

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

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

Part II

July 27, 2021 thru September 30, 2021

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin presiding.

Present: Senators Cardin [residing], Shaheen, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Van Hollen, Young, and Hagerty.

Also present: Senator Graham.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator CARDIN. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We are convened today to consider four of President Biden's nominations: the Honorable Rufus Gifford of Massachusetts to be the chief of protocol; Ms. Lee Satterfield of South Carolina to be an assistant secretary of state; the Honorable Isobel Coleman to be deputy administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; and the Honorable Christopher Lu to be representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform. Senator Hagerty and I both agree that we will defer our opening statements because we have some of our distinguished—have two of our distinguished colleagues that are with us to introduce. And since I might have some judicial nominations before the Judiciary Committee this year, I will recognize Senator Graham.

STATEMENT OF HON. LINDSEY GRAHAM, U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. I owe you one. Okay. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. I really appreciate this. It is a big treat for me. Ms. Satterfield is from South Carolina, a University of South Carolina graduate with a degree in journalism. Her father was a legendary football coach at Furman that won a national title, and she is being nominated to be the assistant secretary for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at State. She has been endorsed by the last six assistant secretaries for the position, the Alliance for International Exchange, Public Diplomacy Council, and the Public Diplomacy Association of America, and Trey Gowdy. I do not know how much you care about the last one, but he is a good golfer, for whatever that matters. But the reason Trey is doing this, she is well respected in our State, and we are

proud of the fact that President Biden chose her for this job, and I look forward to helping.

In this position—she has been involved in this space for a long time. She launched the Center for Diplomatic Engagement, the Center for Global Leadership. She has executive branch experience. Prior to this nomination in the Obama administration, she served as acting assistant secretary of state and deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, so she knows what she is talking about. She has also served as deputy chief of staff of protocol of the United States. During the Clinton administration—you must have been a child back then. During the Clinton administration, she served as the chief of staff for the Secretary of Labor, and as special assistant to the President, and staff director for the White House Office of Public Liaison.

I cannot think of a more qualified, decent person to have this job representing our Nation at a critical moment as we engage the world, and I wholeheartedly support this nomination. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting me speak first.

Senator CARDIN. Well, Senator Graham, we very much appreciate you coming to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Thank you. Senator Markey for an introduction.

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. It is my pleasure to introduce Ambassador Rufus Gifford, a native of the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and to welcome his husband, Stephen, his mom, Ann, and his father, Chad, all of whom call the Bay State home. Rufus' two golden retrievers are no doubt watching at home on C-SPAN 2 as we gather.

It is not every day this committee considers a nominee with as eclectic a career as Rufus Gifford. His credits include Hollywood producer, reality TV star show, ambassador, congressional candidate, and cookbook co-author. It was an unconventional route to today. After graduating from Brown University in the mid-1990s, he set out for Hollywood to produce the next great American film. He jokes that he wanted to make classics like Chinatown or Ordinary People. Instead, instead he gave American audiences Daddy Care 2 and Dr. Dolittle 2. Jokes aside, after his time in Tinsel Town, Rufus discovered his true calling in politics and public service.

After honing his skills as a—as a staffer on the Kerry Campaign in 2004, he met then Senator Barack Obama in 2007, which began a decade-long professional journey with the 44th President. In 2013, President Obama nominated Rufus to be U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, and he was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate. Shortly after arriving in Copenhagen, Rufus agreed to be the headliner of a reality TV show, I Am the Ambassador. Rufus often reminds people that it is more of a documentary than a reality TV show. I Am the Ambassador may have lacked the cliffhangers and the drama of the Kardashians, but it did earn him the Danish equivalent of an Emmy. The show's innovative approach to public diplomacy gave Danish viewers, particularly young

people, and all-access pass into the life of a U.S. Ambassador and the U.S. diplomatic presence in the country. In a country of just 5 million people, 200,000 Danes tuned in each episode to watch as the Ambassador toured the country to speak at town halls, meet with migrant children, and visit Greenland to witness the effects of climate change. The series also showed the Ambassador advance core U.S. interests, such as lobbying the Danish defense minister to continue his country's steadfast support of the U.S. coalition in Iraq and NATO forces in Afghanistan. One Danish viewer said that "It is the type of show you would watch with your mother-in-law, and she would say, oh, he is a lovely man, that Rufus Gifford."

When it came to a decision of where to exchange marital vows, Rufus and Steven picked Copenhagen Town Hall, the historic venue where the first legal same-sex civil union in the world was issued in 1989. If only Rufus as a teenager in the 1980s could know the acceptance and happiness he would find in 2015 as he married the love of his life surrounded by family and friends, ambassadors, and even Crown Prince Frederick and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, and that President Biden would later place faith in him to serve in a highly public role as the chief of protocol. What a testament to the progress we have made.

Rufus' effusive personality makes him the perfect choice for this new role. In Copenhagen, Rufus opened the ambassador's residence to thousands of visitors. As chief of protocol, he will once again play host to foreign dignitaries at the White House and Blair House. His hand will be the first outstretched to greet a prime minister, president, or monarch. The position to which Rufus is nominated is, therefore, a reflection of our country to the world, the first impression, and what a first impression it will be. To echo a Danish fan of his, "He is a lovely man, that Rufus Gifford." Congratulations on your nomination, Rufus. I look forward to what I hope will be your swift confirmation.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Senator Markey, for the introduction. As you know, our committee vets all nominees. A lot of times all we do is read a lot of articles. This is going to be much more enjoyable to see your video clips as we review your qualifications. At this point, I will introduce my colleague, Senator Van Hollen, for an introduction.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you and Senator Hagerty, Senator Shaheen, members of the committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to introduce to the committee the President's nominee to serve as the next permanent representative to the United Nations for management and reform, Mr. Christopher Lu. Chris possesses the leadership, the experience, and the dedication and character required for this role, and I am confident that he will serve our country well if confirmed.

While Chris is now a resident of Virginia, he grew up in Senator Cardin's and my State of Maryland. He comes from Rockville, Maryland where his parents settled after arriving in this country from Taiwan. Chris cut his teeth early on the Thomas S. Wootton High School debating team and then went on to pursue his bach-

elor's degree at Princeton University. It was during that time there that our paths first crossed in the summer of 1986, 35 years ago. Chris was an intern in the office of Maryland senator, Mac Mathias, where I at the time was working as the legislative assistant for defense and arms control. Even back then, Chris stood out for his intellect and passion for service. We got to work together on a range of issues and became friends. From this internship in Senator Mathias' office, he went to Harvard Law School before launching his career in public service, a career that would span 2 decades in all three branches of government.

He first worked as a clerk for Judge Robert Cowan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and gained experience here on Capitol Hill as the deputy chief counsel of the House Oversight and Reform Committee. He later became a key aide to then Senator Barack Obama, a role that would take him from the Capitol to the White House. From 2009 to 2013, he served in the executive branch as the White House Cabinet secretary and as assistant to the President, and during the first term of the Obama administration, Mr. Lu co-chaired the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In 2014, Chris was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate to be deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, a position of key responsibilities, overseeing an agency with 1,700—excuse me—17,000 employees and a \$112 billion budget. He performed his duties with distinction and professionalism. He is currently the Teresa A. Sullivan practitioner senior fellow at the University of Virginia Miller Center.

Members of the committee, I have long appreciated and admired Chris' 20-year career in public service and I am thankful as a citizen for his enduring commitment to serving our country. But despite his very distinguished public service career, Chris never forgot where he started out, as an intern here on Capitol Hill. He always credited that first internship with Senator Mathias for giving him his start in public service, and he also placed special emphasis on the fact that Senator Mathias' office paid its interns even at that time. Without that stipend, without that support, Chris could not have afforded to take that summer internship, which led him on his way. A few years later, Senator Schatz, Senator Murphy, members of this committee, and others sponsored and we passed legislation to enable all congressional interns to be paid, and one of the people I was thinking about at that time was Chris Lu. And when he heard about our efforts, he reached out and we did a video supporting that legislation, which passed.

Chris' commitment to public service and his desire to open the doors of opportunity to others and future generations are what make him such an exceptional leader. And, members of the committee, he is exactly the kind of person we want representing our country in the United Nations. I am pleased to strongly support his nomination, and I urge the committee to do so as well.

Mr. Chairman if I could ask unanimous consent to also enter into the record two letters of support for Chris Lu. One is from over a dozen Asian-American and Pacific-Islander advocacy groups. The other is from former high-ranking officials in Republican administrations who worked with Chris at the University of Virginia.

Thank you, members of the committee, and I urge you to support this fine nomination.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Van Hollen, thank you very much for that introduction. I am sure that my interns who are watching this hearing appreciate the history of why they are receiving some compensation. And let me just also put it—my observations of Senator Mathias. He was an inspiration not only to you and to our nominee, but to many of us in public service in Maryland, an outstanding United States senator.

With that, let me welcome all four of our nominees again, and thank you very much for your willingness to serve during this extremely challenging period in America's history. We recognize it is not easy and it is a family commitment, so we thank you and your families for your willingness to serve our Nation. Each of the positions that you have been nominated for are critically important to United States. The chief of protocol is responsible for advising the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and other high-ranking officials on matters of national and international protocol, creating an environment for successful diplomacy. We have significant challenges today to succeed in diplomacy. The Office of Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs promotes personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations of in the United States and abroad, and presents U.S. history, society, art, and culture to foreign audiences, international exchange programs, such as the Fulbright, the Humphrey, International Visitor Leadership, and Exchange Visitor Program, provides opportunities for individuals from foreign countries to live, study, and work in the United States, and provides similar opportunities for U.S. citizens abroad.

The deputy administrator of United States Agency for International Development is one of the key leaders in our USAID family, specifically responsible to oversee policy and programming, including relief response and resilience, the Bureau of Development, Democracy, and Innovation, the Bureau for Global Health, which our committee is going to be taking up legislation later this week, and regional bureaus, among others, that are the responsibility of the deputy administrator. And the representative of the United States at the United Nations for management and reform is a critically-important position. It is one of the five positions with the rank of Ambassador at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York. The Ambassador directs the Missions Management and Reform Section, which was established to ensure that a senior official at the United States U.N. focuses on issues of management and reform within U.N. system.

So, we have key positions and we have qualified nominees, and we thank you again for your willingness to serve. And with that, let me turn it over to the ranking member, Senator Hagerty.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BILL HAGERTY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator HAGERTY. Senator Cardin, thank you very much, and I want to thank all the nominees for appearing before this committee today. I want to thank you for your service and for your willingness to step up and serve our great Nation.

First, I would like to start with the nomination of the chief of protocol. This position has the unique responsibility of advancing American foreign policy goals by creating an environment conducive for American diplomacy. As the former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, I recognize that protocol can be incredibly challenging with its own set of complex and intricate issues. It is an essential component of a successful foreign policy, and I look forward to hearing the nominee's views on how he will perform the role of chief of protocol. Next, I would like to turn to the nomination to be the assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs. As authoritarian states, such as China and Russia, look to systematically curb freedom and democracy throughout the world, it is imperative that the United States continue to bolster its people-to-people diplomacy. We should look for opportunities to spread the values and ideals of the United States by facilitating various academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchange programs. I am very interested to hear how the nominee intends to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives through educational and cultural programs.

I would like to turn to the nomination to be deputy administrator for policy and programming at USAID. We know that thoughtfully-targeted and -designed foreign assistance can help advance the national security, the economic security, and the humanitarian interests of the United States. This means that ensuring resources that are properly aligned with the broader strategic objectives the United States will be implemented properly. I look forward to hearing from the nominee on this matter. And now, I would like to turn to the nominee to be representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform. This is a position that requires keen judgment and an even temperament. As authoritarian states look for ways to increase their influence in the United Nations, the United States will need to exercise its leverage, including its administrative and budgetary leverage, to protect the integrity of the United Nations. At the same time, the United States should look for support from our allies and its partners to shoulder the financial burden of maintaining and funding the United Nations. As these discussions and negotiations over the administrative and budgetary aspects of the U.N. continue, it will be critical for the representative of the United States to maintain a strong position to ensure that the United Nations is properly and efficiently managed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Senator Hagerty. We will now proceed to our nominees. Your entire statement will be made part of our record.

And without objection, the two letters of support mentioned by Senator Van Hollen will also be made part of our record.

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

Senator CARDIN. At this time, let me recognize Ambassador Gifford, who was previously introduced by Senator Markey.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RUFUS GIFFORD OF MASSACHUSETTS,
NOMINATED TO BE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AND TO HAVE THE
RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE**

Ambassador GIFFORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for the opportunity appear before you today, and thank you, Senator Markey, for the very kind introduction.

Eight years ago, almost to the day, I sat grateful and humbled before this distinguished committee as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark. Today, I sit before you doubly humbled and grateful to be nominated by President Biden to once again serve the country I love. If confirmed as President Biden's nominee for chief of protocol for the United States, I am eager to showcase the best of America and all of America, while reaching out to our friends, allies, and partners throughout the world. I also wish to extend gratitude to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and the over 50,000 State Department employees made up of civil and Foreign Service professionals, locally-engaged staff, eligible family members, and contractors to continue bringing America back to the table.

I am joined here today by my veterinarian husband, Dr. Stephen DeVincent, who was a fellow at the State Department when we first met and who is joining me for the second time on this great journey. And I am joined by my mom and dad, Ann and Chad Gifford. I want to thank all three of them for supporting me today.

Today, in these unprecedented times, traditional diplomacy, like so much else in our great country, has been challenged by COVID-19. However, the United States has remained strong and resilient through the pandemic and has proven that we can work in new and creative ways. In Denmark, I led our amazing team of Americans and locally-engaged staff to strengthen our bilateral relationship and modernize diplomacy while fully embracing the fact that diplomacy starts and ends with human relationships, face-to-face interactions, shaking hands, and breaking through our differences. These are the fundamental ways to carry out the art of protocol, but I also believe that we now have the ability to leverage new tools and technology to build and strengthen our relationships at home and abroad.

We also have a responsibility to model and represent America's diversity by being more inclusive and equitable at every opportunity. This can begin from the moment protocol engages with each and every visiting delegation. If confirmed, I pledge to support the administration's foreign policy goals and reach new audiences using both traditional and modern diplomatic methods of engagement. To do that, I believe I must fully invest in the people who have been at the core of the Office of Protocol for years, across administrations, empowering them and building a true team, one with clarity of mission to work together and advance American foreign policy interests.

Today, the Office of the Chief of Protocol has seven divisions which focus on elements specific to protocol diplomacy. The Blair House, the presidential guest house, has hosted official delegations since it was sold to the U.S. Government in the mid-1900s. The Blair House operates similar to a boutique hotel and can serve as

a representational venue or provide contingent lodging. The Ceremonials Division executes events for both the White House and the Secretary of State involving the Diplomatic Corps and visiting high-level officials, as well as presidential inaugurations, state funerals, and other ceremonies. Ceremonials officers advise on flag etiquette, forms of address, and event logistics. Diplomatic Affairs is responsible for maintaining the Diplomatic Corps order of precedence and the publication of the Foreign Diplomatic List. It coordinates the accreditation of bilateral chiefs of mission, heads of delegation, charge d'affaires, and deputy chiefs of mission and their dependents. It directs the process for new bilateral chiefs of mission and heads of delegation, including arrivals and presentations of credentials to the President at the White House.

Diplomatic Partnership, a revived division, is responsible for outreach to the Diplomatic Corps domestically and will engage audiences, both through social media and other forum. It has several programs, including Experience America, State of the administration, issues roundtables, and the American Heritage Series. Major Events is responsible for planning and executing multilateral summits, major conferences, and other large-scale events. Most recently, Major Events Division carried out the largest virtual summit, virtual official event, with the April 2021 Leaders Summit on Climate, reaching out to 40 world leaders. The Visits Division assistant accompanies presidential delegations abroad. It works closely with other Federal agencies and takes a role in the logistical planning of bilateral meetings with the President, First Lady, Vice President, and Secretary of State, as well as officials and state visits and large-scale international meetings and summits. Finally, the Management Division keeps all the other divisions running, making sure they have all the needed resources. If confirmed as the chief of protocol, I pledge to lead the team of experienced protocol staff to showcase the very best America has to offer.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the—for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to serving the United States and working with Congress to help advance our foreign policy. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Gifford follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RUFUS GIFFORD

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you.

Eight years ago almost to the day, I sat grateful and humbled before this distinguished committee as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark. Today, I sit before you, doubly humbled and grateful to be nominated by President Biden to once again serve the country I love. If confirmed as President Biden's nominee for the Chief of Protocol for the United States, I am eager to showcase the best of America—and all of America—while reaching out to our friends, allies, and partners throughout the world.

I also wish to extend gratitude to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. If confirmed, I look forward to working together with the Secretary and the over 50,000 State Department employees made up of civil and foreign service professionals, locally engaged staff, eligible family members and contractors to continue bringing America back to the table.

I am joined here today by my veterinarian husband Dr. Stephen DeVincent, who was a fellow at the State Department when we first met and who is joining me for

the second time on this great journey. I am also joined (virtually?) by my Mom and Dad and several close friends. I want to thank them for supporting me today.

Today, in these unprecedented times, traditional diplomacy—like so much else in our great country—has been challenged by COVID-19. However, the United States has remained strong and resilient through the pandemic and has proven that we can work in new and creative ways. In Denmark, I led our amazing team of Americans and locally engaged staff to strengthen our bilateral relationship and modernize diplomacy while fully embracing the fact that diplomacy starts and ends with human relationships, face to face interactions, shaking hands and breaking through our differences. These are the fundamental ways to carry out the art of protocol, but I also believe that we now have the ability to leverage new tools and technology to build and strengthen our relationships at home and abroad.

We also have a responsibility to model and represent America's diversity by being more inclusive and equitable at every opportunity. This can begin from the moment protocol engages with each and every visiting delegation.

If confirmed, I pledge to support the administration's foreign policy goals and reach new audiences, using both traditional and modern diplomatic methods of engagement. To do that, I believe I must fully invest in the people who have been at the core of the Office of Protocol for years, across administrations, empowering them and building a true team—one with clarity of mission to work together to advance American foreign policy interests.

Today, the Office of the Chief of Protocol has seven divisions which focus on specific elements of protocol diplomacy.

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The Ceremonials division executes events for both the White House and the Secretary of State involving the diplomatic corps and visiting high level officials, as well as Presidential inaugurations, state funerals, and other ceremonies.

Ceremonials Officers advise on flag etiquette, forms of address, and event logistics.

Diplomatic Affairs is responsible for maintaining the Diplomatic Corps Order of Precedence and the publication of the foreign Diplomatic List. It coordinates the accreditation of bilateral Chiefs of Mission, Heads of Delegation, *Chargés d'affaires* and Deputy Chiefs of Mission and their dependents. It directs the *agrément* process for new bilateral Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Delegation, including arrivals and presentations of credentials to the President at the White House.

Diplomatic Partnership, a revived division, is responsible for outreach to the diplomatic corps domestically and will engage audiences both through social media and through other forums. It has several programs, including *Experience America*, *State of the administration*, *Issue Roundtables*, and *American Heritage Series*.

Major Events is responsible for planning and executing multi-lateral summits, major conferences, and other large-scale events. Most recently, the Major Events division carried out the largest virtual official event through the April 2021 Leaders Summit on Climate, reaching out to 40 world leaders.

The Visits division assists and accompanies Presidential delegations abroad. It works closely with other federal agencies and takes a lead role in the logistical planning of bilateral meetings with the President, First Lady, Vice President, and Secretary of State, as well as Official and State visits and large-scale international meetings and summits.

Finally, the Management division keeps all the other divisions running, making sure that they have all needed resources.

If confirmed as the Chief of Protocol, I pledge to lead the team of experienced protocol staff to showcase the very best America has to offer.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to serving the United States and working with Congress to help advance our foreign policy.

I look forward to your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Ambassador Gifford. We will now hear from Ms. Satterfield, who was previously introduced by Senator Graham.

**STATEMENT OF LEE SATTERFIELD OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS)**

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Sorry. I would like to thank Senator Graham for his introduction. Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Hagerty, and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be assistant secretary of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. I am honored to be considered by the Senate for this important position and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence that they have placed in me. I would like to thank my family—my husband, Patrick, our sons, Jack and Connor—and all of my supportive extended family, friends, and colleagues.

I have worked in various capacities in the consequential field of international engagement for over a decade and dedicated the majority of my almost 30-year career to public service. If confirmed it would be the honor of a lifetime to lead a bureau whose mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people around the world through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges. My experience has prepared me to carry on the proud tradition of excellence at the Bureau. As president of Meridian International Center, I led efforts to connect leaders through cultural exchange and collaboration, driving solutions to shared global challenges and fostering international cooperation for the past 6 years.

I am a passionate champion for using U.S. policy priorities through people-to-people exchanges. Having previously served in ECA as deputy assistant secretary and acting assistant secretary, I know these programs of engagement are an integral part of our diplomacy, which President Biden has placed at the center of U.S. foreign policy. And I hold the many dedicated professionals who make these programs successful in the highest regard. Public diplomacy is a strategy, and like foreign policy professionals, public diplomacy practitioners must survey the global terrain to ascertain America's natural competitive advantages in meeting threats and challenges.

Those advantages are numerous. The United States has the highest-quality, most open and diverse system of higher education in the world. We are and must remain the destination of choice for the best and brightest students. We can welcome international students and protect our national interests. The United States economy is infused with an entrepreneurial spirit that attracts, inspires, and innovates. American culture is the most pervasive and influential culture in the world. English is the language of the world, opening doors and minds. American values are the foundation of a world that rejects violence and extremism, and that embraces liberty, individual dignity, and democracy. ECA exchanges are purposefully designed to leverage all of those inherent strengths of our country. Exchanges have an unparalleled ability to convey and share the American experience, ultimately making our country more secure and globally competitive.

As set forth in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, we are engaged in a global competition for influence and power

with authoritarian states, such as Russia and China. To meet this current challenge, our most powerful assets remain those that have guided and strengthened our Nation since the beginning: our democratic principles. If confirmed, I will thoughtfully evaluate conditions for scaling up in-person exchanges, prioritizing health, safety, and welfare, and build on lessons learned from ECA's successful virtual programs. I will ensure ECA programs represent, promote, and support equity, diversity, and inclusion, while also advancing those principles within the workforce. I will demonstrate responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars by measuring and evaluating program performance through a data-driven approach.

As Secretary Blinken stated, among the best investments we make are in our exchange programs. I will continue ECA activities that benefit the American people and the U.S. economy, contributing directly to local economies and fostering business and educational opportunities, and I will promote those opportunities to U.S. citizens. I will build on ECA's robust global alumni network. Successful exchange programs are not one-and-done events, but rather an initial investment in foreign audiences and a community of potential foreign policy allies. One in three current world leaders are part of the over 1.5 million alumni of ECA exchanges. If confirmed, I will aim to strengthen people-to-people ties and advance our country's foreign policy goals under the leadership of Secretary Blinken and in consultation with Congress.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Satterfield follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEE SATTERFIELD

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. I am honored to be considered by the Senate for this important position, and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I would like to thank my family: my husband, Patrick, our sons Jack and Conor, and all of my supportive extended family, friends, and colleagues.

I have worked in various capacities in the consequential field of international engagement for over a decade and dedicated the majority of my almost 30-year career to public service.

If confirmed, it would be the honor of a lifetime to lead a Bureau whose mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people around the world through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges.

My experience has prepared me to carry on the proud tradition of excellence at the Bureau. As President of Meridian International Center, I have led efforts to connect leaders through cultural exchange and collaboration, driving solutions to shared global challenges and fostering international cooperation for the past six years.

I am a passionate champion of advancing U.S. policy priorities through people-to-people exchanges. Having previously served in ECA as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary, I know these programs of engagement are an integral part of our diplomacy which President Biden has placed at the center of U.S. foreign policy, and I hold the many dedicated professionals who make these programs successful in the highest regard.

Public diplomacy is a strategy, and like foreign policy professionals, public diplomacy practitioners must survey the global terrain to ascertain America's natural competitive advantages in meeting threats and challenges. Those advantages are numerous.

- The United States has the highest-quality, most open and diverse system of higher education in the world. We are, and must remain, the destination of

choice for the best and brightest students. We can both welcome legitimate international students and protect our national interests from malign influence.

- The United States economy is infused with an entrepreneurial spirit that attracts, inspires, and innovates.
- American culture is the most pervasive and influential popular culture in the world.
- English is the language of the world, opening doors and minds.
- American values are the foundation of a world that rejects violence and extremism and that embraces liberty, individual dignity, and democracy.

ECA exchanges are purposefully designed to leverage all those inherent strengths of our country. Exchanges have an unparalleled ability to convey and share the American experience, ultimately making our country more secure and globally competitive.

As set forth in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, we are engaged in a global competition for influence and power with authoritarian states such as Russia and China. To meet this current challenge, our most powerful assets remain those that have guided and strengthened our nation since the beginning - our democratic principles.

If confirmed, I will:

- First, thoughtfully evaluate conditions for scaling up in-person exchanges prioritizing health, safety, and welfare and continue building on lessons learned from ECA's successful pivot to virtual and hybrid programs during the pandemic.
- I will ensure ECA programs represent promote and support equity, diversity, and inclusion while also advancing those principles within the workforce.
- I will demonstrate responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars by measuring and evaluating program performance through a data-driven approach. As Secretary Blinken stated, "Among the best investments we make are in our exchange programs."
- I will continue ECA activities that benefit the American people and U.S. economy, contributing directly to local economies and fostering business and educational opportunities, and I will promote those opportunities to US citizens.
- I will build on ECA's robust global alumni network and continue upgrading alumni engagement platforms. Successful exchange programs are not one and done events, but rather an initial investment in foreign audiences and a community of potential foreign policy allies. One in three current world leaders are part of the over 1.5 million alumni of ECA exchanges.

If confirmed, I will aim to strengthen people-to-people ties and advance our country's foreign policy goals under the leadership of Secretary Blinken and in consultation with Congress. Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much for your testimony. We will now hear from the nominee—President Biden's nominee for deputy administrator for policy and programming at USAID, Ambassador Isobel Coleman, who is a foreign policy and global development expert with more than 25 years of experience working in government, the private sector, and nonprofits. Most recently, she served on the Biden transition team, leading the review of the U.S. mission in the United Nations—to the United Nations. From 2014 to 2017, she was the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations for management, reform, and special political affairs. During this time, she represented the United States in the U.N. General Assembly on budgetary matters and the U.N. Security Council on Africa and peacekeeping issues. From 2018 to 2020, she was the chief operating officer of GiveDirectly, an international nonprofit group that deals with poverty by providing unconditional cash transfers to the extreme poor.

It is a pleasure to have Ambassador Coleman before us.

STATEMENT OF HON. ISOBEL COLEMAN OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE A DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (POLICY AND PROGRAMMING)

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Chairman Cardin, and Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be deputy administrator for policy and programming at USAID. I am grateful to President Biden and Administrator Power for their trust in me at this important moment. I would also like to thank the SFRC staff who have so strongly supported the mission of USAID and have been stalwart partners to the Agency.

I would not be appearing before you today without the love and support of my family, who have encouraged me every step. My wonderful husband, Struan, who is here with us today, and my terrific children, Cullen, Struan, Julian, Josie, and Adrian; my siblings, Carolyn, Richard, and Douglas; and my loving parents, Michael and Edie; and mother-in-law, Jenny. I thank you all.

Over the past 20 years, my work as a writer, diplomat, and NGO leader has taken me to trouble spots around the world from Afghanistan and Yemen to South Sudan and Eastern Congo. I have had the privilege of visiting more than a dozen USAID missions, and I have seen up close the incredible work of USAID staff and partners, from programs training young women to provide life-saving maternal care in rural Afghan villages, to democracy programs helping young people understand their newfound political rights in Tunisia. These and other American investments not only improve the lives of millions, but also advance our own interests. We at home are more secure and more prosperous when democracy and economic opportunities expand for others around the world.

Today, the work of USAID is more important than ever. COVID-19 continues to ravage the world's most vulnerable populations. The pandemic's secondary effects, including loss of incomes, food insecurity, and widespread school closings, are exacting a steep toll in many communities. Untethered corruption is destabilizing countries around the world, and conflict is now driving more than 80 percent of humanitarian needs. My career has helped prepare me to lead the Agency to confront the challenges facing our global development efforts at this time.

I have written extensively about economic reform and democratization, and I am probably best known for my decades-long work to underscore the advantages of investing in women and girls globally. My years in the private sector have helped me to hone my management skills. My time as a diplomat at the U.N. exposed me to the benefits and challenges of multilateralism and instilled in me the imperative of leveraging our resources to marshal those of other countries. And as an NGO working across Africa, I gained firsthand appreciation for the acute challenges facing USAID partners in delivering assistance to those devastated by conflict and humanitarian disasters. If confirmed, I will bring these experiences to bear at USAID to ensure that our programming continues to be more innovative and effective, that it is aligned to administration and congressional priorities, and to mobilize other governments,

international organizations, and the private sector to be force multipliers of our work.

I will also lead on ensuring a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the Agency. Meeting today's demands, from helping partner countries adapt to climate change, to countering democratic backsliding, depends on finding innovative ways to do more with less. To that end, I will strive to ensure that the Agency is breaking down programmatic silos to realize the multiplier effect of our work across bureaus and sectors.

I am clear-eyed about the competitive challenges posed by China, Russia, and other authoritarian regimes, and I will make sure that USAID is deploying the best of America, including technical expertise, financing, corporate partnerships, and innovation alongside our generous grants, to provide an alternative to predatory development models that breed and exacerbate corruption. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your colleagues to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are being deployed effectively to advance American foreign policy interests while doing the most good for the most people. I will bring to my role the same commitment to transparency, bipartisanship, and collaboration with this committee that I brought to my prior role in government.

I thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Coleman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ISOBEL COLEMAN

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee: I am honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be Deputy Administrator for Policy and Programming at USAID. I am grateful for President Biden and Administrator Power's trust in me at this important moment. I would also like to thank the SFRC staff who have so strongly supported the mission of USAID and have been stalwart partners to the Agency.

I would not be appearing before you today without the love and support of my family who have encouraged me at every step: my wonderful husband Struan; my terrific children Cullen, Struan, Julian, Josie, and Adrienne; my siblings, my loving parents Michael and Edie, and my mother-in-law Ginnie. I thank you all.

Over the past 20 years, my work as a writer, diplomat, and NGO leader has taken me to troubled spots around the world—from Afghanistan and Yemen, to South Sudan and Eastern Congo. I have had the privilege of visiting more than a dozen USAID missions and I have seen up-close the incredible work of USAID staff and partners—from programs training young women to provide life-saving maternal care in rural Afghan villages; to democracy programs helping young people understand their new-found political rights in Tunisia. These and other American investments not only improve the lives of millions but also advance our own interests. We at home are more secure and prosperous when democracy and economic opportunities expand for others around the world.

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I thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much for your comments. We will now turn to the Honorable Christopher Lu, who was previously introduced by Senator Van Hollen.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER LU OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, AND TO BE THE ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM

Mr. LU. Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Hagerty, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear today. I would like to thank President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield for their confidence in me. I am grateful to Senator Van Hollen for his kind words and his tireless efforts to create opportunities for future public servants. And, most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Katie Thompson, who is here today, for her steadfast support.

I am the proud son of immigrants who came to this country more than 60 years to start a new life. Government service is literally in my blood. My father, who was a civilian employee at the Department of Defense, believed that working for the Federal Government was the best way to repay the country that had been so good to him. I have tried to follow my father's example during my 20 years of Federal service where I have focused on improving how government addresses the needs of the American people.

As deputy chief counsel of the House Oversight Committee, I conducted investigations to improve the effectiveness of Federal programs. During my time as legislative director for then Senator Obama, we worked with former senator, Tom Coburn, to pass legislation to improve the transparency of Federal spending and reduce

no-bid contracts. As White House Cabinet secretary, I coordinated dozens of Federal agencies to ensure the effective delivery of services during the Great Recession. And at the Department of Labor, I was the chief operating officer of a \$12 billion agency with 17,000 employees, and I oversaw the budget, personnel, procurement, and IT functions. If confirmed, I look forward to applying my experience to this critical position, representing the United States at the U.N.

Since its founding, the United Nations has been an indispensable force for advancing peace and security and improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable people. The events of the past year have highlighted how interconnected our world is and how complex problems often can only be addressed in collaboration with other countries. A well-managed U.N. is in the best interest of the United States. It is also a smart investment for the American people who are the largest funders of the U.N. budget.

Despite its many successes, the U.N. has struggled at times to live up to its founding ideals. In order to address the complex issues of the 21st century, the U.N. needs to operate more like a 21st century organization. If confirmed, I will push for greater transparency and accountability in how the U.N. spends its funds, makes its decisions, and operates its programs. Waste, fraud, and abuse should be rooted out and eliminated, anti-Israel bias must be rejected wherever it exists, sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers and staff must end, and constant vigilance is needed towards countries, like China and Russia, that seek to undermine the U.N. and the rules-based international order.

I am well aware of the challenges of driving change in an organization where the United States is just one of 193 members. However, as Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield told this committee in January, we must have the courage to insist on reforms that make the U.N. efficient and effective and the persistence to see the reforms through. Since its founding, the U.N. has endured and prospered because of American leadership. If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing my 2 decades of Federal management experience to ensure that the United Nations moves closer to reaching its full potential.

Thank you for considering me for this position. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER P. LU

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear today as the nominee to be the Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform.

I would like to thank President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield for their confidence in me. Most importantly, I would like to thank my family, especially my remarkable wife Katie Thomson, for their steadfast support.

I am the proud son of immigrants who came to this country more than 60 years ago to start a new life. Government service is literally in my blood. My father was a civilian employee at the Department of Defense because he believed that working for the federal government was the best way to repay the country that had been so good to him.

I have tried to follow my father's example during my 20 years of federal service, where I have focused on improving how the government addresses the needs of the American people.

As the Deputy Chief Counsel of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, I conducted investigations to improve the effectiveness of federal programs. During my tenure as the legislative director for then-Senator Obama, we worked with former Senator Tom Coburn to pass legislation to improve the transparency of federal spending and reduce no-bid contracts. As the White House Cabinet Secretary, I coordinated dozens of federal agencies to ensure the effective delivery of services during the Great Recession.

At the Department of Labor, an agency with 17,000 employees and a \$12 billion budget, I was the chief operating officer and oversaw the budget, personnel, procurement, and IT functions. We utilized an extensive performance management system, incorporated best practices from outside the federal government, and focused on employee morale. In the annual survey of federal employee engagement, the Labor Department rose from 17th place before I arrived to 6th place when I left.

If confirmed for the role of Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform, I look forward to applying my management experience to this critical position.

Since its founding, the United Nations has been an indispensable force for advancing peace and security, improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable people, and confronting global problems like economic inequality, climate change and human rights. As Secretary Blinken said to the U.N. Security Council in May: "No period in modern history has been more peaceful or prosperous than the one since the United Nations was created."

The events of the past year have highlighted how interconnected our world is and how complex problems often can only be addressed in collaboration with other countries. A well-managed United Nations is in the best interest of the United States. It is also a smart investment for the American people, who are the largest funders of the U.N. budget. Indeed, a 2018 GAO report found that it would cost the United States eight times as much money if we were to undertake unilaterally the U.N.'s peacekeeping missions.

Despite its many successes, the U.N. has struggled at times to live up to its founding ideals. In order to address the complex issues of the 21st century, the U.N. needs to operate more like a 21st century organization. In recent years, Secretary-General Guterres has implemented important operational reforms. But more can and should be done, and U.S. leadership is critical to driving U.N. reform.

If confirmed, I will push for greater transparency and accountability in how the U.N. spends its funds, makes its decisions, and operates its programs. The performance of programs should be evaluated using data. Waste, fraud and abuse should be rooted out and eliminated. Anti-Israel bias must be rejected wherever it exists.

Instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers and staff must end. And constant vigilance is needed of those nations, such as China and Russia, that seek to undermine the U.N. and the rules-based international order.

I am fully cognizant of the challenges of driving change in an organization where the United States is just one of 193 members. However, as Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield told this committee in January: "We must have the courage to insist on reforms that make the U.N. efficient and effective, and the persistence to see reforms through."

In the 75 years since its founding, the U.N. has endured, expanded its mission, and transformed itself because of American leadership. If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing my two decades of federal management experience to ensure that the United Nations moves closer to reaching its full potential.

Thank you for considering me for this position, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator CARDIN. And thank you for your testimony. The committee has four standard questions that we ask all nominees. I will go down the line, ask if you could answer "yes" or "no" to these questions for the record.

Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Yes.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Yes, I do.

Mr. LU. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. You cannot nod. You have to respond.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Yes, I do.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Yes.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Yes.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Yes, I do.

Mr. LU. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Yes.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Yes.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Yes.

Mr. LU. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. Do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Yes.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Yes.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Yes.

Mr. LU. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to each of you on your nominations. I look forward to working with you, and I am sure the rest of the committee feels the same way. Ambassador Coleman, I would like to begin with you because one of the things you said in your opening statement, and you talked a little bit about this in your written testimony, is that you are going to strive to ensure the Agency is breaking down siloes to realize the multiplier effect of work across bureaus and sectors. And in your opening statement, you talked about the importance of investing in women and girls, which I am a big proponent of. Can you talk a little bit about how you could fully integrate women and girls across all aspects of USAID?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen, for that question on a topic near and dear to my heart. Investing in women and girls cannot be a side show, an afterthought. It really has to be the main event. There is so much compelling evidence today that shows that investing in women and girls creates positive cycles for countries, that it improves not only their own lives, the lives of their families, of their communities, but it leads to more prosperous countries and the world as a whole. So, when we look at efforts on food security, humanitarian assistance, global health, whatever it is that USAID is doing—climate change and resilience—women and girls have to be front and center. They are often the most vulnerable in their communities and ones we need to make sure that they are receiving attention. And we know that when efforts and programming is targeted to women and girls, the spillover effects for the whole family are tremendous.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I assume we can feel—rest assured that you will commit to making that a priority, if confirmed.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Absolutely, it will be one of our priorities. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Ms. Satterfield, I totally agree with your comment about cultural exchanges being an initial investment in our foreign allies, and it is the best way for people around the world to learn about the United States and for Americans to learn about others around the world. But one of the challenges that we have had in New Hampshire is with the J-1 Visa Program. I think it is a terrific program, and we have a lot of employers who not only appreciate the ability to learn from the foreign visitors, but who also are able to give them jobs, and that has been an important aspect of our seasonal economy in New Hampshire with tourism. So can you talk about how you would work, if confirmed, with American businesses to address issues that we have had with the J-1 Visa Program over the last year so that we are not facing a winter and a spring next year where we have these same problems where young people are not able to get to the United States because we have embassies closed down and we cannot do the work to ensure that they can arrive in the United States?

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Thank you, Senator, and I agree that the J-1 Visa Program, now called BridgeUSA, is a valuable foreign policy tool and an important public diplomacy program specifically to communities all across the country. I have seen recent reports about the shortage of international visitors in camps that are not being able to continue because of the shortage. And I feel for those parents and families and also those small businesses that affected. The BridgeUSA Program is poised to be stronger than ever. There have been significant improvements in the program over the last couple of years, and now those alumni are included as part of all of the State Department alumni and continuing engagement after they return home, so your point about a critical audience is key.

If I am confirmed, I will work very closely with Consular Affairs to prioritize the J-1 visitors and to communicate with sponsors and communities about the various ways that we can ensure that these participants are able to come to the United States as soon as possible.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. As we continue to struggle with COVID, both here in the United States and around the world, will you also commit to working with State to develop a plan for how we will address this if we continue to have embassies closed around the world?

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Yes, Senator, I will.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. I would just reinforce what Senator Shaheen said on the—on the J-1's. I think many parts of our country depended upon the J-1's, but also the value of the exchange as well as the need in our country was clearly missed during COVID-19. Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. There we go. Thank you. Chairman Cardin, I just want to thank you for your remarks, and, Senator Shaheen, the J-1 issue is also a big issue in my State as well, and I echo your concern and appreciate the fact that, Ms. Satterfield, you will be willing to work with us on this, if confirmed. If I could first turn to Ambassador Gifford, chief of protocol plays a critical diplomatic role. You will be charged with advising not only national, but inter-

national diplomatic protocols. Our Nation will rely upon you. As the former United States Ambassador to Japan, I understand how difficult sometimes the nuances of diplomatic protocol can be, and it will be requiring you to have very keen judgment as you execute your duties, if you are confirmed. Also, I want to remind you that, if confirmed, you will be representing all Americans, and I hope that you will keep that in mind.

And with that in mind, I would like to understand your views, Ambassador, on the importance of bipartisanship in the execution and implementation of U.S. foreign policy, and whether you will commit to work with me and the other members of this committee to make sure that bipartisan representation is critically represented in all of our diplomatic protocol issues.

Ambassador GIFFORD. Thank you, Senator. The answer to that is absolutely, 100 percent. As someone like you, who has served overseas and has seen the real beauty, and strength, and power of American diplomacy globally, as far as I am concerned, partisan politics has absolutely no place at the State Department, that politics famously stops at the water's edge. And then, of course, when we are living and working at the State Department, that holds true as well. The way I think about this is when we—if I am confirmed and I am privileged enough to take that oath of office, I pledge to serve, protect, defend the Constitution of the United States, I do not—no President, no ideology, certainly no political party. And for me, I think I have a record to back that up because that is what I did from 2013 until I left my post in 2017. And I commit to you wholeheartedly to do that once again if I am confirmed in this position.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate that, Ambassador. I have been very frustrated myself seeing former diplomats come back and behave in a partisan manner, and I think that that needs to be parked. And just as you say, you will be representing all of us, and I appreciate your wholehearted focus on that. Ambassador Coleman, if I could turn to you, please. I have enjoyed our opportunity to discuss matters related to the charter that you are looking to undertake. I would like to talk to you about two areas: China and Afghanistan. USAID funds a tremendous amount of effort to help ethnic Tibetans to maintain their culture, to maintain their entrepreneurial presence. It is this type of program that I wholeheartedly support, and I would love to hear your views on how you would look at continuing USAID's support for other groups that may be, in some way, oppressed or damaged in some manner by China's malign behavior.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator Hagerty, for that question, and I thank you for your time last week that we were able to spend to get to know each other a bit. It is a very important question. We have seen an increasing authoritarian turn in China and an erosion of human rights in that country. You mentioned the Tibetans, but, of course, the situation with the Uyghurs is very dire, too. USAID is doing what it can to support the Uyghur people, particularly those who are taking an activist role and those who have been oppressed by the country. Some of them have left the country, and USAID is taking efforts across China to ensure

human rights programming where it can, but often outside the country.

Senator HAGERTY. I hope we can continue this conversation, particularly with the thought of how we can prevent the CCP from diverting or, in some way, frustrating those efforts. I will look forward to having those conversations with you should you be confirmed.

Ambassador COLEMAN. I look forward to it.

Senator HAGERTY. With respect to Afghanistan, I see a very challenging role there because we are making commitments to continue U.S. aid, but the Taliban has taken over half the districts there, putting our presence there under tremendous pressure. Have you had the opportunity to think about how you will deploy USAID resources under the current conditions in Afghanistan, particularly as you see them trending?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator, for that question, too. I have—I have spent a bit of time in Afghanistan. I have been there maybe half a dozen times over the past 20 years and have seen some very good work that USAID has done there. And I recognize that the situation is very fragile right now and rapidly changing. I think USAID has made some strong gains in Afghanistan and will do what it can, both through our own efforts on the ground, but also working through partners there, local partners, international NGOs, and U.N. agencies, to continue some of the good work that we have done. But if confirmed, I will certainly make Afghanistan a priority and to do contingency planning as the situation evolves.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Van Hollen?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to all of you on your nominations. Ms. Satterfield, if I could begin with you, and thank you for the work you have done at the Meridian House. Let me pick up on that work and something I heard you say, which is that you believe that educational and exchange programs do play an important role in our foreign policy. I agree with you. If you look at the previous administration even before the pandemic hit, there was a big drop off in the number of students coming to the United States. In the very first year of the previous administration, international student enrollment in U.S. universities declined by 6.6 percent in the first academic year. We don't need to go into all the reasons for that, but my question to you is, is it your goal to restore a more robust enrollment of foreign students to the United States and to reinvigorate our exchange programs?

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Thank you, Senator, for that question and bringing up this incredibly important point. The United States remains the number one destination for hosting international students, even though the numbers have dropped. Also, there is growing competition from other countries to recruit students to come there to study, and we cannot rest on laurels. It is absolutely my intent to continue to find ways to message to international students. We need strong outreach with accurate and comprehensive information. Frankly, like the statement that was put out yesterday by the State Department—a joint statement by the State De-

partment and the Department of Education listing the ways that international students can come to the United States to U.S. universities and colleges and participate in a way, we can also network through Education USA, which is ECA's educational advising arm, and through our American Spaces, which are in over 600 places around the world. I absolutely commit, if confirmed, to making that a priority.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, terrific, because, as you say, we have seen a drop off in the number of enrollments even before the pandemic, and obviously we need to take into account health issues, but as you mentioned, we are seeing incredible competition around the world. Other countries see it as in their interest to attract students, and we have a whole lot to offer and also a window into, you know, some of the values that form our country in foreign policy—freedom of speech and other things. So, I really hope and am pleased that you are going to make that a priority.

I also just want to mention to you that there is a very good exchange program with young African leaders, the Young African Leaders Initiative, YALI. You are probably familiar with it. I chair the Africa Subcommittee here and Senator Rounds is the ranking member, and we intend to—shortly to introduce legislation to codify that program. Congresswoman Bass introduced and passed that in the House and look forward to working with you. I hope I will have your commitment to work with us on that.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Absolutely. Thank you, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Ambassador Coleman, if I could—well, first let me start with Sudan. I had a chance to visit Sudan a little while back with Senator Coons, and, as you know, the United States through AID has committed \$700 million to support the transition from dictatorship to democracy. This committee is currently reviewing some of the rough drafts of the proposal. We need to get it done quickly, in my view. Are you familiar with that proposal, and do you commit to working with this committee to make sure that we implement it fully?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator, for bringing up Sudan. It is one of the few bright spots actually on the horizon as it makes its transition from military rule to civilian governance, and if confirmed, I will absolutely make Sudan one of my priorities. I am familiar with the legislation. I do not know the details of it, but I do understand that \$700 million has been committed, and investments in helping the civilian government understand how to govern, and building institutional capacity, and working with civil society so that they can strengthen that democratic governance process there is critically important. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. And my last question relates to what Senator Hagerty brought up with respect to Afghanistan. I do know if you have seen the movie, Charlie Wilson's War, but for those of you who have not, I recommend it to you. It is a story about a House member who was successful in getting all of his colleagues to support the purchase of Stinger missiles to provide to the mujahideen, which did help drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan. But the very end of the movie is a—scene of him asking his colleagues to support funding for education and schools in Afghanistan, and he was unsuccessful at doing that. We know what

happened after the Soviet—we pushed the Soviets out, and we sort of, you know, left the scene, and the Taliban filled the vacuum, and they gave—they, of course, gave sanctuary to al-Qaeda. So I—two questions. One is, what is AID's vision for its continued participation in Afghanistan? Number two, how are you going to navigate the security situation there?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator, for the question. You know, USAID, I understand, is looking at the situation very closely in Afghanistan and, as I said earlier, doing contingency planning. It is almost impossible to know what will happen at this point and any time frame. But it has invested \$22 billion in that country over the past 20 years and have some remarkable gains to show for it in terms of significant declines in maternal mortality, more girls in school than ever before in that country's history, and seeking ways to make sure that those gains are not lost, that, in fact, that they are sustained, whether it is through direct interventions or working through partners on the ground through the multilateral system and the U.N. agencies, but also recognizing the possibility for refugee flows and being ready for that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, I think we all have our hands full there with respect to what will unfold, but I appreciate your determination to stay engaged, security allowing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Madam Chair and Ranking Member Hagerty, thank you, and congratulations to the panel. This is a very highly-qualified panel. Ambassador Gifford, it is good to see you again, and I want to start with you. I would have asked exactly the question that Senator Hagerty did. Looking at the background of a Rufus Gifford that I did not know and seeing so much political activity, I would have asked, can you, you know, take an oath and be even handed in your work. I have had the virtue of working with Rufus significantly in the past, and I couldn't say this about everybody I have worked in a political capacity, but I can say it about Rufus Gifford that he is going to be very, very even handed in his approach to the job, which is what he did when he was Ambassador to Denmark. Your success there was very, very notable.

Let me ask you this, Ambassador Gifford. You talked about the many external-facing roles of the protocol chief, but there is also this internal-facing role. You talked about the Management Division within the Office. In the past, there have been some controversies about internal management issues. Tell us what you would do, should you be confirmed, to foster a very professional and inclusive and even-handed environment in the office?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Thank you, Senator, and this is a—this is an issue that is near and dear to my heart. I am certainly aware of the ongoing challenges. There are issues with morale, et cetera. And listen, I think that from a management standpoint, and I think this is—one important thing to note here is that service overseas, understanding the culture of the State Department, understand the expertise that I am walking into, if I am confirmed for this job, is where you start, I think. General respect for the civil servants who have been doing this work for years, understanding that if I am confirmed in this position, that I have a lot to learn

still, that they are the career professionals, and I am coming in to lead, of course, but I still—but I need to be building that team and fostering that sense—that sense of just that word “team.”

And I have to say that over the—with the various teams that I have managed roughly the same size, diverse staffs in a variety of different ways, I like to say that I, at the beginning of any job like this, I take the bull by the horns and ensure that we change the tone and that we create an environment that is equitable, diverse, and empowering because, honestly, if we are going to accomplish the mission, that is what we have got to do. That is where were you got to start.

Senator KAINE. Excellent. Thank you for that. Ms. Satterfield, your Bureau is very important, and it is very important to Virginia because we have a significant number of people who work on programs. For example, in Fulbright, we have 53 Virginians doing Fulbrights during 2020 and 2021 Peace Corps, 114 Virginians in the 2020 Peace Corps Program. We have also hosted critical programs, including the Young African Leaders Conference that Senator Van Hollen asked you about at UVA in 2014 and at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2016. So, there is a lot I would like to ask, but I am just going to ask you about this. Talk to us about the challenges of the Fulbright Program during the time of COVID and how you intend to keep this program vibrant and active, even as the State Department is issuing new guidance and other agencies are issuing new guidance every day about travel restrictions that may need to be continued with some of the nations where we have Fulbright scholars.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Thank you, Senator. It is important to continue to provide ways that we can connect with people around the world and Americans, particularly through Fulbright. It happens to be the 75th anniversary of that program this year, and it is a strong and vibrant way that we reach out to other communities across the world. I remember recently I was speaking with some college students and talking about the role, I am confirmed, that I will play in the United States. As soon as I mentioned “Fulbright,” their eyes lit up. It has a—it resonates, not only here in the United States, but in all places around the world.

The pandemic has created a challenge for doing in-person programming, but I think that—we hope that we will be able to continue in-person programs where possible, and continuing Fulbright and other public diplomacy programs will critical. And if I am confirmed, I will look forward to determining ways we can do that safely.

Senator KAINE. Excellent. Well, I am going to—I am going to include Ambassador Coleman and Mr. Lu in a last comment or question. So, Mr. Lu, you are a wonderful public servant. Since you are nominated for a position that Ambassador Coleman has had, I hope you guys have lunch right after this and let her give you a lot of good advice about how to do it. Ambassador Coleman, here is something I am just interested in, and I just want to put it on your radar screen. There is a program at USAID called the New Partnerships Initiative, which is designed to invest in NGOs—small NGOs and local partners in the USAID humanitarian contracting space. There was a Foreign Policy article in May, just recently, that

criticized USAID for distributing the NPI awards largely through large contractors, kind of undercutting the whole goal of the program, which is to focus on small contractors and local partners. Senators Rubio and I are going to introduce a bill this week called the New Partners—New Partnerships Initiative Authorization Act to really try to make sure that we are building capacity among creative and innovative new partners, and not just legacy partners, who do great work. But we want to create more innovation and more opportunity. And I hope that will be an area that you will focus on, should you be confirmed, and we will look forward to working with you on that.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador Coleman, if I might start with a question in regards to how you intend to set priorities within USAID. And I mention this with President Biden making it clear that our foreign policy is going to be wrapped in our values, something that, I think, every member of this committee strongly supports. He has also indicated corruption is a core national security concern. If you look at what the trends are around the world, decline of democratic states, the rise of corruption in many countries, including some of our allies where we see a rise in corruption, good governance and the role USAID plays in anti-corruption becomes critically important. Later this week, our committee will be considering legislation to expand our role and USAID's role in global health, something we desperately need to do. My question is, we have a limited amount of resources today under USAID that is devoted to good governance and anti-corruption. How do you intend to prioritize good governance and anti-corruption to protect and expand the capacity of USAID to deal with this critical issue for our country?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin, for that terrific question. And also let me just start by thanking you for your leadership on this issue. Whether it is the Global Magnitsky Act or the Combatting Global Corruption Act, you have truly shown tremendous leadership on bringing corruption to the forefront of what needs to be a whole-of-government approach to combating this scourge around the world, so thank you.

If confirmed, I know that corruption—anti-corruption efforts will be very central to a whole range of efforts. Not only has President Biden made this one of his priorities, but Administrator Power also created an anti-corruption task force and is really focused on this issue because it is such a challenging topic in so many parts of the world. And, you know, if confirmed, I would really dig into the programs that exist, look at what has been effective, look at new areas that we could invest more in, but really make this something that is mainstreamed throughout all of our work that we are doing because it is so important.

Senator CARDIN. I would just underscore that one of the areas that we really need to strengthen is the capacity of our embassies to deal with understanding the problems in their country and how we can best interact to deal with anti-corruption measures. So, one of the areas that could help USAID is if there was stronger capacity within missions to be able to provide that type of knowledge and help. I would just urge you to make that part of your priority

selections to strengthen the State Department's ability to deal with anti-corruption.

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator. If confirmed, I will absolutely work with my State Department colleagues on that.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Mr. Lu, I want to talk about a serious issue we have had at the United Nations. We have United Nations peacekeepers. As part of the way that the administratives are handled, there are a lot of countries that lobby to become peacekeepers, and yet we have seen sexual exploitations too often in regard to peacekeepers. So, I want to get your commitment and your response to how you will use your position at the United Nations to make sure that we protect the safety of the people on which the United Nations is operating with peacekeepers, and that safety will be the top concern, not just the politics of which countries are selected for peacekeeping.

Mr. LU. Senator, thank you for that question. The United States has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to sexual exploitation and abuse. There have been improvements, I understand, in recent years under the Secretary-General's leadership in terms of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, increasing transparency of allegations, suspending troops engaged in wrongdoing, often repatriating them and sometimes even withholding payments. All of that being said, far more needs to be done, and the progress that has been made in recent years, including under Ambassador Coleman's leadership, happens when the U.S. is actively engaged in the United Nations. So, you have my commitment, Senator, that if confirmed, this will be a top priority of mine, and I know it is of Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield as well.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Ambassador Gifford, I want to ask you about diplomatic immunity. It is something that is absolutely essential for diplomats to be able to carry out their responsibilities, but we know the pressure that develops particularly when there is a particular incident. So how do you intend to provide guidance in regards to U.S. position globally on defending diplomatic immunity?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Well, I think—thank you for the question, Senator, and it is—it is critically important. I think one of the roles of the chief of protocol here is understanding that when issues of diplomatic immunity arise, and they will inevitably arise, that we have to manage what could become the significant frictions in a bilateral relationship. And how do you do that? This is so much, for me, about communication, that we are not policymakers in the chief of protocol, if I am confirmed. So, what I think needs to be prioritized is heightened communication between whatever Bureau, understanding the issue that has come up and dealing with it collectively. And I think in an issue like these involving incredibly-sensitive issues, that has got to be prioritized above and beyond all else.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Ms. Satterfield, your position at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs will allow you to establish import restrictions on cultural goods from foreign countries through the authorization of memorandums of understanding. Cultural property MOUs have the

power to impact the cultural heritage of ethnic and religious minority populations, which the United States should aim to protect. If confirmed, will you urge the administration to appoint an advocate for religious and ethnic minorities as a public representative to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee to ensure that minorities populations are properly represented?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator. ECA is very proud of the work of the Cultural Heritage Center to protect and preserve global heritage. It is critically-important work, as you said. ECA can and should play a strong role, particularly in cooperating with law enforcement to prevent the financing of transnational terrorism through looting and trafficking of antiquities. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, other parts of the Department, and private entities, particularly through the advisory committee, to ensure a diversity of perspective when continuing the important work as it was laid out originally by Congress.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Thank you. Ms. Coleman, the United Nations Development Program and the World Health Organization recently reported that if low-income countries had similar COVID-19 vaccination rates as high-income countries, they could have added \$38 billion to their collective GDPs in 2021. Through the G7, we have announced ambitious plans to share 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses with low-income countries. Global vaccine inequity still remains a very serious challenge. With the rise of the Delta variant, addressing the vaccine equity issues are more urgent than ever. If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing the push for increased vaccine manufacturing and equitable vaccine distribution in your role at USAID?

Ambassador COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator. Absolutely. There is perhaps no greater challenge today than the global pandemic and its secondary effects, and how it is ravaging countries around the world. And I would like to thank this committee and Congress for its generosity on providing the 500 million vaccines and the \$4 billion to Gavi. So, it is incredibly important to get the rest of the world vaccinated, and I echo President Biden's comment to be—that the United States should be the arsenal of vaccination, and I will do everything I can to make that happen.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. And, Mr. Lu, climate change is an existential threat that continues to harm the quality of life for people all around the world. For that reason, our efforts to combat climate change must be closely aligned with efforts playing out in multilateral institutions like the United Nations. We also have to oversee any multilateral commitments to ensure they come to actionable fruition. How can we work to reform the U.N. system to ensure that climate commitments are monitored and measured so that they don't simply remain empty statements or words?

Mr. LU. Senator, thank you for that question. I certainly share your concerns. The Biden administration believes that we can be the most effective in multilateral organizations when we actively participate in them, and we have the greatest credibility in these organizations when we pay our dues in full and on time, so being an active player gives us that leverage. Climate change, in particular, is an important policy issue, as you well know, not only to the President, but to Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield. This is an

issue that she has raised in the U.N. Security Council, but it is, frankly, an issue that cuts across so many different parts of the multilateral system. So, if confirmed to this position, I will use my position in terms of managing programs to ensure that those that relate to climate change are effectively managed and well funded.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you so much. And, Mr. Gifford, in your role, you are welcoming the rest of the world to the State Department, to the White House. We have gone through a turbulent time over a 4-year period, and now we are trying to re-stabilize all of our relationships. Could you just step back for a second and just lay out why you think that is important that we respect each nation in the world and that we treat them in a way that ensures ultimately that we will be able to elicit from them the kind of response the United States is looking for on policy issues all across the spectrum?

Ambassador GIFFORD. Thank you, Senator. This is, again, something very near and dear to my heart. There are two words over—during the time that I have been preparing for this hearing and whatnot that keep coming up, and those two words are “dignity” and “respect.” And I pledge to you that when I think about this job, when I think about how we interact with world leaders and partners—partner countries around the world, I will lead with dignity and respect. And I think that the soft power of diplomacy cannot be overstated, and, as you mentioned, you are the first hand that folks shake when they are walking down from their plane at Andrews or at Dulles or whatever it may be. And I think as Senator Hagerty said in his introduction that we create the environment conducive to diplomacy. And as far as I am concerned, that is the way you create that environment in which diplomacy can thrive. You do that with dignity and respect.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Thank you, and thank each and every one of you for your willingness to serve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Chairman Cardin. I wanted to just follow up with a few additional questions. You are very kind to let me do that. First, if I could turn to you, Ms. Satterfield. It is wonderful to see you here. In your opening testimony, you commented about the global competition for influence that we find ourselves in with authorization countries, such as China and Russia. I would like to compliment your Department on the wonderful work that they have done with human exchanges, particularly the Fulbright Program and other exchange programs, that I have seen firsthand have an enormous impact. I would also like to make a comment, that there is an alumni network there that I see as immensely valuable, and I would look forward to working with you to driving value from that alumni network, because I think it could make a real difference for the United States’ interests around the globe.

Another thing you mentioned, and I compliment you for your operational experience. You talked about implementing standards and metrics to basically be a good steward of U.S. taxpayer dollars. As you look at this program and take a data-driven approach to how you measure and evaluate what happens, could you talk a bit about how you might use that approach to evaluate how we are

doing versus China and Russia, two authoritarian countries that are trying to exert their influence, when you look at our programs relative to what they are doing?

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Thank you, senator. As it relates to measurement and evaluation, it is a critically-important point and one that the Bureau has been working very hard to come up with a way to have parity across the various programs. They are also different, and that is a good thing. We want a variety of opportunity because what works in one community might not work in another, but that has proven to be challenging for M&E. And the Bureau has done a really wonderful job, in my opinion, based on the information that I have received in preparing for this hearing, to create a program that is a new framework that will ECA to have more data at its fingertips so that we can make good data-driven decisions. And that will be rolled out Bureau-wide at the end of next year.

Senator HAGERTY. As a businessperson, I have always focused on competition. I think we should acknowledge what our competition is and measure our performance according to that competition, so I encourage you to continue to proceed in that fashion. Thank you.

Ms. SATTERFIELD. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. Mr. Lu, if I could turn to you for a moment. I would like to talk with you about the Human Rights Council. The Biden administration has announced its intent to run for a seat on the Council this fall, and Secretary of State Blinken has also acknowledged that the Council is flawed, and he has promised to seek reform. In fact, in 2011, the Obama administration stated that the mandatory review of the Council failed to yield even minimally positive results. So, Mr. Lu, if you are confirmed, I would like to understand the type of reforms that you would like to seek as you look at improving the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Mr. LU. Thank you, Senator Hagerty. I agree, the United Nations Human Rights Council is a flawed organization, but we also need to recognize the important work that it has done in terms of shining a spotlight on abuses in Syria, Iran, North Korea, its promotion of women, LGBTQ individuals, but it has a persistent anti-Israel bias based on a permanent agenda item at its meetings. The Biden administration believes, as I said to Senator Markey, that the best way to reform these organizations is by engaging with them, and that is what we intend to do. It is also a flawed organization because of the membership. We have some of the most egregious human rights abusers who are members of the Human Rights Council.

When Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield has addressed this issue, she said, yes, it is uncomfortable sitting side by side with these people, but it is as uncomfortable for them to be sitting next to us and for us to be calling them out. And I understand that the record has shown that when the U.S. actively engaged in the Human Rights Council, that the number of anti-Israel resolutions decreases, but you are 100-percent right, this will be a challenge.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of our nominees today for their appearance. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Let me again thank all of our witnesses for—nominees for your testimony today and, again, your willingness to serve.

The committee record will remain open through Thursday for questions for the record, and we would ask that you respond to those questions as promptly as possible. We know that we have a backlog in the nomination process and confirmation process, so your cooperation will be deeply appreciated.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator CARDIN. And once again, we thank you very much for your willingness to serve.

With that, the committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. RUFUS GIFFORD BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Morale in the Office of the Chief of Protocol

Question. Leadership and morale-building are important parts of any management position within the State Department. If confirmed, how would you lead the Office of the Chief of Protocol? What specific steps would you take to improve morale?

Answer. There is nothing more important to me than the well-being of my team. Morale of our employees is also directly related to recruitment and retention. Drawing upon my experiences as the former ambassador to Denmark and from the private sector, leadership must model tenets that align mission goals with integrity, professionalism, and transparency.

If confirmed, I plan to consult current leadership to understand where the Office of the Chief of Protocol has come from and where it still needs to go. I will make it clear that any type of partisan political influence or bias is unacceptable. I will assess personnel management and the current staffing situation. I will determine whether we need to address additional resource requirements. Finally, I will promote a collaborative environment where all of us can gel as a team and execute programs in a seamless fashion.

There is no doubt that improving and maintaining morale will be difficult during the pandemic. However, I will ensure that we fully engage within the Department of State's "Future of Work" policy to build a more mobile and agile workforce, and direct appropriate resources for our office space and technology needs. These tools and resilience building resources will help me lead towards great morale.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LEE SATTERFIELD BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

J1 Programs

Question. J1 programs are some of the most effective and cost efficient public diplomacy programs the United States has. However, as you know, the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought on severe visa processing delays and challenges has deeply negatively impacted not only U.S. public diplomacy efforts but also small businesses, schools, and families across the United States who rely on these programs.

- The backlog of Summer Work Travel visas negatively impacted many small businesses in New Jersey and other tourist destinations. How will you, alongside the Bureau of Consular Affairs, work to utilize technology and security to prevent such a backlog in the future? Do you believe there is more can we be doing? Do you have the resources you need to do so?

Answer. I recognize the important contributions that exchange visitors make to New Jersey businesses, and the positive impact they have on states and communities across the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to severely affect con-

sular operations at our embassies and consulates. I am informed that as the global situation continues to evolve, the Department is seeking ways to process visa applications efficiently around the world, consistent with both guidance from health authorities and with the U.S. travel restrictions currently in place. I understand ECA and Consular Affairs continue to work together on these issues, and I will continue that engagement and communication if confirmed.

Question. Teacher exchange programs were also severely impacted by a backlog of visa processing and other challenges. Many K-12 classrooms are reliant upon these educational exchange programs. Will you commit to working to get the program back to pre-pandemic levels and look to scaling up these programs in the future?

Answer. Yes. I recognize the important contributions the BridgeUSA Teacher program makes to K-12 classrooms. The Department is committed to ensuring as many visa applicants can be interviewed as health restrictions allow and has provided updates to sponsoring organizations to advise them on operational changes. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our consular colleagues and keep teacher category sponsors and prospective teacher participants informed.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LEE SATTERFIELD BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Meridian Recusal

Question. If confirmed, do you pledge to recuse yourself from any funding or contracting decisions related to your previous employer, Meridian International Center?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, per my ethics agreement with the Department of State and the Office of Government Ethics, I would not participate in funding or contracting decisions related to Meridian International Center.

Au Pair Program

Question. Recently, several U.S. states have sought to regulate the au pair programs, despite the fact that it is a federal program. This has been accomplished in at least one state, to fairly disastrous effect for au pair families and participants there. In response, the Department of State has attempted to unify the program and clarify that federal au pair regulations preempt state and local laws. This clarifying regulation is essential to the program's continued viability. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting this clarifying regulation?

Answer. The Au Pair program has for many years been an effective public diplomacy program, fostering the mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries through in-person exchanges.

The nature of the Au Pair program, fostering such exchange by placing young people in American homes and caring for young children, makes it unique and special. I am committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all participants.

I am aware there is an effort underway to strengthen the Au Pair program through regulations, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working through that process with stakeholders and keeping Congress informed.

Question. The issue of undue influence by foreign countries—particularly China—has become a central U.S. foreign policy issue in recent years. In addition to increased reporting by think tanks, the State Department has engaged directly with U.S. universities on these matters.

- If confirmed, do you plan to continue State Department engagement with the educational community on these issues?

Answer. Yes. A clear understanding of the organizations and entities that Beijing uses to attempt to undermine U.S. policy is important. Of particular concern are activities that lack transparency and attempt to hide or downplay their affiliations and objectives. If confirmed, I would continue to work with State Department officials promoting transparency on this topic so that the educational community can make more informed decisions. For example, I understand that ECA issued an updated public guidance directive to Exchange Visitor Program (BridgeUSA) sponsors on Confucius Institutes (CI) in November 2020. The objective of this Guidance Directive was to provide sponsors more clarity regarding the possible regulatory violations presented in some CI operations so they can make informed choices about sponsoring exchange visitors coming on programs in support of CIs. I understand

that this clarity of CI operations is one of several reasons for why a growing number of universities have decided to end their Confucius Institute affiliations.

Question. The issue of undue influence by foreign countries—particularly China—has become a central U.S. foreign policy issue in recent years. In addition to increased reporting by think tanks, the State Department has engaged directly with U.S. universities on these matters.

- If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to highlight the risks of undue influence by foreign governments and other actors in U.S. universities and colleges?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Department's outreach work with interagency partners to increase transparency of foreign government actions and promote sharing of best practices so U.S. colleges and universities are well informed and can protect themselves and their students from undue foreign influence.

Question. I introduced legislation designed to enhance State Department and congressional oversight of Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (MECEA) programs with the People's Republic of China (PRC).

- Does the Biden administration plan to reinstate these programs in the future?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support the Secretary's re-examination of the decision to terminate approval of the MECEA Section 108a programs operated by China, with vigilance to potential counterintelligence and propaganda risks.

Question. If so, and if confirmed, do you commit to consulting with Congress in advance of making such a decision?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary's goal of working with this committee and Congress to ensure this administration meets the China challenge. As I committed at my nominations hearing, I will engage in meaningful consultation with Congress while policies are being developed.

Question. How should the Department exercise greater scrutiny of these programs given potential counterintelligence risks and their use as propaganda tools for the Chinese Communist Party?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support the Secretary's re-examination of the decision to terminate approval of the MECEA Section 108a programs operated by China, with vigilance to potential counterintelligence and propaganda risks.

Question. The United States has suspended permission of any PRC national on an "F" or "J" visa to study or conduct research in the United States where the individual's academic or research activities are likely to support a PRC entity implement or supporting the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) "military-civil fusion" strategy. This policy prevents U.S. research and technological innovation from falling into the hands of our most serious military competitor. Do you commit to retaining this policy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary's continuous review to ensure our policies protect the integrity of U.S. research and innovation along with our academic and research institutions.

Question. What are your views on current measures in place to apply sufficient scrutiny to donations and contracts between U.S. universities and foreign entities?

Answer. I am supportive of measures to ensure that donations and contracts between U.S. universities and foreign entities benefit the United States and are not subject to undue foreign influence. If confirmed, I will encourage efforts to educate and inform educational institutions about their possible exposure to undue foreign influence through such arrangements.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LEE SATTERFIELD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Question. The pandemic significantly hampered the normal operation of most ECA-administered international exchanges, with many participants returning home to the U.S. and foreign participants having to be repatriated to their home countries before their programs were complete. ECA is now conducting exchange activity online in a virtual format as it proves feasible to do so.

- What are the lessons learned from ECA's pivot to virtual during the pandemic?

Answer. When the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted most USG-funded in-person exchanges, ECA's innovation and flexible management of international ex-

changes powered a transition to new strategies, sustaining advancement of foreign policy objectives and achieving lasting benefits even amid the pandemic. Most ECA programs pivoted rapidly to virtual and hybrid models providing, or virtually replicating, the in-person exchange experience. This pivot was possible because ECA could leverage the relationships with stakeholders that were developed with previous in-person exchanges. ECA was also able to reach new audiences with some innovative virtual elements and will look to continue some of those elements after the pandemic recedes.

In addition, with careful management by ECA staff and the monitoring and health protocols in place at U.S. host campuses, many foreign Fulbright participants were able to remain at their U.S. host colleges and universities and new foreign Fulbrighters and other academic exchange participants were able to participate in in-person programs, thanks to the flexibility and resilience of U.S. higher education institutions. As recognized by the Inspector's General review of ECA's response to the pandemic, the experience showed the strength of ECA's program management practices, as well as the high level of commitment and capacity by U.S. higher education to safely host and educate students.

I understand ECA is evaluating how it can continue to use virtual engagement or hybrid models to expand the impact of exchange programs and help the Bureau reach new audiences. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and other stakeholders to apply the lessons learned during the pandemic.

American Spaces

Question. There are more than 600 American Spaces around the world, which serve as virtual and in-person platforms to engage foreign nationals through a wide variety of U.S. State Department-sponsored programs and resources on important topics such as studying in the U.S., English language learning, and U.S. culture. This program, managed by the Office of American Spaces, moved to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in May of 2019.

- How have American Spaces (or the American Spaces program) furthered U.S. foreign policy goals under the ECA Bureau?

Answer. Through American Spaces, the U.S. Government is present in more than 610 programming venues worldwide, with over 14 million people participating in virtual programs in FY 2020. Since the Office of American Spaces joined the ECA bureau in 2019, the Department has been able to enhance its work in public diplomacy and integrate ECA programming in the areas of English language teaching, EducationUSA advising, alumni engagement, cultural programs, and sharing information about the United States to further U.S. foreign policy goals. As a result of American Spaces and the Regional Public Engagement Specialist (REPS) Foreign Service corps coming under ECA, the Bureau has also fostered increased cooperation between REPS and Regional English Language Officers, as well as the EducationUSA advising program, to achieve mission and Department goals.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LEE SATTERFIELD BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Visa Processing

Question. One of the issues that has been taking up much of my staff's time is the delay our constituents are facing in being able to reunited with family overseas or having family members visit them. Similarly, many businesses in New Jersey rely on seasonal workers and exchange visitors from all over the world. The Alliance for International Exchange is reporting a 75% decrease overall in visa processing for education and cultural exchange programs, which of course has major economic consequences.

- Can you share how you will address these capacity limitations?

Answer. I recognize the important contributions that exchange visitors make to New Jersey businesses, and the positive impact they have on states and communities across the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to severely affect consular operations at our embassies and consulates. The Department is committed to ensuring as many visa applicants can be interviewed as health restrictions allow, and has provided updates to sponsoring organizations to advise them on operational changes. I understand ECA and Consular Affairs continue to work together on these issues, and I will continue that engagement and communication if confirmed.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. ISOBEL COLEMAN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Global Health

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

Answer. I understand that USAID does not fund Gain of Function Research, and that USAID does not fund work anywhere in the world that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible in humans.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure USAID's research and development grants are fully vetted and do not flow to partners or sub-grantees engaged in such research?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that USAID funds do not support gain-of-function research, i.e. research that makes a virus more transmissible or pathogenic, through either the prime or subpartners.

Question. The budget proposes a substantial increase for Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH), through both bilateral aid programs and contributions to the U.N. Population Fund. If confirmed, how will you ensure USAID compliance with current law, which prohibits the use of U.S. foreign assistance to perform or promote abortion, support involuntary sterilizations, or lobby for or against the legalization of abortion overseas?

Answer. If confirmed, I will follow the law and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including those related to family planning and abortion.

The administration takes seriously the legislative requirements related to voluntarism and informed choice in family planning activities and those related to abortion. I understand that the Agency has worked for decades to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, including the Helms and Siljander amendments.

It is important that USAID continue to work closely with field missions and implementing partners to ensure awareness of statutory and policy requirements applicable to their programs.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to provide to this committee a complete, detailed spend plan for the funds received through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) for the international COVID-19 response, to include all aspects of the response, from vaccine sharing to second order impacts?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure compliance with Congressionally-mandated reporting on COVID funding, including obligations and disbursements by operating unit, that the State Department and USAID submit every 60 days and I commit to regular briefings and consultations with the committee on the use of funds, which I understand is guided by the U.S. COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Plan.

Question. How would you assess the performance of COVAX to date?

Answer. COVAX has performed as well as could be expected in light of ongoing constraints to the global vaccine supply. It is my understanding that while COVAX is below its original delivery projections, as a result of shortfalls in global vaccine production and disruption to its planned supplies, actions such as the G7 vaccine commitment to finance and provide more than two billion doses from the United States and G7 partners by the end of 2022 are critical to enabling the success of COVAX. If confirmed, I will support efforts to expand the availability of safe and effective vaccines globally to bring this pandemic to an end.

Question. How can USAID ensure that COVAX is working expeditiously to get shots in arms while guarding against waste, fraud, and abuse?

Answer. I have learned that USAID's \$4 billion in contributions to Gavi/COVAX in 2021 were provided in tranches, which allowed USAID to ensure Gavi/COVAX obtained the funding needed from other donors to scale up global vaccine access, while closely monitoring COVAX's performance. USAID also participates in Gavi's Audit and Finance Committee, and, as a part of that, regularly reviews the risks involved in procuring and delivering COVID-19 vaccines. It is my understanding that Gavi/COVAX has established multiple methods for receiving reports of fraud, and all allegations are handled by Gavi's SAID to strengthen and reinforce existing systems related to fraud awareness and reporting to mitigate these threats to multi-lateral and bilateral vaccine campaigns.

Question. How can USAID ensure that U.S. financial contributions to COVAX are not used to underwrite the purchase and distribution of substandard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines, particularly following the recent announcement that COVAX would, in fact, begin making major purchases of Chinese vaccines?

Answer. I understand that the generous U.S. contribution to COVAX was not used to purchase vaccines made in China, and that the full U.S.-provided \$4 billion had been allocated by COVAX prior to the facility's decision to purchase Sinopharm and Sinovac. I am not aware of any additional U.S. contributions planned for COVAX at this time. If confirmed, I will join my colleagues in continuing to forcefully raise concerns about procurement of lower-efficacy vaccines, and to urge the People's Republic of China to pick up its fair share of the global burden on vaccine access.

Question. Under what circumstances would U.S. bilateral vaccine contributions be more appropriate than contributions via COVAX?

Answer. I believe that the U.S. Government (USG) is most effective when both bilateral and multilateral efforts are able to support responsible and accountable partners. Multilateral funding allows the USG to leverage the financial commitments, technical expertise, and diplomatic engagement of many other partners, often achieving economies of scale and burden-sharing with other donors. Bilateral funding enables USAID field teams and ongoing local assistance efforts to address priorities that may not be effectively or efficiently covered through multilateral channels.

Humanitarian Assistance

Question. The U.N.'s Global Humanitarian Appeal of \$36.1 billion for 2021 is the largest in history. What can USAID do to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. humanitarian assistance, so we can spread our aid dollars farther, while also leveraging other donor support to meet historic humanitarian needs?

Answer. With humanitarian needs throughout the world at an all time-high, USAID's ability to reach people in need and improve the efficiency of our programs is of utmost importance. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the importance of USAID to be responsible stewards of American taxpayers' dollars. That's why I believe that measuring and analyzing results—and adapting and innovating when programs fall short—is part of the day-to-day management of USAID's operations, including humanitarian assistance programs. I will also ensure, if confirmed, that USAID engages with other donors to leverage our assistance and help as many people in need.

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 purposes of the Cargo Preference Act of 1954.

- Do you agree that U.S. cargo preference requirements for food aid have outlived their statutory purpose?

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 effective and efficient as possible. Each of the food assistance modalities—U.S. in-kind food, locally and regionally procured food, and cash-based programming—should complement 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. Cargo preference requirements increase the cost of programming U.S. in-kind commodities in humanitarian programs. If confirmed, I will look closely at every opportunity to stretch our food aid as far as possible.

Question. In your view, how would an increase of cargo preference requirements impact the ability of USAID to meet historic levels of need for food aid?

Answer. At a time of unprecedented humanitarian need globally, an increase in cargo preference would compromise USAID's ability to reach hungry people, as well as our ability to reduce logistical and cost efficiency in our programs. USAID pays almost 50 percent more per metric ton to ship commodities on U.S.-flag vessels than foreign-flag vessels. An increase in cargo preference requirements would directly re-

sult in increased transportation costs for food assistance programs, which would reduce the amount of resources USAID can dedicate to purchasing commodities and reaching beneficiaries with life-saving assistance.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with OMB to mitigate the deleterious impact of U.S. cargo preference requirements on food aid?

Answer. I am committed to working with Congress and the interagency, including OMB, to make USAID's food assistance programming as effective and efficient as possible. The COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation measures have compounded the effects of climate-related disasters and complex emergencies, creating unprecedented global humanitarian needs.

For example, an estimated 23 million additional people will require emergency food assistance compared to 2019. 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 respond appropriately to each crisis.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress to reform U.S. international food aid programs and bolster the Global Food Security Strategy in a manner that saves lives, supports early recovery, stimulates agriculture-led economic growth, and ultimately promotes self-reliance?

Answer. Yes. The pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide, with the most vulnerable bearing the brunt of its impact. 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) engaging government and private sector partners to safeguard and increase access to nutritious food; (3) working with small and medium sized enterprises across the food system and unlocking private sector funds to accelerate economic recovery, growth and employment; (4) transitioning households and communities off of assistance through economic inclusion models; and (5) 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.

Power Africa

Question. In the face of growing Chinese influence and investment, and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there arguably has never been a more important time to advance U.S. strategic programs to reduce energy poverty, support transformative energy development, and stimulate economic recovery in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, the President's FY 2022 budget request proposes to reduce by 26 percent funding for one of the most important instruments the USG has in its arsenal to accomplish these goals—Power Africa—while simultaneously imposing carbon caps and renewable energy mandates that inevitably will push developing economies in sub-Saharan Africa closer to China.

- Should reducing energy poverty in sub-Saharan Africa be a priority for USAID?

Answer. Absolutely. It is my understanding that Power Africa is well positioned to address energy poverty, bolster human development, and mitigate climate change impacts through private sector-led energy development that delivers reliable, uninterrupted energy and inclusive, catalytic and sustainable economic growth. I understand that Power Africa funds will promote mutual economic prosperity between the US and African partners, as well as promote two-way trade and investment to counter malign influences by advancing universal energy access through 30,000 megawatts in new clean energy generation and connecting 60 million homes and businesses to electricity by 2030.

Question. If so, how can that reasonably be accomplished while the administration redirects funding for Power Africa to undefined climate change objectives and abandons the bipartisan, bicameral agreement on an "all-of-the-above" approach under the historic Electrify Africa Act?

Answer. It is my understanding that Power Africa is expected to play a leading role in the administration's climate change agenda while maintaining its focus on addressing energy poverty in Africa. If confirmed, I look forward to discussing how we can continue to advance Power Africa's goals and expand energy development in Africa.

Venezuela

Question. The authoritarian regime in Cuba reportedly has developed its own COVID-19 vaccine.

- If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that USAID will not provide any direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in which the Cuban state-owned vaccine is used?

Answer. It is my understanding that USAID will only support procurement and delivery of vaccines that meet rigorous quality standards, are safe and efficacious, and have been approved or authorized for emergency use by a stringent regulatory authority, such as the U.S. FDA or the World Health Organization. I understand that USAID has not provided, and has no plans to provide, direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in which any Cuban vaccine is used. Cuba has not published its trial data for its vaccines, nor has the vaccine received an emergency use listing or authorization from the World Health Organization.

Question. Will you also commit to ensuring that USAID will not provide direct or indirect support to a vaccination campaign in Venezuela that is non-transparent and discriminatory?

Answer. I understand that USAID has no plans at this time to provide direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Venezuela, where current vaccination efforts are non-transparent and discriminatory. Venezuela is a self-financing participant in COVAX, which means that it does not receive donor-supported vaccines or other assistance. USAID would only provide COVID-19 vaccination support if Venezuela established a credible, impartial, and transparent national vaccination plan, implemented in partnership with, or under the auspices of, international partners.

Question. If confirmed, how will you ensure that USAID's support for the World Food Program in Venezuela will not strengthen the ability of the Maduro regime to exert control over the Venezuelan people?

Answer. USAID support for the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) in Venezuela is intended to address the emergency food needs of vulnerable Venezuelan children impacted by the crisis. It is my understanding that WFP's programs are operationally independent from any Maduro regime programs and hence, will not strengthen the Maduro regime. I understand that WFP is maintaining its own independent supply chains and food distributions and WFP has indicated no instance of interference by the Maduro regime or attempt by the Maduro regime to gain reputational benefits during this pilot food assistance program.

Afghanistan

Question. While the Department works to inject hundreds of millions in foreign aid into Afghanistan—a reflection of its purported desire to recalibrate the bilateral relationship by investing more in development and assistance lines of effort—USAID OIG plans to scale back its presence in-country, reducing staffing and closing its sub-office in Kabul. All of this is occurring as the Taliban continues to make rapid advances on the ground. According to open source reporting, the U.S. intelligence community assesses that the Government in Kabul may fall in as little as six-to-twelve months after the U.S. and NATO military withdrawal, potentially triggering a humanitarian and security crisis.

- In light of the deteriorating security climate, how can USAID sustain the development gains made in Afghanistan over the past 20 years, particularly as pertains to the hard earned rights of women and minorities?
- As we look to recalibrate our bilateral relationship with Afghanistan, what more can be done to support health, education, empowerment of women and girls, and government transparency?
- How can USAID conduct effective oversight of U.S. foreign assistance programs in Afghanistan, given its diminished presence on the ground?

Answer. With support from the United States Government, the Government and people of Afghanistan—particularly women and girls—have made enormous gains over the last 20 years. Afghans are healthier, better educated, more prosperous, and enjoy greater freedoms than two decades ago. However, we must acknowledge that women and development gains are now under significantly increasing threats and the security environment is deteriorating. I understand that USAID's gender program in Afghanistan is robust and broad, with programming that extends across the entire country and includes education and political and economic participation. I understand that USAID intends to continue to work with women leaders, the private sector, and civil society organizations to adjust programs and approaches in order to continue supporting the rights and safety of women and girls. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues across government to ensure that USAID is doing every-

thing it can to protect the safety of our local partners and the brave civil society leaders who continue to strive for a better life.

I understand that USAID provides on-going and strategic program oversight despite security restrictions in Afghanistan, and that monitoring and oversight measures taken in Afghanistan include: vetting of implementing partners (IPs), multi-tiered monitoring efforts, and financial controls. I also understand that USAID will continue to use third-party monitoring to provide programmatic oversight where our partners and programs operate. These third-party monitors are local to each region and have been capable of accessing USAID programs across the country. If the security environment affects USAID partners' and programs' ability to operate, third-party monitoring efforts will correspondingly adjust.

West Bank & Gaza

Question. Since January 2021, the Biden administration has re-established relations with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and announced nearly \$360 million in planned U.S. assistance. This move has occurred despite the lack of progress in PA reforms, including its toxic so-called "pay to slay program." If confirmed, will you commit to working with this committee to ensure that any U.S. assistance for "reconstruction" efforts in Gaza are allocated in a manner that is consistent with U.S. national security interests and does not in any way benefit Hamas, politically or otherwise?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with this committee to allocate USAID's humanitarian and development assistance in a manner that is consistent with U.S. national security interests. I understand that the Department of State and the USAID Mission in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) have a robust, 15-year-old, partner vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. I also understand that USAID implementing partners in the WBG have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching those for whom it is intended and that assistance is closely coordinated with the Government of Israel, who approves all materials that enter Gaza. If confirmed, I will abide by all legislation, including the Taylor Force Act, that governs how assistance can be deployed in the WBG.

Syria

Question. There is no replacement for cross-border mechanisms to deliver humanitarian assistance in Syria, particularly as cross-line assistance is costly, ineffective, and prone to manipulation. If confirmed, how will you ensure that U.S. assistance is not routed through Damascus and is instead delivered directly to those in need?

Answer. Rising humanitarian needs and an increasingly complex operating environment continue to pose significant challenges for humanitarian actors throughout Syria who continue to reach the most vulnerable at great risk to themselves. The July 9 reauthorization of cross-border assistance through UNSC Resolution 2585 provided crucial relief for the Syrian people, but it does not completely fill the vast needs on the ground. That is why it is vital for the United States to continue to advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access through all possible means—including continued authorization and expansion of U.N. cross-border access and unhindered cross-line assistance. I understand that no U.S. assistance is routed through the Syrian Arab Republic Government. I also understand that all USAID humanitarian assistance is implemented through independent humanitarian organizations—such as U.N. agencies and NGOs—to reach those most in need in line with humanitarian principles.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. ISOBEL COLEMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Policy Framework

Question. Administrator Power, in her confirmation hearing, emphasized that she would place special emphasis on four core challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict and state collapse, and democratic backsliding. The previous administrator, Mark Green, had sought to deemphasize such global priorities and focus on country-specific challenges in response to some complaints of "initiative fatigue" due to what some described as the proliferation of competing priorities and presidential initiatives during the Obama administration. The USAID Policy Framework, issued in 2019, reflects Administrator Green's country-tailored approach and

focuses on the broad goal of “ending the need for foreign assistance” by promoting self-reliance among aid recipients.

- As you work to develop the next Policy Framework, what do you view as the chief cross-cutting themes that are likely to emerge? Or do you agree with Ambassador Green that a country-by-country focus makes more sense?
- How do you see Administrator Power’s four big challenges as fitting into USAID’s next Policy Framework, particularly as they relate to other priorities set by Congress in recent years, such as basic education and food security?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the Administrator Power, interagency colleagues, Congress and external stakeholders to develop an updated Policy Framework, if required. In my view, an emphasis on global priorities that meet the needs of the moment, evidence-based development practice and attention to country needs and regional trends are important and consistent with one another.

Human Rights

Question. A key priority for me is ensuring that supporting democracy and promoting human rights is at the forefront of our foreign policy. But as a lethal pandemic, economic and physical insecurity, and violent conflict ravaged the world in 2020, democracy and human rights defenders sustained heavy losses in their struggle against authoritarian regimes, shifting the international balance in favor of tyranny.

- What more can we do to further these efforts with our European partners?
- How can we better work within the OSCE to address these issues?

Answer. I agree that a unified transatlantic alliance that acts from common principles of human rights protection and rule of law is the strongest bulwark against authoritarianism. I understand that USAID engages frequently with E.U. officials to seek to align policy and to increase burden sharing on key issues such as the COVID-19 global response, human rights, and democracy and governance. For example, I understand that two of USAID’s flagship civil society programs are now leveraging significant funding from the U.K. Foreign Commonwealth Office and the European Union Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring new opportunities to expand upon our partnership with our European partners to support civil society and democracy across Europe and Eurasia. The E.U.’s new seven-year budget articulates a commitment to human development and rule of law. This presents an additional opportunity for greater cooperation. As we see autocratization begin to spread within Europe, USAID can support our European counterparts in identifying concrete ways to re-engage citizens who feel they have been left behind, to bolster the structure and ability to serve of democratic institutions, and to investigate and shut down opportunities for kleptocracy. As you note, foreign malign influence continues to challenge democratic progress around the world. In Brussels, Secretary Blinken and E.U. leaders recently discussed challenges that the People’s Republic of China presents to the rules-based order and agreed to resume U.S.-EU dialogue to coordinate approaches.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Ambassador Carpenter and the U.S. delegation to the OSCE to identify new opportunities to engage with human rights defenders in increasingly restrictive countries to gather information, identify regional trends, and track unmet needs in dynamic environments.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. ISOBEL COLEMAN BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Humanitarian Access in Ethiopia

Question. As you know, the humanitarian situation in Tigray is dire. Despite improvements in physical access, the restrictive operating space for humanitarian actors to enter the region, move freely, communicate, access fuel and banking services necessary to implement assistance, and the blockage of vital supplies are creating the conditions for a humanitarian disaster, including widespread famine.

Aid workers have been targeted and the aid operation politicized by parties to the conflict. Humanitarian experts have indicated that unless the operating environment improves in the next few weeks, it will be too late to prevent catastrophe.

Access challenges and impediments to effective principled response are not new, but humanitarian need is higher than ever, and coordinated and effective U.S. government advocacy to facilitate respect for international humanitarian law and re-

duce barriers that prevent U.S. assistance from getting to those who need it most is critical.

- If confirmed, how would you elevate and address the urgent challenges facing aid delivery in Tigray within the interagency and in your external engagements?
- How can the agency leverage evidence and learning from conflict contexts like Tigray to create effective policy and strategies to reduce political and operational barriers to humanitarian aid delivery in future crises?

Answer. The loss of life and mass displacement resulting from the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region is profoundly disturbing and unacceptable. I understand the administration, with support from Members of Congress and U.N. representatives, has undertaken numerous diplomatic efforts to end the violence and facilitate humanitarian access. If confirmed, I would ensure USAID works in close conjunction with the interagency and the international community to push for a constructive political dialogue and a negotiated ceasefire between parties. I would also work to identify strategic pressure points to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to those in need and would advocate for all parties to cease hostilities and respect international humanitarian law.

To learn from past conflict contexts, we must draw lessons from the Agency's past experiences and apply them to future work for greater impact. By capturing, organizing and disseminating evidence, and by engaging with peer interagency and other partners, we can build better humanitarian and peacebuilding programs, policies and strategies.

Protecting Women in Afghanistan

Question. This committee has been deeply concerned about the safety of women following the U.S.'s withdrawal. We are even more concerned about the safety of women that have worked on USAID cooperative grants. Currently, these partners are not eligible for the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program.

- What protections should be considered for them in light of the danger they may be facing for their work with the United States?

Answer. I share your concerns about the additional challenges facing Afghan women in this increased environment of insecurity within Afghanistan, and I understand that USAID is committed to working with our partners who represent the women of Afghanistan and the interagency to explore short and long-term opportunities for increased protection including through refugee programs in coordination with the Department of State. A sustained deteriorating security environment will make the Agency's ability to provide development and humanitarian assistance more difficult. If confirmed, I commit to working with the administrator and experts at the Agency to conduct robust contingency planning for different scenarios so that USAID can continue its assistance. I commit to engaging at the highest levels to explore every possible opportunity for supporting the Afghans at particular risk for their work alongside USAID and our partners.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CHRISTOPHER LU BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Do you believe that any country, including the United States, should pay more than 25 percent of the peacekeeping budget?

Answer. I believe all countries should pay their fair share of the peacekeeping budget. If confirmed, I will work to reach an agreement to lower the U.S. assessment rate as close to 25 percent as possible and ensure that other countries pay their fair share.

Question. Do you support going beyond the 25 percent cap as imposed by Congress and signed into U.S. law which bears the current President's name?

Answer. The President's FY 2022 budget requests a waiver of the 25 percent peacekeeping cap to allow the United States to pay our full assessment. If confirmed, I will not undertake any action that contravenes U.S. law. I welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to meet our financial obligations, including addressing the substantial level of arrears that have accumulated over the past four years, and the cap on peacekeeping funding.

Question. What is your position on repayment of current U.S. peacekeeping arrears?

Answer. The President's FY 2022 budget requests a partial repayment of U.S. peacekeeping arrears. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to meet our financial obligations, including addressing the substantial level of arrears that have accumulated over the past four years.

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 U.N. peacekeeping missions to ensure they are still necessary for the promotion of international peace and security. If confirmed, I will provide active U.S. engagement in Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budget) negotiations to ensure missions are appropriately resourced. For missions that we deem in the U.S. interest to maintain, I will ensure they are as effective and efficient as possible, while also providing the resources to fully implement their mandates, including well-trained and well-equipped troops and police and necessary assets.

Question. Are there any specific U.N. peacekeeping missions you would support reducing or terminating? If so, what missions do you believe should be reduced or terminated?

Answer. At this point, I do not have sufficient information to make a determination regarding the reduction or termination of any existing U.N. peacekeeping mission. If confirmed, I will work with State Department colleagues to assess the effectiveness of these missions to ensure they are still necessary for the promotion of international peace and security.

U.N. peacekeeping operations are among the most effective mechanisms of burden-sharing in addressing the global challenges to international peace and security. The Department of State and USUN regularly work within the U.N. system, through the United States' permanent seat on the Security Council, engagement with the U.N. Secretariat, and the General Assembly, to ensure that missions are addressing evolving conditions on the ground and fulfilling mandated tasks. If a new mission is proposed, the Security Council's standard practice is to review its mandate annually before determining whether to extend it. This allows the United States to regularly assess progress toward mandated tasks and performance benchmarks and to use our leverage as a permanent member to adjust mandates as necessary.

In recent years, U.N. peacekeeping missions have closed in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti and Liberia, and the peacekeeping mission in Darfur is in the process of closing now. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping operations, while providing missions with realistic and achievable mandates, as well as the necessary resources to fully implement those mandates.

Question. The U.N. maintains several particular bodies and departments that focus on the Palestinians. These including the Division on Palestinian Rights (DPR), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of Palestinian People (CEIRPP), and U.N. Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

- Will you work to challenge the existence and funding of these departments?

Answer. The United States will continue the tradition of maintaining its role as an honest broker in the Middle East, both as a staunch supporter and defender of Israel, and as a promoter of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The United States remains firmly and consistently committed to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians based on a two-state solution. If confirmed, I will assess the mandates of these particular U.N. bodies and departments, and make recommendations on them. I will support organizations and efforts that contribute to these goals.

Question. China has focused intensely on securing leadership roles in various U.N. agencies, particularly those overseeing technical standards that will shape the future. In many cases, these leaders have overtly advanced Chinese Communist Party goals, rather than acting independently to advance the global good. It is clear the United States has had mixed success with elections for heads of International Organizations (IO) in the past and, as a result, is taking more robust and coordinated steps to advocate for qualified and independent candidates in U.N. bodies.

- If confirmed, will you prioritize robust strategies to secure qualified and independent candidates to lead U.N./IO bodies, especially highly specialized agencies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize increasing U.S. efforts to identify and support qualified and independent candidates to lead U.N./IO bodies, including specialized and technical agencies. Such organizations and agencies play an important role

in standard-setting across a broad range of issues that have an impact on our national security, including civil aviation and maritime safety; nuclear safeguards, safety, and security; internet freedom; digital and emerging technologies; intellectual property; and narcotics control and criminal justice.

If confirmed, I will work with the rest of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs to identify qualified and independent candidates who are committed to advancing priorities including transparency and accountability in the U.N. system, engage with key U.N. leadership to communicate our personnel and elections priorities, coordinate with our partners to support likeminded individuals, and support efforts to strengthen the pipeline of talented American citizens interested in serving with the United Nations at all levels. I will also work with Congress, other federal agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to build support for these candidates so that the United States can compete effectively with other countries, including the People's Republic of China, to uphold the foundational values and principles of the U.N. system.

Question. Countering malign influence within the U.N. system will require a robust whole-of-government approach as well as orchestrated cooperation between the U.S. and likeminded partners.

- If confirmed, please describe how you will bolster these efforts within our Government and between governments to identify, recruit, and elect qualified, independent candidates to lead U.N. agencies?

Answer. The Department has established a new office in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs—the Office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel (IO/MSP)—focused on supporting qualified candidates for U.N. elections, multilateral appointments, and competitive positions, as part of a broader effort to strengthen the foundational principles and values of the U.N. and multilateral system. If confirmed, I will coordinate with the rest of the U.S. Government, including Congress and other federal agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and our allies and partners, to expand our recruitment networks and attract qualified and independent U.S. citizens and likeminded candidates with broader, more diverse backgrounds and support their election efforts from New York and across the globe. These efforts will include dynamic campaign strategies that leverage the whole of the U.S. Government's resources and influence to support U.S. citizen candidates and likeminded partners.

Question. Additionally, please describe your intended efforts to bolster U.S. talent recruitment for more junior positions, such as those in the Junior Professional Officer program, in the U.N. and other International Organizations.

Answer. Successfully increasing the number of U.S. citizens employed in the U.N. system requires a multifaceted approach that will involve identifying and advocating for qualified candidates for positions at all levels, including in junior roles. The Junior Professional Officer program is one of the key opportunities offered by the U.N. to encourage young professionals interested in serving in international organizations, and it provides them with hands-on experience across various U.N. agencies. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely with my colleagues in the International Organization Affairs Bureau and other stakeholder bureaus and agencies and consult with Congress to ensure we have sufficient resources, tools, and staffing to support more positions for American citizen JPOs in the U.N. system. With these resources, we can work strategically to increase the number of JPO opportunities funded by the U.S. Government at key agencies and bodies that work on U.S. priorities, expand our recruitment and outreach activities to ensure these opportunities are widely known and available to interested U.S. citizens, and provide tools and services to strengthen our competitiveness in placing qualified American citizens into the U.N. system. If confirmed, I also look forward to using my public statements and travel to champion the need for more young American professionals to work in the U.N. system.

Question. Before fiscal year 2021, there was a 15 percent withholding requirement of U.S.-assessed contributions to the U.N. designed to enhance whistleblower protections. This is now gone.

- Do you support re-instating the 15 percent withholding until these certifications were made? If not, why not?

Answer. I am a strong believer in whistleblower protections. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to examine the benefits and leverage that the conditional withholding of funds provides. Experience shows that temporarily withholding funds can sometimes be of use in advancing reform, except in those cases where with-

holding will negatively impact an important program that the United States specifically supports.

My understanding is, because of the extraordinary nature of withholding funds, the withholding of funds from the World Intellectual Property Organization and International Civil Aviation Organization was a factor that the missions of other countries to those organizations took into account when deciding whether to support reforms that the U.S. missions to those organizations were advancing. In both instances, the support of other countries was essential to getting eventual agreement on needed reforms, especially in the areas of ethics and whistleblower protections.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to address barriers to advance U.N. management reforms, especially those created by the different priorities among member states?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with allies and likeminded member states that strongly support U.N. management reform. Recognizing that all member states will have their priorities, if confirmed, I will work to maximize the areas of agreement to advance our highest priority reforms. If confirmed, I will work closely with reform-oriented leaders and agents of change within the U.N. system to lend our support to their efforts, particularly within the General Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budget). I also welcome the engagement of members of Congress in advocating for U.N. management reforms.

Question. If confirmed, how will you measure success in implementing management reforms at the U.N.?

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 and transparency, as well as continuing efforts to ensure that other countries pay their fair share. I also will work to ensure that the U.N. prioritizes program effectiveness, operational efficiency, and results-based budgeting.

Question. What policies need to be implemented to maintain fiscal responsibility and accountability within the U.N. system?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure international organizations in the U.N. system adhere to best management and oversight practices in ensuring financial and managerial transparency. This transparency is achieved, in part, through annual in-depth reviews of the 34 regular budget sections that the U.N. Secretary-General submits to the General Assembly and Fifth Committee each spring and summer, along with accompanying reports that the Advisory Body on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) provides. These reports contain hundreds of pages of financial and programmatic details on each aspect of the U.N. regular budget. The U.S. Mission similarly conducts in-depth annual reviews of proposed budgets for U.N. peacekeeping missions in the fall. Additionally, the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the reports of the U.N. Board of Auditors, which contain the audited financial statements for the U.N. regular budget and each peacekeeping mission budget, are valuable in analyzing budget requests.

The IO Bureau and U.S. Missions to U.N. System organizations in New York, Geneva, Rome, and Vienna similarly scrutinize the budgets and financial statements of the U.N. funds and programs and each of the U.N. specialized agencies. The U.S. Mission will also continue to support strong U.S. candidates for U.N. technical, budgetary, and oversight bodies. Our membership and leadership on these bodies enable us to promote fiscal discipline and accountability.

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 U.S. push for reform is one of the main drivers behind the progress to date.

- In your opinion, what are the top three reforms that the U.N. could undertake in the coming two years that will have the greatest impact?

Answer. During my two decades of federal service, much of my work has focused on improving the functioning of government organizations. If confirmed, I will work to advance reforms that make the U.N. more efficient and effective, including in its achievement of the goals U.N. member states have set for it, and ensure that the Secretary-General communicates the tangible benefits of implemented reforms to all stakeholders. The Biden-Harris administration will continue to hold the U.N. accountable to its mission and its member states.

In particular, I believe we must do all we can to ensure the U.N. is (1) implementing the reform program that has been set out by the Secretary General, particularly to improve the U.N.'s capacity for conflict prevention (this includes strengthening the Resident Coordinator program, which will improve U.N. operations and coordination across the entire United Nations System through efficiencies and economies among the U.N. Secretariat and the United Nations Funds and Programs); (2) enhancing accountability in the use of resources through the elimination of waste and fraud and strengthened protections for whistleblowers; and (3) enhancing the standards for peacekeeper performance and improved accountability in combatting sexual exploitation abuse accompanied by strengthening prevention measures and protection for victims.

If confirmed, my work will be guided by three principles:

- Working to ensure that all countries pay their fair share to the United Nations and that the U.N. exercises greater budget discipline. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging on the assessment negotiations which are scheduled to begin this fall.
- Supporting initiatives to transform the U.N. into an organization that can better meet the challenges of the 21st century. If confirmed, I will advocate for a greater prioritization of performance metrics that demonstrate tangible outcomes resulting from the delivery of mandated programs
- Countering the negative impact of countries like China and Russia that push ideologies that undermine the U.N.'s mission and the rules-based international order.

If confirmed, I will consult with Congress about where we see the U.N. making satisfactory progress in these areas, and where additional efforts are needed.

Question. How will you explain to the Secretary-General and the member states that continued reform is a precondition for full U.S. support of the U.N.?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States asserts its leadership role across the U.N. system. This will include paying our dues in full and on time, subject to the required Congressional appropriations and authorizations, to maximize our influence, and exerting that influence to continue advancing reforms and uphold the foundational values of the international rules-based order. I also welcome the engagement of members of Congress in advocating for U.N. reform in their discussions with the Secretary-General and member states.

Question. What tactics would you use if reform efforts falter or lack urgency?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with allies and likeminded member states who strongly support U.N. management reform. Recognizing that all member states will have their priorities, if confirmed, I will work to maximize the areas of agreement to advance our highest priority reforms. I will regularly consult with other parts of the U.S. Government, including Congress, as to other possible levers for achieving reform.

Question. With an increase of the use of telework by the United Nations system, how will you work to create cost savings? In particular, will you explore closing or selling U.N. facilities which are not being used?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to achieve agreement by U.N. member states to make the most economic use of U.N. facilities, including analyzing lessons learned during the COVID-19 shutdowns that may help improve workplace flexibility and efficiency, while realizing cost savings through measures to reduce the U.N.'s footprint in headquarters locations. In New York, the U.N. has already ended two leases for office space, and measures are also being implemented in Geneva as part of the renovation project there, such as through the sale and leasing of space to other occupants.

With the greater use of technology to conduct meetings, I also believe the U.N. needs to re-examine its overall approach to staff travel, in particular for conferences.

Question. Over the years, some experts have questioned the ability of the U.N. Office of International Oversight to effectively monitor U.N. programs in part because the office is largely dependent on funding from the U.N. programs that it audits. Some governments, including the United States, maintain that this could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest.

- What is your view on this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Office of Internal Oversight Services continues to receive its funding from the General Assembly, and thus the U.N. member states, so that it can freely audit the U.N. Secretariat. In general, the U.N. funds and programs have their own, internal audit offices, as do the U.N. spe-

cialized agencies. These internal audit offices are generally funded through the regular (assessed) budgets of the specialized agencies and the core (unearmarked) budgets of the U.N. funds and programs. The internal audit offices are ultimately accountable to the member states, not the secretariats, of these entities.

Similarly, the U.N. Board of Auditors, which audits the financial statements and makes recommendations related to internal controls and other financial management practices of the U.N. and the U.N. funds and programs, is funded through the U.N. regular budget and reports to the U.N. General Assembly. The external auditors of the U.N. specialized agencies, which are usually the highly capable and independent national audit offices of countries such as the United Kingdom, India, and the Philippines, are also funded through the regular (assessed) budgets of the specialized agencies and report to each agency's member states.

Question. Do you think U.N. internal oversight is sufficiently independent?

Answer. I believe that any organization, including the United Nations, can do more to improve the effectiveness and independence of its internal oversight mechanism. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) maintains maximum independence from the U.N. Secretariat while ensuring accountability to the United States and other U.N. member states. The Management and Reform Section at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations has been at the forefront of pressing for maximum independence of OIOS since its creation in 1994, with the goal of having OIOS operate like an Inspector General in the U.S. Government. A key opportunity to advance the independence and effectiveness of OIOS is in the negotiations each fall on General Assembly resolutions that define OIOS's mandate and responsibilities. The most recent resolution, A/Res/75/247 adopted on December 31, 2020, contains five paragraphs on operational independence, the most prominent of which is paragraph 6:

6. Reaffirms the operational independence of the Office, stresses that its independence and objectivity are vital in ensuring that its internal oversight functions are carried out in a credible, factual and unbiased manner, and reaffirms the authority of the Office to initiate, carry out and report on any action to fulfil its responsibilities with regard to internal audit, inspection and evaluation, and investigations;

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO CHRISTOPHER LU BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. If confirmed, will you be a strong advocate for us paying our dues to the U.N. in full and on time?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States reasserts its leadership role across the U.N. system. This will include paying our dues in full and on time in order to maximize our influence and exerting that influence to advance reforms and uphold the foundational values of the international rules-based order.

Question. What is your strategy for the upcoming triennial 2022–2024 scales of assessments negotiations to ensure that all countries pay their fair share?

Answer. I understand that the administration is currently reviewing options to try to reach an agreement in the U.N. General Assembly to potentially lower future U.S. assessment rates. If confirmed, I will work to reach an agreement in the U.N. General Assembly to try to lower the U.S. assessment rates and ensure that other countries pay their fair share. I welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to take the steps necessary to allow the United States to meet our financial obligations.

LETTER FROM AAPI (ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER)
ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF CHRISTOPHER LU'S NOMINATION

July 22, 2021

The Honorable Bob Menendez
The Honorable James Risch
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

We are writing to provide our full support and endorsement to Chris Lu for the position of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations for Management and Reform.

We represent a coalition of national Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) organizations engaged in business, legal, civil rights, and healthcare advocacy. Our members worked closely with Chris during the Obama Administration in his roles at the White House and the Department of Labor.

Chris has devoted his career to public service and is one of the AAPI community's most important thought leaders. Through his two decades of work in the legislative and executive branches, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that the federal government better serves the American people. When Chris was the White House Cabinet Secretary, he oversaw one of the most stable and effective Cabinets in history. When he became the Deputy Secretary of Labor, he spearheaded initiatives to expand employment opportunities and protect the health, safety, and financial security of workers. As the co-chair of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Chris championed governmental efforts to disaggregate data and expand the delivery of services to marginalized communities. And earlier in his career, he served as Deputy Chief Counsel of the House Oversight Committee where he spearheaded investigations to improve the functioning of government programs.

In all of his government roles, Chris Lu did his job with the highest standard of ethics and integrity. Chris has the right policy background, management experience, and diplomatic skills to represent the U.S. in the United Nations, and we respectfully request that you swiftly approve his nomination. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy, and Leadership (APPEAL)
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
 Korean Americans for Political Action (KAPA)
 OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
 National Asian Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurs
 National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
 National Coalition for Asian Pacific Americans Community Development
 National Asian American Pacific Islander Business Leaders Finance Council
 National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
 Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
 Taiwanese Americans for Progress
 Texas Asian American Pacific Islander Business Leaders Coalition

LETTER FROM FORMER SENIOR MEMBERS OF REPUBLICAN
ADMINISTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF CHRISTOPHER LU'S NOMINATION

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Bob Menendez
The Honorable James Risch
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

All of us have held senior-level positions in Republican administrations, and we are writing to support the nomination of Chris Lu to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations for Management and Reform.

We have worked with Chris at the University of Virginia Miller Center and have seen up-close his deep commitment to public service. Drawing on his two decades of federal experience, Chris has made significant contributions to the public's understanding of the inner workings of government, as well as current policy issues. Chris approaches his work in a balanced manner, always with great thought and integrity. Even when he disagrees with someone else's views, he does so respectfully and in a way that fosters collaboration.

We believe that Chris Lu has the right temperament, experience, and intellect to represent the United States at the United Nations, and we hope he will be promptly confirmed for this position. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John M. Bridgeland
Director
White House Domestic Policy Council (George W. Bush)

Mary Kate Cary
Speechwriter, White House (George H.W. Bush)

Eric S. Edelman
Ambassador to Finland and Turkey
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (George W. Bush)

Philip D. Zelikow
Executive Director, 9/11 Commission
Counselor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AND AMERICAN
CAUCUS (CAPAC) IN SUPPORT OF CHRISTOPHER LU'S NOMINATION

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2021

The Honorable Bob Menendez
The Honorable James Risch
US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific and American Caucus (CAPAC), which is comprised of 76 members of Congress, I write to express strong support for Chris Lu, who has been nominated to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform. His 20 years of public service at the highest levels of government make him well-qualified for this position.

During the Obama Administration, CAPAC members worked closely with Chris on issues of importance to the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. I have seen up-close his skill in crafting innovative policy and communications strategies, managing large organizations, and bringing diverse interests together to solve problems. Chris is also a trailblazer in the Asian American community. He was one of the highest-ranking AAPIs in the Obama Administration, and only the second Asian American in history to become a deputy secretary of a Cabinet department. His work as co-chair of the White House Initiative on AAPIs led to important policy changes regarding data disaggregation and language translation. After leaving government, Chris has used his public voice to raise awareness about the pandemic's economic impact on AAPIs and the need to address the troubling rise in anti-AAPI hate crimes.

Chris Lu is a proven, knowledgeable, and experienced leader who will deliver results for our nation at the United Nations. I am proud to support him and urge his prompt confirmation.

Sincerely,



Judy Chu
Member of Congress
CAPAC Chair

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:11 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Kaine, Van Hollen, Risch, Young, and Cruz.

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

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

We are here today to consider nominations for four very important positions. Secretary, former Senator, Ken Salazar to be Ambassador to Mexico, Ms. Jessica Lewis to be Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Military Affairs, Ambassador Donald Lu to be the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, and Ms. Marcella Escobari to be an Assistant Administrator for the United States Agency for International Development for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Congratulations on all your nominations. I know all of you have a distinguished history of public service. We appreciate your willingness to continue to serve your country, and those members of your family.

I understand that Senator Bennet and Senator Hickenlooper, our colleagues from Colorado, will be introducing Secretary Salazar this morning. So we will go to them.

Senior Senator from Colorado, Senator Bennet?

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL BENNET, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator BENNET. Thank you, Chairman Menendez for having me, the Ranking Member as well, for allowing Senator Hickenlooper and me to introduce Ken Salazar, President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Mexico.

Ken is no stranger to this body where he served with distinction, and Colorado is honored to call him our own. And I am grateful to call him a mentor and a brother. In my view, President Biden could not have made a better choice.

The American Southwest embodies our braided history with Mexico, and I cannot think of anyone with a deeper connection to the region than Ken.

Our history goes back over 400 years when Ken's family settled in New Mexico before America was even a country. Later, the family journeyed to Colorado, San Luis Valley, where they have farmed for five generations.

If you drive down to the Valley and visit San Luis, which is Colorado's oldest town, there is a stone marker identifying the state's first irrigation ditch, The People's Ditch, etched into the stone or the names of farmers and ranchers who were entitled to draw water from that ditch, because they were the ones who dug it, and the name Salazar is among them.

The Valley is a sparse, beautiful part of our state, but it was not an easy place to grow up. The Salazar family ranch in Los Rincones did not have electricity until 1982.

Ken and his siblings grew up reading with oil lamps. They did not have phones, or television, but they did have the example of their parents, both incredible patriots. Ken's father, Henry, served in World War II and became a staff sergeant. He was so proud of his service to America, that he asked the family to bury him in uniform, which they did.

When the war broke out, Ken's mother, Emma, also wanted to do her part. So she traveled to Washington by herself, when she was only 19, to work at the Pentagon. Neither of his parents had a college education, but they worked hard to provide their family with opportunities they never had, all eight of their children, including Ken, became first-time college graduates.

They were so proud of everything Ken went on to achieve, from working as a lawyer at top western firms, to breaking barriers as the first Hispanic-American elected to statewide office, as Colorado's Attorney General, to become the first Mexican-American elected to the U.S. Senate outside of New Mexico, to joining President Obama's historic Cabinet as Secretary of the Interior.

Ken is exactly who we need to strengthen our vitally important relationship with Mexico, which is critical to the stability and prosperity of our entire hemisphere. But as this committee appreciates, the relationship faces no shortage of challenges, from immigration, to trade, energy, resource management, public health, and the rule of law.

Ken has worked and lived virtually all of these issues. As Colorado's Attorney General, Ken negotiated several extradition arrangements with Mexico, many of which remain in place today. In the Senate he led important immigration reform with Ted Kennedy and John McCain. He shaped major provisions of the Farm Bill. He helped craft by partisan energy bills. When he left to serve in the administration, Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell praised his leadership on the floor, and the Senate confirmed his nomination unanimously.

As Interior secretary, Ken negotiated water-sharing agreements between the U.S. and Mexico, and strengthened bilateral cooperation around conservation to protect Big Bend National Park along the Rio Grande.

I could go on, Mr. Chairman, but it comes down to this, you would struggle mightily to find someone more qualified than Ken. He has the experience and substance to hit the ground running, and a life story that represents America at our best.

I urge the committee to advance his nomination with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. When I am up for a nomination, I want you introducing me, Senator Bennet.

Senator Hickenlooper?

Senator BENNET. I will be there.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN HICKENLOOPER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO**

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Well, good morning, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member, and members of the committee.

I am also equally honored to introduce Secretary Ken Salazar, President Biden's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Mexican States. I have known Ken for over 30 years, from when we first had a jazz club in the basement of my restaurant, and he was raising money for a campaign to protect open lands in Southern Colorado called La Tierra. We got John Nichols to come speak, and raised—I think we raised 16 or \$1,800.

His older brother, John, who some of you remember, from serving in the House, was my Secretary of Agriculture, my first term as governor. Ken has been beside me on every campaign, and every major issue, every political battle I fought. And I have tried to be by his side as well.

As Michael said, his family story is emblematic of the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. His family settled in Southwest, United States was then New Spain in the 16th century. His ancestors helped found the City of Santa Fe. Michael described him growing up on Los Rincones without electricity. He did not mention that Los Rincones is a scrabble of about six buildings. The big city, Manassa, which is four miles away, almost has a population of a thousand.

Again, the ranch down there is one of the most beautiful places in Colorado. My son, Teddy, learned to ride, ride a horse on this ranch when he was 11 years old. And of those eight children that Ken's parents, Emma and Henry raised, all eight graduated from college.

And I was also—well, you ought to get him to tell the story at some point, but children six, seven, and eight were all born on the same long night, which is a story only he can tell. He served Governor Romer, both as chief counsel and as secretary of Natural Resources, and both in those roles, and as a U.S. Senator, and as the secretary of Interior, he never shied away from tough issues.

He understands the importance of collaboration, and bipartisanship, pragmatism. He is a world-class negotiator, which I think he got from his mother, Emma. She was about 5 feet 2 inches, and yet one of the strongest, most potent political forces in Colorado. She blessed two generations of candidates, and they were not always Democrats, but she blessed to two generations, she blessed me on my reelection in 2014 when she was 91 years old.

When he came to the Senate, Ken designated and chose Senator John McCain as his mentor, as a freshman senator, and the two worked together on immigration reform, both working with Republicans and Democrats, he convened ranchers and environmentalists throughout his term as secretary—as Interior secretary, on water issues, conservation issues, et cetera.

From a ranch in Conejos County, Colorado, to the hallways of this chamber, Ken has had a package of experiences that make him uniquely qualified to be a remarkable Ambassador to Mexico. Mexico is an important ally and trading partner. Nuevo Laredo now is our largest port of entry, and in many—in so many cases, the United States and Mexico share priorities. And I think that it is a delicate point in the relationship now, a point that demands someone with the skills of Ken Salazar.

All of us in Colorado are so grateful for all of his contributions, the things that he has done. He created something called Great Outdoors Colorado that, to this day, is perhaps the greatest public-private partnership around land conservation in the history of this country. In everything that he has done, he has been able to bring people together, resolve conflict, and create progress.

And that is exactly what we need now. We are all fortunate to him, once again, answering the call to service, to take on this crucial role at this crucial time.

I wholeheartedly support his nomination, and I hope that he gets widespread support from every single person on this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Senator Hickenlooper. I did not think there was much that could be added after Senator Bennet, but you did a fantastic job of filling out the total, the total picture. So we know that both of you have very busy agendas and you are welcome to excuse yourselves at any time.

With that, let me take a moment to introduce Ms. Jessica Lewis. It is with a mixture of deep pride and wistfulness that we are here today considering the nomination of Ms. Lewis to be the next Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Political Military Affairs.

I, like many others in both the Senate and the House, have had the good fortune of working closely with Ms. Lewis and benefiting from her exceptional wisdom, drive, and judgment. Ms. Lewis is recognized across party lines as one of the most effective and respected leaders on Capitol Hill, she is a trailblazer for women in national security. Indeed, if approved by the Senate, she will be the first woman confirmed to hold this position.

You all know her as the majority staff director of this committee, and prior to that, as a senior national security and foreign policy advisor for then Majority Leader Harry Reid. What you may not know is that she came to Capitol Hill almost two decades ago to work for me as a foreign policy advisor and staff director of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee in the House of Representatives. So we are proud of all of Jessica's accomplishments since then.

And while it would be impossible to catalogue all of these accomplishments here, I do want to highlight her leadership, her steady hand during this past year in particular, leading the staff to an incredibly productive year, while also providing invaluable advice on

the committee's foreign policy priorities. I have been deeply impressed, and that is not an easy thing to do, but not at all surprised.

I would like to highlight that Ms. Lewis' tireless dedication over her entire career to mentoring young professionals as well, elevating her colleagues, and empowering those who have not been traditionally represented in the field, are exemplary. And I have no doubt she will apply herself in the same way, and with equal success at the State Department.

Secretary Salazar is a friend of mine, and of this committee, and I am deeply gratified by your nomination to be Ambassador to Mexico. It is a Testament to the Biden administration's seriousness about restoring a productive and respectful relationship with the people and Government of Mexico. One of the most important, expansive bilateral relationships we have.

The task ahead of you is great. You will need to continue engaging on the critical issues of trade and migration that have been central in our bilateral relationship, while also engaging on the, often uncomfortable, issues that face both our nations, including the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people, environmental threats, and issues of democracy, governance, and rule of law, including with respect to human rights and labor rights.

I have no doubt that your vast experience in government, your personal ties to Mexico, and your commitment to bipartisan solutions will make you an excellent ambassador upon your confirmation.

Of the Office of Political Military Affairs, for which Ms. Lewis has been nominated, are of vital importance to U.S. foreign and national security policy, and to this committee. It is a position with immense impact for safeguarding U.S. national security and promoting and accomplishing vital U.S. foreign policy objectives.

In recent years, the Bureau's relationship and credibility with this committee has been strained, though it has been improving. I expect that with Ms. Lewis at the helm, the Bureau's level of cooperation with the oversight activities of, and consultation with this committee will improve considerably. And I will put that expectation to the test.

Ambassador Lu, I am pleased to see you back again before this committee, this time to be the next Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, a region of critical importance and significant challenges. Indeed, the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan will require sustained Senate oversight for how the administration plans to mitigate the effects of the withdrawal.

I, along with many members of this committee are especially concerned about the plight of women, and the minorities as the Taliban continues to gain military strength.

In addition, as the administration evacuates the first group of Afghan SIV applicants, I continue to be concerned about the thousands of remaining Afghan SIV applicants and our Afghan human rights and democracy partners whose lives remain in grave danger from the Taliban.

And as you know, any peaceful resolution to this conflict must be regional in nature, and will require the Assistant Secretary to be deeply engaged.

Our relationship with India is growing, bolstered by a vibrant Indian-American community here in the United States, I expect our diplomats to deepen this relationship while remaining true to our core values, and raising concerns as necessary.

In Bangladesh, I continue to advocate for labor rights in the establishment of unions to ensure that workers in every sector can work in safe conditions. There will be no shortage of challenges, but I am confident that your knowledge and experience in the region will serve you well as you take on this role.

Ms. Escobari, your extensive experience helping countries in our hemisphere chart a path towards prosperity, including in your previous service as USAID Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau, which make you exceptionally qualified for this position. As you know, the challenges we face in the region are growing by the day. Democratic backsliding has accelerated in many countries aggravating by the ongoing socioeconomic impact of COVID-19.

With the recent assassination in Haiti, widespread protests and regime violence in Cuba, and authoritarian crackdown in Nicaragua, humanitarian emergency in Venezuela, and numerous challenges related to irregular migration, the Western Hemisphere today is less secure, less prosperous, and less stable than it had been in many years.

We look forward to hearing how you will work to address those challenges, if confirmed.

In closing, the four of you have immense challenges ahead, I am confident that your rich experiences will serve you well as you take on your new responsibilities upon confirmation. We look forward to your testimonies. And this is normally a little longer than we would in introducing, nominees, but you are coming into critical positions.

So let me 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. And thanks to our witnesses for joining us today, and your willingness to serve, and of course your families who will share in that sacrifice.

I want to start with the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Central Affairs. Personally, my top two foreign policy priorities are China and global health. And India is a major player in both of these priorities.

So I look forward to hearing your views on how we can work with India to maintain a favorable balance of power in the Indian Ocean, and continued to partner in the fight against COVID, and other global health concerns, including vaccine development and manufacturing in India.

It is also becoming clear that a hasty U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan threatens to squander our hard-fought gains there. Ambassador Lu, we welcome your thoughts on the way ahead.

Next, we have the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs. Our security partnerships are essential to protecting our vital national interests. They are also critical aspect

of competition with China and Russia. We will often hear from our allies and partners over the problems and the speed of our security cooperation process. And often state is at the forefront of these problems.

I look forward to hearing how you plan to strengthen our relationships with partners, and allies, and keep the U.S., the security partner of choice around the world. I have no doubt you have great qualifications for that task in as much as your service on this committee has shown that to be such.

On the nomination of Assistant Administrator of USAID for Latin America and the Caribbean, if confirmed, you will have no shortage of challenges, especially the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the growing violence and poverty in Haiti surrounding the recent assassination of President Moyes, democracy in Cuba and Nicaragua, and holding governments in Central America accountable for addressing the drivers of irregular immigration.

And for the nomination of a U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Senator Salazar, Secretary Salazar, it is good to see you again. As neighbors, Mexico and the United States share an enduring interest in maintaining robust security and economic cooperation. I look forward to hearing your thoughts, especially on how to address the growing role of Mexican transnational criminal organization in the production and trafficking of fentanyl into the United States.

I think all of us have been shocked by the state of politics in Mexico, with the huge number of assassinations that have taken place of people that are running for public office, and the current state of affairs there. It is staggering how many people have been killed.

Ambassador—excuse me—Senator Salazar, your ability to handle these things, I have absolutely no question about. It has been a pleasure working with you on issues that were parochial to my state while you were Secretary of the Interior. I enjoyed serving with you briefly in this chamber.

And with that I will yield back my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

All right, we will turn to our nominees. We will start with Secretary Salazar, and moved down the dais. We ask you to summarize your statement in about five minutes, so we can have a conversation with you. Your full statements will be included in the record without objection.

And with that, we recognize Secretary Salazar.

**STATEMENT OF HON. KENNETH LEE SALAZAR, OF COLORADO,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES**

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, and Ranking Member Risch, and all the members of this committee, for the time this morning. I appreciate your service and your leadership on this committee.

I also want to acknowledge and thank my good friends, Senator Michael Bennet, and Senator John Hickenlooper for their long jour-

ney with me together, working on issues that we so much care about for Colorado and the United States of America.

And I want to acknowledge my family back in Colorado, and the San Luis Valley, and in Denver. My wonderful wife, Esperanza, watching this hearing this morning with Melinda, Andrea, Mireya, and Selena, and Blake, and all of my family in the valley, thank you so much for being the wind beneath my wings for all of the journey that I have had in this wonderful life of mine.

Let me also acknowledge my guests here today. Former colleagues from the U.S. Senate, as well as friends, Stephanie Valencia, Felicia Escobar and Dan Restrepo, I thank them for their help in my own—in my journey.

So let me also say, this is a very proud moment for me, proud because President Joe Biden is a person who cares a lot about Mexico, Central America and Latin America, his many trips, even as Vice President trying to deal with these issues that have been around for—the United States for a very long time, are a testament to his attention to the North-South relationship and to the Western hemisphere.

And so I am very proud to be able to work with him, to have the opportunity, if confirmed by this committee and the Senate, to be able to work on the issues that he so much cares about.

And likewise, Vice President Kamala Harris, she and I knew each other back in her days as attorney general. And I know her interest in dealing with the issues, including the root causes in the relationship between the U.S., Mexico, Central America, and Latin America.

So I very much look forward to being a part of their team, but I can only do that work effectively if I also work closely with the members of this committee, and that includes both the majority and the minority staff, it includes a you, Senator Menendez, Senator Risch, and each of the members of this committee. We may not always agree, but what I will make sure I do is that I have the opportunity to hear your voices and to work with you, to deal with these solutions, or these challenges, and create solutions that we have all been looking for.

So let me just say a word about how I see the issues for the United States and Mexico. Our futures are inextricably bound together as two nations, as people that have a very common heritage.

We are inextricably bound together because of the demographics of our two nations. We are inextricably bound together because of the migration patterns of the history of our two nations. We are inextricably bound together with our economic and jobs, dreams, and the prosperity for both nations. And we are inextricably bound together with the dream of security, and freedom from the fear of violence that we currently see on the border, on both sides of the border, and on the southern border of Mexico, as well as in other places in Latin America. And we are bound together by our history and by our heritage.

I will not spend a long time talking about those issues, but very quickly on the demographics, we have about 170 million Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in both countries. It is interesting that of those 170 million more than one-fourth of the population resides here in the United States. And they come from families like mine

that have been around, through our heritage, for 400, 700 years with our Native American, Mexican, and Spanish backgrounds, through the Mexican-American War in 1848, and then for the last 170 years as American citizens.

We are bound together because the issues of migration have brought us together historically through the push and pull of the history of migration into this country. It is an issue which still bedevils this country in terms of how we deal with a sustainable, orderly migration system, and in order to get to that point, we have to work closely with the Mexican Government to share our interest in dealing with those issues.

We are bound together because of our economy and jobs. You know, they say that the Latino population is the mainstream economy in the United States, some 60 million strong, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans, and 60 million strong contributing greatly to the economy United States and to the future, political, and demographics of this country. So we need to make sure that we are integrating that community.

And on security, we cannot deal with the security issues without having the Mexican Government working with us. It is incumbent upon them because it is a shared responsibility that we have to deal with the violence issues, both on that side of the border, as well as on this side of the border.

So let me just conclude by saying, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member Risch. This is a very proud moment for me, it is a very proud moment because of our history, but it is also a very proud moment, as I look forward to the future, yes, full of challenges, but full of opportunities. It is a proud moment for us to bring the two nations closer together and to deal with a kind of reality that creates prosperity, security, and peace for the peoples of both the United States and Mexico.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Salazar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HON. KENNETH LEE SALAZAR

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and members of the committee, I am proud and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to Mexico.

My history is deeply rooted in Mexico and the United States. My forebearers came from Mexico and Spain in the early 1600s and settled along the banks of the Rio Grande del Norte near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Following the end of the Mexican-American War, they migrated north and established the settlement of Los Rincones in the San Luis Valley. Today, we still ranch and farm the same lands along the tributaries of the Rio Grande.

My father was a proud soldier in World War II. My mother helped open the Pentagon as a public servant. After the war, they returned home. At home, our native language was Spanish. We were poor and worked in the fields and home alongside our parents. We were taught to dream big dreams and the timeless values of faith, hard work and education. All eight of their children became first generation college graduates.

Like my parents, I am a proud American. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance the interests of the United States and to strengthen the common bonds between the United States and Mexico. I recognize the difficult and enormous challenges ahead. I also am optimistic about the opportunities ahead for our two nations.

In my view, it is time to create transformative change in the United States-Mexico relationship by ushering in a new era of partnership with our southern neighbor.

That partnership must:

- address jobs and economic opportunity for the people of the United States and Mexico through trade, infrastructure, tourism, and investment;
- secure our shared borders and create an orderly, safe, and humane framework for migration;
- identify partnerships that address the scourge of violence and respects the rule of law; and
- engage in a global sustainability transformation for a viable planet while respecting the sovereignty of both nations.

If confirmed, I will seek the advice and guidance of this committee and its members in my service to the United States. I look forward to working with President Biden and Vice President Harris and the United States Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Mexico. I also look forward to working with the Mexican Government to advance our shared interests in Mexico and here in the United States.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Secretary Salazar.
Ms. Lewis?

**STATEMENT OF JESSICA LEWIS, OF OHIO, NOMINATED TO BE
AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL-MILITARY
AFFAIRS)**

Ms. LEWIS. Chairman Menendez. Thank you, first of all, for your kind words. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, I am honored and humbled to be here as the Biden-Harris administration's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs.

I would like to thank President Biden for nominating me, and Secretary Blinken for his support. I was lucky enough to start my career on this committee, under then Chairman Biden when Secretary Blinken was the staff director on the committee.

I would like to thank my father, Robert Lewis, for raising my sister and me; his strength and love after my mother, Molly Lewis, passed away when I was a child, made me who I am today. I am also lucky to have the love and support of my stepmother, who is truly my second mother, Patricia Lewis. And I am joined by my sister, Kaitlynn Griffith, who has been with me every step of the way.

My greatest joy in life has been as a mother, and I would like to thank my 9-year-old son, Matthew, who is wisely enjoying a day of summer camp today instead of sitting through a hearing. And to my incredible community of friends, thank you for being my second family.

I would like to personally thank Chairman Menendez, who hired me nearly 20 years ago as a staffer on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and who trained me to be a staffer. The Chairman has the sharpest mind I have encountered, and has taught me to stand up for what I believe. I would not be here before the committee today if it were not for Senator Menendez.

I would like to thank former Senator Harry Reid, who taught me the ways of the Senate during my nine years working for him, and Senator Cardin, who brought me on as staff director of this committee.

And finally, I would like to thank the outstanding bipartisan staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to my team, you are simply the best.

To my Republican colleagues, working with you has taught me when we can come together, as we recently did on the China Bill

which passed this committee with overwhelming support, we are at our very best.

I have spent my entire career in public service, if confirmed I would be honored to continue that path at the State Department. I began my career teaching third grade in public schools, and believe my work as a teacher serves as the foundation for all I do today.

I then worked at the Organization of American States running education, training, and technology programs in Latin America. Since then, I have spent nearly 20 years on The Hill and have worked on some of the most critical national security legislation of our time. I staffed the Conference Committee for the legislation that implemented the 9/11 Commission recommendations in the early-2000s, and recently negotiated passage of the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act only a few years ago.

And, as Senator Reid's National Security advisor, I worked directly with the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, the Defense Department, and our Intelligence Agency.

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs manages our arms sales, and security assistance, negotiates international security agreements, and manages our security relationships with other countries. The Bureau is also in charge of U.S. programs to help countries cope with the after effects of war through conventional weapons destruction programs.

If confirmed, I would focus on four areas. First, as President Biden promised, a plan to enhance the consideration of human rights in our decision-making to ensure our arms sales are in our foreign policy interest, and in line with American values.

Second, I am committed to reinvigorating the Bureau's relationship with this committee and with Congress.

Third, I want to focus on strengthening the workforce at the Bureau, and specifically its efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Fourth, I believe the judicious provision of U.S. defense equipment can deepen our relationships with our allies and partners, and support our foreign policy and national security. I believe if government can help to keep the global playing field level, our defense companies can continue to out-compete any rival while upholding our values.

In conclusion, if confirmed, I am committed to leveraging the tools of the Political-Military Affairs Bureau in the service of U.S. foreign policy and American values.

Thank you. And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lewis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JESSICA LEWIS

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, I am honored and humbled to be here as the Biden-Harris administration's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs.

I would like to thank President Biden for nominating me, and Secretary Blinken for his support.

I would like to thank my father Robert Lewis for raising my sister and me. His strength and love after my mother, Molly Lewis, passed away when I was a child, made me who I am. I am also lucky to have the love and support of my step-mother—who is truly my second mother—Patricia Lewis. I am joined by my sister Kaitlynn Griffith, who has been with me every step of my life. My greatest joy in

life has been as a mother, and I would like to thank my 9-year-old son Matthew, who is wisely enjoying a day of summer camp today instead of sitting through a hearing. And to my incredible community of friends—thank you for being my second family.

I would like to personally thank Chairman Menendez, who hired me nearly 20 years ago as a staffer on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and who trained me to be a staffer. The Chairman has the sharpest mind I have encountered and has taught me to stand up for what you believe in. I would not be here before the committee today if it were not for Senator Menendez.

I would like to thank former Senator Harry Reid, who taught me the ways of the Senate during my 9 years working for him, and Senator Cardin, who brought me on as staff director of this committee.

Finally, I would like to thank the outstanding bipartisan staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. To my team, you are simply the best. To my Republican colleagues, working with you has taught me when we can come together—as we recently did on the China bill which passed this committee with overwhelming support—we are at our best.

I have spent my entire career in public service; if confirmed, I would be honored to continue that path at the State Department. I began my career teaching third grade in public schools and believe my work as a teacher serves a foundation for all I do.

I then worked at the Organization of American States running education, training, and technology programs in Latin America.

Since then, I have spent nearly 20 years on the Hill and have worked on some of the most critical national security legislation of our time. I staffed the conference committee for the legislation that implemented the 9-11 Commission recommendations in the early 2000s and negotiated passage of the Countering Americas Adversaries Through Sanctions Act only a few years ago.

And, as Senator Reid's national security advisor, I worked directly with the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, the Defense Department, and our Intelligence Agencies.

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs manages our arms sales and security assistance, negotiates international security agreements, and manages our security relationships with other countries. The Bureau is also in charge of U.S. programs to help countries cope with the aftereffects of war through conventional weapons destruction programs.

The Bureau is also unique because of its dedicated workforce. They have a well-deserved reputation for professionalism, and they have performed the challenging work of the Bureau across administrations.

If confirmed, I would focus on four areas.

- First, as President Biden promised, I plan to enhance the consideration of human rights in our decision-making to ensure our arms sales are in our foreign policy interest and in line with American values.
- Second, I am committed to reinvigorating the Bureau's relationship with this committee and Congress.
- Third, I want to focus on strengthening the workforce at the Bureau, and specifically its efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Fourth, I believe the judicious provision of U.S. defense equipment can deepen our relationships with our allies and partners and support our foreign policy and national security. I believe if government can help to keep the global playing field level, our defense companies can continue to outcompete any rival while upholding our values.

In conclusion, if confirmed, I am committed to leveraging the tools of the Political-Military Affairs Bureau in the service of U.S. foreign policy and American values.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And as a good staffer, you came in under five minutes. So it is just amazing.

Ambassador Lu, please go ahead?

STATEMENT OF HON. DONALD LU, OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS)

Ambassaador LU. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of this committee, I am honored and humbled to be here today as President Biden's nominee to be the next Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs.

I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have shown in me. I would not be here today without the love and support of my family. I am joined today by wife and best friend, Ariel. And we have two wonderful teenagers at home, Kip and Aliya. Unlike Security Salazar's kids, they are not watching, they are sleeping soundly at the moment.

As the son of an immigrant to the United States, I am particularly proud to have served my country in the U.S. Foreign Service in the Peace Corps. During my 30 years at the State Department, I have worked in India, Pakistan, and Central Asia, advancing our agenda on counterterrorism, democracy, and anti-corruption.

As someone who believes that the Foreign Service and the Civil Service should look like the face of America, I am committed to implementing the President's vision on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Chairman, with the President's decision to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan by September 11, we are faced with new risks and new opportunities. And in particular, we have an historic opportunity to rebalance our relations with the countries of this region to better reflect our long-term strategic priorities.

First, it is in our national interest to continue to strengthen our fast-growing strategic, economic, and people-to-people ties with India, while also speaking forthrightly about human rights and our democratic values. As two great Indo-Pacific powers, we must strive to ensure that our Asian partners remain sovereign and free, and not dominated by a single power.

As two great democracies, we must demonstrate through our example why democracy promotes peace, stability, and personal freedoms. And as two great free-market economies, we can build a more stable and inclusive global economy.

As the producer of 60 percent of the world's vaccines, India is critical to the global fight against COVID-19, and if confirmed, I would work with India to end this devastating pandemic. And I commit to working with India and our partners to tackle the climate crisis.

Second, on Pakistan: We have for more than 20 years defined our relations with this important partner primarily through the prism of counterterrorism and security. If confirmed, I will build on our long history of friendship with Pakistan to advance human rights, religious freedom, counterterrorism cooperation, and an improved business climate for American investors.

Third, Afghanistan: I started my career working on the Afghan border in the Pakistani City of Peshawar. I saw then, first-hand, the desperate plight of Afghan refugees. I have a deep commitment to encouraging peace, security, human rights, and the rights of

women and girls. If confirmed, I will work to advance our objectives in Afghanistan.

Finally, in the other countries of South and Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives, we face competition from China and Russia like never before. We must recommit ourselves to robust engagement with these countries to support their sovereignty and independence in the face of many challenges.

Critical new tools have been authorized in this effort, from the creation of the Development Finance Corporation, to this committee's important work on the Strategic Competition Act.

If confirmed, I will work to make the United States a reliable international partner for the Governments and peoples of these countries, one who is willing to call out malign influence, and stand up for human rights and democracy.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will take seriously my role as a steward of the public trust. I will safeguard our precious resources, our people, our embassies, and the strong reputation of the United States.

I believe in the importance of our voice in support of human rights, religious freedom, and democracy, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with the Congress to build robust relations between the United States and the nations of South and Central Asia. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Lu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DONALD LU

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear here today as President Biden's nominee to be the next Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

As the son of an immigrant to the United States, I am particularly proud to have served my country in the U.S. Foreign Service and the Peace Corps. During my 30 years in the State Department, I have worked in India, Pakistan, and Central Asia advancing our agenda on counterterrorism, democracy, and anti-corruption. And as someone who believes that the Foreign Service and the Civil Service should look like the face of America, I am committed to implementing the President's vision on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Mr. Chairman, with the President's decision to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan by September 11, we are faced with new risks and new opportunities. In particular, we have an historic opportunity to rebalance our relations with the countries in the region to better reflect our long-term strategic priorities.

First, it is in our national interest to continue to strengthen our fast-growing strategic, economic, and people-to-people ties with India, while also speaking forthrightly about human rights and our democratic values. As two great Indo-Pacific powers, we must strive to ensure that our Asian partners remain sovereign and free, and not dominated by a single power. As two great democracies, we should demonstrate through our example why democracy promotes peace, stability, and personal freedoms. And as two great free-market economies, we can build a more stable and inclusive global economy. As the producer of 60 percent of the world's vaccines, India is critical to the global fight against COVID-19, and if confirmed, I would work with India to end this devastating pandemic. And I commit to working with India and our partners to tackle the climate crisis.

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Third, on Afghanistan, I started my career working on the Afghan border in the Pakistani city of Peshawar and saw first-hand the desperate plight of Afghan refugees. I have a deep commitment to encouraging peace, security, human rights, and the rights of women and girls. If confirmed, I will work to advance our objectives in Afghanistan.

Finally, in the other countries of South and Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives—we face competition from China and Russia like never before. We must recommit ourselves to robust engagement with these countries to support their sovereignty and independence in the face of many challenges. Critical new tools have been authorized in that effort, from the creation of the Development Finance Corporation, to this committee's important work on the Strategic Competition Act. If confirmed, I will work to make the United States a reliable international partner to the Governments and peoples of these countries, one who is willing to call out malign influence and stand up for human rights and democracy.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will take seriously my role as a steward of the public trust. I will safeguard our precious resources—our people, our embassies, and the strong reputation of the United States. I believe in the importance of our voice in support of human rights, religious freedom, and democracy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Congress to build robust relations between the United States and the nations of South and Central Asia.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador.
Ms. Escobari?

STATEMENT OF HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI, OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT [LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN]

Ms. ESCOBARI. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for opportunity to testify before you today.

It is an honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID.

My passion for development was sparked by growing up in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in our hemisphere, the daughter of two pediatricians who worked in the country's public hospitals.

They brought home a passion for making a difference one child at a time, but also the frustrations of seeing kids die more from disease than poverty. They wanted to prevent disease, not just treat it. My father started the first blood bank in our city, and my mother tried to change culture, implementing practices of hand-washing in maternity wards.

My parents inspired me to tackle the root causes, not just the symptoms of poverty. So I want to thank those watching this today, my husband, Beran, our sons Nico and Lucas, and our friends and family, whose support and love are the reasons I can sit before you today.

When I had the honor to serve in this role for the last year of the Obama administration, the region faced acute threats. Venezuela's economy had contracted by 60 percent, and 300,000 people had fled the country. Hurricane Mathew had hit an already-battered Haiti, and Colombia was embarking on a fragile peace process.

Now the stakes are even higher. The pandemic has hit Latin America harder than any other region in the world. 5.6 million people have fled Venezuela, a humanitarian crisis created by an oppressive and inept regime. The people of Cuba and Nicaragua are

seeing renewed crackdowns on their most fundamental rights. And one of the strongest democracies in the region, Colombia, is being shaken by economic and social unrest.

Our ability to extend a hand urgently and wholeheartedly, in partnership with our southern neighbors will largely determine the course of the region's recovery.

I believe that the stakes are profound, nothing less than the faith of the region's citizens that liberal democracy, rule of law, and market-based economies can deliver on their most pressing needs.

The inability, and in a few cases unwillingness of national governments to respond to these needs, have led to political instability that threatens the future of the region, as well as the security of the United States.

So I sit before you with a sense of urgency. If confirmed, I will focus on these pressing issues: combating COVID-19, confronting the security and migration crisis in Central America, and strengthening governance across the region.

My passion and conviction come from my parents, but my optimism that we can make a difference, is grounded in a career studying and implementing development. My early experiences in the private sector taught me the importance of creating conditions for investment and growth. In academia, I learned the value of good ideas, and while there are no silver bullets, there is a lot we know about what works and what does not.

If confirmed, I will bring a focus on data and evidence, as well as the ability to iterate quickly on lessons learned. During my time at USAID, I had the privilege to work with dedicated and knowledgeable professionals, who regularly go above and beyond the call of duty.

If confirmed, I will empower their efforts and contribute to a culture where respect, equity, diversity, and inclusion are part of our values and the way that we operate, both here and abroad.

Since leaving the Obama administration, I have worked on the barriers to inclusion and opportunities faced by workers here in the United States. We often draw lines between so-called "developed" and "developing", between Global North and Global South. But in truth, there is no bright line when it comes to the crippling effects of poverty.

The need for inclusive, sustained growth is as real in Appalachia as it is in Antigua. I hope to bring that humility to this job, the sense that every nation is a work in progress, and given the cross-border nature of our challenges, climate change, pandemics, cyber threats, our fates are linked, and our ability to work together, even more urgent.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Escobari follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for considering my nomination.

It is an honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID.

My passion for development was sparked during my childhood in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries on the continent, as the daughter of two pediatricians who practiced in the country's public hospitals.

They brought home a passion for making a difference one child at a time, but also the frustration of seeing children die more often from poverty than disease.

They wanted to prevent disease, not just treat it. My father started the first blood bank in our city, and my mother tried to change culture—with simple things like handwashing practices, or promoting the use of breast milk.

My parents inspired me to tackle the root causes—not simply the symptoms—of poverty.

I want to thank them (who are watching this today), my husband, Beran, our sons Nico and Lucas, and our friends and family, whose support and love are the reasons I can sit before you today.

When I had the honor to serve in this role for the last year of the Obama Administration, the region faced acute threats. Venezuela's economy had contracted by 60 percent, 300,000 people had fled the country. Hurricane Mathew had hit an already battered Haiti, and Colombia was embarking on a fragile peace process.

Now the stakes are even higher. 5.6 million people have fled Venezuela—a humanitarian crisis created by an oppressive and incompetent regime. The people of Cuba and Nicaragua are seeing renewed crackdowns on their most fundamental rights. And one of the strongest democracies in the region, Colombia, is being shaken by economic and social unrest. The pandemic has struck Latin America harder than any other region in the world.

Our ability to extend a hand—urgently and wholeheartedly—in partnership with our southern neighbors will largely determine the course of the region's recovery.

I believe that the stakes are profound—nothing less than the faith of the region's citizens that liberal democracy, rule of law, and market-based economies can deliver on their most basic needs.

Inequitable, and lackluster growth have left citizens frustrated and demanding better. And the inability or, in a few cases, unwillingness, of national governments to respond adequately has led to political instability that threatens the future of the region as well as the security of the United States.

I sit before you with a sense of urgency.

If confirmed, I will focus on these pressing issues: combating COVID-19, confronting the security and migration challenges in Central America, and strengthening governance across the region.

This means empowering civil society to stand up to authoritarian regimes, while also helping democratic governments improve their capacity to deliver basic goods and services—from water to electricity to health.

My passion and conviction come from my parents, but my optimism is grounded in a career studying and implementing international development.

My early experiences in the private sector taught me the importance of creating conditions for investment and growth. In academia, I learned the value of good ideas, and while there are no silver bullets, there is a lot we know about what works and what doesn't in development. If confirmed I will bring a focus on data and evidence, as well as the ability to iterate quickly on lessons learned.

During my time at USAID, I had the privilege to work with dedicated and knowledgeable professionals, who regularly go above and beyond the call of duty. If confirmed, I will empower their efforts and contribute to a culture where respect, equity, diversity and inclusion are part of our values and the way that we operate, both here and abroad.

Since leaving the Obama administration, I've worked on the barriers to inclusion and opportunity faced by workers here in the United States.

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The need for inclusive, sustainable growth is as real in Appalachia as it is in Antigua.

I hope to bring that humility to this job—the sense that every nation is a work in progress, and given the cross-border nature of our challenges—climate change, pandemics, and cyber threats—our fates are linked, and our ability to work together, even more urgent.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you, all. Let me start with a series of questions on behalf of the full committee. And a simple yes or no from each of you, but would suffice. I have these ques-

tions that speak to the importance of—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 ask each of you to provide just 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. SALAZAR. Yes.

Ms. ESCOBARI. Yes.

Ambassaador LU. Yes.

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Mr. SALAZAR. Yes.

Ms. ESCOBARI. Yes.

Ambassador Lu:

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing a notification after the fact?

Ambassaador LU. Yes.

Ms. ESCOBARI. Yes.

Mr. SALAZAR. Yes:

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to request for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Mr. SALAZAR. Yes.

Ms. ESCOBARI. Yes.

Ambassaador LU. Yes.

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. All right, thank you. All right, let me start off then, a round of five minutes.

Secretary Salazar, in the last four years, there were serious problems in the U.S. cooperation with Mexico on migration issues, and previous administration threatened Mexico with sanctions over migration, implemented policies that forced asylum seekers to remain in dangerous Mexican border communities during their application process, and signed a series of agreements whose contents have never been provided in full to Congress.

Some of these policies, in my view, were morally reprehensible as well as potentially on lawful. And while the Biden administration has taken steps to put things on a better path, we need a holistic strategy to strengthen bilateral cooperation on migration issues, and ensure that the United States upholds its international obligations and domestic laws.

So can you take a moment? You referenced it somewhat in your own personal history, but to lay out the vision of how you view the United States and Mexico working together to have a productive and respectful manner to address the challenges related to irregular migration?

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We need to find the synergy with Mexico to deal with a shared set of challenges. For Mexico there is displacement underway with people

leaving Mexico and coming into this country because of a lack of opportunity there. The Mexican Government has an interest in making sure that their people stay there. No one would want to be going away from their home to a country far away unless they were fleeing poverty, or violence, or other forms of distress.

And so what we need to do is to have a high-level dialogue with Mexico to address both the short-term issues that currently deal with issue of irregular migration, but also as the President and the Vice President have said, dealing with the longer-term issues of the root causes, and so working with my colleagues, hopefully if I get confirmed in the State Department, including the panel who is here today, so Secretary Blinken, and the President, and the Vice President, we hope to bring about that kind of dialogue that creates a holistic strategy to deal with the issues of migration.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me turn to the question of violence and crime, violence and the influence of organized crime in Mexico have reached highly concerning levels. In the lead up to the June mid-term elections, over 100 politicians were murdered, 36 of whom were running for office. These trend lines and the serious implications for our national security mandate that we find ways to strengthen U.S.-Mexico security cooperation.

There are areas for easy—there are areas for easy consensus, such as strengthening efforts to address financial crimes tied to the drug trade, and expanding bilateral efforts to combat arms trafficking from the U.S. to Mexico.

However, in other areas, we face potential obstacles to improving security cooperation, including a new Mexican law approved in December that appears to threaten bilateral cooperation and the linkages between drug traffickers and senior Mexican officials, as evidenced in the arrest of General Cienfuegos last year. I trust that upon your confirmation, you will give these issues your full attention, and keep the committee informed.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Chairman, yes, I will. This is an area where the administration is already engaged in high-level dialogues with Mexico on how we deal with these shared issues. And it is something that this committee obviously will be involved in. So I very much look forward to working with the administration and you to find the solutions.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, there is new data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, showing that in 2020 over 93,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in the United States, making it the most lethal year for overdoses on record, opioids, and fentanyl in particular pose highly lethal risk to our citizens, and the U.S. Government has to undertake every effort possible to address this tragedy.

We have to improve domestic to address illicit drug consumption, and we must expand efforts to combat the scourge of illicit production and trafficking of fentanyl and other opioids.

Data indicates that drug traffickers are increasingly shipping fentanyl precursors from China to Mexico, where drug trafficking organizations are producing fentanyl and trafficking it to the United States. Given the threat to U.S. citizens posed by illicit fentanyl trafficking, I also trust you will raise this issue at the highest levels with Mexican officials upon your confirmation.

Mr. SALAZAR. I will do, Mr. Chairman.

All right, Ms. Lewis, just a quick question for you, I have several, but I want to go to the ranking member. The informal review process for arm sales has existed for decades, and is a vital consultative relationship between this committee and the Bureau of Political Military Affairs to work through questions, issues, and concerns about proposed arm sales before they are formally notified to Congress.

That relationship suffered under the last administration, but it has improved dramatically under Secretary Blinken. Do I have your commitment to continue and deepen this consultation process with this committee?

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. The last administration infamously attempted to evade congressional oversight on multiple arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates by abusing authorities intended only for emergency. There was no serious argument that these sales qualified as emergencies under the law. And this episode I would expect should never be repeated.

Do you commit to only recommend using the emergency authorities under the Arms Export Control Act in true emergency situations, and not in an effort to evade Congress?

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

Senator Risch?

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

Secretary Salazar, as you transition into this I am wondering if you are familiar with the backlog of U.S. extradition requests that the United States has out to Mexico. My state in particular has one unique case, but others also. We are struggling a bit with this, and certainly you can blame part of it on COVID, but they also seem to drag their feet.

Are you familiar with this issue? And if not, I assume you will commit to get on board with it and see if we cannot move this along a little better.

Mr. SALAZAR. Yes, Senator Risch. I am generally familiar with the issue. I will say that, as Colorado attorney general, I worked closely with your attorney general, now Attorney General Wasden, to develop among the attorneys general the—at the state level with our counterparts in Mexico, the Article 4 prosecution units, which now exist in many of the attorneys Generals' offices around the country.

And so I would look forward to bringing that experience in terms of the bilateral relationship to make sure that the extradition process as under the Constitution, actually are implemented.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. And certainly, that work that you did is one of the things that is driving all of this, and that is that it is streamlining the process, but it is still not moving as fast as we would like to see it. So appreciate your thoughts on that. And I hope you will move forward.

Do you have any thoughts on the—the chairman made reference to this, a number of—I understand this is an internal issue within Mexico, but I think Americans were stunned to hear that in this electoral season, which they had their elections, I believe, on June 6th, and on the run-up to that there were 88 candidates assas-

sinated who were running. I mean this is—this is not a hallmark of a democracy by any stretch of the imagination. What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you, Senator Risch. We need to make sure that we have a strong democracy here at home in the United States, and also that in Mexico, they are a sovereign, and we respect their sovereignty, but they, too, have a shared interest in making sure that the violence, including the assassinations of the last—that occurred during the last election are something that does not happen.

And so it is something that I am certain we will be able to work with the Mexican Government as we enter into the dialogues between the United States and Mexico to address the issues of violence.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Ambassador Lu, I want to talk for a minute about our withdrawal from Afghanistan. I noted this just within the last 24, 48 hours, the Taliban met with the Chinese, a delegation from China. And I do not know what was on the agenda. I can about assure you what was not on the agenda was human rights, or treatment of the Uyghurs. What are your thoughts as far as China is now moving into that vacuum?

Ambassaador LU. Senator Risch, first thank you for your attention and interest in this important issue. I read with concern the same press articles about the Chinese meeting with the Taliban. I know that the countries surrounding Afghanistan, including China, share many of the same concerns we have about the deteriorating situation there.

I can assure you, if confirmed, I will do everything in my power to encourage those countries to be messaging directly to the Taliban that any recognition, any assistance, any support is contingent upon the Taliban's participation in a peace process that results in a negotiated political settlement, as well as respect for the progress that has been made over the last years in respecting minority rights, the rights of women and girls, and counterterrorism.

We do face the challenge of independent countries with different views in that region. But I firmly believe we share a common goal of having stability and peace in Afghanistan.

Senator RISCH. Thank you for your thoughts on that. My personal view, I think it is going to be a heavy lift trying to convince the Taliban that they will respect the gains that have been made in that country for women's rights. But it is our duty to press on with that. And I am encouraged to hear your words in that regard. I expect that that is what you will do.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member Risch, and congratulations to the nominees. What a wonderful panel.

I am particularly happy to see my longtime friend, Senator Salazar, and also Ms. Lewis, who is just a stellar part of the Senate family, it is always nice to see you, and a member of the Senate family on the other side of the dais, being nominated for a position for which their work entitles them. So congratulations to all of you.

Senator Salazar, let me start with you, with respect to one particular challenging aspect of the U.S.-Mexico relationship right now, and that is the targeting of the press and journalists in Mexico. I place a real high emphasis on protecting freedom of the press. Senator Graham and I introduced a bill in May, the International Press Freedom Bill to help make journalists safer overseas, and even create a special visa category to enable threatened journalists to find safe Haven in the United States.

I am really concerned about attacks on journalists. And for years Mexico has been the deadliest country in the world for journalists. Eight journalists were killed in 2020. Three have been killed so far this year. I took a CODEL recently with six members, bipartisan, in Mexico at the beginning of July. And we met with civil society groups and groups of journalists, and they really laid out their concerns about this.

Often the attacks are unsolved. They do not necessarily believe the attacks are by the Government, but they are often by criminal groups who are not then investigated. And they feel like there is a sort of impunity when it comes to analyses, and investigation, and certainly prosecution of these attacks.

There is a unit within the—equivalent of the Attorney General's Office in Mexico that is supposed to focus on these attacks, but it is widely criticized for solving one or two high-profile cases, and then letting others go unaddressed.

Should you be confirmed, and I will do all I can to make sure that you are, how might you address this particular issue to try to promote more safety for those journalists in Mexico?

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you, Senator Kaine, and thank you as well for your long-time service, and friendship, and guidance over the years on so many issues. You raise an issue that is of a very serious nature. Here in this country we all celebrate the fact that we have a First Amendment, and that we have freedom of the press. And it is something that is one of the most enshrined values of our society, and of democratic societies.

And so when those who are moving forward with the reporting of the news, the journalists that you speak about have to live under threat and are in a position where their reporting ends up getting trampled upon in some way, by whoever it does it. We have a shared interest with Mexico, and Mexico, from my point of view, does not want to tolerate what is happening now with some of the violence against journalists.

So I would commit to you, Senator Kaine, that I would work with the Mexican Government, at all levels to address this issue, and work closely with you to make sure that we are addressing this issue, not only in Mexico, but around the world.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Salazar. And here is a question for both Ms. Escobari and Senator Salazar, and maybe, Ms. Escobari, I will start with you.

The U.S. is going to host the Summit for the Americas which, it happens every three or four years, the timing is a little bit variable now as to whether it will be late '21 or early '22. The U.S. has not hosted it since 1994. I think it is a particularly important time to have the Summit for the Americas because of COVID, and vaccine

diplomacy, and backsliding democracies, and street unrests in many nations, so it is a really important time.

Mr. Chair, I really look forward to taking up the Brian Nichols nomination soon. I know it was held over today at Senator Cruz's request, but for the U.S. to host the Summit for the Americas without a confirmed State Department Head over the Western Hemisphere Division would be a challenge.

But as you think about participating, either from the USAID space or from—as Ambassador of Mexico and a Summit for the Americas, what would be the kinds of things that you would like to see on the agenda in that summit?

Ms. ESCOBARI. Thank you, Senator. And for your commitment to development through many years, and there are many priorities in the region. I think just to start I would say that COVID at times feels like priority one, two, and three, just because it has ravaged the region. The reasons are structural reasons why that has been the case, high urbanization, you know, informality, poor health systems, but really it has had not only the highest rates of deaths, but also the highest contractions of GDP anywhere in the world.

So the ability together with the region, with our help, with other allies internationally, to help in the procurement of vaccines, and in the distribution of vaccines, and eventually in the manufacturing of vaccines, and their safe and equitable distribution, I think would be at the top of that list.

Senator KAINE. I will submit the second half of the question to Senator Salazar, for the record, since I am over my time. But I appreciate the opportunity to visit with you all. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Chairman, might I just make a quick response to his question since I think it is relevant to most of the committee members?

The CHAIRMAN. Of course, of course.

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Kaine.

The Summit of the Americas to me represents a great opportunity for Canada, the United States and Mexico to really stand up for the North American Continent. So as I participate in that process, if I am confirmed by the Senate, expected on the agenda, we will be talking about economic issues, jobs, trade, economic opportunity, migration and how we deal with those issues, both from Canada and from Mexico, the borders.

I imagine we should be talking and we will be talking about security, given the high level dialogues that are going on. But in addition to that, the whole issue of conservation and environment. The shared borders are political borders, but the environment, and the ecology, transborder into Canada, transborder into Mexico are also very important. And so how we deal with that issue, in my view, should be a part of what we focus on, on the Summit for North America.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand we have Senator Young with us, virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, chairman. And welcome to our nominees.

Senator Salazar, when I served along our Southern Border as a Marine Corps officer in the mid-1990s, I saw first-hand the impact of the border crisis on our own country, and on those who were crossing our southern border.

Sadly, the scale of the crisis has become much greater today. This has indeed become what you might characterize as a 50-state border crisis. The vast majority of migrants I understand are not coming from Mexico, but from other countries further south. And that means that our neighbor, Mexico, is suffering from a migration crisis of its own, including securing its own southern border, addressing humanitarian issues, just like we are, and dealing with the economic stresses of a surging migration across their southern states.

The task is made even more challenging for that government, by the presence of predatory criminal trafficking groups in the region. How do you view Mexico's responsibility, Mr. Senator, inactions to secure its southern border? And if you can speak to the largest enforcement gaps where Mexico needs to focus to gain greater supervision over its southern border, I would really appreciate that.

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you very much, Senator Young. And thank you as well for your service.

You start from a reality that we are facing with—facing in this country and have faced for a very long time, you described the situation at the border back in the 1990s, when you were serving around the border. And the reality of it is that these issues have been with us for a very long time. And that really underscores an important role of this committee, and a very important priority for the President and for the Vice President.

And that is, long term, looking at the root causes of what is creating this problem. We have had these challenges for a very long time. And as you say, a very much affecting Mexico in terms of the migrant trail that we now see going across Mexico. So how we work with Mexico to develop a strategy that is effective both for the short term and the long term will be one of the highest priorities that I will take on as Ambassador to Mexico.

The Mexican Government has said clearly that—and are providing significant resources into securing their own Southern border. They have said, and are working on trying to help their—the Central American countries to the south. And so we need to succeed on that mission in a collaborative way with Mexico, so that we can address the problem for the long term.

And I commit, Senator Young, to working with you and the members of this committee to make sure we get that done.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you for that commitment. And I am appreciative of that. I know other members of the committee are as well.

Let me dive into a couple of specifics. There are networks of spotters, guides, informants all within Mexico that are so severely degrading efforts of the U.S. Border Patrol to try and secure that border, which I think is in the interest of course just not—not just of the United States, but also of our Mexican neighbor.

So if confirmed, what will you do to improve coordination and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican Border Patrol authorities?

Mr. SALAZAR. Senator Young, that underscores the importance of what the Biden administration is doing with Secretary Blinken and others, engaging in the high-level dialogue around security and violence issues. And we expect that we will spend a good amount of our time working on those issues. If I am fortunate enough to get confirmed by the United States Senate, I commit to you that that will be one of the highest priority issues.

Senator YOUNG. If you look at the surge that has occurred, really since earlier this year, I do understand this is an ongoing, long-standing problem, as I acknowledged from the beginning, but there has been a surge from the beginning of this year. Why does it appear that Mexico has been less willing to work with the Biden administration on this immigration, unauthorized, than the Trump administration?

Mr. SALAZAR. Senator Young, I think as Chairman Risch said a few minutes ago, we need to have a holistic approach to the issues in Mexico. It is more than just the issue of securing the border. We need to have a safe, secure, and efficient border. And Mexico shares that interest with us, we share that interest, the administration is working hard to develop a northerly and fair and humane system of migration into this country. And we need to make sure that we are working together with Mexico and with the U.S. Senate to address that challenge that has been around for a very long time.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. I thank you for your time. I thank you for your service. You did not answer my final question about why it appears that Mexico has been less willing to work with the Biden administration, apparently, on this issue than the Trump administration. So perhaps if you want to weave that into your future comments, you can. Thank you so much.

Mr. SALAZAR. I am happy to elaborate, Senator. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch; and congratulations to all of you on your nominations.

Senator Salazar, great to see you back, thanks for stepping up again. We have just five minutes. I am going to concentrate my time on situation in South and Central Asia.

Ambassador Lu, thank you for your terrific service as a member of the Foreign Service. You have made us proud.

I see that Secretary Blinken is now in India to discuss a wide range of issues that are important to the United States-Indian relationship, and to discuss our common interests in the Quad. And I support that initiative.

I would like to focus on the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And I welcome your statement that our relationship with Pakistan should be beyond the one-dimensional security lens. And you indicate that, if confirmed, you will build on our long history of friendship with Pakistan to advance human rights, religious freedom, counterterrorism cooperation, and an improved business environment for American investors.

And I look forward to working with you to achieve those goals. Of course, a key issue that impacts the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the surrounding area, is the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. And what that means. We had Ambassador Khalilzad before this committee in late April. And I just

want to see if you are on the same page with him as to the situation here. So I have a couple of very, yes/no questions.

First, do you agree that if Afghanistan descends into total chaos, even more than the conflict we see today, that that could mean an influx of thousands of refugees into Pakistan?

Ambassaador LU. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Okay. And do you agree that it is in Pakistan's interest to achieve stability and a political settlement in Afghanistan?

Ambassaador LU. Yes, absolutely.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And do you agree with Ambassador Khalilzad that in the Doha talks, Pakistan has facilitated the discussions between the Afghan Government and the Taliban?

Ambassaador LU. Yes. The African Government and the—certainly the Taliban and the United States, and I think we would like to see Pakistan do even more to facilitate Taliban's involvement in talks with other Afghan leaders. Yeah.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And would you agree that a political settlement is the only viable long-term path forward?

Ambassaador LU. A hundred percent, yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. So, one of the things that some of us were proposed on a bipartisan basis, Senator Young from Indiana, Senator Cantwell, myself, and others, is the idea to give all parties some kind of hope and a better economic future. People in Afghanistan, people in those border regions of Pakistan. And the idea is to establish what we call Reconstruction Opportunity Zones.

And the idea is that textiles and certain other goods that are produced and manufactured in those areas would have duty-free access to the United States. In order to establish the potential of a peace dividend and a good future for people in the region.

Ambassador Khalilzad said he supported the concept. I know the administration has been looking at it, had interest in pursuing this with you and the administration. Have you had a chance to look at their proposal, and what you think it could mean in terms of, you know, building a better future?

Ambassaador LU. Senator Van Hollen, first let me say huge thanks on behalf of my colleagues at the State Department. It is wonderful to have such a strong supporter of our relations with South Asia sitting in the U.S. Senate.

I believe strongly that enhanced economic integration is one of the keys to a durable peace in Afghanistan and throughout the region. I support a deepening of economic ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan. And if confirmed, I will work to expand trade and investment between these two countries and the United States. I believe we should be exploring all of the options on the table.

I am personally very interested in the legislation that you and other members of the Senate have proposed. And I look forward, if confirmed, to be providing technical feedback and dialogue to you and other members of the committee, from State Department, Department of Congress, and the USTR.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Do we have your commitment that you and the State Department would provide our staff with technical feedback on the legislation?

Ambassaador LU. Absolutely.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Now, just in closing, you know, I think we have established the important role Pakistan can play in trying to facilitate some kind of negotiated settlement in Afghanistan. I think all of us hope for the best, although we all understand that there are huge risks that we are witnessing right now. But I cannot understand why, given that importance, President Biden has not yet contacted directly and called the Prime Minister Khan. Can you explain that? It is a mystery to me.

Ambassaador LU. Senator, I completely agree with you, the dialogue is essential between the United States and Pakistan at a high level. As you know, there have been several high-level administration discussions with Pakistan to include multiple engagements by Secretary Blinken with the Pakistani Foreign Minister. These talks have focused on critical issues.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Ambassador, I do not—I am aware of all that but, as you know, the President has reached out to lots of foreign leaders. Given the importance of the future developments in Afghanistan to us, given the importance of the relationship with Pakistan, it seems to me a totally unforced error that the President of the United States has not made that phone call. There is no need for you to comment. I appreciate your service.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Ms. Chairman. Congratulations to each of the nominees. Senator Salazar, good to see you. I enjoyed visiting with you yesterday in my office.

As you know, I am increasingly concerned about what appears to be a deliberate and a systematic campaign by the Mexican Government to undermine American companies and especially American energy companies. Just a few weeks ago the Mexican Government gave its state oil firm, Pemex, a major-shared oil find, over a private consortium led by Houston-based, Talos Energy, which had first discovered the crude and had already invested nearly \$350 million in the project.

This decision was just one of a series of moves that the Mexican Government has pursued to roll back Mexico's historic 2013 energy sector liberalization reforms, which benefited both them and us. It goes without saying that these moves are in significant tension with both the Mexican Constitution and the USMCA.

On July 29th, I joined Senator Cornyn, Senator Inhofe, and sent a letter to President Biden highlighting these concerns. The next morning President Lopez Obrador dismissed the letter saying quote, "There is really no problem, and that the concerns are insignificant".

Let me start by asking you, do you agree with the Mexican President that the concerns about Mexico's tilt away from U.S. companies towards Mexican Government control of the energy sector towards open hostility to American companies, do you agree with the Mexican President that those concerns are insignificant?

Mr. SALAZAR. Senator Cruz, the rule of law is important, obviously important to us here in the United States, and to interests here that are investing in Mexico, and my understanding is the ambassador, the U.S. Trade Representative for the United States

has said that energy is covered under the United States-Canada-Mexico Agreements. So I think what we need to do is to raise these issues and make sure that we are protecting American investment in Mexico.

Senator CRUZ. So I am deeply concerned that right now the Mexican Government is feeling no meaningful pressure from the Biden administration to reverse its campaign, to undermine American energy firms, and so what I would like to ask you, is first of all, to what degree do you assess that the Mexican Government's moves in the energy sector are harmful both to them and us?

Mr. SALAZAR. Senator Cruz, I intend to work on these issues, if confirmed, and if I get your support, coming out of this committee, and on the floor of the Senate. You know, I was very involved in the negotiation of the Gulf of Mexico Transboundary Agreement with Secretary Clinton and with the support of President Obama. It was because of those Transboundary Agreements which, frankly, had resolved an issue that had been outstanding for some 50 years, that we have had the investment of the movement that we have had in the energy sector.

It is a complicated issue, but I intend to give it everything that I have to see how we can work with the Mexican Government that are sovereign, I respect their sovereignty, but we will work together to see whether we can find some solution to this challenge.

Senator CRUZ. So if you are confirmed as Ambassador, what specific steps do you expect to take to halt and reverse the Mexican Government's targeting of and discrimination against American energy firms?

Mr. SALAZAR. Yeah, we will work closely with my colleagues in the Biden administration, both in the White House, as well as within USDR, and the State Department, the Commerce Department, to see how we can address these issues.

Senator CRUZ. Do you think it is a problem?

Mr. SALAZAR. It is a problem, sir.

Senator CRUZ. Why is it that the Mexican Government seems to be moving away from American interest, and American priorities, and seems to be moving rapidly away from them in the last six months, during the Biden administration?

Mr. SALAZAR. Senator Cruz, there is a reality that I do not believe that the United States has engaged in the kind of bilateral relationship with Mexico during the last four years under the former administration, or even before that. And so what we need to do is we need to engage in the kinds of dialogues that will make sure that we are developing sustainable issues and a sustainable framework between the United States and Mexico.

We cannot afford to have our relationship with Mexico go into an abyss of dysfunction. And that is in the shared interest of both the United States and Mexico. And I commit to working not only with the President, and the Vice President, my colleagues in the State Department, Secretary Blinken, but with you, to see how we can come up with a kind of framework that will address the issues that this committee, both on the Democratic side, through Senator Menendez, and on the Republican side through Senator Risch, has an interest in dealing with, because if we do not deal with these issues in this very difficult time in the relationship between the

U.S. and Mexico, we will be facing some very significant issues on down the road.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And congratulations to each of you on your nominations, we appreciate your willingness to continue in public service.

I am going to give Senator Salazar a little rest for a minute, and start with you, Ms. Lewis. And again, we will miss you with the committee, but are delighted that you are going to be continuing to do your good work.

I think you were with the committee when we passed the Women Peace and Security Act, which I am very proud of. It has been a bipartisan effort. We have seen it starting to be implemented in the Department of Defense, I think less so in the Department of State.

And so can you talk about how you might be able to promote WPS goals and your strategy, if confirmed, to make sure that it is incorporated into global peace operations, and into international military education, conventional weapons, and how you would work with DOD?

Ms. LEWIS. Absolutely. First of all, Senator, thank you so much for your leadership on this issue. You really have been a guiding light for all of us.

In the Bureau of Political Military Affairs, there already has been a focus on this issue. One of the changes they have implemented is to make sure that in the training that we provide that as we look at working with individual militaries, we make sure that the representation of women is equal to the representation of women in their services when we train them. And I was pleased to learn about that. That would be something I would want to continue and grow moving forward.

I also think, as you look at all of the pieces of the work that the Bureau does, other issues such as the great work that the Bureau does demining, making sure that our civilians—civilians are protected from some of these landmines also has a great impact on local communities, but also specifically on women. And I know that is something that they take into consideration.

And then finally, as I said, in my opening statement, I know that really looking at the workforce inside the Bureau would also be something that would be a priority for me. If confirmed, I believe I would be the first woman in this position, but I also am aware that the Bureau has an incredibly talented pool already. And it would be my job to look closely at the unique makeup of this Bureau, which includes civil service, foreign service, also a number of people in uniform who come over, to make sure that we are also looking at the issue of women moving forward and really using the talents of women inside the Bureau.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I appreciate that. And look forward to working with you. And as you know, the importance of this initiative is that when women are at the table we are more successful, in conflict areas, in ensuring that success is spread to all elements of the community. So thank you.

Ms. LEWIS. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator Salazar, now that you have caught your breath. As you may be aware, New Hampshire has a real challenge with substance misuse. It has been an issue, not just in our state, but throughout the country. And we saw in 2020 that we had more overdose deaths, drug deaths than we have had any time in our history.

And one of the things that we know in New Hampshire is that many of the illegal substances that come into the United States come in through Mexico. And as I understand, there have been some tensions in recent years with Mexico in terms of how we can best work together to intercept and interdict those drugs. So can you talk a little bit about what your approach would be to addressing that with Mexico?

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you very much, Senator Shaheen, for the question. The issue of drugs north is something that has been around for a very, very long time. And that issue is exacerbated in part by what China is doing in Mexico with fentanyl.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Mr. SALAZAR. And all of those issues that are affecting the people of New Hampshire, and throughout the United States of America. It is a shared problem between the United States and Mexico, and I commit to working with the Mexican Government, and United States authorities to look for solutions to the problem.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I hope you will come back to this committee and let us know what resources we can help you with in order to continue to address that in a successful way.

Mr. SALAZAR. Thank you. I will.

Senator SHAHEEN. And Ambassador Lu, I have been very concerned about what is happening in Afghanistan now, as I am sure you are, as we look at the gains made by the Taliban. And one of my biggest areas of concern is what happens to the women and girls in Afghanistan. It has been one of the greatest successes of our efforts there, not only of the United States but the international community.

So tell me what you think, what more you think we can do as the United States to raise concerns about what is happening there in the international community? How can we support ensuring that the freedoms that women and girls, and other ethnic minorities in the country enjoy now, are not totally erased as the Taliban continue to make gains?

Ambassaador LU. Senator Shaheen, I was really moved by your tribute to Afghan women who were killed by the telephone in the hearing in May with Ambassador Khalilzad. I actually knew one of those young women. Fatima Khalil was a senior at the American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, the posting I just left. I spoke at her graduation, one of the brightest, most capable and self-confident people I have ever met in my life.

She had an American education, spoke fluent English, a worldview that was unlike anyone else. And she could have gone anywhere, done anything. And she decided what she really wanted to do is go back to her home country to work on human rights, and the rights of women and girls, and the Taliban killed her for that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Ambassaador LU. So it is personal for me, as I know it is for many of us who have worked in and around this region, I share your deep concern about what is happening now in Afghanistan, and the women and girls who are now at risk. I think it is critical that we continue our robust assistance to the programs that we have been running for years in Afghanistan that have promoted such progress over 20 years, training, education, legal services.

But now we have to expand that. We need to look at how we are caring for those who are at risk. And as we know, we are good at doing that all over the world, including in very difficult places, in Cuba, and Russia, and Iran, and North Korea, we need to up our game. And I know there are very smart people in the interagency right now, putting together plans about how we would use the U.S. refugee admissions process, or emergency humanitarian relief to try to mitigate some of these risks. And we look forward, if confirmed, to working with you and other members of Congress to put together that plan.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I look forward to that. My time is up, but I just want to relay to you what I heard from some of the women leaders in Afghanistan who were urging us in the United States to have our President, our Vice President, all of our high-level officials speak out in the international community about what the Taliban are doing and raise international awareness and condemnation for what is happening there. So I hope you will agree to do that if confirmed.

Ambassaador LU. Absolutely.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. And thank you for your leadership in this disregard. We appreciate your clarity and voice on this all the time.

Some final questions, there is a vote going on.

So, Ms. Lewis, I do not think you would get away that easy. When the Department of Defense through existing authorities, and seeking new ones, has assumed an outside role in providing security assistance to foreign countries, providing foreign assistance is, and in my view, always should be the purview of the Secretary of State and the State Department conferred by diplomats in the service of our foreign policy.

I want to ask you. Will you use all means at your disposal, if confirmed, to conduct oversight on U.S. security assistance for foreign countries, and foreign persons, regardless of which U.S. agency is providing it?

Ms. LEWIS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And if confirmed, will you work closely with the committee to prevent any further loss or duplication of state security assistance authorities?

Ms. LEWIS. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. All right, one last question. You fully support the Taiwan's Relations Act, is that correct?

Ms. LEWIS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And U.S. support for Taiwan self-defense?

Ms. LEWIS. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to treating Taiwan the same as every other state in the Arms Process Sale?

Ms. LEWIS. Yes, sir, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Lu, let me ask you. At this point as the security environment grows more precarious in Afghanistan, what leverage, what efforts can we realistically take to support members of civil society? Senator Shaheen just talked about Afghan women and girls, and I echo that, but also civil society. And what measures can we take to take care of those partners who worked for the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, CIPI, Internews and IFAS, they do not qualify for special immigrant visas, but they created extraordinary service at all times?

Ambassaador LU. Absolutely. Mr. Chairman, in my first job in the State Department, I worked in the American Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan. In one of my jobs, I was an admin officer, was to support our staff of our embassy in Kabul, our local staff. And they had long since stopped working in the embassy. The embassy had been closed for three years at that point.

But we maintained the commitment to our people. And that commitment went on for 12 years until we reopened our embassy, we paid their salaries, we took care of them. It is critical that we take care of the people who have shown loyalty, and service to us. Whether that is our own employees, people who have been interpreters and translators for the Military and the State Department, or it is folks that have worked in civil society supporting our programs. These were dangerous jobs even then, and they are even more at risk today.

I hear you on, the fact that they would not qualify for special immigrant visas. I do think there is a discussion within the inter-agency and with the Congress about how to safeguard these people at risk. It is a broad category, and we are looking at the full range of possibilities. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Process, humanitarian parole, humanitarian emergency assistance.

I welcome, if you, sir, or your staff have ideas about how we can make sure we are showing loyalty to those people, who have risked their own safety and their lives to support our common goals. I think it is not something we are going to get done alone as an administration. It will take the administration, plus Congress, and international partners to safeguard all of these people.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that. We do, and we will share them. But, you know, these entities that are promoting the core values through the different roles they play, are important to be able to preserve, not only in this case, but send a global message that when you do this work, whatever it is in the world, however dangerous it is, that you in fact will be backed up. And I think that that is incredibly important.

One last question for you, Ambassador, I have been very involved in supporting labor rights in Bangladesh. I appreciate the efforts since the Rana Plaza disaster, but there is a lot of work that remains to make sure, that Made in Bangladesh does not mean made in the blood of Bangladeshi workers.

Do I have your commitment to press the Bangladeshi Government to allow unions to register and function without repression?

Ambassaador LU. Yes, you do, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

And then finally, Ms. Escobari, I do not want you to think nobody cares about what you are doing. We do a great deal. I think you have extraordinary experience in the development aside of the role that you are going to play and you even referenced it in your remarks. And so I will not dwell on that, but I do want to say that part of what USAID is, it has to do with, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, is the democracy side of it. And sometimes at AID, not under Samantha Power, but in the past I have feared that we have lost the democracy side of the USAID mission.

When I see protests in Cuba, when I see what is happening in Haiti, when I see what is happening in Nicaragua, and elsewhere, I see a tremendous backsliding on the question of democratic governance and human rights. Can you speak a little bit as to how you will see your mission at AID in that regard?

Ms. ESCOBARI. Senator, thank you for your question, and for always speaking very forcefully on behalf of democratic rights and accountability in the region.

I do see good governance as a prerequisite to progress on everything else. Corruption is corrosive for many reasons, but in particular because it undermines citizens' beliefs that governments can deliver for them. USAID's efforts have focused on the—you know, in supporting civil society, human rights defenders, free press, all of these efforts reinforce citizens' demand for democracy.

And on the supply side, as you know, there are also great efforts on just improving the rule of law and making it more available. And if confirmed, I will double down on those efforts, and also pursue other new approaches that that can address the recent backsliding. That is very particular in key—in key countries that you mentioned.

The CHAIRMAN. As I said to Administrator Power, I am keen on this issue, and I have both put in language support to help the Agency as well as in the appropriations process, so we look forward to working with you with that.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me thank all four of our nominees for their willingness to serve and continue to serve our country. And I thank your families.

I wanted, particularly, to acknowledge and thank Jessica Lewis for her extraordinary help to me and to our committee. You have the diplomatic skills to take on this new assignment. If you can handle the egos of the members of this committee, you can handle any challenge that you might confront in the State Department. So we wish you only the best.

It is good to see my former colleague, Ken Salazar, before us. We always enjoyed his company in the Senate, and look forward to his service to our Nation in Mexico.

I am going to ask one question to Mr. Salazar and Ms. Ms. Escobari. And that is to deal with corruption.

Mexico is a great neighbor of ours. They have a serious problem on protection of human rights, particularly journalists, they have a corruption issue. Our hemisphere, unfortunately, has a systemic corruption issue in many democratic states. And I know the President has identified corruption as a national security core interest.

We have in this committee passed additional resources to deal with corruption.

I just really want to underscore the importance of this subject in your portfolios. I had a chance to talk to Mr. Salazar yesterday, or the day before, and we had a, I think, a good conversation on this subject.

So, Ms. Escobari, if you could just share with us your strategies for how you are going to deal with countries that have free elections, but have elected—have not been able to deal with systemic corruption, which has led to significant erosion of human rights and stability in these nations.

Ms. ESCOBARI. You know, as I mentioned in my last comments, I do think good governance is a prerequisite for progress on everything else. In the last quarter of the 20th century, Latin America actually saw the greatest gains in liberal democracy, but these gains were not accompanied with the investments in human capital, physical capital to really create a middle class. And now we have political and economic elites that remain entrenched, corruption permeates everyday transactions. And unequal growth has left citizens frustrated. And this has become really fertile ground for authoritarian and populous leaders.

So I think that focusing on the ability of these states to deliver the goods and services, but also to support civil society, to hold those governments accountable to deliver is the kind of ingredients that we need to strengthen rule of law at a time that all the pressures on these economies make them increasingly fragile.

Senator CARDIN. One of the areas that we really need to improve upon, is to build a capacity in our embassies, in each of these countries, to be able to identify the weaknesses of the countries in which they are representing the United States in, and to be able to work with our different agencies as to how we can work with the country to make significant progress on any corruption issues.

It seems to me that is one of the areas that should be a priority of the position you have been nominated for. And just again, we welcome your commitment to really work to make a major difference in our capacity in each of these countries.

Ms. ESCOBARI. Yes. You have my commitment. And I think it is really beneficial that USAID has a presence and has had a presence in these countries for many years, and can add that perspective to regional embassies.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

That brings this nominations hearing to a close. The record for the hearing will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, July 29th, which is tomorrow, I would urge members to get their questions in for the record today.

I would urge the nominees, if you are in receipt of questions for the record that you answer them fully and expeditiously so that the committee can consider your nominations before a business meeting.

With the thanks of the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. KENNETH LEE SALAZAR BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Violence and Crime in Mexico

Question. Violence and the influence of organized crime in Mexico have reached highly concerning levels. In the lead up to the June midterm elections, over 100 politicians were murdered, 36 of whom were running for office. These trend lines and the serious implications for our national security mandate that we must find ways to strengthen U.S.-Mexico security cooperation.

- Would you please lay out your priorities for strengthening our security cooperation with Mexico?

Answer. I understand U.S.-Mexico security cooperation remains a top national security priority, and neither country can successfully confront transnational organized crime alone. It is critical that efforts to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, address illicit drug production and trafficking, reduce impunity and corruption, and strengthen the rule of law receive the full cooperation of the Mexican Government. If confirmed, I look forward to comprehensive conversations with the Mexican Government on how we can best align our security and law enforcement efforts, so this cooperation deepens and works for the benefit of both our nations. I will also not hesitate to raise any concerns that I believe to be obstacles to our bilateral cooperation.

If confirmed, I also look forward to engaging in a review with appropriate U.S. and Mexican officials to ensure specific programs are effective in addressing our shared challenges, and will look for opportunities with Mexico to make additional adjustments to our programming where necessary and appropriate to reflect changes in conditions and priorities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. KENNETH LEE SALAZAR BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In April, the Supreme Court of Mexico unanimously ruled in favor of the U.S. position concerning a long running trade dispute with Mexico involving fresh potato exports. If confirmed, would you make it a priority to ensure that the regulatory process in Mexico reinstates and maintain market access for U.S. fresh potato exports and U.S. potato growers in general?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my top priorities as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico will be securing and maintaining fair market access for U.S. businesses in Mexico. Agricultural trade between the United States and Mexico is an important component to our overall trade relationship, and as Ambassador, I would work with the U.S. Trade Representative and the Department of Agriculture to ensure U.S. agricultural products are not disadvantaged.

Question. American investors in Mexico are experiencing significant and growing regulatory challenges under the administration President Lopez Obrador, including increasing difficulties in getting permits for a range of activities. These actions are contrary to Mexico's obligations under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement. If confirmed, would you make it a priority to ensure that Mexico abides by its obligations under the USMCA?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the U.S. Trade Representative and other U.S. agencies to ensure Mexico fully adheres to its commitments under the USMCA. Mexico is one of the United States' most important trading partners and represents a crucial market for U.S. businesses. As Ambassador, one of my top priorities would be ensuring the full implementation of the USMCA.

Question. Mexico has a broader definition of refugee than the United States and the 1951 U.N. Refugee Convention. For example, Mexico recognizes a right to asylum based on "generalized violence; foreign aggression; internal conflicts; massive violations of human rights; and other circumstances leading to a serious disturbance of public order." As a result, many would-be asylum seekers arriving in Mexico from Central America could qualify as refugees in Mexico. If confirmed, do you commit to ensure the Government of Mexico enforces its own legal obligations towards would-be asylum seekers arriving in Mexico?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador to Mexico, I will work with colleagues at the State Department and international organization partners to continue to support ef-

forts to improve access to protection, humanitarian relief, and local integration opportunities for displaced persons and vulnerable migrants in Mexico. I understand that, through its international organization (IO) partners, the Department supports humanitarian assistance for refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants. This assistance includes support for local integration for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as helping Mexico to strengthen the capacity of its asylum system.

Question. In June 2020, the Treasury Department designated a number of Mexico-based individuals and entities that were part of a sanctions evasion network supporting the corrupt regime of Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela. Earlier this year, there were reports that at least three Cuban-flagged oil tankers designated by the Treasury Department for transporting Venezuelan oil to Cuba have been serviced in the Mexican port of Veracruz, in apparent violation of U.S. sanctions. If confirmed, do you commit to ensure robust understanding and enforcement of U.S. sanctions policy in Mexico?

Answer. Mexico can play a critical role in helping to address some of the most complex issues in the region pertaining to democracy, governance, human rights, and the rule of law. Building an effective U.S.-Mexico partnership requires ensuring Mexico has a fulsome understanding of all U.S. policies, including those related to sanctioning authorities. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Government of Mexico fully understands U.S. sanctioning authorities and policies. I will also commit to working with Mexico to advance democratic and human rights priorities throughout the region.

Question. Mexican transnational criminal organizations are producing increased quantities of fentanyl and cartels, such as the Sinaloa and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel, are the primary trafficking groups responsible for smuggling fentanyl into the U.S. from Mexico. If confirmed, do you commit to encourage Mexico take meaningful actions to tackle transitional criminal activities throughout its territory, including the production and trafficking of fentanyl and other illicit narcotics? Do you commit to periodically review International Narcotics and Law Enforcement programs in Mexico to ensure they are focusing on meaningfully reducing the flow of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids to the U.S.?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to encourage Mexico to take meaningful actions to tackle transnational criminal activities throughout its territory, including the production and trafficking of fentanyl and other illicit narcotics.

If confirmed, I also commit to periodically reviewing INL programs, and all U.S. Government interagency counterdrug efforts in Mexico, to ensure they are focused on meaningfully reducing the flow of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids to the United States.

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, do you commit to ensuring effective law enforcement cooperation with Mexico?

Answer. Yes. I understand U.S.-Mexico security cooperation remains a top national security priority. It is critical that 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 to ensure our law enforcement cooperation deepens and works for the benefit of the United States and Mexico.

Question. In the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Mexico was identified as Tier 2 due to its overall increasing efforts but still not fully meeting the minimal standards for eliminating trafficking. 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. Trafficking in persons (TIP) is a heinous crime perpetuated throughout the region that must be addressed through a holistic approach. The Department of State supports various programs that help develop the capacity of investigators and prosecutors at the state and federal levels to combat this crime. The State Department also supports efforts to prevent human trafficking and assist victims through support for shelters.

If confirmed, I pledge to support the administration's policy to counter TIP in Mexico, including the implementation of the Operations Group on Human Smuggling and Human Trafficking that Vice President Harris announced during her June visit to Mexico, and the recommendations from the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report. I will work with my staff to identify areas where we can make headway in

state- and federal-level prosecutions, including prosecutions of forced labor crimes and complicit officials, and in significantly enhancing comprehensive protection services for trafficking victims. I plan to discuss bilateral cooperation on the issue in high-level discussions and under a potential Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue. I will also engage Mexico on its commitments under USMCA's labor chapters, particularly as they pertain to forced labor.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Mexico was described as having instances of intolerant behavior towards religious minorities. 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. I understand there were some instances of intolerance towards religious minorities highlighted in the 2020 Religious Freedom Report; however, Mexico has been a strong partner in promoting religious freedom in its own country and the region. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Office of International Religious Freedom to promote and protect religious freedom in Mexico. I pledge to work with the Mexican Government, religious leaders and communities, and civil society to ensure the country maintains momentum on assuring religious freedoms and address the instances where those freedoms may be threatened.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Mexico was identified as having committed severe human rights abuses, including impunity for government and military employees, corruption, torture by security forces, violence against journalists and human rights defenders, and more. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. The promotion of human rights is central to U.S. national security and prosperity. The United States uses a wide range of diplomatic tools to advance respect for human rights, including working directly with the Mexican Government and civil society. USAID and the Department of State have implemented projects to address various human rights concerns, including forced disappearances, violence against human rights defenders and journalists, and impunity, as well as public diplomacy programs to support and train human rights defenders.

The Department promotes accountability for human rights violations and abuses by implementing human rights-related sanctions and visa ineligibilities, and Leahy Law assistance restrictions. Consistent with U.S. law and Department policy, prior to furnishing assistance to security force units and individuals, all candidates are subject to Leahy vetting to assess if there is credible information of gross violations of human rights. The Department also submits reports consistent with the requirements of the relevant annual appropriations act.

If confirmed, I plan to utilize all the available tools at my disposal to promote human rights in Mexico and support all programs being implemented. I will seek to work with the Government of Mexico to ensure human rights is a central tenet in high-level security discussions, as well as look to relaunch the annual Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue, which last met in December 2017.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

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 activist undermines freedoms of expression and association, as well as regional security.

I am committed to supporting efforts to promote respect for human rights and press freedom. Through USAID, the U.S. currently 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. My understanding is that we also build and support professional networks and provide training to equip journalists to face challenges and professional risks specific to Mexico. Working with the Committee to Protect Journalists, we support training on journalist safety, investigative journalism guidelines, and best practices to increase transparency and accountability.

If confirmed, I will work to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and reduce impunity. I will continue calls for Mexican authorities to investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes against journalists and human rights defend-

ers wherever they occur, and will actively engage with civil society organizations working these issues.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. KENNETH LEE SALAZAR BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. If confirmed, how will you address human rights concerns with the López Obrador administration and ensure that U.S. funds are not supporting policies or entities that are committing abuses?

Answer. The promotion of human rights is central to U.S. national security and prosperity. The United States uses a wide range of diplomatic tools to advance respect for human rights, including working directly with the Mexican Government and civil society. USAID and the Department of State have implemented projects to address various human rights concerns, including forced disappearances, violence against human rights defenders and journalists, and impunity, as well as public diplomacy programs to support and train human rights defenders.

The Department promotes accountability for human rights violations and abuses by implementing human rights-related sanctions and visa ineligibilities, and Leahy Law assistance restrictions. It is my understanding that, prior to furnishing assistance to security force units and individuals, the Department conducts Leahy vetting to assess if there is credible information that such units committed gross violations of human rights. The Department also submits reports consistent with the requirements of the relevant annual appropriations act.

If confirmed, I plan to utilize all the available tools at my disposal to promote human rights in Mexico and support all programs being implemented. I will seek to work with the Government of Mexico to ensure human rights are a central tenet in high-level engagement, as well as look to relaunch the annual Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue, which last met in December 2017.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with civil society groups, independent journalists, and human rights defenders that have been targeted by the Government?

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 activist 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, we currently support Mexico's National Protection Mechanism for Journalists and Human Rights Defenders and work 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. We also build and support professional networks and provide training to equip journalists to face challenges and professional risks specific to Mexico. Working with the Committee to Protect Journalists, we support training on journalist safety, investigative journalism guidelines, and best practices to increase transparency and accountability.

If confirmed, I will work to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and end impunity. I will work with the Department to continue calling on Mexican authorities to investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes against journalists and human rights defenders wherever they occur, and actively engage with civil society organizations working these issues.

Question. How can Congress help advance human rights concerns, including violence against journalists?

Answer. Respect for human rights is fundamental, and a free and active press is an integral part of a healthy democracy. Congress can help advance administration priorities on human rights in Mexico by ensuring the Department and USAID maintain appropriate resource levels for security and development assistance, which include programming on human rights, the protection of journalists, and development of Mexico's capacity to investigate and prosecute aggressions against journalists and human rights defenders.

I would also recommend Congressional members engage with Mexican authorities whenever possible to discuss human rights issues. If confirmed, I would invite Congressional delegations to come to Mexico to observe the human rights situation on the ground.

Question. Will you commit to working with me to advance the Combating Global Corruption Act and to raising the profile of efforts to fight international corruption as a U.S. national security priority, particularly in Mexico?

Answer. I understand Department of State priorities include supporting Mexico in addressing public corruption, transparency, and the rule of law. U.S. assistance programs train justice sector operators; establish, improve, and certify internal affairs departments; increase transparency and accountability through culture of lawfulness and ethics programs; and promote civil society and media participation. I understand all Mexican security officials receiving training or other assistance are subject to Leahy Law human rights vetting. I am also aware that the Department considers human rights, ties to organized crime, and corruption when implementing foreign assistance programs, as well as assesses the applicability of visa ineligibility authorities to target officials involved in significant corruption or gross violations of human rights.

If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress to assess all potential tools that can be deployed to help in the fight against international corruption, as well as discuss potential areas of cooperation on anti-corruption in high-level engagements.

Question. Do you see opportunities to work with the Organization of American States to further our anti-corruption agenda?

Answer. The OAS has a unique and vital role and mandate in the Americas: to promote a hemispheric commitment to representative democracy, human rights, and development and security cooperation. More than any other multilateral organization, the OAS today is the premier forum through which the member states can work together to improve the lives of our citizens and bring to life the democratic principles articulated in the OAS Charter and the landmark Inter-American Democratic Charter.

I understand the OAS's Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACC) adopts a comprehensive approach in which 34 member states work together to fight corruption. There are also opportunities in the OAS to work with countries to review legal frameworks and institutions through the Follow-up Mechanism for the Implementation of the IACC (MESICIC).

With the Lopez Obrador administration having made anti-corruption a central tenet of his administration, if confirmed, I will work to engage with Mexico to ensure we use every available tool at the bilateral and multilateral levels to address corruption.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address corruption concerns with the Lopez Obrador administration and ensure that U.S. funds are not ending up with corrupt entities and individuals?

Answer. The United States supports Mexico's efforts to address corruption, transparency, and the rule of law. President Lopez Obrador has made anticorruption a focal point of his presidency. If confirmed, I will work with the Mexican Government to further discussions on anticorruption efforts and will continue to support U.S. anticorruption programming that assists Mexican Government and civil society efforts to counter corruption at federal, state, and local levels. If confirmed, I, and the Department, will continue to ensure all Mexican security officials receiving training or other assistance are subject to Leahy Law human rights vetting. Furthermore, I will continue to ensure we assess and mitigate the risk of corruption before providing assistance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. KENNETH LEE SALAZAR BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. What is your view of the current situation in Cuba?

Answer. I have been watching the historic protests in Cuba and the Cuban Government's troubling response very closely. I can assure you that Cuba is among this administration's highest priorities. If confirmed, I will carry out the administration's aims to support peaceful protesters; to denounce human rights abuses, including violence, detentions, and Internet shutdowns and censorship; and to urge countries—even those opposed to U.S. sanctions—to support the Cuban protestors' demands for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These are universal values every country should support.

Answer. If confirmed, will you press the Mexican Government to support the bipartisan U.S. policy on Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will carry out the administration's aims to denounce human rights abuses, including violence, detentions, and Internet shutdowns and censorship; and to urge countries—even those strongly opposed to U.S. sanctions—to support Cuban protestors' demands for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Question. In your opinion, how has implementation of the USCMA been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer. While the COVID-19 pandemic limited the possibility of in-person collaboration, I commend our interagency colleagues and their counterparts in Mexico and Canada for finding ways to advance the USMCA implementation process despite the challenges. For example, Mexico took significant steps to undertake its herculean task of labor reform. While the recent report shows there is still work to be done, what was accomplished in establishing the labor courts, especially under the circumstances, is laudable. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work with the interagency and our Mexican counterparts to continue the implementation process and address the areas where COVID-19 has complicated our joint efforts.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take as Ambassador to ensure that economic cooperation with Mexico under USMCA supports the growth of American businesses?

Answer. Since the USMCA entered into force July 1, 2020, I understand it has proven a valuable tool for improving trade relations between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. As Ambassador to Mexico, I will work with the State Department, the U.S. Trade Representative, and other U.S. Government agencies to continue building areas for cooperation and ensure full regulatory compliance with the agreement. I will also prioritize engagement on labor issues and support USTR's efforts through the Rapid Response Mechanism to ensure U.S. businesses are on an equal footing.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JESSICA LEWIS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How do you see the relationship between making the United States “the security partner of choice” and ensuring that U.S. security partners respect human rights and international humanitarian law, especially when using U.S.-origin defense equipment?

Answer. The President and Secretary Blinken have stated that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy and have made it clear that the United States will cooperate with allies and partners where our priorities align and not shy away from defending U.S. interests and American values where they do not. 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, when appropriate, provide training and education to enhance professionalism and adherence to human rights standards.

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.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that human rights concerns are given equal weight as other considerations when assessing potential arms sales?

Answer. I understand the Administration is working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the Administration's foreign policy priorities, including the respect for human rights and the rule of law. Promoting the protection of human rights in our arms transfer process bolsters our own national security, as well as that of our partners. If confirmed, I will review the arms transfer decision-making process to ensure human rights concerns are given full weight in arms transfer decisions, in accordance with the CAT Policy. I will also seek to assist partner forces in taking steps to comply with international law, build security sector governance capacity, and protect human rights.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JESSICA LEWIS BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Does the current global amount, allocation, and geographical distribution of State Department security assistance sufficiently account for the strategic challenges facing the United States and its allies and partners?

Answer. State ensures that its security assistance strategically advances U.S. diplomatic and defense relationships, and that investments in foreign security forces advance U.S. foreign policy and national security interests, within the parameters set by the law and Congress. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that State's security assistance investments continue to focus on addressing strategic challenges facing the United States and its allies and partners, to ensuring our assistance and diplomatic efforts are the foreign policy tool of first resort, and to continuing to engage with Congress on this important issue.

Question. Does the Department have sufficient visibility into Department of Defense security cooperation activities so that State can guide planning for those activities, not just concur or object prior to implementation?

Answer. As I understand it, there is a coordination process that has been developed between the Departments of State and Defense, including State's participation in fora hosted by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and combatant commands, as well as the annual State-Defense Joint Security Sector Assistance Review. This process provides key State stakeholders the opportunity to participate in planning for security assistance activities prior to receipt of formal concurrence requests in order to ensure both departments' programs are complementary and mutually supportive. If confirmed, I commit to work to improve mechanisms that allow State to ensure that Defense's security assistance supports U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives.

Question. Do you commit to maintaining the tiered review process, and ensuring that this committee retains its role as the body in the Senate charged with reviewing the policy implications of potential arms sales?

Answer. I commit to maintaining the tiered review process, and I will work with the Committee in its role as the body in the Senate reviewing potential arms sales.

Question. Does the Department and its interagency partners sufficiently prioritize and expedite sales essential to the vital national interests of the U.S. and its most critical allies?

Answer. I understand the Department's top priority, working together with the interagency, is to advance vital national interests, including those shared by our allies, within the framework of existing laws. If confirmed, I will continue to seek efficiencies to improve the interagency process and work closely with our partners and allies to streamline vital capabilities for our critical partners that support U.S. foreign policy and security interests, and commit to continuing to engage with you and your office on this important issue.

Question. Does the Department spend sufficient time and attention in working with critical allies to develop requirements together to address those capabilities most needed for our shared interests? Does the Department have the personnel, especially at posts, to build and maintain the relationships required to jointly develop requirements?

Answer. The Department, working with colleagues at the Department of Defense, staffs embassies with Security Cooperation Officers (SCOs) who serve under Chief of Mission authority as well as their respective Combatant Command. These SCOs form the "first line" as key interlocutors with foreign Defense Ministries and services and are responsible for the development and maintenance of professional working relationships to advance U.S. strategic objectives and jointly develop requirements. If confirmed, I will work with the Department and DoD to ensure these vital positions are adequately trained and staffed to meet our foreign policy objectives.

Question. Do you support changing the arms sales process to require a resolution of approval for sales? Why or why not?

Answer. It is my sense that arms transfers are a key part of our security cooperation with allies and partners—and it is our relationship with allies and partners around the world that gives the United States a critical edge over our competitors and adversaries. If confirmed, I will examine this matter and consult with the Committee.

Question. Do you support restricting the arms sales emergency authority to those articles and services that can be delivered within 60 days?

Answer. I understand Congress's concern that the emergency authorities within the Arms Export Control Act be used to respond only to genuine emergencies. If confirmed, I would consult with subject matter experts in the Department of State and Department of Defense to identify whether there would be any negative policy or logistical implications to such limitations before giving any specific proposal my full support.

Question. Should the United States seek the return of U.S.-origin defense articles if issues emerge with end use by the foreign country or international organization customer?

Answer. I understand that there are many legal issues and other more practical matters of logistics and finance involved in such an option. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our foreign partners only use U.S.-origin defense articles and services for the purposes for which they were provided, and that the Department considers the full range of consequences if a partner cannot or will not protect U.S.-origin defense articles; if confirmed, as well, I commit to continuing to engage with Congress on this important issue.

Question. Do you support imposing a new requirement for Leahy-like vetting for all U.S. arms sales?

Answer. The President has made it clear that respect for human rights must be at the center of U.S. foreign policy, which includes policy decisions on arms transfers.

If confirmed, I will review the arms transfer decision process to ensure it adequately considers human rights and the risk of civilian casualties when making such decisions, including preventing U.S. origin items from being transferred to foreign security force units that have committed gross violations of human rights. I will also insist on adherence to our agreements on the use of U.S.-origin defense equipment by our allies and partners, compliance with both the laws of armed conflict and respect for human rights, and will consider the full range of consequences should violations occur. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with Congress on this important question.

Question. If confirmed, how will you balance vital U.S. national interests when we have values-based disagreements or human rights concerns with partners? In your opinion, do security partnerships give us more influence when we have human rights disagreements with partners, not less?

Answer. The President and Secretary Blinken have stated that human rights must be at the center of U.S. foreign policy. If disagreements with our partners arise, I believe we must address them openly and have frank conversations when necessary. The United States will cooperate with allies and partners where our priorities align and not shy away from defending U.S. interests and American values where they do not.

Answer. Among the many benefits of U.S. security partnerships around the world is an opportunity for us to influence the training, doctrine, and professionalism of partner armed forces in ways that enhance adherence to human rights standards and build security sector governance capacity. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure we take every opportunity to leverage our security relationships to enhance human rights around the world.

Question. Should the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) have a veto over arms sales?

Answer. DRL plays an integral role in the arms transfer decision process, and their input is essential to ensuring human rights are considered.

If confirmed, I will review the arms transfer decision process and work closely with DRL to ensure human rights concerns are given full weight in arms transfer decisions.

Question. Do you support reversing the Obama Administration's Export Control Reform initiative, and making large categories of articles FMS-only once again?

Answer. As you are aware, the export control reforms initiated under the Obama Administration were completed, and the categories of items from the munitions list moved to Department of Commerce control are now being regulated under the Export Administration Regulations. Separately, if confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to work closely with our DoD colleagues to maintain an appropriate FMS-Only list that guarantees the successful development of partner capabilities and the protection of U.S. technology. If confirmed, I would be glad to continue to engage with Congress on this issue.

Question. Many Americans believe U.S. allies free-ride off of U.S. military commitments. If confirmed, how would you plan to ensure sufficient burden-sharing by our allies?

Answer. I support President Biden's call to reinvigorate our alliances. Security simply costs more in today's complex environment, and, if confirmed, I will work to reframe the burden sharing conversation at NATO to increase focus on capabilities, readiness, and force generation, in addition to defense spending. In that same spirit, when appropriate, I believe the United States should seek fair and equitable cost-sharing arrangements with our partners. We saw how this diplomatic approach secured quick results in the new multiyear cost sharing agreement with the Republic of Korea that was signed in April. If confirmed, the PM bureau, under my guidance, will continue to impress upon our allies that only with greater mutual investment in defense can we ensure our alliances are able to adapt quickly to a changing security landscape with the necessary capabilities and military readiness.

Question. Is being a signatory to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons consistent with being a U.S. ally?

Answer. While the United States understands and shares the desire to advance nuclear disarmament goals, we do not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). I believe the TPNW is incompatible with U.S. extended deterrence relationships that are still necessary for international peace and security, and it may reinforce divisions that hinder the international community's ability to work together to address pressing proliferation and security challenges. All NATO Allies share our opposition to the TPNW, and the U.S. position on this issue has spanned administrations. Seeking to ban nuclear weapons through a treaty that does not include any States Parties that possess nuclear weapons will not reduce nuclear arsenals.

Question. What is the Department doing to expedite delivery of critical capabilities to those priority allies and partners most in danger from growing threats from the People's Liberation Army?

Answer. There is no doubt that the People's Liberation Army's growing capabilities pose significant challenges to our allies and partners in the region. PM prioritizes security cooperation activities, including arms sales and security assistance to bolster our allies' and partners' capabilities to secure their land and maritime borders and increase Maritime Domain Awareness, security, the rule of law, and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. If confirmed, I will support efforts to increase interoperability with partners, and force projection and posture in the region. Empowering our partners and allies in these ways serves to deter more aggressive PRC military behavior in the region.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to encourage Taiwan to invest in its own defense, and to acquire capabilities most suitable for defense against the Peoples Liberation Army?

Answer. The United States has sold nearly \$30 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. Taiwan should focus on an asymmetric defense concept and prioritize modern, resilient, and cost-effective approaches. As I understand it, our expanding security cooperation, which is calibrated to meet the threat from the PRC, seeks to encourage and support Taiwan in developing those capabilities. As part of that cooperation, if confirmed, I will encourage Taiwan to spend on defense an amount commensurate with the growing threat it faces and to prioritize the appropriate capabilities.

Question. How can we best capitalize on Japan's increasing focus on Taiwan, and its efforts to improve its own defensive capabilities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to working closely with allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Indo-Pacific region. I believe Japan can be a critical partner in that respect. For the first time since 1969, a U.S.-Japan Leaders' statement referenced the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait; in addition, Japan's annual defense white paper stressed this year that "stability of the situation around Taiwan is important, not only for the security of our country, but for the stability of the international community." If confirmed, I will commit to exploring opportunities to collaborate with Japan to reinforce peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Question. If confirmed, 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. Advancing defense cooperation in Southeast Asia and supporting our defense partners throughout the Indo-Pacific remains critical to ensuring our national interests in safeguarding the rules-based international order and global peace and prosperity. If confirmed, and as I committed at my nominations hearing, I look forward to consulting extensively and meaningfully with Congress as we advance U.S. objectives in the Indo-Pacific.

Question. Do you consider the Philippines to be a strategically important ally of the United States? Please explain your position.

Answer. The U.S.–Philippine alliance is a relationship founded on shared strategic interests, shared history, culture, and strong connections between our nations. As Secretary Blinken has stated, the United States stands with the Philippines in the face of the PRC's provocations, pressure and unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea. I understand that we share the Philippines' concerns regarding the PRC's problematic and coercive activity in the South China Sea, and that we will continue to work with our Philippine counterparts through bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. At the same time, I take seriously the matter of human rights abuses in the Philippines and, if confirmed, will work with State to consistently raise this as an issue of great concern with their government.

Question. The United States military currently cooperates with the Armed Forces of the Philippines on counterterrorism and maritime security. Multiple members of Congress have proposed limiting or cutting off U.S. security assistance to the Philippine military because of concerns over human rights abuses. Do you believe that taking such a step is in U.S. interests?

Answer. A longstanding treaty ally, the Philippines continues to be a critical partner in the Indo-Pacific on an array of issues. I take seriously the matter of human rights abuses in the Philippines, and my understanding is that we consistently raise this as an issue of great concern with their government. When violations have occurred, the United States works with the Armed Forces of the Philippines to promote accountability for violators. My understanding is that PM does not provide assistance to the Philippine National Police. If confirmed, I will ensure that any provision of security assistance is closely aligned with the Administration's bilateral and regional foreign policy objectives, remains in compliance with the Leahy Law and maximizes human rights training in military-to-military security cooperation activities.

Question. The United States military currently cooperates with the Armed Forces of the Philippines on counterterrorism and maritime security. Multiple members of Congress have proposed limiting or cutting off U.S. security assistance to the Philippine military because of concerns over human rights abuses. Do you believe that taking such a step would improve human rights conditions in the Philippines?

Answer. I understand State consistently underscores the importance of respect for human rights and accountability for any violations to all levels of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and civilian leadership. Maintaining our security assistance relationship can be an important way the United States can continue to engage on the human rights agenda. If confirmed, I will ensure the provision of security assistance is closely aligned with the Administration's bilateral and regional goals, remains in compliance with applicable law, including the Leahy Law, and maximizes human rights training in military-to-military security cooperation activities.

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 specifically on the U.S. interests it serves.

- 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 allies and partners to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region, build interoperability, bolster U.S. force projection, ensure freedom of navigation and overflight, uphold rule of law, counter transnational crime and terror organizations, respond to natural and humanitarian crises, and reassure our allies and partners of U.S. commitment to the region, empowering them against coercion

and malign influence and enabling them to play an effective role in global peacekeeping. Security cooperation can provide opportunities to instill U.S. values in support of preserving 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 preferred security partner and helping to ensure they can protect and advance 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. Does the TPNW present a threat to the integrity of the NATO alliance, and the security of NATO member states?

Answer. All NATO Allies share our view that the TPNW is inconsistent with the Alliance's nuclear deterrence policy, is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, risks undermining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and does not take into account the current security environment. NATO has made several statements opposing the TPNW, most recently in its June 2021 Summit Communiqué. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our Allies carefully consider the impact on their security and the Alliance prior to making any decisions relating to the TPNW.

Question. If Egypt takes receipt of Russian Su-35s, what impact do you anticipate it will have on U.S. security sector assistance to Egypt?

Answer. If confirmed, I will join my colleagues at the Department in urging the Government of Egypt to refrain from new major Russian arms purchases, including Su-35 fighter aircraft, which risk triggering Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) Section 231 sanctions and would damage our bilateral security sector cooperation and assistance. While it is too early to prejudge the Administration's response to the scenario you outlined, if confirmed, I will work with my State colleagues to fully implement CAATSA, and I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this matter.

Question. Can you commit to advocating for strong U.S. support to the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO) in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula?

Answer. As I understand it, the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO) plays an integral role in maintaining security and provides a framework for an enduring military-to-military relationship between Egypt and Israel. So long as that is necessary and cooperation continues between the two partners, if confirmed, I will advocate for strong U.S. support for the MFO.

Question. The Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) was founded in 2005 and over the last 15 fiscal years, 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, if confirmed, to continue to integrate women into GPOI's work in both peacekeeping troops and in leadership positions in peacekeeping missions.

- 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 support PM's work through GPOI to increase the meaningful participation of women in peace operations by promoting efforts to: encourage partners to increase recruitment, training, and deployment of women at all levels of peace operations—including in leadership and decision-making positions; incorporate gender topics into training for all peacekeepers; and invest in gender-responsive upgrades at partner training centers.

Moreover, if confirmed, I will direct PM to pursue activities through GPOI that enhance and expand upon existing SEA prevention and accountability training incorporated into pre-deployment training, as well as National Investigation Officers training.

Question. Do you commit to ensuring the State Department advertises the GPOI programming as part of our assistance to U.N. peacekeeping efforts?

Answer. Yes, I do. In fact, I understand there will be a particularly valuable and timely opportunity to do so as we approach the U.N. Peacekeeping Ministerial in December.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JESSICA LEWIS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. How do you see the relationship between making the United States the security partner of choice and ensuring that U.S. security partners respect human rights and international humanitarian law, especially when using U.S.-origin defense equipment?

Answer. The President and Secretary Blinken have stated that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy and have made it clear that the United States will cooperate with allies and partners where our priorities align and not shy away from defending U.S. interests and American values where they do not. 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, when appropriate, provide training and education to enhance professionalism and adherence to human rights standards.

If confirmed, I will support assistance to help ensure our partners' 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.

Congressional Review of Arms Sales

Question. During the previous administration, I have been concerned that congressional review periods have been bypassed for certain arms sales and the administration refused to respond to congressional inquiries regarding those sales.

- What steps will you take to address these concerns?

Answer. Given my experience on the committee, I very much understand the importance of Congressional oversight, whether in terms of the need to respond to inquiries, to respect and maintain both the formal and informal Congressional review processes, as well as the value that Congressional perspectives bring to the Executive Branch's own policy deliberations. If confirmed, I will respect the role of Congress in the arms transfer process, will adhere to all statutory requirements, and will ensure the Bureau is responsive to Congressional requests for information.

Question. In your experience working in Congress, what observations have you made about factors that may hinder Congress from effectively exercising its oversight role over the arms sales process?

Answer. In addition to the absolute prerequisite of Executive Branch cooperation with Congress on these matters, I would note that arms sales are authorized under different sections of U.S. law and may involve equities under the jurisdiction of the Senate's Foreign Relations, Armed Services, Appropriations, and even Banking Committees.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JESSICA LEWIS BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Recent protests against the Government in Colombia have resulted in more than 40 reported deaths and thousands of injuries. In some cases, protests had turned violent and erected blockades to prevent the distribution of food and medicine to communities in need. Colombian military personnel and law enforcement had been deployed for crowd control and have broken up these blockades. The Colombian Government has been proactive in investigating instances of alleged human rights abuses committed by security personnel.

- In your opinion, to what degree will the human rights conditions on Colombia's FMF program evolve based on state security forces' response to the mass demonstrations that began in late April 2021?

Answer. I understand that Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for Colombia supports efforts to strengthen the appropriate role of the Colombian military, including to provide aviation, riverine, and maritime security, in a democratic society. All

FMF for Colombia is provided consistent with the Leahy Law, and therefore human rights are taken under consideration. If confirmed, I will continually review the impact and effectiveness of our foreign assistance programs, as well as opportunities to augment and reinforce human rights-related components.

From 2008 to 2017, previous administrations had bundled Taiwan arms sales notifications together, announcing multiple notifications on a single day, which led to extended periods of time between arms sales announcements. Since September 2018, this approach changed, with the administration announcing one or two Taiwan arms sales packages at a time, with shorter gaps between notifications.

Question. Do you agree that the former approach had significant downsides, particularly with regard to strategic planning and signaling U.S. support for Taiwan?

Answer. I understand the concern with previous approaches, and commit to moving requests for transfers of defense articles upon receipt of each request. If confirmed, my overriding goal will be to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable it to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our “one China” policy. U.S. security cooperation with Taiwan is calibrated to meet the threat from the PRC and ensure we fulfill our commitments to Taiwan, as reflected in the Taiwan Relations Act.

From 2008 to 2017, previous administrations had bundled Taiwan arms sales notifications together, announcing multiple notifications on a single day, which led to extended periods of time between arms sales announcements. Since September 2018, this approach changed, with the administration announcing one or two Taiwan arms sales packages at a time, with shorter gaps between notifications.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to further improve upon the approach developed since 2018, and ensure that the United States maintains a regularized and robust arms sales process that addresses Taiwan’s defense needs as expeditiously as possible?

Answer. I recognize the serious and growing threat that the PRC poses to Taiwan, and the urgency of Taiwan improving its self-defense capabilities. If confirmed, I will support moving requests for transfers of defense articles upon receipt of each request. This is identical to the arms sales process used for other partners.

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, nor should the impact of arms sales be judged on total value alone. Taiwan should focus on an asymmetric defense concept and prioritize modern, resilient, and cost-effective approaches. Our expanding security cooperation seeks to encourage and support Taiwan in developing those capabilities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DONALD LU BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How many Afghan allies who have or are now applying for SIVs will the U.S. relocate?

Answer. The Department of State remains committed to Afghan partners who assisted the United States over the past two decades in Afghanistan. On July 29, 2021, the first relocation flight arrived in the United States with 221 Afghan special immigrant applicants, including 70 minors. A second flight arrived on August 2, 2021 with 181 SIV applicants. The Department is leading a worldwide effort to continue relocating eligible applicants and their families over the course of the next several weeks. There are approximately 20,000 Afghan principal applicants at some stage of the SIV application process, but about half of these applicants need to take action and provide legally-required documentation before the U.S. Government can begin processing their case and determine their eligibility for consideration for an SIV. It is my understanding that the U.S. Government intends to support all SIV applicants who are determined to be eligible for the program.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to press the Bangladeshi Government to allow unions to register and function without repression?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to press the Bangladeshi Government to allow unions to register and function without repression, so that they may continue their important work to try and improve working conditions in Bangladesh.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensure that a labor attaché is sent to our embassy in Dhaka this year?

Answer. Knowing the importance of having a labor attaché and how one can support the improvement of labor conditions in country, I commit to ensuring that a labor attaché is sent to Embassy Dhaka as soon as possible. The Department is working with the Department of Labor to establish and fill this important position.

Question. If confirmed, do I have your commitment that USG assistance for labor unions will not diminish under your leadership?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to work with interagency stakeholders to support labor unions. Their work has been vital to improvements to strengthening safety improvements in the ready-made garment sector, and we will need to continue to support their work so that labor conditions can improve in all industrial sectors in Bangladesh.

Question. What are the prospects for the Indian Government to further diminish arms sales from Russia?

Answer. In recent years, India has taken significant steps to reduce its defense cooperation with Russia and increase cooperation with other partners, especially the United States, through increasingly sophisticated joint military exercises, increasing defense purchases, and deepening implementation of interoperability agreements. If confirmed, I will urge India to continue to turn away from major defense equipment purchases from Russia, and continually convey our concerns that Russia does not share the common strategic interests and values underpinning the U.S.-India partnership.

Question. Beyond the purchase of the S400, are you concerned that the Indian Government will seek to make further significant purchases of Russian arms?

Answer. In recent years India has increasingly diversified its defense purchases away from Russia. I will continue to support and encourage U.S. defense sales with India and urge all of our allies and partners to avoid purchasing new major defense equipment from Russia.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to engage with the Indian Government on the challenges faced by the Sikh farmers community in Punjab and their ability to peacefully protest now and in the future?

Answer. The farm laws themselves are an issue for the people and Government of India. However, peaceful protests are a hallmark of any thriving democracy as the Indian Supreme Court described on a case regarding the farm protests. If confirmed, I will underscore our strong support for the right to peacefully protest with the Indian Government.

Question. If confirmed, do you have a plan to advocate for effective accountability in Sri Lanka?

Answer. Accountability and impunity for human rights abusers continues to be an issue of great concern in Sri Lanka. If confirmed, I will continue to seek a commitment from the Sri Lankan Government to credibly address longstanding human rights cases and respect civil society, members of ethnic and religious minority groups, and human rights defenders. Additionally, I will seek to utilize available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or Global Magnitsky sanctions, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals.

Question. Given the concerns that several Senators have raised on security cooperation with Sri Lankan officials who have been implicated in human rights abuses during the war, do you commit to consult closely with this committee and staff on any arms sale or future security cooperation effort with Sri Lanka?

Answer. The Biden administration takes very seriously the need to incorporate human rights into our engagements with Sri Lanka, including our security and law enforcement cooperation objectives. Our long-term strategic interests are best served by a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Sri Lanka. If confirmed, I commit to closely consult with the committee to ensure that in any engagement with or equipment transfer to the military, law enforcement, counterterrorism or security officials, we continue to emphasize respect for democratic governance, human rights, accountability, and rule of law.

U.S. Businesses in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

Question. Several U.S. businesses have expressed concerns about the rule of law their ability to operate in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Do I have your commitment to work with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on these cases as they happen to ensure that U.S. businesses are not treated unfairly?

Answer. Promoting United States investment in Central Asia is a key pillar of the U.S. Central Asia Strategy, and facilitating U.S. exports and investments supports the G7 Build Back Better World initiative. If confirmed, I will work with our host government partners to improve the business and investment climate in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and I will work with those in federal agencies and private industry to address issues when they arise. I will also work closely with the committee to ensure you are apprised of key developments.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DONALD LU BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In your view, has India taken significant steps to reduce its defense cooperation with Russia? What are some of the most notable steps? Other than the S-400 purchase, what else concerns you about the Indian-Russian relationship?

Answer. In recent years, India has taken steps to reduce its defense cooperation with Russia and increase cooperation with other partners, especially the United States, through ever more sophisticated joint military exercises, increasing U.S. defense purchases, and concluding defense enabling agreements, such as COMCASA. If confirmed, I will urge India to continue to diversify away from Russian arms and reiterate Russia does not share the common strategic interests and values underpinning the U.S.-India partnership.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our security relationship with India in the short-term? What about the longer-term?

Answer. U.S.-India defense ties have expanded significantly over the past two decades, as evidenced by the conclusion of five major defense enabling agreements and over \$20 billion in bilateral defense trade.

In the coming years, the United States will look to increase the interoperability of our forces through additional logistics cooperation, expanded defense information sharing, increasingly complex multi-service exercises with like-minded partners, maritime domain awareness, peacekeeping, and joint development of defense technologies in line with India's status as a Major Defense Partner of the United States. In addition, the United States will look to deepen defense cooperation in important domains such as emerging technologies, space, and cyber.

Question. What will you do to work with the Indians on boosting COVID vaccine manufacturing in the region and ensuring these vaccines are available for export to support dire global vaccine needs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Indian Government to expand COVID-19 vaccine production to make vaccines globally available and affordable both through the Quad Vaccine Partnership and bilaterally. If confirmed, I will coordinate with the Indian Government to address global medical supply chain constraints that limit necessary inputs for vaccine production.

Question. What role do you see India playing in the Indo-Pacific region in light of the growing challenges from China?

Answer. The United States and India share a vision of a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The United States welcomes India's emergence as a leading global power and its role as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues and the interagency to encourage India to continue its important contributions toward capacity building, maritime security, economic development, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief in the Indo-Pacific.

Question. What will be your main priorities in cooperating with India through the Quad and cooperating with India in Southeast Asia?

Answer. The Quad aims to build relationships with partners that share our values, perspectives, and approaches to regional and global challenges on a range of political, economic, and security issues. If confirmed, I plan to work with my counterpart in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and interagency to encourage Quad partners, including India, to expand our robust cooperation on priorities including maritime security, counterterrorism, COVID-19 vaccine production, and climate change. If confirmed, I will work with the Indian Government to reaffirm our strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality, enhance our coordination in the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum, and look forward to exploring ways of working with India in the Mekong sub-region and across the Indo-Pacific.

Question. Do you commit to making the resolution of the Lincoln House issue a priority with India, and to directing the U.S. Ambassador to India to do the same?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will also consult closely with Members of Congress on this issue.

Question. The Indian Ministry of Defense is also involved in this issue. Do you commit to ensuring relevant U.S. Department of Defense officials are briefed on the issue, and to ensuring they raise it with their own counterparts as well?

Answer. Yes.

Question. In 2016, the Obama administration labeled India a “major defense partner,” a designation supported by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Some have called for an amendment to the Arms Export Control Act to facilitate more defense sales to India and help solidify it as a Major Defense Partner. Does the Biden administration support such a step?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to consult closely with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, the Department of Defense, and Congress on this and other steps to advance our defense and security partnership with India.

Question. The Obama administration launched the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative with India to promote joint co-development and production of defense systems. Thus far, that objective has not been realized. To what do you attribute this?

Answer. The U.S.-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) has been a valuable mechanism in building linkages between the U.S. and Indian defense establishments. While some DTTI working groups have faced challenges, many, such as the Aircraft Carrier Technologies Working Group, have resulted in productive technical exchanges. In 2019, the United States and India concluded a DTTI Industry-to-Industry Framework to promote greater collaboration with the private sector.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department of Defense to advance progress under the DTTI.

Question. Will the Biden administration pursue greater cooperation under DTTI with India? If so, what will be the administration’s key priorities?

Answer. The U.S.-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) has catalyzed exchanges on a range of technologies, including related to aircraft carriers and small unmanned aerial vehicles. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with my Department of Defense counterparts to further deepen cooperation with India through DTTI.

Question. Will the Biden administration advocate for India’s membership on the U.N. Security Council and in the Nuclear Suppliers Group?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with my counterparts. The administration will review reform proposals and work closely with Allies and partners at the U.N. to ensure that UNSC reforms are undertaken in such a way as to enhance the efficiency of the Council, promote U.S. values, and leave unaltered the veto power. Moreover, I intend to work across the interagency to continue U.S. support for India’s membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Question. How will the Biden administration cooperate with India on 5G, digital security, and other emerging technology issues? Please be specific.

Answer. The Biden administration has prioritized cooperation with India on a host of emerging technologies issues, both bilaterally and through the Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group. The United States and India, along with other Quad partners, intend to focus on the coordination of technology standards development and the joint efforts to maintain the integrity of standards-setting bodies, cooperation on telecommunications development, including the diversification of equipment suppliers, and convening dialogues on the security of technology supply chains, especially microelectronics and critical minerals.

Question. Pakistan played a positive role in bringing the Taliban to the table, but has publicly refused to host U.S. CT [Counter-Terrorism] assets and has been unable to force the Taliban back to the table. What is an appropriate role for Pakistan in Afghanistan? Is it time for a change in U.S.-Pakistan policy?

Answer. I believe Pakistan has an important role in Afghan peace negotiations. I understand the Department continues to make clear that progress toward a political settlement in Afghanistan, and collaboration on regional stability efforts, including against terrorist groups, are vital elements of an expanded U.S.-Pakistan relationship. If confirmed, I will also encourage Pakistan and Afghanistan to improve economic ties and expand trade, which will help build incentives to reap the divi-

dends of peace. Further, if confirmed, I will also work to expand trade and investment between the United States and these two countries to help enhance broader regional economic integration.

Question. The Taliban continues to seize more territory and threaten population centers while our embassy footprint is increasingly confined to Kabul. How do we provide adequate oversight of taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan? Absent issuing OFAC waivers, what should the policy be about assistance to Taliban-held areas?

Answer. The Department continues to monitor U.S. Embassy Kabul's staffing to ensure the necessary flexibility and sufficient resources to advance U.S. interests, including supporting efforts to reach a political settlement and supporting Afghanistan's stability. Maintaining an appropriate diplomatic presence is essential to ensure that we can support our Afghan partners and that we have the staff to monitor our assistance and programming. Both the Department and USAID have been developing scenario-based contingency plans to adjust U.S. assistance programming as the operating environment warrants, including to ensure it continues to advance U.S. interests and is consistent with U.S. law and policy.

Question. What is the administration's strategy for processing the large volume of pending SIV applications from Afghanistan given the deteriorating situation on the ground?

Answer. The Department of State remains committed to Afghan partners who assisted the United States over the past two decades in Afghanistan. For that reason, the Department has taken steps to address the large volume of pending Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications from Afghanistan. The Department is currently working to relocate SIV applicants who are in the advanced stages of processing to either the United States or other third country locations while we complete their special immigrant applications. We began relocating SIVs and their families to Fort Lee in Virginia in late July and appreciate Congress' generous support in this regard. We have also increased our consular staffing levels to augment our processing capacity across all stages of the SIV application process, and we are currently examining ways to make the application process more efficient. The Department looks forward to working with Congress on this issue and appreciates your attention to this matter.

Question. Efforts to combat trafficking in persons vary country to country in the South and Central Asian region. Some made significant progress during the 2020 reporting period. How can you, if confirmed, bolster these efforts?

Answer. Trafficking in persons is a serious crime which affects all countries. If confirmed, I will press South and Central Asian states at the highest levels of government to build on foundational improvements to prevent vulnerability of populations to trafficking, including marginalized individuals; increase prosecution of traffickers; and protect victims of trafficking. I will continue to seek opportunities for collaboration between the United States and regional partners to increase government anti-trafficking capacity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly increased vulnerability to trafficking around the world. I will continue to prioritize close collaboration with other key Bureaus within the Department of State and the international and local NGO community to address this important concern.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report and the 2021 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report, some countries in the South and Central Asian region were identified as intolerant of religious freedom or having a significant hand in repressing religious minorities. 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 regionally?

Answer. Respect for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law are fundamental principles of the United States. Intolerance of religious freedom and the repression of religious minorities anywhere is deeply concerning and counter to U.S. values, including in the South and Central Asian region. If confirmed, I will work with the Office of International Freedom and other relevant Bureaus in the Department of State and the larger interagency community to bolster religious freedom in South and Central Asia through work with the NGO community, direct engagement with governments and other avenues as appropriate.

Question. The protection of fundamental human rights remains a priority in the region. If confirmed, how will you direct the bureau to engage with civil society to bolster these rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press our partners at the highest levels to recognize the valuable role of civil society in building open, inclusive, and just societies by protecting fundamental freedoms. Civil society—particularly women-led civil society organizations and human rights defenders. Civil society, when respected and allowed operational space, can be a positive force in addressing many of the most pressing issues in the region, particularly those that affect vulnerable communities, and we will continue to seek opportunities through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance to support their work, develop their capacities, and strengthen their role in their communities. We will press our partners to engage in the legal reforms needed to protect free speech, assembly, association, and religion as vital components of a free society.

Question. How will U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan affect our interaction with Central Asia nations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to bilaterally engage our Central Asian partners on counterterrorism and security priorities, including as related to Afghanistan, in support of their independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. I would also continue to utilize the C5+1 regional diplomatic platform for the United States and the Central Asian states to expand regional security cooperation and increase connectivity between Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Question. Do you believe that the nations of Central Asia will prove to be useful partners in helping to stabilize Afghanistan? If so, how would you expect to see these nations act to maintain peace and security in the region?

Answer. The nations of Central Asia have been supportive partners of the United States in reducing terrorist threats in the region and working to support stability in Afghanistan. If I am confirmed, I intend to continue working with the five Central Asian nations to improve security and stability in the region through such as efforts as improving border security, countering the flow of narcotics, sharing information across borders, as well as assisting refugee populations and increasing economic connectivity.

Question. As the U.S. leaves Afghanistan, do believe that the U.S. should begin to interact with the Central Asian nations differently? If so, how?

Answer. For 30 years, the United States and the five Central Asian nations have built shared commitments to peace, prosperity, and security in the region. I believe our consistent engagements to strengthen those commitments should continue as the United States maintains its support for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Question. How can we counteract Chinese attempts to gain a foothold in the region's economy?

Answer. While most South and Central Asian countries seek to maintain positive relationships with the PRC and look towards Beijing for development financing and trade, they do not view their relationships as zero sum and actively seek to diversify their economic relationships to avoid becoming too dependent on Beijing. In Central Asia, for example, the C5+1 regional diplomatic platform strengthens countries' independence, sovereignty, and economic connectivity, in turn increasing their negotiating power in relations with the PRC and other regional actors. Investments in exchanges and increasing capacity in higher education are also mechanisms that allow the United States to maintain influence with South and Central Asian Governments and society, and positively shape their economic development and empower local communities. I will work intensively with U.S. Government investment institutions such as the Development Finance Corporation, our representatives to multilateral development institutions such as the World Bank, IFC and, and like-minded 3rd country bilateral partners, and U.S. private sector partners to develop creative options to enable the economies in the region to develop in a healthy, balanced manner.

Question. To what extent does the BRI lead to the expansion of China's institutions and legal norms in Central Asia? How can and should the U.S. work to counter that growth?

Answer. From its inception, the land-based "Belt" portion of BRI prioritized developing China's economic and logistical linkages to its western neighbors in Central Asia and it continues to be a region of focus for the initiative. In addition to rail infrastructure investments, BRI projects have since expanded to include energy projects, port developments along the Indian Ocean, and information communications technology (ICT). While countries in the region look to BRI to meet their devel-

opment financing needs, the opaque nature of BRI financing leads to increased corruption and elite capture, creates unsustainable debt, and limits countries' flexibility in their bilateral relationship with Beijing. In cooperation with our international partners, the private sector, and the interagency, we are promoting alternatives to PRC financing and advancing regional economic development, including through the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and also working to improve transparency.

Question. In Central Asia, China has already begun funding and building the Digital Silk Road. Telecommunications infrastructure, surveillance networks, and other modernizing technologies are being lent and sold to Central Asian Governments. These give China a foothold in the Governments and societies which will be a platform for Beijing to spread influence. How can the United States compete and counter Chinese influence in the Central Asian tech space?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage our Central Asian partners to work with trustworthy vendors for their Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and services. As part of a long-term approach that sets Central Asia on a path toward working with trusted partners, we will continue looking for opportunities to promote global and regional programs, such as the World Bank's Digital Central Asia and South Asia (CASA); ways to further bilateral cooperation in the tech space; and programs to foster greater ICT transparency. I will work with the Development Finance Corporation and other USG partners to develop creative approaches to the challenge, and collaborate closely with the Congress on the matter.

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? Could such a thing be accomplished in Central Asia?

Answer. We face competition from China and Russia like never before, and must recommit ourselves to robust engagement with the countries of Central Asia to support their sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity in the face of many challenges. Over the past two decades, China has supplanted Russia as the region's largest trade and investment partner, though Russia remains an important security partner for many of the countries in the region, and there are signs that Moscow is wary of losing influence. Through our own bilateral and multilateral engagement within the region, we are working to build Central Asian countries' resilience and independence from malign influence from any and all external actors of concern.

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. Turkey's abuses have spilled into Central Asia, where the Governments have been pressured to scrutinize and close down Gulenist schools. The most recent abuse involved Turkey's kidnapping and illegal extradition of a Turkish-born Gulenist teacher in Kyrgyzstan. How can the U.S. better use its influence to prevent protect Central Asian nations from undue Turkish influence and work to protect those who may be subject to persecution once back in Turkey?

Answer. U.S. diplomacy in Central Asia, including through the C5+1 diplomatic platform, balances against regional over-reliance on foreign powers and addresses a core objective of our Central Asia strategy: protecting the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Central Asian states. If confirmed, I will work in concert with colleagues from EUR and the rest of the Department of State to continue efforts to promote the rule of law and respect for human rights in Central Asia bilaterally, regionally through the C5+1 platform, and multilaterally through the OSCE and other fora. I will remind Central Asian partners at the highest levels that requests for extraditions or transfer of individuals across international borders must happen transparently and with respect for the legal process. I will also continue to remind Central Asian partners of their non-refoulement obligations to prevent individuals from facing the threat of torture or mistreatment abroad. The Department of State is in direct contact with the spouse of the missing Turkish schools director and is working to ascertain what happened to him.

Question. What do you believe the role of sanctions should be in the creation and execution of U.S. foreign policy?

Answer. I believe the sanctions tools provided by the various sanctions authorities are critical for the creation and execution of U.S. foreign policy. I have seen firsthand the powerful impact our sanctions have when formulating policies and diplomatic strategies. When used thoughtfully to further U.S. and like-minded countries' democratic and human rights goals, these tools can dissuade, deter or even stop the

behaviors they were designed to address. Well-developed sanctions advance our bilateral relationships and help our regional partners.

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. I believe the sanctions imposed on Russia since 2014 were effective in raising the economic cost for Russia to pursue aggressive and hostile activities. These sanctions also deterred many of Russia's traditional trading partners from continuing to do business as usual.

Question. What secondary impacts do you believe U.S. sanctions on Russia have had on Central Asian economies and politics?

Answer. Most countries in Central Asia have longstanding trade relationships with Russia and have faced secondary economic impacts from U.S. sanctions on Russia, including effects related to Russia's devaluation of its currency.

Question. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment was passed in 1974 and mandated sanctions on the Soviet Union until it allowed Soviet Jews the option to leave the USSR. Despite the fact that all Jews who wish have long since left the post-Soviet Central Asian nations, they all still remain cursorily sanctioned under Jackson-Vanik. Practically, what effect has the continued existence of Jackson-Vanik sanctions (waived though they may be) have on the nations who remain thus labeled?

Answer. The Jackson Vanik (JV) Amendment imposes trade penalties on non-market economies that restrict emigration. When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, the amendment was applied to all of the newly independent states. However, since 1998, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan have received and maintained Presidential Waivers to the JV restrictions, based on the Department of State's semi-annual certification that they are fully compliant with the Amendment's requirements for free and open emigration; in other words, they are granted Normal Trade Relations (NTR) status, but it is not permanent (PNTR).

Given their longstanding compliance with the law, JV is no longer relevant for these countries. PNTR status would allow Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to compete fairly with the rest of the world when forming trade relationships.

Question. Do you believe that the Jackson-Vanik sanctions on the Central Asian nations should be repealed without condition? Should they only be repealed when the nations in question make further human rights concessions?

Answer. The denial of PNTR under Jackson-Vanik is an ongoing bilateral irritant, and one that limits our trade potential in the region. Trade discrimination under laws such as JV is technically prohibited under the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), of which both Kazakhstan and Tajikistan are members. Uzbekistan is in the process of joining the WTO in 2021. The Kyrgyz Republic was granted PNTR in 2001 when it acceded to the WTO. Restoring PNTR to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan now would reassure them that the United States supports peace and economic development in the region. Ending the applicability of the Jackson-Vanik amendment to these countries would allow the United States to grant them PNTR and would advance our goals of promoting economic growth and regional connectivity. The Department's position is that it should be repealed based on the countries' compliance with the terms of the original legislation.

With regards to human rights concessions, the Department of State uses more effective and targeted tools—such as the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, the Human Rights Report, and the Religious Freedom Report, to apply leverage and motivate reform. Withholding PNTR would not be as effective as these existing mechanisms.

Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia

Question. The State Department just released the 2021 Trafficking in Person's Report, and while some Central Asian nations showed improvement in the past year, there are still serious issues with the fight against trafficking. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan were removed from the Tier 2 watch list, however Tajikistan and Turkmenistan remain at Tier 3.

- Please outline what steps you will take to address this issue with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to help them make improvements.

Answer. Tajikistan demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period and was ranked Tier 2 in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, but many improvements in anti-trafficking remain to be seen. If confirmed, I will work with the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons

to press the Government to increase efforts to combat trafficking, including by adopting and implementing standard operating procedures for identifying trafficking victims and referring them to care. I will also encourage the Government to train law enforcement to screen for signs of trafficking among vulnerable groups.

While some progress has been made, trafficking in Turkmenistan remains a serious concern. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Turkmenistan to implement its new National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, as well as continue to press for further action to end government policies or actions that compel or create pressure for the mobilization of forced labor, to include eliminating the cotton and silk production quotas and mandatory participation in public works. I will work with regional partners, including international organizations, to encourage the Government of Turkmenistan to grant independent observers full access to monitor cotton cultivation and cease the harassment, detention, and abuse of individuals for documenting labor conditions.

Question. As Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan have all recently made key improvements in fighting the trafficking of persons, what steps do you believe the U.S. can and should take to help those nations maintain that success and make further improvements?

Answer. Though the tier ranking upgrades in Central Asia are promising, human trafficking must be fought tirelessly and efforts must always increase. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the positive trajectory of efforts in the Central Asian region by increasing coordination among states on anti-trafficking efforts, including through the C5+1 platform and partnering with international and regional partners to increase government capacity to protect victims, prevent trafficking among vulnerable populations, and increase prosecution of traffickers across all states. However, many countries risk overemphasizing a multilateral approach out of a misconception that trafficking requires cross-border movement. In reality, all these countries could do more to prevent, detect, and address trafficking within their own borders. I will therefore work to ensure Central Asian countries do not pursue multilateral approaches to the exclusion of their own urgently needed policy reforms and improvements, particularly in regards to legislation, steps to eliminate state-sponsored forced labor, and the identification and protection of victims among vulnerable or marginalized groups and those subjected to forms of trafficking that do not involve cross-border movement.

Question. In Central Asia, media freedom is still severely limited due to both the active efforts of governments to silence dissent, and the lack of legal protections afforded to independent journalists. Abuse, imprisonment, torture, and killings of reporters are not uncommon. Free media is all but eliminated in some of these countries. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, how will you address this problem in Central Asia and make clear that we will not allow the abuse and imprisonment of journalists anywhere in the world?

Answer. Central Asia must take tangible steps to enshrine fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and the press, into laws that enable an environment of political pluralism. If confirmed, we will encourage the region to allow space for peaceful dissent and non-violent speech, both online and offline—it is more important than ever that the press be allowed to continue to report freely on events as they develop. We will continue to support democratic principles, rule of law, and protection of human rights for all in Central Asia, as they are key elements to the development of any society, and will help unlock the full potential of the region.

Anti-Corruption/Rule of Law

Question. Several high-profile scandals have exposed the Western financial system's inability to prevent corruption. In the FY2021 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 stored. Many of the high-profile cases have involved Central Asian rulers, their families, and oligarchs.

- What concrete actions will you take as Assistant Secretary for SCA to push countries to reform their systems and crack down on corruption?

Answer. As President Biden said last month in establishing the fight against corruption as a core national security interest, "corruption attacks the foundations of democratic institutions, drives and intensifies extremism, and makes it easier for authoritarian regimes to corrode democratic governance." The Department currently works to combat corruption through development and promotion of internationally

recognized standards, commitments, and obligations, such as those enshrined in the U.N. Convention against Corruption. Further, the Department uses diplomacy to promote reform, foreign assistance to strengthen institutions, and visa restrictions to promote accountability for corrupt actors. If confirmed, I will work to push countries to reform their systems and crack down on corruption, including through the use of the FY 2021 NDAA anti-money laundering provisions and other tools in U.S. law. Recognizing the fight against corruption cannot be won by governments alone, I will also take steps to strengthen the ability of civil society and media to reveal corruption, foster public demand for change, and address weak governance and poor human rights conditions that cultivate corruption.

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. It is key that the United States leads by example with our partners and allies to make our own systems less friendly to kleptocracy and less penetrable by dirty money, to increase coordination, and share lessons learned in the fight against corruption globally. By undertaking measures to protect our financial system from dirty money, we protect our own institutions and make it harder for authoritarians and corrupt authorities to syphon away their countries' economic resources. If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Treasury Department and other relevant interagency partners on this important effort.

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. Yes. The administration has established countering corruption as a core U.S. national security interest. The Department will develop plans for increasing efforts to combat corruption by December 2021 under the National Security Study Memorandum process, and will continue to work closely with allies and partners to prevent and expose the PRC's and Russia's efforts to export corruption as a tool of influence, sow instability, and gain market access. We must also continue efforts to foster government transparency and, separately, protect the enabling environment for civil society and journalists as part of our efforts, given their crucial role in combatting corruption.

Question. Since the change of Government in Uzbekistan in 2016, there have been many positive changes, but they have come at a slow pace. International organizations have only slowly been allowed to register to work in the country. If confirmed, do you commit to working to help more international NGOs register in Uzbekistan?

Answer. The United States supports Uzbekistan's political and economic reforms. Civil society is a crucial component to any functioning democracy and is necessary to continue these reforms. If confirmed, I will continue our work with Uzbekistani partners to ensure local and international NGOs can easily register and operate freely to serve all persons of Uzbekistan, including those from vulnerable communities.

Question. The U.S. Peace Corps has not been able to operate in Uzbekistan since 2005. They have been working to try and restart operations in Uzbekistan, but the process has been very slow, both because of bureaucratic inertia in Uzbekistan and the problems posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. If confirmed, do you commit to working to facilitate the reentry of the U.S. Peace Corps into Uzbekistan?

Answer. I understand the Uzbekistani Government has invited the Peace Corps to return to Uzbekistan, and that the Peace Corps has begun a virtual assessment of conditions in Uzbekistan for possible re-entry. I understand that once pandemic conditions allow the Peace Corps to visit Uzbekistan, the Peace Corps will make a final determination of whether or not it can establish a program in Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the Peace Corps in the re-entry process.

Question. What spheres do you consider as most ripe for future reform and positive changes in Uzbekistan? If confirmed, are there specific areas in which you will push Uzbek authorities to make progress? Please specify which.

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to lead U.S. support for Uzbekistan's political and economic reforms, including strengthening human rights and democracy, and improving healthcare, education, agriculture, and rule of law. I will also continue to work with the Government of Uzbekistan to support improvements to the business and investment climate, including privatization of state-owned enterprises, and to strengthen climate ambition. I also look forward to working with our Uzbekistani partners, including through the C5+1 diplomatic platform, to support

greater regional engagement, building on Uzbekistan's initiatives to improve relations within Central Asia and foster connectivity with Afghanistan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DONALD LU BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Central Asia

Question. The five “Stans” are all under increasing pressure from both China and Russia—neither of which is encouraging the development of market economies or rule-of-law. As co-chair of the Helsinki Commission, I have noted that these governments, and civil society groups from them, are active participants in OSCE proceedings, including the annual Human Dimension gathering in Warsaw. They seem very interested in staying connected to Europe and North America. Based on your time in Kyrgyzstan, what are your thoughts on whether OSCE could provide a bridge to the democratic West for these five countries?

Answer. The OSCE, particularly through its field operations in each Central Asian country, plays an invaluable role by increasing cooperation between Western and Central Asian countries on key issues—including countering terrorism, promoting democratization and human rights, water and energy management, border control, and migration. It also provides a forum to raise concerns about regional security and violations of OSCE commitments, including human rights, and has been a main platform for the United States to challenge Russia directly for its actions. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek provides master's level education for students from Central Asia and Afghanistan and is a model for the region. I fully support further OSCE engagement in Central Asia.

Question. How do we ensure that human rights are more prominent in our engagement with India? What is your response to myriad assessments that see India's democracy and human rights record trending negatively?

Answer. As the Secretary mentioned during his recent visit to India, every democracy, including our own, is a work in progress. The U.S.-India relationship is underpinned by a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will regularly raise our human rights concerns with the Indian Government in the spirit of our close strategic partnership. I will also ensure that our support for civil society and media in India is robust.

Question. No one group has made more significant strides since 2001 than Afghan women. In terms of the economy, women have come a long way since the fall of the Taliban regime. They have returned to work by the hundreds of thousands, many becoming business owners and entrepreneurs. Afghanistan has rebuilt an education system that had basically stopped functioning. In 2001, only 900,000 students were in primary school—all of them male. Today, more than 9 million students are in school, and nearly 40 percent of them are girls.

- What do you think the implications of the military withdrawal will be for Afghan women and girls?

Answer. While it is difficult to overstate the significant gains made by Afghan women and girls over the last 20 years, I recognize how much remains to be done. Rising insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic, decades of conflict, widespread poverty, humanitarian crises, and cultural barriers continue to threaten progress made in women and girls' rights in Afghanistan. Even though U.S. military troops are withdrawing, I understand the United States will continue to support the rights of Afghan women and girls through diplomacy and by maintaining significant humanitarian and development assistance.

Question. How can the administration hold the Taliban and Afghan Government to account in preserving the rights and gains of Afghan women without the support the U.S. military provided to Afghan forces and the check it served as on the Taliban?

Answer. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the status of women and girls in Afghanistan and will consult with Afghan and international partners and civil society on how best to promote accountability. While the future of Afghanistan is for Afghans themselves to decide, the United States has made clear that future development assistance and international legitimacy depend on the actions of the Afghan Government with respect to rights and fundamental freedoms, especially those of women, children, and members of minority groups.

Question. What can we do to preserve the rights and gains of Afghan women and girls?

Answer. I believe continued high-level diplomatic engagement and programmatic support by the United States and international community is required to help maintain and build upon the gains made by Afghan women and girls in the last 20 years. I am committed to using the full force of our diplomatic, economic, and development toolkit to support the Afghan people, particularly women and girls. U.S. and international development and humanitarian assistance has been instrumental in providing Afghan women and girls with access to the resources, expertise, and tools necessary for achieving the gains of the last two decades.

Question. Pakistan has been accused of numerous reported human rights abuses, some of them even perpetrated by the Government. Watchdog groups often rank Pakistan among the world's most dangerous countries for journalists and women. How do we hold the Pakistani Government accountable for human rights abuses?

Answer. In addition to documenting human rights abuses in Pakistan through the Human Rights Report and International Religious Freedom report, the Department regularly raises concerns about issues of human rights and individual freedoms during engagements with Pakistani officials, including at the senior-most levels. Such issues include media freedom, the rights of women and girls, sexual and gender-based violence, and protection of minority groups, among others. If confirmed, I will strongly and consistently urge Pakistan to uphold the rule of law and respect human rights and freedoms in accordance with its constitution and international obligations. I will also encourage the Pakistani Government to protect press and media freedoms for all and will emphasize in engagements with Pakistani counterparts that a vibrant press and informed citizenry are key for any free nation.

Question. How do we elevate the voices of targeted communities in Pakistan, including journalists and others critical of the Government?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Pakistan engage regularly to hear the concerns of civil society organizations, activists, religious leaders, journalists, and businesses, including those from underserved and at-risk communities. If confirmed, I will maintain our robust engagement with these constituencies to continue listening to their concerns and raising these issues with senior Pakistani officials. These communities are also often represented by civil society organizations that do important work to address these concerns and advocate for change with the Pakistani Government, but these organizations are often hampered by overly burdensome restrictions on their operations. If confirmed, I will continue to stress to the Pakistani Government the imperative of a vibrant civil society to any democracy, and the value of allowing civil society organizations to help deliver vital assistance to Pakistan's most vulnerable communities, including women, children, and members of religious minority groups.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON DONALD LU BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In your opinion, how will the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan impact future security in Central Asia?

Answer. Our Central Asian partners are deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan. Each of the Central Asian republics are taking steps to reinforce their border security. In general, they share our counterterrorism and security priorities in Afghanistan and are interested in enhancing cooperation. Per the President's instructions, we are working to maintain significant counterterrorism assets in the region. If confirmed, I will continue to engage partners, allies, and key stakeholders in Central Asia on how best to monitor and counter terrorist threats in the region.

Question. What effect might it [the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan] have on the longstanding U.S. policy goal of fostering intraregional connectivity within Central Asia?

Answer. Connectivity remains a key element of United States policy across Central and South Asia. My vision of regional connectivity includes stable and secure infrastructure that meets the highest international standards; open markets operating on a fair and competitive playing field; and a sustainable and healthy environment. It also includes Afghanistan's greater integration with its neighbors, and realizing its potential as a regional transit, trade, and energy hub. Regional connectivity

is critical to long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. Peace and regional integration are mutually reinforcing.

We will continue to foster cooperation to build Central Asian connectivity with Afghanistan through the C5+1 diplomatic platform, bilateral dialogues, trilateral discussions with Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbors, and a planned quadrilateral format including the United States, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to encourage the Central Asian states to work with the Afghan Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue strategic efforts to encourage the Central Asian states to develop closer ties with the Afghan Government across energy, economic, cultural, trade, and security sectors, which directly contribute to regional stability. This effort would include utilizing the C5+1 regional diplomatic platform for the United States and the Central Asian states to expand security cooperation and increase connectivity between Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Question. The main logic behind the U.S. Government's negotiations with the Taliban is that the promise of U.S. assistance to them is enough incentive to change its policies or behavior. Do you believe this, especially given recent reports of Taliban activity that suggest otherwise?

Answer. I remain concerned about the Taliban's recent military operations in Afghanistan. The group's public position remains to find a solution to the conflict through a negotiated political settlement. I understand the Taliban and Islamic Republic negotiating teams continue to meet and discuss the parameters of a settlement, and I hope both sides can accelerate those negotiations. The Taliban also have routinely expressed their desire for diplomatic and economic relations with the rest of the world, including the United States. I am committed to using our full diplomatic, economic, and development toolkit, as well as working alongside the international community and Afghanistan's neighbors, to support efforts to establish peace and promote the future that Afghans are seeking.

Question. What can you tell me of the Taliban's views on the participation of women in the political system and the role of religion in society? Have these views really moderated since 2001?

Answer. In public statements, Taliban leaders have emphasized their commitment to upholding and guaranteeing all the rights afforded to women under Islamic law, but they have not followed through on these statements with visible reforms regarding the social and political inclusion of women in the areas they control. In a joint declaration released after the July 2019 Intra-Afghan Peace Conference in Doha, the Taliban agreed to assure "women rights in political, social, economic, educational, cultural affairs within the Islamic framework of Islamic values." Taliban leaders have also said that women can hold political office, except as head of state or chief justice. However, women do not play an active role within the Taliban's shadow administration or structures, and Taliban officials sanction repressive behavior in Taliban controlled or influenced communities. If confirmed, I will promote women's full, meaningful, and equal inclusion in Afghan society.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to step up cooperation with India in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. The United States and India share a comprehensive, global strategic partnership and a vision of a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will continue to expand cooperation with the Indian Government bilaterally, regionally, and multilaterally on the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, mutual prosperity, Quad engagement, climate change, defense and security issues, and shared values.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to promote India's role in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, and more generally, to strengthen this important platform?

Answer. The Quad aims to build relationships with partners that share our values, perspectives, and approaches to regional and global challenges on a range of political, economic, and security issues. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the interagency to encourage Quad partners to expand cooperation on maritime security, counterterrorism, COVID-19 vaccine production, democratic principles, and climate change, among other priorities.

Question. If confirmed, what needs to happen to encourage India to take a more constructive approach to its neighbors that China is actively seeking to influence?

Answer. The United States welcomes India's emergence as a leading global power and its role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean region, underpinned by our shared commitment to the rule of law, freedom of navigation, democratic values, and regional connectivity. If confirmed, I will encourage the Indian Government to continue its important contributions toward capacity building, economic development and connectivity, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and numerous other areas of cooperation with its neighbors.

Question. How will you support South Asian states who have territorial disputes with Beijing, such as India and Bhutan?

Answer. The United States strongly opposes unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments, military or civilian. Parties to territorial disputes must adhere to international law and resolve differences through dialogue. If confirmed, I will engage closely with the Indian Government to understand how the United States can best support India including through defense technologies, intelligence sharing, and diplomatic support. If confirmed, I will also work to further advance our friendship with Bhutan and reaffirm our support for its sovereignty.

Question. How do you plan to counter Chinese malign influence in smaller South Asian states, such as Sri Lanka and Nepal?

Answer. I am very concerned by the People's Republic of China's activities contrary to international norms of behavior, such as promoting disinformation or excessive debt in South Asia. If confirmed, I will seek to counter the PRC's application of economic pressure through assistance and help countries manage existing debt loads, evaluate contracts for transparency and equity, and combat corruption. Economic pressure through assistance has been a key tool of manipulation used by the PRC. We will also lead with our most powerful tool—our values—which most clearly demonstrate the value of democratic leadership in the region.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to working with New Delhi to coordinate and strengthen U.S. and Indian support of the Tibetans in exile in India?

Answer. I commend India's hosting of Tibetan refugees over many decades. India's continued support is crucial to ensuring that a large part of the Tibetan diaspora can freely practice their language, culture, and religion. If confirmed, I'll work with the Indian Government to ensure that Tibetans in exile in India, including the Dalai Lama, can continue to promote peace and understanding around the world without external influence.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DONALD LU BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. The State Department's 2020 Country Report on Human Rights and Practices for India notes, among other significant human rights issues, the Government of India places "restrictions on freedom of expression and the press, including violence, threats of violence, or unjustified arrests or prosecutions against journalists, use of criminal libel laws to prosecute social media speech, censorship, and site blocking." If confirmed, what steps do you intend to take to promote freedom of speech and freedom of expression in India?

Answer. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian constitution and as fellow democracies, the United States and India have a shared interest to engage on these issues, as the Secretary did in his recent travel to New Delhi. If confirmed, I intend to follow the Secretary's principled leadership on the matter and work closely with U.S. Mission India and colleagues across the Department to continue our robust engagement with Indian journalists and media, to raise concerns with the Indian Government, and to consult faithfully with Congress.

Question. The State Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom expressed concern about the implications of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) when it was passed by the Indian parliament in 2019. Also citing the CAA and other significant downward trends in religious freedom conditions, the U.S. Commission on International Freedom (USCIRF) recommended in its 2020 Annual Report that the State Department designate India as a Country of Particular Concern in its next annual report on International Religious Freedom. What is the State Department's policy regarding the CAA?

Answer. Respect for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law are fundamental principles of both the United States and India. While the Indian Government has not yet actively implemented the Citizenship Amendment Act, the Department continues to call on India to protect the rights of its religious minorities in keeping with India's constitution and history of diversity.

Question. How does the Department factor USCIRF recommendations into its own deliberations when determining whether a country is included as a Country of Particular Concern in the International Religious Freedom report?

Answer. USCIRF is an independent commission established under the 1998 International Religious Freedom (IRF) Act to provide policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress with respect to matters involving international religious freedom. The Secretary considers a wide variety of factors, including USCIRF findings as required by the IRF Act, when making the annual religious freedom designations.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to hold frank conversations with your counterparts in the Indian Government regarding its obligation to commit to freedom, democratic principles, equal treatment of all citizens, human rights, and the rule of law for all?

Answer. Yes.

Diplomatic Vision for Afghanistan After U.S. Troop Withdrawal

Question. U.S. policymakers and foreign policy experts had initially expected the withdrawal of U.S. military forces to be accompanied by a diplomatic surge. Yet the security situation in Afghanistan may preclude the possibility of such a surge.

- Given the security challenges in Afghanistan, what is your vision for U.S. diplomatic engagement and presence in Afghanistan after the U.S. troop withdrawal is complete?
- If the State Department is unable to lead a diplomatic surge, how can the United States best secure the gains that we have made in human rights, education and empowerment of girls, and other important issues in Afghanistan? In other words, how can the United States best help the Afghan people and promote U.S. interests in Afghanistan?

Answer. I understand all the agencies at our Embassy will continue their important work, as long as security conditions permit, consistent with the administration's commitment to stay fully engaged on behalf of U.S. interests in Afghanistan. This will include our consular support to U.S. citizens and fulfilling our commitment to Afghans who have worked alongside us through adjudication of Special Immigrant Visas. I will remain in frequent communication with our Embassy in Kabul and the interagency to continuously evaluate information pertaining to the security of U.S. citizens and U.S. Government personnel, facilities, and interests in Afghanistan in order to mitigate any emerging threats. I will also consult with stakeholders on creative approaches, such as off-shoring, that can advance U.S. interests while keeping our mission safe.

I am committed to using our full diplomatic, economic, and development toolkit to support efforts to establish peace and promote the future that Afghans are seeking. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to sustain and further advance the gains achieved by Afghan society, particularly those made by Afghan women, girls, and minorities over the last 20 years. I am committed to using our diplomatic and assistance resources to continue to advocate for women's rights, support their meaningful participation in peace negotiations, work to create quality educational opportunities, assist women to join the workforce, combat gender-based violence, and expand access to quality healthcare.

Question. In your testimony, you noted that for the past 20 years, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has been defined by the war in Afghanistan and related U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the region. With U.S. troops leaving Afghanistan, there is an opportunity to redefine the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Issues such as climate change, strategic competition with China, economic development, and others may be on the table.

Despite many shared interests and priorities, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has been beset by years of distrust and unaligned policies. What will it take for the United States and Pakistan to move beyond the persistent challenges in our bilateral relationship to cooperate on our shared priorities?

Answer. The Department continues to make clear it seeks further assistance from Pakistan for progress toward a political settlement in Afghanistan and collaboration on regional stability efforts, including against terrorist groups. Such actions would

contribute importantly to an expanded U.S.-Pakistan relationship. If confirmed, I will push for more bilateral cooperation based on shared priorities, including securing a responsible end to the conflict in Afghanistan, advancing regional security and fighting terrorism, expanding both bilateral and regional commercial and trade opportunities, promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development, and ad

Chinese Territorial Aggression in Bhutan

Question. China reportedly claims as many as eight areas inside Bhutan as being Chinese territory. In 2015, China announced that it had built an entirely new village called Gyalaphug inside a 232-square-mile area claimed by China since the early 1980s, but internationally understood as part of Lhuntse district in northern Bhutan.

China's efforts to fortify the Tibetan borderlands, expand its maritime control in the South China Sea, and conduct other provocative measures are nothing new. Yet building a new village inside the territory of another country is different. According to at least one report, China does not need the land it is settling in Bhutan. Its aim, rather, is to force the Bhutanese Government to cede territory that China wants elsewhere in Bhutan to give Beijing a military advantage in its struggle with New Delhi.

- What is the Department's policy on Chinese efforts to expand its borders by building towns and villages in disputed territories?
- If confirmed, what efforts will you lead to protect Bhutan's sovereignty and prevent it from becoming a pawn in China's attempts to gain an advantage over India?

Answer. The Department is very concerned with the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s construction of towns and villages in disputed territories. Parties to territorial disputes must adhere to international law and resolve differences through dialogue. If confirmed, I will work to advance our friendship with Bhutan, reaffirm our commitment to its sovereignty, and coordinate with our partners, including India, to address the PRC's buildup in the Tibetan borderlands and to support a free and open region capable of resolving differences through dialogue. I also pledge to work closely with Congress to address this concerning trend.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DONALD LU BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. What are the limits of cooperation that we can expect to see from India given their history of non-alignment?

Answer. Over the last two decades, the United States and India have made tremendous strides across all aspects of our strategic partnership. Our cooperation encompasses a wide range of issues, including regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific; the Quad; trade and investment; defense and security; climate change remediation; clean energy; higher education and people-to-people; shared values, and science and space. India has a unique foreign policy outlook given its history, but given our growing strategic convergence the Indo-Pacific, I am confident U.S.-India ties will continue to mature and deepen.

Question. China is aggressively pushing on India's border and is now claiming areas in which they have never had a historic assertion. Do you believe China is trying to find an "off-ramp" for this issue or is it looking to escalate the dispute with India?

Answer. The United States is concerned by Beijing's pattern of ongoing attempts to intimidate its neighbors, including India. We're closely following updates of any troop disengagement, and we welcome ongoing efforts to de-escalate the situation. We continue to monitor closely as both sides work toward a peaceful resolution. We urge direct dialogue and a peaceful resolution to border disputes.

Question. What message is China trying to send with its actions? Do you believe it is pushing this issue specifically to discredit India with regional allies?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned by a pattern of territorial encroachment and failure to abide by the previous status quo along China's disputed terrestrial and maritime borders. We will stand with friends, partners, and allies in the face of the PRC's most assertive policies and for the good of the region.

Question. Do you believe these escalations will push India into a more robust and long-term security agreement with the U.S.?

Answer. India will seek partnerships based on its interests, but our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific portends greater regional and bilateral cooperation.

Question. India is the biggest donor to the Afghan National Government and 5th globally. What are India's interests in Afghanistan? Or is this more just another front in the long running competition with their neighbor Pakistan?

Answer. The United States and India have a shared interest in a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. India does not wish to see Afghanistan turn into a terrorist safe haven that undermines its security. We welcome India's support for the peace process and its long-running development assistance program.

Question. What does India stand to lose if security situation in Afghanistan worsens?

Answer. India has expressed concern about potential terrorist attacks against Indian interests in Afghanistan, as well as the impact on regional stability should the security situation deteriorate further. In the immediate term, India is also concerned about the threat to India's personnel and nationals working in Afghanistan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Cuba

Question. As part of USAID's work in defense of human rights, it is my understanding that USAID carries out programming focused on addressing the forced labor practices of Cuba's foreign medical missions.

- What is your assessment of these medical missions and, if confirmed, will you continue USAID's current programs?

Answer. I believe that Cuba's foreign medical missions, as noted in the Department of State's 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, represent a form of labor trafficking. As noted by the TIP report, the Cuban Government "failed to inform participants of the terms of their contracts, confiscated their documents and salaries, and threatened medical professionals and their family members if participants left the program."

I understand that USAID has programs in place currently to support the human rights of Cuban workers, including medical personnel.

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 a tight grip on all aspects of life on the island and are ruthless in seeking to stifle dissent. If confirmed, I will continue to promote all types of programming to support human rights and fundamental freedoms for the Cuban population and look forward to consulting with you on this issue.

COVID-19 and Economic Recovery

Question. COVID-19 has had a particularly devastating impact on Latin America and the Caribbean, claiming at least 1.2 million lives. Today, only one in ten individuals in the region is fully vaccinated.

- If confirmed, what strategies will you implement to increase access to and distribution of vaccines in the region?

Answer. To date, I understand that the United States Government has delivered over 33 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Furthermore, it is my understanding that USAID is also preparing countries to safely and effectively distribute COVID-19 vaccines. To date, I understand USAID has provided more than \$75 million globally, including \$13.5 million for the Latin America and Caribbean region, to assist countries to develop their national COVID-19 vaccine distribution plans, address misinformation and vaccine hesitancy to improve trust and confidence, strengthen supply chain and logistics to distribute vaccines with speed, equity, and safety, train health professionals to administer vaccines, and manage health information systems for better data tracking. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the Agency's efforts to increase access to vaccines in the region.

Question. How would you balance addressing the multiple consequences of COVID-19 on public health, economies, social development, and women and children in the region?

Answer. It is my understanding that USAID continues to monitor and address the evolving and varied second-order impacts of the pandemic on the region, and will leverage existing and new programs to address the most critical challenges. COVID-19 has hurt economies throughout the region, disproportionately impacting the poor and vulnerable. COVID-19 has also contributed to a humanitarian crisis in the region, increased gender-based violence, and lack of access to income-generating opportunities. The response today also needs to address the millions of children not receiving routine vaccinations and the millions displaced from school. To date, I understand that USAID has responded to such impacts with programming to support microcredit and job training for small businesses and entrepreneurs; the expansion of social protection, psycho-social and educational support in vulnerable communities; job opportunities for likely migrants; and the adoption of e-commerce strategies and tools to respond to COVID-19 economic restrictions. If confirmed, I will prioritize addressing the second-order impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Central America

Question. Successive U.S. strategies have failed to make any discernable progress in achieving or advancing the goal of reducing mass illegal migration from Central America. If confirmed, what actions would you recommend taking 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? What specific reforms should individual governments adopt to effectively reduce illegal migration from the region?

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.

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. I will also 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. And I look forward to further consultations with Congress on how to further improve the effectiveness of these programs.

Nicaragua

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritize programs and activities designed to improve the capacity of the democratic forces in Nicaragua to be a credible political challenge to the Ortega regime?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring USAID supports viable, democratic processes, institutions and forces 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.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to channel any humanitarian assistance that USAID may provide in Nicaragua solely through independent non-governmental organizations?

Answer. Yes, I commit to channeling any USAID-provided humanitarian assistance solely through independent NGOs and Public International Organizations (PIOs). U.S. humanitarian assistance is provided through impartial international

and local organizations and U.N. agencies, who are on the ground working with vulnerable populations, for the sole purpose of helping people in need.

Cuba

Question. The Government of Cuba maintains an estimated 50,000 medical personnel in more than 60 countries under conditions that meet the definition of human trafficking. 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 doctors participating in its overseas medical programs. Do you agree that the Cuban regime's overseas medical missions amount to human trafficking? If confirmed, do you commit to ensure USAID Missions in U.S. Embassies in countries that accept Cuban medical missions help communicate the realities of the forced labor practices employed by the Cuban regime?

Answer. I believe that Cuba's foreign medical missions, as noted in the Department of State's 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, represent a form of labor trafficking. As noted by the TIP report, the Cuban Government "failed to inform participants of the terms of their contracts, confiscated their documents and salaries, and threatened medical professionals and their family members if participants left the program."

I understand that USAID has programs in place currently to support the human rights of Cuban workers, including medical personnel.

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. If confirmed, I will continue to promote programming to support human rights and fundamental freedoms for the Cuban population and look forward to consulting with you on this issue.

Question. Do you commit to maintain a robust USAID democracy program focused on advancing respect for basic human rights 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, persecuted activists, and their families. NGOs are poised to continue defending the human rights of those who are abused and even jailed for their political beliefs.

Haiti

Question. Haiti is facing a complex and worsening crisis of governance. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring USAID plays an effective role in promoting economic self-reliance and meaningful dialogue among the different political forces? If confirmed, do you commit to dedicate resources to 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, governance and humanitarian assistance to promote democratic political reform, peace and stability.

Venezuela

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring USAID-supported humanitarian efforts in Venezuela do not bring reputational benefits to the Maduro regime and individuals or entities aligned with the regime? Do you commit to ensuring USAID does not provide direct or indirect support to a COVID vaccination campaign in Venezuela that uses vaccines developed by the Cuban regime?

Answer. I understand that USAID has no plans at this time to provide direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Venezuela, where current vaccination efforts are non-transparent and discriminatory. Venezuela is a self-financing participant in COVAX, which means that it does not receive donor-supported vaccines or other assistance. USAID would only provide COVID-19 vaccination support if Venezuela established a credible, impartial, and transparent national vaccination plan, implemented in partnership with, or under the auspices of, international partners. In addition, it is my understanding that USAID has not provided, and has no plans to provide, direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in which any Cuban vaccine is used. Cuba has not published its trial data for its vaccines, nor has the vaccine received an emergency use listing or authorization from the World Health Organization.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Addressing Corruption

Question. President Biden has taken an important step toward enhancing the ability of the United States Government to combat corruption and criminal actors worldwide with the release of the National Security Study Memorandum on fighting corruption. Defining the fight against corruption as a “core U.S. national security interest” sets a standard for how our government, our partners, and others can work together to combat such illicit, corrosive activity. I’ve reintroduced the Combating Global Corruption Act which is now in front of the full Senate and has been introduced in the House. The bill obliges the Executive to identify corruption in countries and rank them in a public, tiered system with respect to levels of corruption in their governments; establishes minimum standards for combating corruption; and evaluates foreign persons engaged in grand corruption for consideration under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

- Will you commit to working with me to advance the Combating Global Corruption Act and to raising the profile of efforts to fight international corruption as a U.S. national security priority, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean?

Answer. I agree that fighting corruption is a U.S. national security priority and I look forward to discussing the Combating Global Corruption bill with you, if confirmed. I agree that anti-corruption efforts must be a focus of our efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean. The President has articulated a comprehensive \$4 billion, four-year plan to confront corruption, enhance security, and foster prosperity to address the root causes of migration from Central America. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to most effectively implement President Biden’s plan in Central America, and to working with interagency colleagues to utilize all possible tools to increase pressure on those not doing enough to confront corruption and impunity across the region. I also will seek to deepen current investments in democracy, human rights, and governance, including by supporting civil society organizations and promoting independent media and protection for journalists critical to combating corruption in the region.

Question. Where do you see the biggest opportunities to make real strides in eliminating corruption in the Americas over the next two or three years?

Answer. I understand that the USAID institutes robust anti-corruption programming by helping host countries to strengthen controls and transparency in their procurement systems and enhance their capacity to prosecute and adjudicate cases through the courts system. Corruption is corrosive for many reasons, and in particular because it undermines citizen’s belief that government can deliver for them. Corruption also contributes to weak democratic institutions and widespread impunity in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. As a result, crime and violence flourish, which is linked to people’s intentions to migrate. If confirmed, among my priorities for USAID’s Latin America and Caribbean Bureau will include helping institutions deliver basic services with transparency and efficiency, and supporting civil society organizations and independent journalists carrying out oversight of government institutions. I also would seek to work with interagency colleagues to ensure that all possible tools are used to combat corruption in the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. As Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID, you will oversee 17 regional missions, 900+ people and over \$1 billion of development funds focused on promoting inclusive growth, human rights, democracy and governance, and citizen security. Your biography mentions that during your last tenure at USAID, you focused on the administration's priorities, including: "reinforced U.S. support for Peace Colombia, established a long-term development plan for Haiti, and prepared a proactive strategy to confront the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela." It says also that in response to Congress' doubling of funding to Central America, you led changes in strategy, organization and execution to combat root causes of poverty and migration in the region.

- Can you provide the committee with the major concrete steps of your strategy to confront the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed, I will 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. I commit to working with non-governmental organizations and civil society groups to advance democracy and a pathway to democratic elections in Venezuela. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with you about how we might strengthen those efforts, given the devastating costs of Maduro's repression, and that of USAID's continued work to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Venezuelans in Venezuela as well as Venezuelan migrants and refugees across the region.

FOLLOW-UP TO SENATOR RUBIO'S INITIAL QUESTION

Question. In your response to my question for the record ("Can you provide the committee with the major concrete steps of your strategy to confront the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela?") you responded with a description of the steps you would take to address the crisis, if confirmed. While we appreciate your wholehearted support for Interim President Guaidó and the democratic aspirations of the Venezuelan people, the intent of my question was to receive a summary of the concrete steps you helped to develop to confront the crisis during the Obama administration.

- Please provide a description of your strategy to confront the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela during your last tenure at USAID, including the outcomes of those actions.

Answer. In 2016, in my capacity as Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), I worked with the Bureau and USAID and its partners to assess the worsening humanitarian conditions in the country to understand who the crisis was affecting most severely and in which parts of the country. Our ongoing analysis led to the inclusion of Venezuela in a watchlist at Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau, the Bureau that was then in charge of humanitarian response, stabilization, and democracy.

The political opposition controlled the National Assembly, but the regime was blocking them from performing their democratic functions. As a result of the ongoing situation on the ground, USAID/LAC programming focused on monitoring and reporting on human rights, electoral conditions, and living conditions in the country. USAID also worked to support independent media, and I supported providing robust assistance to the National Assembly.

Under my direction, USAID/LAC assessed what possible outcomes could evolve on the ground, and what response would be adequate. This included continuing USAID programming to defend and promote democratic rights, initiating delivery of socio-economic relief and commodities, particularly medical supplies, through local independent partners, and expanding humanitarian assistance through local independent partners to avoid politicization by the Maduro regime. We also anticipated programming that would be needed should a political transition to democracy transpire. This assessment process continued in an iterative manner through the end of the administration.

Question. What is your understanding of the status of current USAID programs in Haiti?

Answer. I understand that USAID is committed to working with the Haitian people in their efforts to build a healthy, prosperous, and peaceful Haiti. Given recent

developments, it is a critical time to learn from the past and smartly engage foreign assistance resources in Haiti. If confirmed, I commit to supporting COVID relief, humanitarian assistance, and resilience building in Haiti. While humanitarian assistance will help alleviate some urgent humanitarian needs, it will not and cannot address the root causes of the current economic and political situation in Haiti, which will only be sustainably addressed by engaging Haitian actors with the political will to take-on much needed Haitian-driven reforms.

Question. Earlier this year, I re-introduced my bipartisan legislation, the Central American Women and Children Protection Act. This bill authorizes appropriations to provide assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras through bilateral compacts to increase protection of women and children in their homes and communities and reduce female homicides, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

- In your opinion, is this legislation something that USAID should support?

Answer. Thank you for your commitment to protecting women and children in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, a goal that I wholeheartedly share. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on this legislation and will ensure that USAID continues to support gender-based violence (GBV) survivors and women at risk of GBV in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and welcome continued support for programming in this area. 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.

Question. In a recent letter to President Biden, I asked that the United States to be prepared to provide COVID-19 vaccines, and other humanitarian assistance, to the people of Cuba, but only if it is delivered to, and distributed by, trustworthy and independent international organizations. We must not allow the regime to take possession of such relief and use it as a weapon to force the people of Cuba into compliance with their demands.

- Are you being briefed on any discussions with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to Cuba?
- What do you see as the priorities in this space?

Answer. While I am not privy to any internal U.S. Government discussions, I have been following recent developments and the U.S. Government's announcements to facilitate the shipment of humanitarian assistance to Cuba. I understand that USAID has been providing assistance, including food, medicine, and hygiene products to victims of repression, including political prisoners, their family members, and other individuals who are persecuted because of their political or religious beliefs. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize support for these populations, which remain under even greater threat following the July 11 protests. Accordingly, I will do my utmost to ensure that assistance is delivered to, and distributed by, trustworthy and independent organizations.

Question. If confirmed, how will your actions to address the current political and humanitarian crises in Venezuela differ from this strategy you prepared during the Obama administration?

Answer. In 2016, the opportunity to work with an interim government was not yet a possibility—this is a difference. If confirmed, I will 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. I commit to working with non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations to advance democracy and a pathway to democratic elections in Venezuela. This is my priority.

USAID's engagement on health and food security also has the potential to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis and contribute to conditions for a democratic transition. With increasing access inside Venezuela by USAID's implementing partners, I would pursue creative solutions that bring respite to the Venezuelan people outside of the Maduro regime's control and I commit to engaging with you and your staff, if confirmed.

Question. Can you clarify your role in developing this strategy? Did you personally author this strategy?

Answer. Given the ongoing humanitarian and political situation in Venezuela, as previously stated, USAID/LAC engaged in assessing possible outcomes under my direction while Assistant Administrator for the Bureau. We analyzed the economic decline and its ramifications, summarized FEWS NET food security assessments, the

worsening of the medical and security situation, and ways to circumvent the regime's politicization of essential goods should the situation on the ground shift. This iterative process was managed, in response to my direction and under my guidance, by the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean's Office of South American Affairs.

Question. In your response to my question for the record ("In your opinion, is this legislation something that USAID should support?"), you responded, "Thank you for your commitment to protecting women and children in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, a goal that I wholeheartedly share. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on this legislation and will ensure that USAID continues to support gender-based violence (GBV) survivors and women at risk of GBV in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and welcome continued support for programming in this area. 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."

- The intent of this legislation is to authorize the United States to enter into Women and Children Compacts with the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, modelled off of those the United States has entered into with Ghana, The Philippines, Peru and Jamaica. Do you believe that these compacts will contribute to USAID's efforts to address support women and children at risk of GBV?

Answer. When conditions on the ground are right, I believe compacts with partner governments on important issues like countering GBV can be extremely important. I understand that the Child Protection Compact Partnerships the U.S. has developed jointly with governments, for instance with Jamaica and Peru, have aimed to build on existing efforts to prosecute and punish perpetrators of child trafficking, identify child trafficking victims, coordinate and strengthen protective services, and prevent child trafficking. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on this legislation, and with the State Department to establish such agreements, in appropriate countries.

To help create the conditions for such compacts, I will ensure that USAID continues to prioritize efforts to counter GBV. The "U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America" and the "Collaborative Migration Management Strategy," released on July 29, provide further details to guide USAID's strategic efforts for the region, including protection efforts for at-risk groups and addressing gender-based violence. Pillar V of the Root Causes Strategy focuses on "combating sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence," with objectives including: governments and civil society take steps to prevent sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence; hold perpetrators accountable; and protect and provide services for victims. I commit to working with your office to ensure that our mutual priority of protecting vulnerable populations, most specifically women and girls in Central America, is embedded in future programming.

Question. In your response to my question for the record on your awareness of the administration's discussions regarding humanitarian assistance to Cuba, you responded, "While I am not privy to any internal U.S. Government discussions, I have been following recent developments and the U.S. Government's announcements to facilitate the shipment of humanitarian assistance to Cuba. I understand that USAID has been providing assistance, including food, medicine, and hygiene products to victims of repression, including political prisoners, their family members, and other individuals who are persecuted because of their political or religious beliefs. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize support for these populations, which remain under even greater threat following the July 11 protests. Accordingly, I will do my utmost to ensure that assistance is delivered to, and distributed by, trustworthy and independent organizations."

- If confirmed, please provide what steps and actions will you take to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered to, and distributed by, trustworthy independent organizations inside Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will verify that existing basic needs assistance benefiting political prisoners, dissidents, and their families, is implemented by U.S.-based or internationally recognized independent NGOs. If confirmed, I will ensure that my team requires that each of these organizations provide USAID with their delivery and distribution protocols, and that they be verified and monitored frequently to ensure assistance does not benefit members of the regime.

Question. Please be specific on how will you ensure that this humanitarian assistance does not benefit members of the Castro/Díaz-Canel Regime?

Answer. As USAID designs new solicitations for additional basic needs assistance instruments, I will ensure that all necessary safeguards are in place for such work to be carried out only by independent organizations and to prevent the regime from benefiting from them in any way.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to provide regular briefings to my office, and other interested Senate offices, on USAID's provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to regular briefings with your office and other interested Senate offices on USAID's provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Cuba.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARCELA ESCOBARI BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

China, COVID-19, and Economic Development

Question. The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the region, and countries are struggling with record levels of debt and an anemic economic recovery. Latin America faced the sharpest economic contraction in 2020 of any region in the entire world. Unfortunately, many of these countries were struggling even before the pandemic due to weak rule of law, low investment, and poor governance.

Relatedly, I am worried by China's rising influence in the region. In 2019, Chinese companies invested \$12.8 billion in Latin America, up 16.5 percent from 2018, concentrating investments on regional infrastructure such as ports, roads, dams and railways.

I'll note that China's investments are not just making a difference in infrastructure but in the past four years, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Panama have each switched their recognition from Taiwan to China. Clearly, China is using this investment to achieve their geopolitical goals as well.

- If confirmed, how would you work through USAID to counter what China is doing in the region to ensure that the United States remains the partner of choice for our neighbors?

Answer. I understand that the administration's approach to countering PRC's influence is to provide tangible support that promotes sustainable opportunities for economic growth coupled with democratic governance, transparency, and local ownership of development work. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S International Development Finance Corporation to provide countries with choices and opportunities, rather than debt traps, digital surveillance, and development projects that are often opaque, extractive and coercive. It is important to me to work with allies and partners in the region to better leverage resources and exert influence. I will be a visible advocate for cooperative economic development and trade, human rights, democratic governance, and environmental, social, and labor standards, if confirmed.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in Room SH-216, Hon. Chris Van Hollen presiding.

Present: Senators Van Hollen [presiding], Kaine, Young, and Rounds.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Good morning, everybody. The nominations hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

I want to welcome all of you here and thank my colleague, Senator Rounds, who is the ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee and the Subcommittee on Global Health Policy. I look forward to continuing our work together.

I am very pleased to welcome our three nominees this morning, Ambassador Michael Raynor to be Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Marc Ostfield to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay, and Mr. Troy Fitrill to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea.

Again, welcome all of you here. Congratulations on your nominations and thank you for your ongoing service to the country as members of the Foreign Service, and I also want to thank and salute your family members who have joined with us today.

Before we hear from our nominees, I would like to outline several key topics of relevance for today's panel before turning it over to the ranking member for his opening statement.

Ambassador Raynor, I am pleased to welcome you back to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and glad that President Biden has selected you to represent the United States in two nations that hold great promise and great potential for enhancing our diplomatic presence in West Africa, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

As you know, Senegal has been a democratic stronghold in the region and a long-standing friend of the United States, and I hope that should you be confirmed you will work in partnership with this committee and regional stakeholders in Senegal to deepen the bonds that link our two nations.

In contrast, Guinea-Bissau has undergone significant political upheaval in recent years, and those political challenges are paired with serious development challenges.

The World Bank estimates that 70 percent of the population in Guinea-Bissau lives on \$1.90 per day or less, and that hardship has only been compounded by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

I look forward to discussing with you your potential avenues and your ideas for engagement in Guinea-Bissau as we work to promote development, both in that country and across West Africa.

Mr. Fitrill, you have been selected by the president to serve in Guinea, another country that presents many challenges and also opportunities for engagement.

I was pleased to see the State Department's determination from last year that Guinea has, quote, "great potential," unquote, for the programs of the new International Development Finance Corporation, especially in the areas of banking, agriculture, IT, energy, and infrastructure.

In addition, the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives recently launched a \$15 million regional program seeking to bolster stability in coastal West African nations, including Guinea.

At the same time, we must be clear eyed about the challenges we face in Guinea from last year's violent and controversial reelection of President Condé. Also, to look at the impact of China's deepening influence in the country.

I look forward to discussing measures the United States can take to leverage the tools at our disposal for the benefit of our interests and those of the people of Guinea.

We all recognize that Africa is not a monolith. It is essential that we work with community partners and local leaders to address specific challenges facing each of these African nations, and as we work to strengthen our bilateral relationships also to impact our broader effort to enlarge prosperity that is mutually beneficial to African nations and the United States in West Africa and throughout the continent.

That larger mission must include finding ways to broaden our development efforts through initiatives like USAID and DFC, and enhance trade by making full use of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA, and other trade tools. We look forward to discussing those ideas with you as well.

Finally, we come to Mr. Ostfield, who has been selected to serve on the other side of the Atlantic, in Paraguay, which is a long-time friend and partner to the United States, and I have been pleased to see the Biden administration make a concerted effort to strengthen our already warm relations with Paraguay.

On March 14th, Secretary Blinken spoke on the phone with President Benítez and reiterated the United States support for the Paraguayan people, and in June, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, traveled to Paraguay to participate in the second U.S.-Paraguay Strategic Partnership Dialogue, a forum that has been vital in advancing discussions between our countries on trade, security, democracy, and collaboration.

Mr. Ostfield, we look forward to exploring with you the current state of U.S.-Paraguay relations and looking at areas where we can further strengthen that relationship.

Let me just end where I started by congratulating all of you on your nominations. I look forward to our discussion during this hearing.

And with that, let me turn it over to my colleague, Senator Rounds.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROUNDS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA**

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, let me just begin by saying that I am very pleased to see this well-qualified panel of nominees before us today with one previously confirmed twice by this committee to serve in two ambassadorial posts, as well as two other very experienced State Department personnel with great records of service. I want to thank you and your families for your service to our country.

Ambassador Raynor, your background with Africa to include two tours as an ambassador will serve you well if you are confirmed to be our next ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how you will apply lessons learned from your most recent tour in Ethiopia, particularly regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic and recent unrest in Senegal is affecting Senegal stability and economic prospects.

I would also like to hear how you will approach our relationship with Guinea-Bissau and your views on the prospects for greater political stability under President Embal?.

Dr. Ostfield, if confirmed, your experience in global health security and managing other global issues will make you well placed to serve as our Ambassador to Paraguay.

I am interested in your thoughts on what additional assistance from the U.S. or other international partners Paraguay might need in order to overcome the health and economic effects of the pandemic.

We would also welcome your ideas on improved governance and rule of law, increasing security cooperation, and advancing U.S. business interests.

Mr. Fitrill, if you are confirmed, I would be very pleased that we would be sending a diplomat to Guinea who has held a number of senior positions in the Bureau of African Affairs, including most recently as director of the Office of West African Affairs.

Now, this oversees the U.S. engagement with Guinea. I am interested in your thoughts on how Guinea might overcome its deep political divisions and recommit to regular democratic transfers of power.

With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you, and it is back to you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Ranking Member Rounds.

I want to recognize that we have been joined by Senator Kaine, who, among other things, oversees the Western Hemisphere.

Welcome.

And before I turn it over to all of you for your testimony, let me just expand a little bit on your backgrounds, and Senator Rounds mentioned some of your experiences.

But I do think it is worth emphasizing the deep experience that all of you have and I must say, as someone who grew up in a Foreign Service family, I am grateful for your service and it always

serves our country's interests well when we nominate and send people who have deep knowledge of the issue areas they are jumping into.

Ambassador Michael Raynor, known affectionately by friends and colleagues here and abroad as Ambassador Mike, is a long-term member of the Foreign Service. Over the course of his extensive career, Ambassador Raynor has worked in all African sub-regions.

He most recently served as the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia and was previously our Ambassador to Benin. Earlier in his career, Ambassador Raynor was director of the Office of Career Development and Assignments in the State Department's Bureau of Human Resources where he oversaw career development for over 14,000 members of the Foreign Service.

He has also served as the Africa Bureau's Executive Director where he led management and crisis support efforts for the Bureau's 53 U.S. embassies and consulates.

In addition, his previous service includes tours as management officer at U.S. Embassies in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Guinea, and Djibouti. He earned an MA in international affairs from Columbia University and a BA from Lafayette College.

He is the recipient of numerous State Department awards, including the Leamon R. Hunt Award for management excellence. He is fluent in French and, as an extra bonus, at least for me, he is a resident of the state of Maryland. Welcome.

Mr. Marc Ostfield is a career member of the Senior Executive Service with over 40 years of experience in international affairs and national security.

He is the current ombudsman of the United States State Department, and also has served the department as Acting Director of the Foreign Service Institute, Director of the Office of Policy and Global Issues in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Senior Foreign Affairs officer at the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation, and Senior Advisor for Bioterrorism, Biodefense, and Health Security in the Office of International Health and Biodefense.

Mr. Ostfield earned his BA, MS, and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He is the recipient of a Presidential Rank Award, numerous Senior State Department awards, and a range of other honors including a prestigious diplomacy fellowship from the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He speaks Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Arabic. Welcome to you.

Mr. Troy Damian Fitrill is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and current Director of the Office of West African Affairs at the State Department.

He has previously served as deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassies in Ethiopia and Mauritius, and as Deputy Director of the Department's Office of Southern African Affairs.

In addition, he served as Senior Advisor to the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes of Africa. Mr. Fitrill has also spent time on Capitol Hill as a Pearson Fellow.

We will not hold it against you, you worked on the House side instead of the Senate side. But you worked on the House Foreign

Affairs Committee where your portfolio included a suite of issues relevant to Asia, the Pacific, and Africa.

I am also proud to know that Mr. Fitrill earned his BA in my home state at the University of Maryland and an MS at the National War College. He speaks French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, and Danish, and let me just welcome you as well.

So it is wonderful to have a group of three very qualified nominees to be ambassadors to these important posts.

Now, let me turn it over to each of you for your opening statements.

Let us begin with Ambassador Raynor.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL RAYNOR OF MARYLAND, 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 SENEGAL, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

I am grateful to the president and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence in me, and I am deeply indebted to my wife, Kate, my son, Bradley, and my daughter, Emma, for their sacrifices and support throughout my Foreign Service career.

During more than 31 years as a Foreign Service officer, I have developed substantial policy and managerial experience and a record of inclusive leadership fostering interagency collaboration, strong performance by diverse teams, and high morale in challenging environments.

As Ambassador to Ethiopia, I advanced our bilateral priorities at the time, which included supporting the country's transition toward democratic governance and free market economics, launching new programs to bolster human rights and counter ethnic strife, strengthening peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts, and facilitating major growth in U.S. commercial investments. I am devastated by the current situation there.

As Ambassador to Benin, I elicited strong security cooperation, helped improve the country's business climate and U.S. commercial prospects, and strengthened the country's democratic trajectory.

As Assistant Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I led some of the United States' largest foreign assistance and justice sector programs, as well as the embassy's large and complex management, consular, and security operations, while regularly engaging Afghan leaders on governance and security concerns.

As Executive Director of the Bureau of African Affairs, I led the State Department's management and crisis support for more than 50 posts in Africa.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and to Guinea-Bissau, my highest priority will be the welfare interests and security of American citizens, whether ensuring responsive consular services, advocating for U.S. businesses, or strengthening partnerships to confront regional instability.

This priority will guide every embassy objective and activity. If confirmed, I will also do everything I can to ensure that the dedicated women and men serving at the U.S. embassy are secure, healthy, and provided every opportunity for success.

Our close partnership with Senegal spans more than 60 years and is rooted in our shared values of democracy and human rights, peace and security, economic opportunity, and prosperity.

Senegal's long democratic tradition of peaceful transitions of power, free and fair elections, a robust private press, and a strong civil society is unique in West Africa and serves as a model for the region.

Senegal's dynamic economy has achieved impressive growth while creating new opportunities for U.S. investment. While the pandemic has hampered this progress and worsened the economic strains felt by Senegal's large youth population, U.S. public and private investments can play a key role in reigniting the country's growth.

Embassy Dakar and Washington counterparts are pursuing a number of possibilities for U.S. investment to strengthen Senegal's economy and its long-term security and democratic governance.

Senegal is a key security partner in West Africa and a critical ally in the United States' efforts to promote stability and counter violent extremism. It is a major contributor to peacekeeping missions across Africa and regularly hosts regional military exercises in partnership with the United States and France.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the United States' essential democratic, commercial development, and security partnerships with Senegal.

In Guinea-Bissau, the United States has sustained its programs in partnership despite pandemic-related challenges, and there is scope to expand the bilateral relationship further in the days ahead.

If confirmed, I will seek to advance our two countries' shared interests in bolstering democracy and human rights, promoting stable and responsive civilian governance, advancing development and economic opportunity, and countering drug trafficking.

Senegal and Guinea-Bissau are dynamic nations with extraordinary histories and extraordinary potential. I am honored by your consideration of me to serve in such an important posting.

If confirmed, I will welcome advice and input from you and your staff on any aspect of the United States' multifaceted relationships with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

I will also be pleased, if confirmed, to welcome you and your staff in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and to keep you up to date on the activities of the U.S. embassy in Dakar.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[Prepared statement of Ambassador Raynor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL RAYNOR

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence in me, and am deeply indebted to my wife Kate, my son Bradley, and my daughter Emma for their sacrifices and support throughout my Foreign Service career.

During more than 31 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have developed substantial policy and managerial experience and a record of inclusive leadership fostering interagency collaboration, strong performance by diverse teams, and high morale in challenging environments. As Ambassador to Ethiopia, I advanced our bilateral priorities at the time, which included supporting the country's transition toward democratic governance and free-market economics, launching new programs to bolster human rights and counter ethnic strife, strengthening peacekeeping and counter-terrorism efforts, and facilitating major growth in U.S. commercial investments. I am devastated by the current situation there. As Ambassador to Benin, I elicited strong security cooperation, helped improve the country's business climate and U.S. commercial prospects, and strengthened the country's democratic trajectory. As Assistant Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I led some of the United States' largest foreign assistance and justice sector programs as well as the embassy's large and complex management and security operations, while regularly engaging Afghan leaders on governance and security concerns. As Executive Director of the Bureau of African Affairs, I led the State Department's management and crisis support for more than 50 African posts.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, my highest priority will be the interests, welfare, and security of American citizens. Whether ensuring responsive consular services, advocating for U.S. businesses, or strengthening partnerships to confront regional instability, this priority will guide every Embassy objective and activity. If confirmed, I will also do everything I can to ensure that the dedicated women and men serving at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar are secure, healthy, and provided every opportunity for success.

Our close partnership with Senegal spans more than 60 years and is rooted in our shared values of democracy and human rights; peace and security; and economic opportunity and prosperity. Senegal's long democratic tradition of peaceful transitions of power, free and fair elections, a robust private press, and a strong civil society is unique in West Africa and serves as a model for the region.

Senegal's dynamic economy has achieved impressive growth while creating new opportunities for U.S. investment. While the pandemic has hampered this progress and worsened the economic strains felt by Senegal's large youth population, U.S. public and private investments can play a key role in reigniting the country's growth. Embassy Dakar and Washington counterparts are pursuing a number of possibilities for U.S. investment that will strengthen Senegal's economy and its long-term democratic governance and security.

Senegal is a key security partner in West Africa and a critical ally in the United States' efforts to promote stability and counter violent extremism. It is a major contributor to peacekeeping missions across Africa and regularly hosts regional military exercises in partnership with the United States and France.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the United States' essential democratic, commercial, developmental, and security partnerships with Senegal.

In Guinea-Bissau, the United States has sustained its programs and partnership despite pandemic-related challenges, and there is scope to expand our bilateral relationship further in the days ahead. If confirmed, I will seek to advance our two countries' shared interests in bolstering democracy, promoting stable and responsive civilian governance, advancing development and economic opportunity, and countering drug trafficking.

Senegal and Guinea-Bissau are dynamic nations with extraordinary histories and extraordinary potential. I am honored by your consideration of me to serve in such an important posting. If confirmed, I will welcome advice and input from you and your staff on any aspect of the United States' multi-faceted relationships with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. I will also be pleased, if confirmed, to welcome you and your staff in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau and to keep you up to date on the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Dakar.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.
Mr. Ostfield?

STATEMENT OF MARC OSTFIELD OF PENNSYLVANIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENI-POTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

Mr. OSTFIELD. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the president's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay.

I am grateful for the trust and confidence President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. I appear today with the support of my husband of 32 years, Michael, who has encouraged me throughout my career of public service.

Over the course of the past 35 years, my work has always been about making the world a healthier, safer, more just, and more equitable place.

Whether on the frontlines of AIDS prevention, developing global health campaigns in Latin America and worldwide, or in the Department of State shaping policy on issues ranging from bioterrorism to human rights to human trafficking to anti-corruption, my professional experience has demonstrated the power of diverse teams that reflect the country we serve and the ability to build coalitions in challenging environments.

My experience as a volunteer firefighter has reinforced the importance of mutual aid and decision making in high-pressure situations. If confirmed, I will draw upon this experience to advance U.S. goals in Paraguay by working to strengthen governance, increase security, and promote U.S. business interests.

Mr. Chairman, Paraguay has proven to be a reliable partner and ardent defender of democracy in the region, calling for an end to undemocratic practices in Venezuela and Nicaragua, and supporting Cubans' right to peaceful protest.

Paraguay's steadfast support for Taiwan is another indicator of its commitment to democracy. Like all democracies, Paraguay has its challenges, particularly the need for stronger rule of law and democratic governance.

Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Paraguay 137 out of 180 countries, near the bottom for Latin America.

In order to deliver prosperity for all its citizens and foster greater economic opportunities with the U.S., Paraguay must continue its efforts to root out corruption and impunity, increase transparency, and repair judicial integrity.

If confirmed, I will prioritize anti-corruption and leverage tools such as Section 7031(c) of the 2019 Appropriations Act, which Secretaries Blinken and Pompeo have used to designate corrupt Paraguayan officials.

The global pandemic created outsized risks for Paraguay, with the world's highest daily per capita death rate in June of this year. The U.S. proudly donated 2 million vaccine doses to Paraguay in July, which promptly began its mass vaccination campaign.

Additional U.S. support this year will bring U.S. funding for vaccine assistance to over \$9 million since the start of the pandemic.

Paraguay's long-standing bond with like-minded democratic partner Taiwan has made it a target of pressure tactics by the People's Republic of China to push Paraguay into switching diplomatic relations to Beijing.

If confirmed, I will work to support Paraguay's economic and political sovereignty and its commitment to Taiwan.

U.S. security goals center on helping Paraguay counter illicit networks, which threaten the safety of U.S. citizens and the region through money laundering, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and links to terrorist organizations.

If confirmed, I will prioritize helping Paraguayan regional partners strengthen border security and address transnational crime.

The United States is Paraguay's number-one investor and U.S. exports to Paraguay support an estimated 7,000 American jobs. To protect and expand U.S. business opportunities, I will engage Paraguayan authorities on investment disputes, procurement tenders, and intellectual property rights.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will consult with this committee as we work for the safety, freedom, and prosperity of the U.S. and Paraguayan people.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Ostfield follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARC OSTFIELD

It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay. I am grateful for the trust and confidence President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me.

I appear before you today with the support of my husband of 32 years, Michael, who has encouraged me throughout my career of public service.

Over the course of a career spanning 35 years, my work has always been about making the world a healthier, safer, more just, and more equitable place. I spent 15 years on the front lines of HIV/AIDS prevention, developing global health campaigns in Latin America and worldwide. For the past almost 20 years, I've been honored to serve in the Department of State—creating initiatives to combat bioterrorism; shaping policy on issues ranging from human rights to human trafficking to anti-corruption and the environment; leading the Foreign Service Institute in delivering essential training for the U.S. diplomatic workforce; and supporting that workforce to address conflict as Ombudsman. My experience as a professional has demonstrated the power of diverse teams that reflect the country we serve, and the ability to build coalitions in the most challenging environments. My experience as a volunteer firefighter has reinforced the importance of mutual aid, and the ability to make decisions in high pressure situations. If confirmed, I will draw upon this experience to advance U.S. foreign policy goals in Paraguay by working to strengthen governance, increase security, and promote U.S. business interests.

Mr. Chairman, Paraguay has proven to be a reliable partner and ardent defender of democracy in the Western Hemisphere, voting consistently in multilateral fora to call for an end to undemocratic practices in Venezuela and Nicaragua, and supporting Cuban citizens' right to freedom of expression and peaceful protest. Paraguay's steadfast support for Taiwan is another indicator of its commitment to democracy.

Like all democracies, Paraguay's has its challenges—particularly the need for stronger rule of law and democratic governance. Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Paraguay 137 out of 180 countries, near the bottom for Latin America. In order to deliver prosperity for all its citizens and foster greater economic opportunities with the United States, Paraguay must continue its efforts to root out corruption and impunity, increase transparency, and repair judicial integrity. The United States is supporting these goals with \$44 million in USAID funding over five years. If confirmed, I will prioritize anti-corruption and leverage tools such as Section 7031(c) of the 2019 Appropriations Act, which Secretaries Blinken and Pompeo have used to designate corrupt Paraguayan officials.

The global pandemic created outsized risks for Paraguay which has endured one of the world's deadliest – surges, with the world's highest daily, per-capita death rate in June 2021. The United States proudly donated two million vaccine doses to Paraguay, which promptly began an effective mass vaccination campaign. Additional U.S. support this year will bring U.S. funding for non-vaccine assistance—including technical assistance, medicines, respirators, oxygen, and field hospitals—to over \$9 million since the start of the pandemic.

Paraguay's long-standing bond with like-minded democratic partner Taiwan has made it a target of pressure tactics by the People's Republic of China to push Paraguay into switching diplomatic relations to Beijing, including through quid pro quo vaccine diplomacy. If confirmed, I will work to support Paraguay's economic and political sovereignty and its commitment to Taiwan. U.S. security goals center on helping Paraguay counter illicit networks, which threaten the safety of U.S. citizens and the region. Paraguay's Tri-Border Area (TBA) with Argentina and Brazil is one of the principal routes for multi-billion-dollar money laundering, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and other smuggling operations. Some TBA criminal organizations have known or suspected links to terrorist organizations. To address these threats, U.S. programs build Paraguayan capacity to combat money laundering, financing of terrorism, and criminal gangs—along with programs to strengthen judicial and prosecutorial capacity. U.S. military assistance to Paraguay correspondingly strengthens cooperative crisis response capabilities. If confirmed, I will prioritize helping the TBA countries reinvigorate the Regional Security Mechanism, which coordinates efforts to enhance border security, dismantle transnational criminal organizations, and prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The United States is Paraguay's number one investor, and the Department of Commerce reports that U.S. exports to Paraguay support an estimated 7,000 American jobs. To protect and expand U.S. business opportunities in Paraguay, I will continue to ensure our Embassy engages Paraguayan authorities on investment disputes, procurement tenders, and Intellectual Property Rights.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will consult with this committee as we work for the safety, freedom, and prosperity of the U.S. and Paraguayan people. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ostfield.
Now we will turn to Mr. Fitrill.

STATEMENT OF TROY DAMIAN FITRILL OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Mr. FITRILL. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea.

I am proud to have my family here today, my wife, Kathryn, a fellow Foreign Service officer, and my children, Madeleine and Sam, who have spent their lives immersed in the Foreign Service themselves.

Although my career has taken us all to several continents, we are drawn to and always thrilled to be in sub-Saharan Africa, where we have spent the majority of our assignments.

My last assignment as Director for West African Affairs was, like everyone's, shaken up by the pandemic. But the one and only trip I was able to take before the pandemic struck began in Guinea, where I had the pleasure of traveling up country with my friend and colleague, Ambassador Simon Henshaw, whose passing was a shock to all who knew him. It would be a signal honor, if confirmed, to try to build upon his work.

The relationship between the United States and Guinea has passed through various stages during Guinea's 63 years of independence.

But we have always extended our hand in partnership through support for nascent democratic institutions, productive economic initiatives, and supporting the Guinean people directly through effective education and health programs, including in response to the Ebola epidemic in 2014.

Indeed, in this current pandemic, American investments in health systems paid off as Guinea sought to mitigate the ravages of COVID-19.

In the midst of this crisis, however, Ebola raised its ugly head again earlier this year, and those American-supported institutions reacted swiftly and effectively, halting it this time in a matter of months and with minimal loss of life.

Economically, Guinea is growing faster than anticipated, sustained mostly by strong mining activity, construction, and agriculture. U.S. companies have been in Guinea since the days of independence and more are joining them every year.

Recent investments in energy infrastructure, mining, and banking show that when given a fair chance, the United States is the preferred partner.

I do not minimize the challenges. There are opportunities in infrastructure precisely because so little infrastructure exists. The challenges to doing business in Guinea are well documented, and recent political tensions only increase the level of difficulty.

As we partner with the Guinean people, we advocate for fundamental freedoms, we advocate for open political participation, and we advocate for justice and dignity.

Guinea was born a nation of peace and leadership, and the citizens of that country, the region, and the world need a Guinea that builds upon that history.

Right now, Guineans rightfully express concern about peace and security both at home and in the region. If confirmed, I will encourage dialogue among the parties to strengthen political pluralism. Such dialogue can only succeed if all sides feel confident that there can be a positive outcome.

We support efforts to reform Guinea's security institutions with capacity-building efforts to bolster civilian protection, rule of law, and accountability. Guinea's troops have performed well in Mali, the most dangerous peacekeeping mission on Earth, and we recognize Guinea for that contribution.

If confirmed as the twenty-third U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea, I will support and encourage the ongoing democratic process, I will promote economic development, including advocacy for U.S. exports, support for U.S. investment and helping diversify Guinea's economy, and I will work to improve public health institutions, enhance Guinea's efforts against trafficking in persons, and strengthen our security partnership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee for the opportunity to address you today. My wife and I are both former Hill staffers, and so I would also like to thank your staffs for all they do to support you and your constituents every day.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Guinea, and I hope very much to welcome you there on a visit one day soon.

And with that, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Fitrell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TROY DAMIAN FITRELL

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea. I am proud to have my family here today: my wife Kathryn, a fellow Foreign Service Officer, and my children Madeleine and Sam, who have spent their lives immersed in the Foreign Service themselves.

Although my career has taken us all to several continents, we are drawn to and always thrilled to be in sub-Saharan Africa, where we have spent the majority of our assignments. My last assignment, as Director for West African Affairs was, like everyone's, shaken up by the pandemic, but the one and only trip I was able to take before the pandemic struck began in Guinea, where I had the pleasure of traveling up-country with my friend and colleague, Ambassador Simon Henshaw, whose passing was a shock to all who knew him. It would be a signal honor, if confirmed, to try to build on his work.

The relationship between the United States and Guinea has passed through various stages during Guinea's 63 years of independence, but we have always extended our hand in partnership, through support for nascent democratic institutions, productive economic initiatives, and supporting the Guinean people directly through effective education and health programs, including in response to the Ebola epidemic in 2014. Indeed, in this current pandemic, American investments in health systems paid off as Guinea sought to mitigate the ravages of COVID-19. In the midst of this crisis, however, Ebola raised its ugly head again earlier this year, and those American-supported institutions reacted swiftly and effectively, halting it this time in a matter of months and with minimal deaths.

Economically, Guinea is growing faster than anticipated, sustained mostly by strong mining activity, construction, and agriculture. U.S. companies have been in Guinea since the days of independence, and more are joining them every year. Recent investments in energy, infrastructure, mining, and banking show that when given a fair chance, the United States is the preferred partner. I do not minimize the challenges; there are opportunities in infrastructure precisely because so little infrastructure exists. The challenges to doing business in Guinea are well-documented and recent political tensions only increase the level of difficulty.

As we partner with the Guinean people, we advocate for fundamental freedoms, we advocate for open political participation, and we advocate for justice and dignity. Guinea was born a nation of peace and leadership and the citizens of that country, the region, and the world need a Guinea that builds upon that history. Right now, Guineans rightfully express concern about peace and security both at home and in the region. If confirmed, I will encourage dialogue among the parties to strengthen political pluralism. Such dialogue can only succeed if all sides feel confident that there can be a positive outcome. We support efforts to reform Guinea's security institutions, with capacity-building efforts to bolster civilian protection, rule of law, and accountability. Guinea's troops have performed well in Mali, the most dangerous peacekeeping mission on earth, and we recognize Guinea for that contribution.

If confirmed as the 23rd U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea, I will support and encourage the ongoing democratic process. I will promote economic development, including advocacy for U.S. exports, support for U.S. investment, and helping diversify Guinea's economy. And I will work to improve public health institutions, enhance Guinea's efforts against trafficking in persons, and strengthen our security partnership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you today. My wife and I are both former Hill staffers and so I would also like to thank your staffs for all they do to support you and your constituents every day. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Guinea and I hope very much to welcome you there on a visit one day soon. I am happy to answer any questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Fitrill, and I thank all of you again, and welcome to all the family members who are with us, and I want to reinforce your statement of appreciation for all our staffs as well.

Ambassador Raynor, if you were to pick the top challenge that you will face in each of the two countries that you would go to, if confirmed, can you just identify those very quickly?

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you, Senator. Absolutely.

In Guinea-Bissau, the top challenge is to create a sense of partnership that reflects shared values of democracy and governance, and creates opportunity to bring U.S. influence to bear on the development of that country, the economic opportunities of that country, and the political opportunities for the people of that country so that it can build its governance, it can reinforce its stability, and it can become more integrated into regional and international community of nations.

Senegal, if I may, I will give a one-part question, a three-part answer. Politically, it is a, as we both have noted, sir, a very long-standing democracy.

But all democracies incur strains, and paying attention to maintaining political space to respecting citizens' rights and opportunities of expression and participation remains important for all of our democracies, and I would very much want to reinforce our partnership with Senegal in that regard.

Senegal plays an enormously important security role, both as a bulwark against terrorism in the Sahel and its peacekeeping mission.

I would very much want to reinforce its capacity to play both of those roles while also continuing to support its efforts to inculcate its security and military institutions with a high respect for democratic norms.

Economically, enormous potential for U.S. firms. I would very much want to support and broaden those opportunities and bring deals to fruition while also, through private sector and public engagement, building up Senegal's economy, its capacity to create jobs for its large youth population both to create economic opportunity for all of us but also to contribute to Senegal's ongoing stability and democracy as well.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

And just staying with West Africa for now, Mr. Fitrill, we talked about the relative democratic stability in Senegal. We have a different situation, of course, in Guinea.

How concerned are you about political space and democracy in Guinea, and what can the United States do to strengthen democratic norms there?

Mr. FITRILL. I am, indeed, concerned about these issues. Right now, the levels of political tension in the aftermath of the violence and conflict of last year's election season still echoes.

The number of detainees currently held in custody in Guinea are worrying. Our focus is on the process. If there is wrongdoing, they should be charged.

If they have been charged, they should have a fair trial, and while detained, they should be given humane treatment. That is on the immediate sense of some of the issues in the country.

But, more broadly, the ability for people to exercise those fundamental rights of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, these are under some threat in Guinea.

I think the United States can keep its efforts on overarching democratic processes in the country and we could use our messaging both, public and private, to be able to encourage a greater advance towards political dialogue in that country.

At the moment, the tensions are such that there is very little dialogue occurring. People are talking past one another. And I believe the United States, we can use our good offices of the embassy and of officials in Washington to help encourage a greater dynamic of political dialogue in the country in order to achieve a future in which more regular democratic transitions can take place.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, and in my remaining 50 seconds, if you could assess China's influence in Guinea, because we know that Guinea has been a major recipient of Belt and Road support.

China, of course, does not adhere to the same standards with respect to rule of law and democratic norms that we aspire to.

Can you talk a little bit about the influence of China in Guinea and how that impacts U.S.-Guinea relations?

Mr. FITRILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

They are the largest trading partner that Guinea has. That is a challenge for Guinea and for the rest of the world.

The emphasis is on a level playing field, and we know that that is not always the case with China. But our focus on the broader macroeconomic policies of the country have led to real competition and that is why U.S. investors have been successful in the country as well as investors from other parts of the world.

But keeping that attention on transparency, on the applicability of the rule of law, these are the areas in which we need to remain focused so that we can have full, even, and fair competition.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Senator Rounds?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me begin just simply, once again, by thanking all of you and your families for your service to our country.

Ambassador Raynor, in your previous assignment in Ethiopia, you engaged with the Ethiopian Government on several complex issues for the United States, including the war in Tigray and the historic transition under Prime Minister Abiy.

Senator Inhofe, Senator Bozeman, and I were there earlier this spring and we had the opportunity to visit with President Abiy at that time, and seemed to me that there were some real challenges there that we tried to work through with the Prime Minister.

You, clearly, have some insights with regard to what had occurred in Ethiopia. Now, as you move forward with coming to Senegal, you find yourself in a unique situation once again.

If confirmed, what lessons would you draw from your time in Ethiopia and how would you apply them in Senegal?

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you, Senator.

I guess I would note at the outset that the while there would, certainly, be much commonality in my engagement in Senegal, if

confirmed, as there was in Ethiopia, the starting point is pretty different.

Ethiopia was just launching during my time there a very new and ambitious effort to create a democracy and a free market economy, preceded by, frankly, millennia of repression and closed ways of doing business. Senegal, of course, has a long and strong democratic tradition.

But I think one of the lessons I learned from Ethiopia is that democracy can never be taken for granted, that you have to deal forthrightly with your counterparts in the country, make sure they are aware of what you can do to support our shared interests but also make sure they are aware when you have concerns about what they are doing that you feel is getting in the way of those shared interests.

That is something I have done throughout my career and throughout my two ambassadorships and we, certainly, anticipate doing in Senegal as well.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. I am going to stick with Africa on my discussions.

And Dr. Ostfield, I see that Senator Kaine is here, and I am sure that he is going to provide ample opportunity for discussions with regard to Paraguay.

So if I could, I would like to turn to Mr. Fitrill, and just curious, as the former Director of the Office of West African Affairs you have had a unique perspective on developments in the West Africa region.

How would you assess the democratic, economic, and security landscape in the region, and how does Guinea fit into these regional trends?

Mr. FITRILL. Thank you. It has been a challenging two years, no question. I would say that all of those aspects that you mentioned are linked.

One of the problems is the advancement of violent extremist organizations has not occurred in a vacuum. It did not occur just because the organizations chose to enter the space.

They have achieved the success that they have had because they found a ground that was available for that kind of activity.

The local grievances, the backsliding of democracy, widespread corruption have all been problematic in the region, and the current attention needs to focus on all the drivers of extremism and not just the extremists themselves.

Our efforts to address the extremists themselves has to be done in a way in which it is not actually counterproductive.

All of these issues, frankly, pay no attention to national borders, and I know that the Government of Guinea itself is deeply concerned about its eastern and northeastern borders and considers these issues to be existential for their country.

And so the attempt to address those drivers of extremism across the Sahel, across West Africa, are absolutely critical for any way of addressing sustainably the concerns that these governments have right now.

Senator ROUNDS. If you could provide advice to us today with regard to Chinese influence and how to offset it; if there were, perhaps, one or two specific areas where we could be more precise,

more exacting, more on target with the type of programs that we should support, what would you recommend to us in terms of the right tools for use?

Mr. FITRILL. Bingo, Senator. You put it right in your own words. The programs that you gave us with the International Development Finance Corporation is probably the biggest step forward for us to be able to compete on a level playing field.

We can keep shining a light on the playing field. We can keep lobbying and persuading to make sure that international norms are respected.

But if we do not have the financing behind our expeditionary commercial efforts, then we are always going to be fighting for second place, and we have already seen tremendous successes with OPIC and with its successor organization, the DFC.

We are looking forward to some tremendous successes in the region. But having that finance behind was probably the biggest step forward.

Senator ROUNDS. Very good. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator KAINE?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Chairman, and Senator Rounds is right. I am really here to really focus on Paraguay. So Mr. Ostfield, welcome.

Just a quick story and then a question, and it is about U.S. vaccines in Paraguay and, really, throughout the region.

Just returned from a CODEL, six of us, three Democrats and three Republicans. We went to Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Colombia, and there were many issues. But what we heard again and again was just this deep appreciation for the U.S. donation of vaccines.

And if I had read a memo about it, I would have sort of understood it, but I really had to go and hear it because the story we heard again and again is the U.S. is donating vaccines to us. China and Russia are willing to sell us vaccines.

We really feel good about the quality of the U.S. vaccines. We are not 100 percent sure about the quality of the China and Russia vaccines, and when we make a contract with China and Russia to get vaccines, they may or may not come through.

Paraguay has had a very difficult time during COVID. It has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the Americas. It has got a population of 7 million.

They did a contract with China to sell them a million vaccines through Sinopharm and China just unilaterally cancelled the contract because Paraguay is one of the 15 countries in the world that recognizes Taiwan.

This is a huge political issue in Paraguay. President Benítez's handling of the pandemic and the challenges they have had led the congress there to consider impeaching him just a couple of months ago. They averted that, but China likely saw that as an opportunity and so just last month canceled the vaccines.

On the other hand, the United States has delivered a million vaccines, donated a million vaccines to Paraguay, and with the an-

nouncement of President Biden the other day, there is a chance that we may donate more.

Other nations in the Americas—El Salvador, the Dominican Republic—as soon as they stopped recognizing Taiwan, China gave them vaccines.

Often, in the last few years what we have heard from leaders in the region is that the U.S.—we would much rather deal with the U.S. than China, much rather—we are culturally so connected. But you are not around and China is, and if China is around we are going to deal with them.

The vaccine delivery and donations by the United States gives us such a massive opportunity to rebuild goodwill and, really, kind of accelerate our goodwill ahead of China's in the region if we do it right.

So I will ask you, Mr. Ostfield, should you be confirmed, how might you use the fact that the U.S. is being a great global donor, including to countries in the Americas, including Paraguay, to build our standing and deepen the relationship between the United States and Paraguay?

MR. OSTFIELD. Thank you, Senator Kaine. It is great to hear about your experience on the recent CODEL to the region.

If confirmed, I would look forward to building on the recent U.S. donation of 2 million doses of vaccine. The first tranche of a million arrived July 9th. The last tranche, I believe, arrived last week.

If you ever look at any press reports, they arrived on planes with Star Wars logos. So quite a media story, in addition to the vaccine itself arriving in Paraguay.

By all reports, Paraguay has already implemented a fairly effective mass vaccination campaign. Reports I saw just this week there is now people receiving their second dose. So they have been that efficient, that effective, at getting vaccines out there.

And it is true that the China-Taiwan relationship or the China-Taiwan issue complicates things for Paraguay. They do not have access to the Chinese resources.

If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Government of Paraguay to strengthen Paraguay's commitment to Taiwan. It was encouraging to note that during Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nuland's recent trip to Paraguay the President of Paraguay made a statement affirming Paraguay's long-standing connection to Taiwan. They are like-minded democratic partners.

The U.S. Embassy in Asunción in May of this year hosted the first virtual forum for U.S. and Taiwanese entrepreneurs, looking at investment opportunities in Paraguay specific to things like renewable energy and electric vehicle manufacturing.

If confirmed, one of the calls I look forward to making in Asunción is to the Taiwanese Ambassador there to identify ways that the U.S. and Taiwan can partner.

The U.S.-Taiwan connection is good for the United States, it is good for Taiwan, and it is good for Paraguay. And so ways that we can work together to help them are in our interests and I look forward to furthering those, if confirmed.

SENATOR KAINE. Well, just to kind of underline and exclamation point something, so the U.S. has donated 2 million vaccines in a country of 7 million.

I mean, that is a big deal in terms of the percentage of the population that U.S. donations are now able to cover.

We visited Ecuador. Just for my colleagues, Ecuador has had a tradition of an anti-U.S. Government for about 30 years.

They had an election in the spring and they not only elected a pro-American president, but they also elected a parliament where 80 percent of the members are brand new, and one of the reasons they did that is because the 30-year closer and closer to China, what has it gotten them?

It has got them oil drilling in the Amazon by Chinese companies that are causing huge environmental challenges, slipshod infrastructure projects, including dams that are causing waterfalls and rivers to dry up, Chinese fishing fleets vacuuming up fish around the Galapagos, which is part of Ecuador.

And many people view the election in Ecuador and this very dramatic turn toward a pro-U.S. posture as a revulsion at what happens when you get too close to China and the debt that comes along with that, and the slipshod quality of some of the work caused the public to want to do something else.

We have a real opportunity and the innovation of American firms, Operation Warp Speed, the Biden administration's decision to deploy in a very generous way, is something that in Africa, in the Americas, all around the world, it is a great opportunity for us to deepen ties.

Mr. Ostfield, I look forward to working with you, should be confirmed, and I think this is going to give you a really good ability to do good work there.

Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Kaine, and I think Paraguay is a really good example, as you said, of where the U.S. donation of 2 million vaccines has had a huge impact. Hopefully, it will be a model for how we approach others in the region and around the world.

Senator Young, I am told, may be joining us now via WebEx.

Okay. He is no longer available.

So I just have one last question because I did not have a chance to ask you one, Mr. Ostfield, and it relates to the environmental situation in Paraguay, and my colleagues will have another round, of course, for other members who are interested in asking additional question.

So, you know, last October, Paraguay endured one of its worst wildfire seasons and it is currently suffering from a drought that has depleted the Paraguay River, which is the country's main waterway and trade corridor that has gone to record lows.

This has led to environmental degradation and worsened economic hardship during the pandemic. It has also led Paraguay to ask Brazil, which is suffering from its own severe drought, to release water from the low-capacity Itaipu Dam.

So what is your assessment of the environmental and economic impact of the drought and how has this impacted Paraguay's relationship with neighboring Brazil?

Mr. OSTFIELD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Government of Paraguay on strengthening their ability to respond to the kind of environmental threats you described.

Paraguay has taken some meaningful actions in this step, already participated in the Ministerial Roundtable in April with Special Envoy for Climate Change Kerry, committed to achieving zero net emissions by the year 2050, and with USAID support has been working on improving sustainable livestock processes and forest fire management, recognizing the great threat they have experienced and that they face.

At the same time, the threats that Paraguay faces that are environmental in nature are linked to some of the issues that I described in my opening statement, particularly, rule of law, corruption, and impunity in the country. For Paraguay to effectively address these environmental challenges, which it needs to do, it is going to need to ensure that it has a system where there is an ability to enforce laws that are passed to achieve compliance with standards that the Government may assess and that U.S. assistance in these areas in investigation, prosecution, and so forth will actually be an asset for Paraguay in addressing the environmental challenges that it and its neighbors in the region are facing.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I will turn it over to the ranking member.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have one question but I would direct it to both Ambassador Raynor and to Dr. Ostfield, and it follows along the same line as I had earlier for Mr. Fitrill.

And that is with regard to the programs that we have available to us to provide and to promote goodwill and to improve our economic activity between the different countries, I also serve on the Armed Services Committee and in there we talk about ways in which we can promote with our allies and our friends the ability to coordinate activities and to have them learn our way of military activity.

But time and again, as we speak with these military officers, they talk about the need for the engagement by the Department of State and the different programs that can be very, very helpful and very efficient in maintaining good relationships with these countries and can be done at a very low cost, really, for the amount of impact that we provide.

I would ask, beginning with Ambassador Raynor, if there were particular programs that you have found to be beneficial, could you share that with us?

And then, Dr. Ostfield, if you could as well give us your thoughts.

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you, Senator.

I think I would mention three things in response to that.

First, I would note that our traditional development work is important. It meets human needs. It shows that we are in partnership with the country where we are engaged and not there to pursue our own narrow interests, and elevating the visibility of that impact is something that I have always sought to do at the embassies I have served at.

I think that is an important piece of it because we need to persuade not only the governments but the people of these countries where their true friends and partners are.

Secondly, I would note that leadership development programs in the United States, our programs—you mentioned the military ones, the War College, that sort of thing—world class. No one comes close to the quality.

But what we lack is scale. China does not do it as well as we do but they do it for hundreds of thousands of times more people than we do.

So if there were a way that we could increase the scale of some of these programs—bring them to the United States. It is not the same to do the work in the country because when they come to the United States they understand America in a way that they will never understand if they are not physically there, absorbing everything that we are.

The third thing I would mention is, as important as I think training and development programs are, I think the way that the United States, ultimately, will be transformational is through the private sector through high-quality private sector engagement with countries.

We have enormous interest in Senegal and in every country I have served at in the quality of U.S. private sector engagement, sharing information, high-quality labor standards, and environmental standards. We do it right. However, where we suffer is on the competitive cost side of that.

So you mentioned DFC, and I got to say that is a very exciting reinvention of that program from where I sit based on what we did before. The scale of it is more in keeping with what we need to be doing. Its construct can and should make it more nimble, because what we do is run out of time. We have processes, and China and others come with financing built in.

So we need to streamline and make more scaled and impactful the financing piece of the support we provide to our own private sector engagement.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Dr. Ostfield?

Mr. OSTFIELD. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

I would focus on three areas in terms of where the U.S. can better help Paraguay develop and become more of an even stronger and more viable partner for us and for the region it works in.

The first of those is addressing governance and rule of law and U.S. training and technical support and financial support to help Paraguay root out corruption.

To strengthen the integrity of their judicial system, which has a reputation of being weak and corrupt, is an essential element of ensuring that Paraguay has the kind of thriving democracy that the Paraguayan people deserve and that we also want to see for Paraguay.

Secondly, U.S. assistance in improving security in the region. That includes things like money laundering, links to terrorism financing, narcotics trafficking, and counterfeiting. U.S. assistance has helped in areas related to asset forfeiture, improved investiga-

tory techniques, and better case building mechanisms strengthened prosecution across the board.

Not only do we do that on the civilian side, U.S. military has been assisting the Paraguayan military in things like crisis response to help address the security situation in the tri-border area, which is the area where Paraguay borders Brazil and Argentina, but also more broadly.

And then finally, if Paraguay wants to, indeed, be an attractive destination for U.S. businesses, for U.S. businesses to further investment there, Paraguay is going to have to address these issues.

U.S. assistance is already working with Paraguay, for example, on improving the transparency of its solicitations and its procurement tenders, which have a tendency to be opaque, to help the Government of Paraguay better understand the risks with untrusted vendors, and to dissuade Paraguay's business community from the investment disputes and frivolous lawsuits in violation of intellectual property rights, which, ultimately, act as a deterrent for many U.S. businesses to invest in Paraguay.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

And I do not know if you have any closing remarks.

Senator ROUNDS. I would just simply say thank you to our panelists before us today, our nominees. Clearly, as I said earlier, you are a qualified group of individuals, and I thank you and your families for your service.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Let me second that and just say I think this is a very important moment for American diplomacy around the world, and in my judgment, all of you will help our country meet that moment in the countries you have been nominated to be our ambassador in, and I look forward to supporting your nominations.

For any members wishing to submit questions for the record, the hearing record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, Friday, August 6th.

And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MICHAEL RAYNOR BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What is the risk of terrorist activity in Senegal? From where do the threats emanate? On what areas will you focus U.S. efforts to support Senegal's counterterrorism efforts if confirmed?

Answer. Senegal's internal security situation is stable and generally peaceful, and its professional and capable police and gendarmerie forces operate throughout the country. I am concerned, however, by increasing instability and violence in the region. Our military and civilian security cooperation is focused on preparing Senegalese military and civilian forces to address terrorist and other threats. The United States is a key security partner to Senegal, and Senegal regularly hosts large scale AFRICOM military exercises in the region. Pre-COVID, the United States planned 45 joint defense engagements with Senegal. I understand most of our planned defense cooperation events were cancelled in 2020, but that the United States has since rescheduled several of our mission-critical bilateral engagements.

Senegal is a recipient of U.S. security assistance under the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). Through the TSCTP, the United States works to increase Senegal's immediate and long-term capabilities to address terrorist threats and prevent the spread of violent extremism. Senegal maintains a strong will to counter violent extremism and seeks to deepen our already close counterterrorism partnership to further develop its capacity in this regard. If confirmed, security cooperation will remain a key priority of mine.

Question. Senegal remained on the Trafficking in Persons Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year. According to the report, the Government “did not investigate or prosecute traffickers exploiting children in forced begging consistent with the 2005 anti-trafficking law and did not take action against officials who refused to investigate such cases. . . . Officials did not consistently use the 2005 anti-trafficking law to prosecute alleged traffickers and continued to apply penalties inconsistent with the law.” If confirmed, how will you encourage accountability for officials who refuse to investigate forced begging? What steps will you take to encourage the Government to apply penalties for trafficking consistent with the law?

Answer. Per the 2021 TIP Report, the Government of Senegal does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. I understand that cooperation on anti-trafficking efforts with the Senegalese Government remains a top priority for Mission Dakar. Senegalese Government efforts this past year included implementing the third phase of its program to remove vulnerable children, including trafficking victims, from the streets; increasing investigations, prosecutions, and convictions; and adopting a new national action plan. The Government identified and referred to services 6,187 vulnerable children, including potential child trafficking victims, during the reporting period, a significant increase compared to the 1,358 children identified during the previous reporting period.

If confirmed, I will work to expand on this progress and to address with the Senegalese Government the prioritized recommendations in the 2021 TIP Report. These include increasing efforts to actively investigate and criminally prosecute trafficking offenses, punishing convicted traffickers with significant prison terms consistent with the 2005 anti-trafficking law, and establishing a system to automatically trigger investigations of alleged traffickers when potential trafficking victims are identified, including potential child forced begging victims. I will also continue to support the Department's project to combat sex trafficking under the Program to End Modern Slavery.

Question. Two prominent would-be candidates in the 2019 Presidential elections—Karim Wade, son of the former president, and Khalifa Sall, the former mayor of Dakar—were barred from running due to corruption convictions which some critics viewed as politically selective, particularly in the case of Khalifa Sall whom President Sall pardoned months after the vote. Local activist groups also came under increased state regulatory pressure during the electoral period. And Ousmane Sonko, an anticorruption activist who challenged President Macky Sall in the 2019 elections was arrested on charges of rape and disturbing public order in March 2021, prompting protests in Dakar and elsewhere. What accounts for the legal troubles of opposition figures? Are the charges politically motivated? What is the trajectory of democracy in Senegal—is space expanding or shrinking? What will you do if confirmed to help preserve political space in Senegal?

Answer. Although the official investigation into sexual assault charges against opposition leader Ousmane Sonko is ongoing, he and his supporters claim the accusations are a political conspiracy by President Sall to sabotage Sonko's 2024 presidential aspirations, comparing the charges to previous criminal cases orchestrated against Khalifa Sall and Karim Wade to disqualify them from the 2019 presidential election. Sonko's subsequent arrest in early March triggered several days of intense political protests that spiraled into widespread riots and looting, the worst Senegal had seen in decades. The unrest resulted in at least fourteen deaths, hundreds of injuries, and significant damage to private businesses across the country. It has also shifted the country's political landscape in ways that remain to be seen fully, including exerting additional pressure on President Sall to clarify his position on whether he will seek a third term in 2024. If confirmed, I will continue to call on the Government of Senegal, both publicly and privately, to respect democratic norms and constitutional requirements, including term limits and regular democratic transitions of power. I will also engage like-minded missions, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders to speak in a unified voice on issues of democracy and preserving political space in Senegal.

Question. A regional court with jurisdiction in Senegal determined that a controversial election law enacted in 2018 which requires citizen endorsements for presidential candidates violated civil liberties and directed Senegal's Government to annul it. Has the law been annulled? If not, why not, and is failure to annul it an indicator of a deterioration of the rule of law in your view?

Answer. The Government of Senegal annulled this law on July 8, 2021.

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. As Ambassador to Ethiopia, I launched major new programs to support democratization, human rights, opposition political parties, independent media, civil society, and relevant national institutions, including the creation of a credible human rights commission and electoral board. I led the design and implementation of new USAID programs in economic empowerment, political participation, education, and health to promote greater participation by women in political and economic life.

As Ambassador to Benin, I worked closely with the then-president and other elements of the Beninese Government to ensure respect for constitutional term limits, resulting in a democratic and peaceful transition of presidential power. I established new programs to counter corruption and boost government accountability and transparency, as well as significant new initiatives to foster interreligious tolerance and cooperation. As Acting Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I led major development and justice sector programs to promote the well-being, human rights, education, rule of law, security, and economic prospects of Afghans and, in particular, Afghan women.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Senegal? 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. Senegal has long served as a democratic model in the region with a strong history of democratic values and peaceful transitions of power, respect for the rule of law, tolerance, and respect for human rights, values which the United States shares. I was deeply concerned, however, by the March unrest, which led to the tragic loss of life of fourteen individuals who were killed during the protests. A significant contributing factor to the unrest was political dissatisfaction related to perceived government oppression of critics, as well as concerns over youth unemployment and economic anxiety exacerbated by government-mandated Covid-19 restrictions. The Government took other deeply concerning actions during the unrest, such as suspending transmission of two opposition-friendly television channels broadcasting news and commentary on the protests. While Senegalese media have traditionally operated freely, and many international press outlets have offices in Senegal, press freedom is an area of increasing concern as government pressure on opposition voices has increased in the past year.

If confirmed, I will use my unique platform and voice as the U.S. Ambassador, both publicly in my interactions with the Senegalese people and privately with Senegalese officials, to elevate issues of democracy, democratic norms and constitutional requirements, press freedom, respect for human rights, and the need for citizen-responsive governance. I will continue to urge all parties to exercise restraint, to avoid future violence and destruction of property, and to work toward peaceful and inclusive dialogue to resolve complicated problems, which will require cooperation by all Senegalese to make meaningful progress.

Question. What steps will you take - if confirmed - to support democracy in Senegal? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Senegal has long served as a democratic model in the region with a strong history of democratic values and peaceful transitions of power, respect for the rule of law, tolerance, and respect for human rights -- values which the United States shares. The Senegalese people understand how important democracy is, and they overwhelmingly support having a say in how they are governed and by whom, as evidenced by the March protests over concerns about the economic situation and youth unemployment, as well as political dissatisfaction related to perceived government oppression of critics. If confirmed, I will ensure that in our diplomatic engagements with the Senegalese Government we pay close attention to access to justice, respect for democratic norms and constitutional requirements, free and fair elections, media freedom, the health of civil society, and government transparency and

accountability. 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 the Senegalese people, and ensure coordination of effort with like-minded missions and other key stakeholders.

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 good governance are key U.S. priorities in Senegal. I understand that U.S. public diplomacy and outreach in Senegal support Mission and Department goals on promotion of democracy and good governance through press outreach, small grants, American Center-based programs, digital video conferences, visiting speakers, exchange programs, and social media engagement. For example, USAID provides support to the Government of Senegal to meet its own governance targets to decentralize management and fiscal authority by delegating decision-making to regional and local governments, improve transparency and accountability at the national level, and consolidate and improve the quality of democracy in Senegal. USAID's work seeks to increase citizen engagement in government processes, strengthen effective local governance, improve transparency and accountability, and promote peacebuilding efforts in Casamance. If confirmed, I will prioritize these key efforts as Ambassador.

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 Senegal? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meeting 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 Senegal. Organizations promoting human rights, civil society, and good governance are critical to any functioning democracy. If confirmed, I will continue and strengthen the relationships built by Mission Dakar and the Department of State more broadly with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States, and Senegalese human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Senegal. 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 Senegal, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with like-minded missions and other key stakeholders to address our concerns with a unified voice.

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 strengthening the relationships Mission Dakar has built across the political spectrum, including by engaging with both ruling and opposition parties and leaders. I will work with both the Government and opposition parties to develop a more inclusive political environment and 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, development projects, small grants, and direct engagements, I will advocate for a political environment that is inclusive of Senegalese women, youth, and minorities.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Senegal 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 Senegal?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Senegal on press freedom issues. Senegalese media has traditionally operated freely, and many international press outlets have offices in Senegal. Press freedom is an area of increasing concern, however, as government pressure on opposition voices has increased in the past year. During the March 2021 unrest, the Government suspended transmission by two opposition-friendly television channels broadcasting news and commentary on the protests. I will also call on the Government to prevent and stop the harassment of journalists and media outlets whose reporting is critical of the Senegalese Government's

policies. Such actions have a negative impact on press freedom and 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 Senegalese. We will continue to prioritize providing training and other capacity building opportunities for journalists. If confirmed, I will commit to meet regularly with independent, local press in Senegal.

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 Senegal.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Senegal on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Senegal on the right of workers and labor groups to organize, including to form independent trade unions, and I will call out incidents when this right to associate is restricted.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Senegal, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Promoting respect for human rights and democracy is a priority for our mission in Senegal. If confirmed, I will use all diplomatic tools at my disposal to defend the human rights and dignity of all individuals in Senegal, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Senegal?

Answer. In a country that otherwise largely respects human rights, the struggle for LGBTQI+ individuals in Senegal is ongoing. The situation of Senegal's LGBTQI+ community remains dire, and members of the community continue to be subject to arbitrary arrests and to convictions for consensual same-sex activity. Incidents include the arrest and beatings of suspected LGBTQI+ individuals by religious police in Touba and arrests of LGBTQI+ individuals in Dakar for holding a birthday party. The Covid-19 pandemic has created additional difficulties for LGBTQI+ organizations and their mission to serve their communities. In February, following President Biden's message to the African Union, comments from Senegalese citizens overall were positive and generally appreciative of U.S. re-engagement in Africa, but 10% of the comments criticized its references to LGBTQI+ inclusion. Several warned against warming up to the United States too quickly and advised caution regarding mentions of the LGBTQI+ community. Likewise, Senegalese are widely critical of calls to respect the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Senegal?

Answer. Promoting the human rights of LGBTQI+ people is a challenging endeavor in a society as conservative as Senegal. It is also a priority of the Biden administration around the world, and, if confirmed, I commit to carrying out the President's mandate. It is critically important, in doing so, to consult with LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations in Senegal to take account of the local context and ensure we do not exacerbate the problem. For instance, it may not always be appropriate to issue public statements in response to specific anti-LGBTQI+ incidents, but to engage in quiet, closed-door diplomacy that minimizes additional risks to LGBTQI+ people. Embassy Dakar has relaunched an interagency Human Rights Working Group to identify ways to assist human rights defenders, including LGBTQI+ activists, in addressing harassment and violence. Discretion and strategic engagement with the international community are the only avenues for LGBTQI+ activists to operate within the current social environment. LGBTQI+ activists and individuals will continue to face a difficult road as long as Senegal remains intolerant of LGBTQI+ persons. In gauging how, when, and whether to engage on this topic, it is invaluable to understand the sense of the local LGBTQI+ community, and I commit that, if confirmed, the Embassy team and I will continue engaging with the LGBTQI+ Senegalese and their allies.

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 Senegal?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to accommodate promptly all appropriate requests for briefings. As someone whose professional career began as a staff member of a Senate Select Committee, I have a strong appreciation and respect for Congress' key oversight role and will fully cooperate in accommodating that role.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO TROY DAMIAN FITRILL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How much democracy and governance related assistance has the United States provided for programs and activities in Guinea over the last four fiscal years and in what areas? If confirmed, in what areas would you recommend assistance be channeled?

Answer. From FY 2017 to FY 2020, the State Department and USAID allocated \$12 million in bilateral foreign assistance to Guinea to support good governance; political competition and consensus building; and independent media and free flow of information.

If confirmed, I would recommend that we continue these programs, and also that we prioritize additional democracy and governance areas including rule of law, strengthening political parties, and transparency in elections.

Question. There were multiple reports that security forces killed civilians related to the March 2020 referendum and legislative elections, and the October 2020 Presidential elections. What is the status of the investigations into elections related violence in Guinea? If confirmed, how will you support accountability related to electoral violence?

Answer. I understand that there has been no progress on investigations into violence surrounding the 2020 elections and referendum. If confirmed, I will press the Government of Guinea to investigate thoroughly and transparently, and to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, including those associated with the alleged unlawful killings in 2019-2020 in the lead up to and aftermath of the legislative elections, constitutional referendum, and presidential election.

Question. Human rights organizations claim that 300 to 400 people were arrested in the wake of the October elections. Opposition figures were targeted for arrest the following month. Were these arrests politically motivated? What is the status of those detained? What specific actions will you take, if confirmed, to address politically motivated detention, harassment and intimidation of opposition and civil society?

Answer. Authorities reportedly arrested an estimated 400 people during the March 2020 legislative and October 2020 presidential election periods. Arrested individuals include opposition leaders, civil society members, and journalists. Many of these arrests appear to be politically motivated. The Government of Guinea has released an unknown number of detainees since November 2020 and recently released eight high-profile opposition leaders, but arrests continue. At least two detainees have died in detention, while others continue to suffer from lack of access to adequate health care, prison overcrowding, and life-threatening prison conditions.

If confirmed, I will press the Government of Guinea to ensure that detained members of the political opposition receive all applicable procedural protections and fair trial guarantees for those who have been charged, and that those detained are treated humanely to help Guinea establish a more representative, democratic, and transparent government. I will press for the release of those who have been unjustly detained, who have not been charged, and whose detention appears politically driven.

Question. Are media freedoms respected in Guinea? Are journalists free to be critical of the Government without fear of reprisal? A recent legislative change calls for the High Authority of Communication to be appointed by presidential decree as opposed to being elected by a group of peer commissioners. How will that impact media freedoms? What steps will you take if confirmed to support free media?

Answer. I understand that press freedom in Guinea is significantly constrained due to government action. Journalists have been subjected to harassment and intimidation after publishing reports critical of the Government. Guinean journalists have been detained by security forces, and foreign journalists have been forced to leave the country. Government officials attempt to censor the media on spurious legal and administrative grounds. The July 2020 law allowing the president to ap-

point the chair of the High Authority of Communication and raising the number of presidentially chosen members is just another example of the Government's efforts to constrain press freedom.

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging across the spectrum on the importance of press freedom and to meeting regularly with press outlets. I will call on the Government of Guinea to respect press freedom and to prevent harassment of journalists critical of the Government. If confirmed, I will seek to continue support for the development of free press and journalists through training and capacity building programs for journalists.

Question. According to the State Department Country Report on human rights, Guinean law "criminalizes rape and domestic violence, but both occurred frequently, and authorities rarely prosecuted perpetrators." What assistance is the U.S. providing to law enforcement to address rape and sexual violence in Guinea?

Answer. The State Department, through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), has provided \$400,000 for FY20. U.S. Government support provides mentoring and training to Guinean law enforcement officers to improve their understanding and support of internationally recognized human rights, fight trafficking in persons, and address sexual and gender-based violence. I understand that this training also strengthens Guinean law enforcement's capacity to identify and investigate rape and domestic violence cases.

Question. Guinea is on the Tier 2 Watch List for the second year in a row, according to the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report. The report indicates that the Government does not "provide sufficient funding to the Office for the Protection of Gender, Children, and Morals." What efforts will you undertake, if confirmed, to encourage the Government to dedicate resources to that office? What other efforts will you engage in if confirmed to ensure the Government adequately addresses trafficking in persons?

Answer. I understand that Guinea remains on the Tier 2 Watch List in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report because the Government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts to address trafficking in persons compared to the previous reporting period, even considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity.

If confirmed, I will work to raise awareness and enlist the support of communities and local government to address the human trafficking issue. I will press the Government to fully fund and support government officials and entities that work to support and protect trafficking victims. We will continue to work together with the Government of Guinea to strengthen Guinean capacity to improve its trafficking in persons record, and with NGOs and the international community to provide assistance and training to Guinean law enforcement and the judicial system to ensure that traffickers face justice. I will also continue to support the Department's project to combat child trafficking under the Program to End Modern Slavery, as well as the Department's bilateral project to identify and provide services to victims of trafficking.

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. Almost every position in my career has had a focus on promoting respect for human rights. As Labor Attaché in Guatemala, I counseled nascent factory unions in achieving formal recognition and lobbied government officials to allow unions to make use of arbitration proceedings. The former increased the number of recognized unions and the latter increased access to legal redress in the face of labor rights abuses. As Chargé d'Affaires in Mauritius, I led my Embassy team to organize and execute a three-day skills camp to train women to run for elected office. After Constitutional changes took place, the number of women in elected positions increased four-fold. If confirmed, I commit to keeping respect for human rights at the forefront of U.S. engagement in Guinea.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Guinea? 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. I am deeply concerned by the number of members of the political opposition in Guinea who remain imprisoned and the limiting of political space for opposition parties and groups by the Guinean Government. All Guineans must be free to express opposing views. Abuses by law enforcement and security forces must be in-

vestigated and those responsible must face justice. The press must be free to report critically. If confirmed, I will call upon the Government of Guinea to resolve the detainee issue and make other positive overtures to the opposition to ease political tension. I will press for an investigation into violence and killings around the 2020 elections. I will push for greater freedom of the press and greater protections for journalists.

Question. What steps will you take - if confirmed - to support democracy in Guinea? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to raise concerns publicly and privately about lack of accountability for alleged human rights violations and abuses by security forces and the continued pretrial detention of opposition supporters, civil society members, and journalists. Potential impediments include the lack of transparency and accountability within the justice system, slow bureaucratic processes, and a lack of resources.

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. The United States Government implements projects in Guinea supporting local governance, civil society, and media to consolidate good governance across the country. If confirmed, I will prioritize implementation of security sector reform projects and training to help prevent future human rights violations and abuses and instruct on the role of security services in sustaining and supporting democratic processes and institutions. We will work to build capacity of civil society organizations to promote respect for democracy and human rights and accountability in the democratic process.

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 Guinea? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Promotion of respect for human rights in Guinea is one of the most important priorities for the United States. If confirmed, I commit to meet 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 Guinea. I will ensure our Embassy continues to build and strengthen its relationships with a broad spectrum of civil society both in the United States and in Guinea. I will work with our diplomatic and international partners to encourage the Government to cooperate with civil society to create a safer, freer, and more democratic Guinea.

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 will work to strengthen our existing relationships and build new ones across the political spectrum and will engage with democratically oriented political figures and parties. I will work with both the Government and opposition parties to develop a more inclusive political environment which respects human rights and democratic norms. Through engagement, programs, and grants I will advocate for greater participation by women, minorities, and youth in politics.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Guinea 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 Guinea?

Answer. A free press is vital in any democracy to hold leaders to account, as well as exposing and fighting corruption. If confirmed, I commit to engaging across the spectrum on the importance of press freedom and to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Guinea. I will call on the Government of Guinea publicly to respect press freedom and to prevent harassment of journalists critical of the Government. If confirmed, I will seek to continue support for the development of free press and journalists through training and capacity building programs for journalists.

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. The corrosive effects of disinformation and propaganda on democracy are particularly troubling in countries still working toward enshrining democratic principles and respect for fundamental freedoms in their political cultures. If confirmed, I will continue current engagement and promote new engagement with government, the press, and civil society organizations to counter disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Guinea, including through the Embassy social media platforms.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Guinea on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. My tour as Labor Attaché in Guatemala taught me the importance of engaging with labor groups, including unions, to protect and promote the welfare of workers. If confirmed, my team and I will actively engage with the Government of Guinea on the right for workers, labor groups, and independent trade unions to form and join organizations of their own choice, and I will publicly call out abuses or restrictions of this right of freedom of association.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Guinea, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Promotion of human rights in Guinea will be one of my top priorities if I am confirmed. I commit to using all the tools at my disposal to promote and defend the human rights and dignity of all Guineans, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Guinea?

Answer. The confluence of traditional local cultures with Islamic tenants has created an environment in Guinea where consensual same-sex sexual conduct and recognition of the LGBTQI+ community is a strict taboo. The legal environment does not allow same-sex relationships or marriages, and Guinean law does not consider LGBTQI+ individuals a protected class. Anti-discrimination laws to protect LGBTQI+ persons do not exist. I am unaware of any prominent individuals that champion the cause of equal societal treatment for the LGBTQI+ community. In addition, the traditional nature and outlook of the majority of Guineans would be a natural obstacle to holding a frank public discussion about LGBTQI+ issues.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Guinea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my office to highlight the strengths of diversity and acceptance of all people for who they are. The United States is rightfully proud of the strides we have made, and continue to make, in living up to our founding principle that everyone is equal under the eyes of the law. I believe that if confirmed, I can use the persuasive power of the Embassy to help Guineans begin to address this important issue.

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 Guinea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work together with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs to respond promptly to all appropriate requests for information and briefings for members of Congress and their staff, and to offer such briefings whenever I am in Washington.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 (a.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:36 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Van Hollen, Risch, Young, and Cruz.

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 appreciate the patience of both members and the nominees of conferring with the ranking member on the question of nomination.

We are here today to consider nominations for four very important positions: Ambassador Julieta Valls Noyes to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Ambassador Barbara Leaf to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Ms. Julianne Smith to be Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, and Ambassador Denise Bauer to be the Ambassador to France and Monaco.

Congratulations on all your nominations. The four of you have a distinguished history of public service. We appreciate your willingness to continue to serve our country.

We also appreciate your families because it is a sacrifice to families as well who are engaged in the service by their support and sometimes travel abroad. We thank them.

Before I continue, I understand that the distinguished Senator from Virginia is privileged to make three introductions. I do not get three introductions from New Jersey and I am the chairman.

In any event, Senator Kaine we'll recognize you now.

STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member Risch, for scheduling this hearing for such wonderfully qualified nominees.

It is my pleasure to introduce three of the nominees, two from Virginia, one from California, who is a very close friend: Denise

Campbell Bauer, to be ambassador to France and Monaco, Julieta Noyes to be Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, and Barbara Leaf to be Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

I previously introduced Ambassador Bauer to this committee in 2013 when she was nominated to be ambassador to Belgium. I have had a chance to know Denise and her family now for about 15 years.

She had a distinguished career in journalism, nonprofits, and domestic and international politics. But in particular, in her service in Belgium, she served at a most challenging time.

In March of 2016, Belgium was subject to coordinated terrorist attacks at the same time as France also underwent those attacks. And at that point, Ambassador Bauer, she will describe, worked very hard to keep Americans safe, to work with our ally, Belgium, and even coordinate some activities between Belgium and France.

As Ambassador to Belgium, she was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. She worked very, very hard on that transatlantic relationship and to advance U.S. policy goals in Europe.

And as you know, the U.S. presence in Belgium also includes the NATO and EU missions, and so the Belgian Ambassador has a lot of important work in those multilateral efforts.

Her on-the-ground experience in the region leading the implementation of U.S. foreign policy at a challenging time has demonstrated her ability and would make her very, very fit to serve as our Ambassador in France and Monaco.

Ambassador Noyes exemplifies the dedication of career Foreign Service officers and their families, many of whom call Virginia home when they are not serving overseas.

I have had a chance to see Ambassador Noyes' work up close and personal. I met her in several occasions when she was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Europe from 2013 to 2015 and, again, in Spain when I had the honor, as did the chair of this committee, to serve as honorary chair of the U.S. Spain Council.

Ambassador Noyes has served the country with great skill while raising three children together with her husband, who is also a Foreign Service alum, now a retired officer with 29 years of service.

Two of her children, wisely, attended Virginia universities, University of Virginia and Christopher Newport University.

And I would note in particular, Mr. Chair, that in this position, working on important issues of population, refugees, and migration, Julieta has a powerful family experience. She is the daughter of Cuban refugees and would bring that personal passion to the important work of State in this area.

Finally, I want to introduce Ambassador Barbara Leaf, another Virginian. I noticed that she is a proud alumni of William and Mary and the University of Virginia, but she is wearing only a William and Mary brooch today and not the UVA brooch. She probably had hoped I would not point that out.

But she is a very well qualified nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs. She comes to the committee with a deep background in Near Eastern Middle East politics.

She was a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and previously served as our ambassador to the UAE and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Arabian Peninsula in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

This struck me. All of these State Department career folks are wonderful in foreign language proficiencies but listen to this.

Ambassador Leaf speaks Arabic, French, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian. She will lead the bureau with integrity and enthusiasm, and I am proud to introduce this great Virginian to the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine, for that introduction of all of our distinguished nominees.

I know that Senator Shaheen is very happy to see four incredibly talented women before the committee. Let me continue now.

Briefly, I had a conversation with the ranking member, and I appreciate his attention to the seriousness of the situation we have on nominees in the committee.

We have over 70 nominees pending before the committee and we have over 50 completed files. I look forward to working with the ranking member so that we can continue to expedite those nominees in the days ahead.

Okay. I am now being told that Senator Shaheen has also got an introduction to make.

Senator Shaheen?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Risch.

I am very honored to be able to join Senator Kaine in doing introductions this morning, particularly to be able to introduce Julie Smith, President Biden's nominee to be Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

As chair of the Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation and co-chair of the Senate NATO Observer Group, like other members of this committee, I understand very clearly the importance of Ms. Smith's experience and expertise in what she will bring to this role.

Julie's resume and background is a testament to her commitment to the transatlantic alliance. Her career has spanned 25 years crossing the Pond to work on transatlantic security issues both in and out of government.

She has worked at both the Pentagon and the White House and has worked at some of America's most esteemed think tanks, including the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the German Marshall Fund, and the Center for a New American Security.

And Julie, of course, is no stranger to this committee. She testified in 2017 here on the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship, and her expertise drawn from many years researching transatlantic relations has benefited those in and out of government.

She has spent the last three years researching and writing on Europe's evolving attitudes and vulnerabilities as they relate to China, a subject that we all know very well on this committee.

Julie has also worked to bring foreign policy to audiences outside the Beltway, most recently launching a program called “Across the Pond, In the Field” to bring Europeans to 12 U.S. cities to talk to Americans about foreign policy.

Her accolades and accomplishments alone make her worthy of confirmation, but I also want to highlight Julie’s leadership as a mentor to women in the national security space.

And yes, Mr. Chairman, I was very excited to see four women on the dais this morning who have been nominated to be ambassadors, and Julie has been involved for a long time in mentoring women.

She co-founded the Leadership Council for Women in National Security to provide a support network for women in a predominantly male space. And because of her leadership, there are a number of women in Washington who proudly call themselves mentees of Julie.

And I am also pleased to recognize Julie’s husband, David, who is here with her this morning and I think it is her older son, Liam, who is also here.

As a mother, her family has kept her on her toes, and I can appreciate that because I know that as a working mom you have to juggle a lot of things, which is really important to the world of diplomacy.

For all of these reasons, I am very happy to have Julie’s nomination before this committee. I am sure that my colleagues will appreciate her responses and I hope, Mr. Chairman, that we do have an agreement to move forward these nominees.

It is critical to ensure that American foreign policy can continue. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Let me just briefly reference the positions that these nominees are being nominated for.

Ambassador Valls Noyes, congratulations on your nomination. You bring a distinguished record of diplomatic and management experience to the role, including your most recent assignments leading the Foreign Service Institute and serving as U.S. Ambassador to Croatia.

As you know, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration is responsible for addressing some of the most pressing global challenges we have today.

According to the United Nations, at the beginning of the year there will be more than 82 million forcibly-displaced people in the world, of whom 26.4 million are refugees. No doubt that number has only grown and will continue to grow.

From the global forced migration crisis to the humanitarian emergencies in Venezuela, Ethiopia, Syria, and Afghanistan, the United States must lead in addressing the acute needs that exist today and the long-term drivers of these crises.

The task before you is immense, and I recommend if you are confirmed that you develop strong consultative relationships with the many refugee and resettlement organizations that have deep expertise in this area, and I am confident they would welcome your engagement.

Let me say a few words specifically about Afghanistan and the dire humanitarian crisis there. Nearly half of the entire population, more than 18 million people, need humanitarian assistance right now.

More than 4 million Afghans are internally displaced and the outgoing instability and violence may very well produce large flows of refugees into neighboring countries in the coming months, which would create a great deal of instability.

The PRM bureau will be at the helm of the U.S. response to this crisis and your leadership will be essential to ensuring that our response meets the moment.

Ambassador Leaf, welcome back to the committee. I am pleased that you stopped by our office to get a little bit of a tour of the region. I am hopeful that we can get you quickly in place so the bureau and the whole department can benefit from your decades of experience.

Despite repeated efforts from multiple administrations to pivot to great power competition, the Middle East and North Africa remain central focal points of challenges and, I believe, some opportunities for the United States.

As you know, Iran has continued to advance its nuclear program, and I believe the United States must pursue all options to find a negotiated deal that addresses not just Iran's nuclear program but also its support for terrorism and its ballistic missile activity.

Lebanon is on the brink of collapse. Tunisia, once a bastion of hope for people all over the region, is experiencing a troubling back slide on the democratic reforms, and I have yet to understand exactly what the administration's plan is with Syria.

As Iraq heads towards elections, we have an opportunity to engage with leadership and Iraqis who want a brighter future, and I am hopeful that more countries across the region will build on the historic diplomatic relations between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain in the Abraham Accords.

Overall, I believe we need to reinvigorate our diplomatic presence and outreach in the region in which our policy has slowly become more and more militarized, and I trust that you are up to that task.

Ms. Smith, we welcome your nomination. Glad that the president selected you for this critical post. During his administration, President Trump repeatedly attacked NATO and our allies. This, unfortunately, drew criticism from both sides of the aisle in the Senate, evidence that bipartisan support for the Alliance is strong.

President Biden's visit to NATO earlier this year helped to repair ties. But work remains to be done to ensure that our allies understand that the United States is steadfast in its support for the Alliance.

You have an exemplary background, experience, intellect, and judgment to represent the United States at NATO, and I hope that we can get you out there as soon as possible.

There are many important conversations happening in Brussels right now about the future of NATO, what its mission will be in the new world in which we live, and we need an ambassador there as soon as possible.

Ambassador Bauer, I am pleased to see you again before the committee. I appreciated your leadership of the embassy team in Belgium, especially during the 2016 Brussels terrorist attack in which Americans were killed and injured.

It is critical that the United States has an experienced ambassador in Paris where we have so many issues to advance with their government, from counterterrorism in the Sahel to support for allied democracies in the eastern Mediterranean.

France is also critical to our policy objectives in Iran and Russia, and I have appreciated the French foreign minister and ambassadors engaging with the Senate on these issues. We look forward to hearing your goals of how we can deepen our oldest diplomatic relationship even further.

Let me close with saying that the four of you have immense challenges ahead. I am confident that your experience can serve our country well as you take on new responsibilities, if confirmed, and we look forward to each of your testimonies.

Let me turn to the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch, for his opening remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, regarding the nominees, I appreciate the conversation. We will continue that. I committed to you and I continue to commit to you that I will work in good faith to get these people in place.

I was a governor. I understand that you cannot operate unless you have your team in place. You and I have worked hard to get them to the floor and, as we both know, that that is a special problem that neither you nor I have control over. I get a lot of complaints that you and I cannot deal with because it is a floor problem.

But I will continue to work in good faith and see if we cannot move these forward.

I thank all of you for taking the opportunity and undertaking the privilege of serving the United States in these important positions, and your families. As the chairman mentioned, this is a sacrifice that is borne equally by the families.

I want to talk briefly about each of these.

First of all, for the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near Eastern Affairs, the Middle East region remains shaped by seemingly intractable problems, including Arab-Israeli tensions, continued export of Iranian terrorism, the humanitarian crisis in Syria and Yemen, and growing Chinese and Russian encroachment.

I am concerned that the current administration's approach to these dilemmas appears to not strike the appropriate balance and runs the risk of ceding the region to other malevolent powers, and I think everyone knows of what I speak there.

The administration's precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan has been a strategic unforced error, as both the chairman and I focused on yesterday.

Additionally, its diplomatic embrace of the Iranian regime is hard to understand. The lack of focus on the Abraham Accords is befuddling, to say the least.

Increased barriers to conventional arms transfers and the chilling of relations with our traditional Middle Eastern partners will send a message of American disengagement, which I do not believe that we want to do.

The Abraham Accords especially need to be embraced. They need to be enhanced. They need to be further moved forward.

And I know that as I watch the administration, I think there is a lot of reluctance simply because it was an action by the previous administration. But that was a tremendous success and we should celebrate it and exploit it as best we can.

Like the chairman, I do not understand what Syria policy is today. We need to understand that. I hear rumors and they are, hopefully, not true about the administration's thoughts regarding Assad and his rehabilitation or remaining in place. That is a wrongheaded approach. But in any event, we do need an approach that everyone understands.

Now is the time for the United States to reinforce that we stand with our partners and are up to the challenge. I expect to hear how you plan to improve our engagement in the region and address the serious risks ahead of us.

Next, we have the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration. The administration's botched evacuation from Afghanistan has resulted in thousands of refugees and internally-displaced people inside the country.

Taken with the ongoing refugee crisis endured by Syrians, Venezuelans, and the Rohingya, we now face the world's largest refugee and migration numbers ever.

Through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, the U.S. Government provides significant assistance to humanitarian partners, including the United Nations.

It is crucial that we ensure all of this assistance meets U.S. national security needs and receives proper oversight.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these issues. I also remain deeply concerned with the Biden administration's decision to restart funding to UNRWA. This organization has a history of using textbooks which incite violence against Israelis as well as has employees with ties to Hamas. We should secure true reforms before giving another dime to this organization.

Moving on to the nominee for U.S. ambassador to NATO, NATO is the world's most successful political and military alliance in the history of the planet. But it is 72 years old and must be flexible to meet new challenges.

NATO will need to continue to deal with Russia and aggression on its southern border. It must also be aware of China's growing direct threat of alliance. The balance of power in the world today is incredibly different than it was 72 years ago.

Last year's NATO 2030 report attempted to address some of these emerging issues and recommended that NATO's Strategic Concept be updated to address China-related issues as well as ways that allies can improve political coordination. I hope to see these recommendations followed.

NATO is also a nuclear alliance. Membership in the Nuclear Ban Treaty is incompatible with being a U.S. ally and NATO member. We must push back strongly on any efforts by NATO members to lend credibility to that treaty or to weaken our nuclear-sharing arrangements.

Lastly, I am worried by the disregard we showed our NATO allies in our hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan. This administration has repeatedly emphasized the importance of our allies. Yet, the way we went about this evacuation has sent our partners the exact opposite message.

Our allies deserve better, especially after invoking Article 5 following the 9/11 attacks and fighting alongside our troops for more than 20 years. They are livid. I think everyone in this room knows that and it will be our job, your job, to fix that.

Finally, we have a nominee for ambassador to France and Monaco. The United States has long enjoyed close relations with France and it remains one of our closest allies.

In Africa, I look forward to continued engagement with our French partners on important challenges, including in the Sahel, Cameroon, the DRC, and the Central African Republic to ensure we pursue mutually beneficial approaches.

France's ambassador here in the United States is an excellent friend and ally, and I have seen and experienced France's desire for a stronger alliance firsthand.

Now is a critical time for us to make real progress in the relationship. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

With that, thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will turn to our nominees now. I ask that you summarize your statement in about five minutes or so because the committee will want to ask you questions. Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection.

And if you have family members who could be with you today, please do not hesitate to introduce them.

And with that, we will start with Ambassador Noyes and then work our way down the aisle.

STATEMENT OF HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION)

Ambassador NOYES. Thank you, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch. It is an honor to appear before you as President Biden's nominee as Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration. I am grateful to him and to Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

I am the first person ever nominated for this position from a refugee background. My parents and members of my extended family entered the United States as refugees from Cuba 61 years ago and later became proud American citizens.

Our family is profoundly aware of the debt we owe to this great nation and, indeed, I joined the State Department in part to repay that debt.

When given an opportunity, refugees and vulnerable migrants can become valued contributors to the countries that receive them. My hard-working family members happily give back to this country as taxpayers and engaged citizens.

I am honored to introduce you to one of them today, my mother, Julieta Valls. In addition to raising a family, my mom worked in international development for years, presenting the best of America to people in other nations.

And, Senators, I want to thank you for scheduling this hearing today so I can wish her a happy birthday on the Congressional Record.

I am also joined by my wonderful husband, Nick, a retired Foreign Service officer whose mother also immigrated to America. Our children, Alexandra, Nicholas, and Matthew, are watching online. My family support has enabled me to serve our country I love, and I thank them.

In over 35 years as an American diplomat, I have worked to advance human rights, refugee, and migration issues in multiple positions outside of PRM.

As ambassador to Croatia, I presided over the final stages of a U.S.-funded refugee resettlement program and hosted a regional conference on refugees.

My mission also ran regional training programs for police, prosecutors, and justice officials on topics that included supporting the rights of migrants.

As a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European Bureau, I managed relations with 11 Western European countries and the European Union, some of our key partners, in supporting at-risk populations around the world.

As Deputy Chief of Mission at our Embassy to the Vatican, I worked with church leaders, religious communities, and Catholic aid organizations on issues like combating human trafficking.

While director for multilateral and global affairs in the Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Bureau, I oversaw international negotiations on human rights resolutions at the United Nations and conducted human rights consultations with multiple partners.

I was a member of the high-level delegations that reported to the U.N. on U.S. compliance with two major international treaties, the Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Earlier in my career, I worked on democracy, human rights, and foreign aid issues in the Western Hemisphere. I would bring these experiences to bear as PRM assistant secretary and, if confirmed, would seek to strengthen America's leadership on global, humanitarian, and migration issues.

One of my most urgent priorities would be to help the vulnerable people of Afghanistan wherever they may be. Sadly, there are also millions of other vulnerable populations worldwide.

Working with partners like USAID, I would prioritize life-saving humanitarian assistance and protections for people from Syria, Burma, South Sudan, Venezuela, and beyond.

I also would advance support for maternal health in humanitarian crises and respond to gender-based violence, upholding the administration's commitment to women's health.

If confirmed, I would ramp up engagement with other countries to pursue durable solutions to the problems that lead people to flee their countries, including in our own hemisphere.

Another key PRM priority is to rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program as directed by the president. If confirmed, I would collaborate with the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, and work with Congress to ensure the program's success.

It is a testament to the generosity of Americans that the United States is the largest humanitarian aid donor in the world, but we cannot meet all global needs alone. If confirmed, I would carefully manage the U.S. taxpayer funds that enable PRM's work and urge other nations to share this responsibility more equitably.

I am eager to work with PRM's exceptional partners in international and nongovernmental organizations, Senate willing, to carry out PRM's mission, and if confirmed, it would above all be a privilege to learn from and lead the hard-working passionate employees of PRM. Their dedication is inspirational.

Senator Menendez, Senator Risch, members of this committee, my nomination as PRM Assistant Secretary is the greatest professional honor of my life.

If confirmed, I would give my all to lead PRM in supporting persecuted and vulnerable people around the world in keeping with our nation's centuries-long history of compassion and generosity.

As the daughter of refugees, I understand that history and that responsibility acutely. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Noyes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES

Thank you, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch. It is an honor to appear before you as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration. I am grateful to him and to Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

I am the first person ever nominated for this position from a refugee background. My parents and members of my extended family entered the United States as refugees from Cuba sixty years ago and later became proud American citizens. Our family is profoundly aware of the debt we owe this great nation. Indeed, I decided to join the State Department to help repay that debt.

When given an opportunity, refugees and vulnerable migrants can become valued contributors to the countries that receive them. My hardworking family members happily give back to this country as taxpayers and engaged citizens. I'm honored to introduce you to one of them today, my mother Julieta Valls. In addition to raising a family, my mom worked in international development for years, presenting the best of America to people in other nations. I am proud to be her daughter. I am also joined by my husband Nick, a retired Foreign Service Officer whose mother also emigrated to America. Our children, Alexandra, Nicholas, and Matthew are watching online. My family's support has enabled me to serve our country; I love and thank them.

In over 35 years as an American diplomat, I have worked to advance human rights, refugee, and migration issues in multiple positions outside of PRM. As Ambassador to Croatia, I presided over the final stages of a U.S.-funded refugee resettlement program and hosted a regional conference on refugees. My mission also ran regional training programs for police, prosecutors, and justice officials, on topics that included supporting the human rights of migrants.

As a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European Bureau, I managed relations with eleven Western European countries and the European Union, some of our key partners in supporting at-risk populations around the world. As Deputy Chief of Mission at our Embassy to the Vatican, I worked with Church leaders, religious communities, and Catholic aid organizations on issues like combating human trafficking.

While Director for Multilateral and Global Affairs in the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Bureau, I oversaw international negotiations on human rights resolutions at the United Nations and conducted human rights consultations with many partners. I was a member of the high-level delegations that reported to the United Nations on U.S. compliance with two international human rights treaties: the Convention Against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Earlier in my career, I worked on democracy, human rights, and foreign aid issues in the Western Hemisphere.

I would bring these experiences to bear as PRM Assistant Secretary, and if confirmed, would seek to restore America's leadership on global humanitarian and migration issues.

One of my most urgent priorities would be to help the vulnerable and displaced people of Afghanistan—wherever they may be. Sadly, there are also millions of other vulnerable populations worldwide. Working with partners like USAID, I would prioritize life-saving U.S. humanitarian assistance and protections for people from Syria, Burma, South Sudan, and beyond. I also would advance programs that support maternal health in humanitarian crises and respond to gender-based violence, upholding the administration's commitment to women's health.

If confirmed I would ramp up engagement with other countries to pursue durable solutions to the problems that lead people to flee their homes, including in our own hemisphere.

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I am eager to work closely with PRM's exceptional partners in international and non-governmental organizations, Senate willing, to carry out PRM's mission.

If confirmed, it would above all be a privilege to learn from and lead the hard-working, passionate employees of PRM. Their dedication is inspirational.

Senator Menendez, Senator Risch, members of this committee, my nomination to serve as PRM Assistant Secretary is the greatest professional honor of my life. If confirmed, I would give my all to lead PRM in supporting persecuted and vulnerable people around the world, in keeping with our nation's centuries-long history of compassion and generosity. As the daughter of refugees, I understand that history and responsibility acutely.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador.

[Speaks in Spanish.]

The CHAIRMAN. I would sing my famous birthday song but it would take too long for the committee's consideration.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So maybe after the fact.

Ambassador Bauer?

STATEMENT OF HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

Ambassador BAUER. Thank you, Senator Kaine, for that very kind introduction.

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

It is my great honor to be President Biden's nominee to be United States Ambassador to France and Monaco. I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me, and, of course, I am thankful for my husband of nearly 30 years, Steven, our wonderful daughters, Katherine and Natalie, my extended family, and everyone who has supported me over the years.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and the Congress as I dedicate myself to protecting and advancing U.S. interests in Monaco and France.

I would be proud to join the talented dedicated State Department and interagency teams hard at work pursuing those goals. I saw firsthand the superb commitment our embassy teams provide U.S. citizens and businesses when I served as U.S. ambassador to Belgium from 2013 to 2017.

On March 22nd of 2016, my daughter, Natalie, was already on the bus on her way to school when Brussels was attacked by terrorists. I raced into the office as our team rallied to coordinate with and support our Belgian colleagues, to help victims, and guard against follow-on attacks.

This challenging time left no doubt why American embassies matter. Our team worked hand in glove with the Belgians, and they were there for our fellow Americans so that they were not alone far from home during perhaps the worst time in their lives.

It would be my great honor to again serve the American people, now as ambassador to France. I would like to highlight a few of the pillars of our partnership that I would bolster as ambassador.

France, as you have noted, is among our most capable and reliable military allies. As NATO allies, France and the United States have built and sustained the post-war global order, promoting freedom and prosperity.

France is the second largest global footprint after the United States and is the second largest troop contributor to the D-ISIS coalition. France has reached its NATO goal of 2 percent of GDP on defense spending and contributes to NATO missions and exercises.

The United States and France exchange information and share best practices on countering violent extremist threats, and France leads on countering terrorism in the Sahel where it has eliminated leaders of ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their affiliates.

If confirmed, I will not only ensure our cooperation continues but will look for ways to strengthen that important partnership.

France welcomes the United States return to the Paris Agreement and is eager to engage in close cooperation and strategic alignment on climate issues, particularly climate finance, clean energy, green recovery, and using trade and financial flows to further Paris Agreement objectives.

The United States and France share a deep economic relationship. France and the United States traded \$99 billion of goods and services in 2020, making France one of our largest trading partners in the EU.

France works on coordination with the United States and other partners to hold Russia and China accountable for their destabilizing activities, human rights abuses, and violations of international norms.

France has played a significant role in shaping EU policy towards the PRC and supports the U.S.-EU dialogue on China where we seek a values-driven approach.

If confirmed, I will advocate strongly with the French Government that we must hold Russia accountable for its actions and maintain pressure on the Kremlin to adhere to its international commitments and obligations, including the Minsk agreements.

And finally, the United States shares many of the same goals with France when it comes to Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. On all the challenges facing those countries, France seeks deeper cooperation with the United States.

If confirmed, I also look forward to fostering our relationship with the Principality of Monaco and working together with his Serene Highness, Prince Albert II, and his Government to further our joint goals.

Of course, if confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the embassy community and all Americans in France and Monaco.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bauer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER

Thank you, Senator Kaine, for that very kind introduction.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify today. It is my great honor to be President Biden's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco. I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

And of course, I am thankful for my husband of nearly 30 years, Steven; our wonderful daughters, Katherine and Natalie; my extended family; and everyone who has supported me through the years.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and the Congress as I dedicate myself to protecting and advancing U.S. interests in France and Monaco. I would be proud to join the talented, dedicated State Department and interagency teams hard at work pursuing those goals.

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France works in coordination with the United States and other partners to hold Russia and China accountable for their destabilizing activities, human rights abuses, and violations of international norms. France has played a significant role in shaping the EU's policy towards the PRC, and supports the U.S.-E.U. Dialogue on China, where we seek a values-driven approach. If confirmed, I will advocate strongly with the French Government that we must hold Russia accountable for its actions, and maintain pressure on the Kremlin to adhere to its international commitments and obligations, including the Minsk agreements.

And finally, the United States shares many of the same goals with France when it comes to Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. On all the challenges facing these countries, France seeks deeper collaboration with the United States.

If confirmed, I also look forward to fostering our relationship with the Principality of Monaco and working together with His Serene Highness Prince Albert II and his Government to further our joint goals.

Of course, if confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community and all Americans in France and Monaco.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Smith?

**STATEMENT OF JULIANNE SMITH OF MICHIGAN, NOMINATED
TO BE UNITED STATES PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO
THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANI-
ZATION, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EX-
TRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY**

Ms. SMITH. Good morning, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor to be nominated to be the Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO.

I want to extend my thanks to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for placing their trust in me for this critical position.

If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the president's pledge to revitalize and strengthen America's alliances. I also want to thank Senator Shaheen for her kind words and leadership in the NATO Observers Group.

Let me start today by thanking my family, my husband, David, and our two sons, Liam and Dylan, for their love and support. David and Liam are with us here today. My son, Dylan, is tucked away in second grade at school.

I am proud to be a woman working in the field of national security. But my greatest joy comes from my family.

I also want to thank my parents, who are watching in my home state of Michigan, and my sister for their guidance and encouragement.

I have worked on a wide range of national security challenges over the years but Europe has always been my passion. Ever since I received a scholarship to spend a year at the Sorbonne as an un-

dergraduate, I have been fascinated by America's long-standing relationship with our closest allies across the Atlantic.

From my first job at a small think tank here in Washington, D.C., to my positions in the Pentagon, at the White House, and now the State Department, I have worked to strengthen our relationship with Europe, navigate our differences, and identify innovative ways to address our shared challenges.

No institution has played a bigger role in the history of the transatlantic relationship than the NATO Alliance. Since its creation in 1949, it has served as the bedrock of transatlantic security, protecting our shared values, and safeguarding each of its members against outside aggression.

NATO's story is a remarkable one of unity and solidarity. After the end of the Cold War, NATO's story became one of adaptation. Over the last 30 years, NATO has added 14 new members, developed new partnerships in the Middle East and Asia, agreed to operate a new warfighting domain such as cyber, and acquired new capabilities to respond to an array of emerging challenges, from terrorism to disruptive technologies to climate change.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Alliance has bolstered its deterrence and defense posture, including through the deployment of multinational battle groups on its eastern flank.

Despite the fact that it makes decisions by consensus, NATO has repeatedly showcased its ability to take action quickly when it counts. It swiftly invoked Article 5 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, for which the United States will always remain deeply grateful.

While NATO is rightly heralded as the most successful military alliance in history, the Alliance, now almost 75 years old, does have its share of challenges. Some allies are still struggling to meet their commitments to increase defense spending.

Decision-making remains slow, and the weakening of democratic values in some member states is tearing at Alliance cohesion. Allies are also making slow progress in the hard work of improving their military capabilities, especially in new domains like cyber and space.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with our NATO allies and partners to address such shortfalls and prepare the Alliance to face future challenges.

I will also look forward to working with allies on the important task of drafting a new Strategic Concept, which was last updated 10 long years ago.

That document must reflect the changing security environment of today, especially Russian aggression, threats we face in cyberspace, and the People's Republic of China's malign activities across the Euro-Atlantic region.

I will work to ensure that none of those new challenges detract from the Alliance's core task of ensuring a strong deterrence and defense for all its members.

I believe that part of NATO's success rests with the strong bipartisan support one finds both here in Congress and among the American public.

I was heartened to see the enthusiastic welcome that the Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, received when he addressed Congress in 2019.

If confirmed, I will ensure that bipartisan support continues and would look forward to welcoming congressional delegations to Brussels. It would be my great honor to represent the United States at NATO.

I believe in this alliance, I believe in the important role it plays in America's own defense, and I believe in our critical leadership role inside it.

I look forward to your questions and thank you for your consideration.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JULIANNE SMITH

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor to be nominated to be the Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO. I want to extend my thanks to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for placing their trust in me for this critical position. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the President's pledge to revitalize and strengthen America's alliances.

I would like to start by thanking my family—my husband David and our two sons, Liam and Dylan—for their never-ending love and support. I am proud to be a woman working in the field of national security but my greatest joy comes from my family. I also want to thank my parents (who are watching from my home state of Michigan) and my sister for their guidance and encouragement.

I have worked on a wide range of national security challenges throughout my career but Europe has always been my passion. Ever since I received a scholarship to spend a year at the Sorbonne as an undergraduate, I have been fascinated by America's longstanding relationship with its closest Allies across the Atlantic. From my first job at a small think tank in Washington to my positions in the Pentagon and at the White House, I have worked to strengthen our relationship with Europe, navigate our differences, and identify innovative ways to address our shared challenges.

No institution has played a bigger role in the history of the Transatlantic relationship than the NATO Alliance. Since its creation in 1949, it has served as the bedrock of Transatlantic security, protecting our shared values and safeguarding each of its members against outside aggression. NATO's story is a remarkable one of solidarity and unity.

After the end of the Cold War, NATO's story became one of adaptation to a changing world. Over the last 30 years, NATO added 14 new members, developed new partnerships in the Middle East and Asia, agreed to operate in new warfighting domains such as cyber, and acquired new capabilities to respond to an array of emerging challenges, ranging from terrorism to emerging and disruptive technologies to climate change. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Alliance has bolstered its deterrence and defense posture, including through the deployment of multinational battle groups on its eastern flank.

Despite the fact that it makes decisions by consensus, NATO has repeatedly showcased its ability to take action quickly when it counts. It swiftly invoked Article 5—the collective defense clause of the Washington Treaty—in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, for which the United States will always remain deeply grateful.

While NATO is rightly heralded as the most successful military alliance in history, the Alliance, now almost 75 years old, does have its share of challenges. Some Allies are still struggling to meet their commitments to increase defense spending, which they made after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. Decision making remains too slow, and the weakening of democratic values in some member states is tearing at Alliance cohesion, causing some members to question whether all Allies share the same values. Allies also are making slow progress in the hard and expensive work of improving their military capabilities, especially in new domains like cyber, space, and other emerging technologies.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with our NATO Allies and partners to address such shortfalls and prepare the Alliance to face future challenges. I will also look forward to working with Allies on the important task of drafting a new Strategic Concept, the roadmap that lays out NATO's future direction, which was last updated ten long years ago. That document must reflect the changing security environment of today, especially Russian aggression, threats we face in cyberspace, and the People's Republic of China's malign activities across the Euro-Atlantic region.

I will work to ensure that none of those new challenges detract from the Alliance's core task of ensuring a strong deterrence and defense for all its members.

I believe that part of NATO's success rests with the strong bipartisan support one finds both here in Congress and among the American public. I was heartened to see the enthusiastic welcome Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg received when he addressed Congress in April of 2019. If confirmed, I will ensure that bipartisan support continues and would look forward to welcoming congressional delegations to NATO Headquarters.

It would be my great honor to represent the United States at NATO. I believe in this Alliance, the important role it plays in America's own defense, and in our critical leadership role in NATO.

I look forward to your questions and thank you for your consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
Ambassador Leaf?

STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA A. LEAF OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS)

Ambassador LEAF. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this committee. It is an honor to be here as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

If confirmed, this would be the culmination of a lifetime of work on behalf of the U.S. in the Middle East and North Africa.

My story is like that of many Americans called to public service, inspired by multiple generations of family members who served. My family has had someone serving in the U.S. military continuously for almost 80 years.

Much of my wider family were also called upon to support those who served, making their own sacrifices. My mother managed to raise six children on a tobacco farm in southern Maryland during the years my father, an Air Force pilot, served in far-off places.

I remember on an early assignment in the Foreign Service I met up with my oldest brother, Tim Leaf, here behind me who is representing the whole Leaf clan. I met up with him as a deployed Marine officer in the streets of newly-liberated Kuwait. My youngest brother deployed repeatedly to Iraq and Afghanistan, with great costs borne by his young family.

My younger sister is a Foreign Service officer, now serving in southern Africa, far from family and friends.

My husband, Chris Querin, had a distinguished career in the Marine Corps, taking him to Jerusalem, where we met early in my career. He and our two daughters, Maro and Asja, provided the unstinting loving support that enabled me to shoulder what was asked of me, even when that meant being apart from them when I served a year in Iraq.

Service is a theme in my family and service has more relevance today for Americans than ever before. In the Middle East, President Biden's strategic vision provides a roadmap and a set of principles for our engagements based on rebuilding long-term relationships in the region.

If confirmed, I will work to reinforce those partnerships around an affirmative agenda, focused on building shared prosperity but also confronting shared problems: fighting COVID-19, developing an international health infrastructure to prevent future pandemics, building a new energy economy around renewables to arrest the

drivers of climate change, addressing desertification and growing water shortages, combating transnational repression while promoting respect for fundamental freedoms and open societies, and sustaining the core institutions of the international order that have provided security and stability for over 70 years.

If confirmed, I pledge to represent the best of American values and will make it clear that relationships with the U.S. are stronger when human rights principles are respected.

The region has been convulsed by conflict and instability for over the past two decades, but many of our partners have turned towards deescalation and to working with the U.S. to quell the region's conflicts.

Iran, of course, has been the outlier to this trend. Tehran continues to pursue destabilizing policies, including through its support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, its support for violent groups, and its abhorrent human rights record and long-standing practice of using wrongfully detained U.S. citizens as political tools. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would pose an even greater threat.

As part of the administration's renewed multilateral engagement, if confirmed, I will work in tandem with regional partners and allies to advance U.N. peace processes in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

The president's vision for a collaborative relationship with the countries of the Middle East comes in the wider context of a growing global challenge to our values of open societies and open economies.

This challenge comes primarily from the People's Republic of China and Russia. Both pursue influence in the region in a zero-sum fashion. If confirmed, I expect to have frank conversations with our partners about the challenges posed by certain Russian and Chinese actions.

And if confirmed, I will not be able to accomplish this ambitious agenda without the outstanding Foreign Service officers, civil servants, contractors, and family members employed here and in the region.

I am committed to promoting the safety and security of our people overseas as a paramount priority, supporting the professional development of our employees and the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the bureau and our posts around the region.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you as we reshape, rebuild, and reenergize the U.S. Government's engagement with the Middle East, building a better future for the American people and the people of the region.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Leaf follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR BARBARA A. LEAF

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this committee. It is an honor to be here as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. If confirmed, this would be the culmination of a lifetime of work on behalf of the United States in the Middle East and North Africa. I cannot express how much this opportunity to serve my country and the American people means to me.

My story is like that of many Americans called to public service, inspired by multiple generations of family members who served in one capacity or another. My family has had someone serving in the military, continuously, for the past 80 years. So much of my wider family were also called upon to support those who served, making their own sacrifices along the way. My ever-entrepreneurial mother managed to raise six children on a tobacco farm during years my father, an air force pilot, served in far-off places. On an early assignment in the Foreign Service, I met up with my oldest brother, a deployed Marine officer, in the streets of newly-liberated Kuwait. My little brother deployed repeatedly during America's two longest wars, to Iraq and Afghanistan, with great costs borne by his young family. My younger sister is a Foreign Service officer, now serving in southern Africa, far from family and friends. My husband had a distinguished career in the Marine Corps, taking him to Jerusalem, where we met early in my career. He, like our two daughters, provided the unstinting loving support that helped me shoulder what was asked of me, even when that meant being apart for a year while I served in Iraq.

Service is a theme in my family, and it has more relevance today for Americans than ever before, given the multiplying challenges abroad and at home that require re-investment in ourselves, re-commitment to partnerships, and U.S. leadership globally.

In the Middle East, President Biden's strategic vision provides a roadmap and a set of principles for our engagement, based on re-building long-term relationships in the region to meet the manifold, emerging new challenges. But the President's vision demands the evolution of our partnerships beyond the conventional security realm that has defined our approach to the region for well over 30 years. If confirmed, I would work to reinforce those partnerships around an affirmative agenda focused on building shared prosperity and confronting shared problems: fighting COVID-19 and developing an international health infrastructure to prevent future pandemics; building a new energy economy around renewables to arrest the drivers of climate change; addressing desertification and growing water shortages; combating transnational repression, while promoting respect for fundamental freedoms and open societies; and sustaining the core institutions of the international order that have provided security and stability for over 70 years.

If confirmed, I pledge to represent the best of American values, and will make it clear that relationships with the United States are stronger when human rights principles are respected.

The region has been convulsed by conflict and instability for the past two decades, but many of our partners have turned in recent months towards de-escalation and to working with the United States to quell the region's conflicts. Iran, of course, has been the outlier to this trend. Tehran continues to pursue destabilizing policies, including through its support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, its subversive support for violent groups, and its abhorrent human rights record and long-standing practice of using wrongfully detained U.S. citizens as political tools. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would pose an even greater threat.

As part of the administration's renewed multilateral engagement, if confirmed I will work in tandem with partners and allies to advance U.N. peace processes in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

The President's vision for a collaborative partnership with the countries of the Middle East comes in the wider context of a growing global challenge to our values of open societies and open economies, values that have underpinned the institutions of the international order. This challenge comes primarily from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia; both pursue influence in the region in a zero-sum fashion. If confirmed, I expect to have frank conversations with our partners about the challenges posed by certain Russian and PRC actions.

If confirmed, I will not be able to accomplish this ambitious agenda without the outstanding Foreign Service Officers, Civil Servants, Contractors, and family members employed here and in the region. I am committed to promoting the safety and security of our people overseas, the professional development of our employees, and the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Bureau and our posts around the region.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you as we reshape, rebuild, and reenergize the U.S. Government's engagement with the Middle East, building a better future for the American people and the people of the region. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all very much.

Before I start my questions, let me start a series of questions that we ask every nominee that comes before the committee, and

they are on behalf of the full committee and I just simply ask you for a verbal yes or no answer.

These are questions that speak to the importance that the committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch and we expect and would be seeking from you.

I will ask each of you to provide just a yes or no answer to the following.

Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Did I get four yeses there?

Ambassador LEAF. Yes.

Ms. SMITH. Yes.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Do you commit to engaging in a meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. And do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you all for that. For the record, all four nominees answered yes to all the questions.

Let me start a series of five-minute rounds.

Ambassador Noyes, how can the department and the PRM in particular help ensure that thousands of Afghans allies who were left behind when the last U.S. military plane departed on August 30th have equal access to evacuations?

This will be one of the most critical immediate challenges that you will have. Give me a sense of how you envision your department's participation in that.

Ambassador NOYES. Senator, thank you for the question.

I think I speak for all of my colleagues at the State Department to say how proud we were to see how many people we were able to get out of Afghanistan and how heartbroken we were to see that we could not get out everyone that we wanted to.

The president, the Secretary, have made clear their intention to uphold the commitment that we had to the people who worked for us, to the people who qualify for Special Immigrant Visas, and we will continue to work to process their cases and get them out.

We have also made available consideration for referral under refugee programs, the P-2 refugee referrals, and other ways of getting access to resettlement in the United States.

We also would commit to working with international organizations like the High Commissioner for Refugees to seek resettlement for people at risk in other countries, not just in the United States.

Our commitment to uphold the human rights and to protect the vulnerable people of Afghanistan through resettlement, if that is what is needed, is a firm one, and if confirmed as Assistant Sec-

retary, I would work with colleagues throughout the department and other agencies to uphold that commitment.

The CHAIRMAN. Today is the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month, and many of us held a call with national leadership, and one of the questions that came up is that it seems that we treat refugees from the southern border below differently than we treat refugees from other people in the world.

Seems to me that a refugee, if they meet the definition under the law, is a refugee, regardless of where they come from. Do you share that view?

Ambassador NOYES. Yes, Senator. Anyone who qualifies as a refugee should be given the same treatment and the same consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador Leaf, I could spend the whole hearing with you, but I will not because we had a good session yesterday. But I will put some questions for the record just so that we can have the record sustained. But I do want to broach one or two of them with you.

Over the weekend, Iran and the IAEA reached what seems to be a subpar last-minute agreement to prevent the IAEA from formally censuring Iran.

I remain deeply concerned about the details of this agreement, specifically because my understanding is that while the IAEA will have access to the information it needs, it will not be able to see that access. It will not be able to see the actual information in real time.

It will not be able to see the information that was taken out or that will be taken out from the storage chips of what was going on since Iran broke off inspections, and it will not be able to see the new information that will be placed in the new storage chips to do the video recording of what is going on.

Therefore, while there will be, quote/unquote, "monitoring" taking place, there will be no review of the monitoring. Therefore, we will have no information about the status of Iran's program. If there is something called a Pyrrhic victory, that is the ultimate definition of it.

Secretary Blinken has responded to that report by warning that Iran is running out of time to reap any benefits of a compliance agreement with the JCPOA.

I, honestly, believe that returning to the JCPOA just as it was does not realize the tremendous change in circumstances we have today as well as the fact that Iran's nefarious activities in ballistic missiles, destabilization of the region, arms trafficking, and a whole host of other things are equally or as important.

Let me ask you, how much time and diplomatic space do you think is left to get to a longer and stronger nuclear deal that also addresses these regional transgressions and attacks by proxies against not only U.S. partners and allies but also U.S. personnel and facilities in the region?

Ambassador LEAF. Thank you, Senator, for those questions and those comments.

I would not want to get into in a hypothetical answer to the question of how much time. Secretary Blinken laid down a warning marker with that remark and it is a valid one.

We have been waiting now, for two months to go back into a set of discussions, which are quite urgent, and as you said, the discussion on the JCPOA, a mutual compliance-for-compliance return to that agreement is only a starting point.

What I would say to your concerns about these other issues, including a supplemental agreement, longer, stronger, but also the ongoing nefarious activities, those are my concerns, too. The administration, in fact, does not view this as a sequential matter in terms of addressing those regional activities.

There are ongoing discussions with our most important ally in the region, Israel, as well as other concerned parties, and we work to synchronize and use a set of tools—economic sanctions, pressure, occasionally military and other diplomatic tools with them—to confront and constrain Iran in these activities.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it fair to say that we really do not know where Iran is at in its nuclear program right now?

Ambassador LEAF. I am not sure I would want to characterize it that way, Senator, and, obviously, there are intelligence estimates to that effect.

The CHAIRMAN. I get real concerned when I see Mr. Albright suggest that we are one month away. He is a pretty independent verifier. I get concerned when we are heralding the IAEA agreement that, basically, says, well, we will keep the monitoring but we cannot see anything that is happening and we do not know what has happened in between.

That is not creating a safeguard for anybody. We need to be a lot more robust with the IAEA. This committee will be seeking the IAEA's briefing, which it has not given to date, because we got to know what we are seeing and what we are not seeing and be honest with ourselves at the end of the day.

I have many other questions for some of the other nominees. But, in fairness, to our colleagues, Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Obviously, I share a lot of those concerns also.

And Ambassador Leaf, I can tell you, I told Secretary Blinken this when we met, and you can take it for what it is worth, but having been through this thing with Iran for so long, this business of saying now that you are going to try to get back into the old JCPOA and then there will be add-on negotiations and agreements in the future, with all due respect, I think that thinking is just delusional.

There is no way that Iran is going to continue to negotiate and do an add-on agreement if, indeed, they are able to get the JCPOA back where it was and get our sanctions off.

That is my two cents' worth, and I understand we have a basic disagreement in that regard. But nonetheless, I will be shocked if you can get that done.

Secondly, you heard the discussion from both myself and from the chairman regarding a Syria policy, and we need that.

I am not expecting you to opine on that today because I think you have got your work ahead of you before you can get there. But we need something that we can articulate and move forward on, and we do not have that on Syria.

Ms. Noyes, I want to talk about UNRWA for just a minute. I introduced the UNRWA Accountability and Transparency Act with 11 of my Senate colleagues, and we share real concerns on UNRWA.

What are your thoughts on UNRWA?

Ambassador NOYES. Senator, I share the concerns that you expressed in that legislation about the efficiency, the effectiveness, and the neutrality of UNRWA. The administration agrees, with the premise behind the legislation.

That said, it is my understanding that UNRWA is a force for stability in the region by providing vital services to Palestinians in need—education for school children, health care for people, and the only viable alternative to UNRWA in those areas would be Hamas.

Therefore, while we, certainly, would agree with the intent of the legislation and the framework agreement that the PRM bureau entered into with UNRWA accounts for the need to make changes and to redouble efforts to ensure the efficiency, the effectiveness, and the neutrality of UNRWA.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate your thoughts. I do not think simply because there is an alternative that is worse we should take this—in my judgment, a very bad agency and try to make that work.

I think we should try to make that work. But I think that if it does not work, we should not say, well, the only other alternative is Hamas. I do not subscribe to that theory.

But in any event, I think most everyone who has dealt with UNRWA and seen, for instance, the textbooks they print for use in their schools is just disgusted that U.S. taxpayer money is going down the drain in that regard.

I hope you will focus on that. I hope you can get them in a better direction, and it is going to take a considerable change in direction for me to embrace what they are doing.

Thank you for your efforts in that regard.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

My understanding is Senator Cardin is with us virtually.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do want to thank all of our nominees for their willingness to serve our nation during these extremely challenging times. We thank you. We thank your families.

Ambassador Leaf, I want to follow up on some of the comments that have already been made. We see some positive developments in the Middle East with the Abraham Accords, and Congress has passed that and the Senate Finance Committee has passed S. 1601, which would build on that to have the United States active in trying to get more of the countries in the Middle East to sign on to the Abraham Accords.

On the other side of the ledger, we see activities in the United Nations General Assembly that is very much trying to compromise Israel's sovereignty.

Just share with me your strategies in dealing with the countries in the region to get more to move towards the Abraham Accord approach with Israel rather than trying to isolate Israel in the United Nations.

Ambassador LEAF. Thank you, Senator, for that set of questions and comments, and I could not agree more on both counts.

First, with respect to the Abraham Accords, it is a truly exciting set of developments in a region that for so long has really not had a lot of good news, and I, if confirmed, very much look forward to seizing the opportunities opened with those nascent relationships and deepening, expanding them while really expanding the circle beyond the four countries.

I think there is a lot of opportunity. I would say the UAE and Bahrain and Morocco probably represented the sort of most forward leaning of the countries in that regard.

But, nonetheless, and this has been a subject of discussion with the Israeli Government, there are other opportunities out there, and I think it self-evidently should be a priority for my work, if confirmed, and it would thread into the work of every U.S. ambassador in the region so that it was a very concerted and coordinated effort.

I also agree with you in terms of the anti-Israel bias that we see repeatedly come up, whether in the UNGA or in U.N. bodies, and, if confirmed, I would absolutely work in lockstep with other members of the administration, with our mission to the U.N., and others to push back on that vigorously.

Senator CARDIN. I would just point out I think the Abraham Accords is a positive incentive for countries to normalize their relationship with Israel. The actions in the United Nations and its bodies require us to make it clear that there is a price to pay when we see this type of activity take place that is very much against the sovereignty of our closest ally in the Middle East.

I would hope you would also be aggressive in activities to make it clear that the United States will act on behalf of Israel in regards to the United Nations.

Ambassador Noyes, I want to ask you a question on immigration. I agree with Chairman Menendez's point in regards to Afghanistan, and that is going to, certainly, be a major focus of all of our work in the next several months in order to relocate those at risk.

But I want to get closer to our own hemisphere, and Senator Menendez raised these issues. We show international leadership by our actions here in America. Yes, we will show it in regards to the Afghan refugees.

But in regards to refugees coming out of our own hemisphere, we, certainly, have a lot of individuals who have left Venezuela. We have the Central American migration that we know about.

Can you just share with me the strategy of exercising leadership in our own hemisphere to show that we have the right global policies in regards to migration that can help us not only in dealing with the challenges we have in the Western Hemisphere but also our leadership globally?

Ambassador NOYES. Thank you for that question, Senator Cardin.

Certainly, this hemisphere is not alone in having issues with refugees and migration. One of the administration's major efforts with regard to how to deal with these issues is for Central America. There is a root cause's strategy to get to the causes that lead people to leave their nations.

But insofar as PRM is concerned, the administration has also put forward a comprehensive migration management strategy, which is an effort, a whole-of-government effort, to work with U.S. Government agencies but also with the governments of the region in trying to address the issues that lead to migration and to come up with collaborative approaches for dealing with those issues, whether it is providing access to temporary work permits, providing protection, humanitarian assistance in countries where they are needed, dealing with issues of corruption, rule of law.

And that is a model, Senator, that I believe could be very useful and very effective in dealing with migration questions and refugee challenges elsewhere in the world.

If confirmed, I really would like to do more in the area of humanitarian diplomacy, working closely with our partners and with other governments around the world to address these issues before they become so severe that they lead people to leave their countries, and also to address issues that have led people to leave their countries such that they can find ways to return safely, humanely, and voluntarily to their home countries.

I think there is a lot to be done in the area of humanitarian diplomacy. I think the approach the United States is taking in Central America and in Mexico with this holistic whole-of-government and collaborative approach with regional governments is, again, a model for these issues around the world.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. We will be judged by our actions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

My understanding is that there are presently no Republican colleagues seeking recognition so I will move to Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, thank you. And again, congratulations to the nominees.

Ambassador Bauer, one of the wonderful opportunities in the U.S. relationship with France is that France has significant equities all over the globe in areas where the U.S. shares interest, and we work in tandem in Southeast Asia. We work in tandem in the Sahel. I want to ask a question about one of the countries you mentioned, Lebanon.

The U.S.-Lebanese relationship, especially with the Lebanese military, has been a strong one. Lebanon is very strategically important.

But right now in Lebanon there has just been a set of catastrophes, one after the next, and the current political situation in Lebanon poses grave risk both to the health and satisfaction and quality of life of everyday Lebanese but also the surrounding communities.

The French Government under President Macron has been very involved in trying to promote a better chapter for Lebanon. Should you be confirmed, what might we be able to do, the United States and France together, to figure out ways to help Lebanon to a better place?

Ambassador BAUER. Thank you for the question, Senator Kaine.

Yes, indeed, it is a very challenging situation, and it is my understanding that we are working closely with the French and that

the French take it very seriously and will be good allies, going forward.

It is certainly something I would engage on right away should I be confirmed, and would also welcome the opportunity to consult with you and other members of this committee to develop a best plan for going forward.

Senator KAINE. Excellent. I almost asked that question as a proxy for Senator Murphy, who is the chair of the Subcommittee of Foreign Relations that oversees that relationship, and he just was in Lebanon with other members of the committee.

I think it is an increasingly destabilized Lebanon is a real problem for a lot of nations, including the United States, and we can work together with France on that.

Ambassador Leaf, I am concerned about a number of things in the relationship between the United States and Egypt. There are some positive developments. President el-Sisi met with Prime Minister Bennett in Sharm El Sheikh recently, which was the first meeting between leaders of Egypt and Israel in a decade. That is positive.

But I am really worried about human rights issues in Egypt and they affect a lot of Virginians. There was reporting in the last few months about the involvement of Egyptian intelligence in the murder of Virginia resident Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

I wrote a letter to the Secretary of State last month asking the Department of State to dig into these allegations and then render some judgment on the potential applicability of 7013(c) visa restrictions.

You are not yet at State. That letter had not come to you. But these are very serious allegations of the involvement of the Egypt secret police and intel officials in the murder of a Virginian, a journalist.

Now, I will say the Egyptian Government has denied these allegations. We spoke directly about it with the head of Egyptian intelligence on the committee. But there is an answer to the question of whether or not they are involved, and if they were there has got to be some consequences.

Should you be confirmed, will you take this kind of a request of the Department of State to make an assessment about what occurred and then whether there should be accountability? Will you take this matter with the utmost seriousness?

Ambassador LEAF. Thank you, Senator, for that question, and it is an extraordinarily serious issue that you have raised.

Within the context more broadly, and I will say straight up, of course, I will take my responsibilities absolutely seriously, if confirmed, under both U.S. law and U.S. policy on human rights.

I would just offer another couple of comments on this broader issue that you raised, how human rights feature in the relationship with Egypt, and you will have seen this week that Secretary Blinken decided on the issue of \$300 million of the \$1.3 billion of foreign military financing for Egypt.

It was a very methodical and carefully thought through set of decisions to signal, to reaffirm, really, that as with countries around

the world, human rights do feature at the center point of relations with Egypt.

Now, we have long-standing national security interests in that relationship. Egypt has been a strategic partner of enormous importance for the U.S. but also for the region and for Israel, in particular.

And as you said, this was a remarkable thing. For the first time in a decade you had the two leaders meet publicly. The fact that leaders have met before, but they could not do it publicly in front of their publics speaks to how unsteady that relationship was.

I will just pledge to you that, if confirmed, I will absolutely keep my focus on these human rights issues and the case that you cite, in particular.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Leaf, if confirmed, you are going to inherit a region that has been transformed in remarkable ways in recent years, most significantly by the Abraham Accords.

The Abraham Accords were historic peace agreements, the first in decades achieved in the region. They were achieved, I believe, because the prior administration abandoned the long-standing U.S. policy of deliberate ambiguity between Israel and the Palestinians and, rather, pursued a policy that America unequivocally stands with our friend and ally, the nation of Israel.

That clarity produced the Abraham Accords, I believe. That clarity was manifested in multiple ways, including moving our embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, including withdrawing from the disastrous Obama Iran nuclear deal.

The Biden administration seems bound and determined to unwind all of the positive progress made in the Middle East, to run away from the peace deal, to embrace the strategic ambiguity that for decades failed, and the Biden administration seems to want to go back to that failure.

When it comes to the Abraham Accords, the Biden administration, frankly, has been almost comical, going so far as quite literally putting out a guidance at the U.S. State Department not to utter the words Abraham Accords, in writing officials in the Biden State Department saying, "We do not use those words here." Instead, they are to be referred to as normalization agreements.

And I will say that was not simply a written guidance but, sadly, it is a guidance that seems to be followed. Just yesterday, the U.S. ambassador of the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, gave a speech on the anniversary of the Abraham Accords in which she refused to utter the words Abraham Accords. The entire thing seems like a Monty Python skit.

I understand that the Biden administration is not a fan of Donald Trump. But throwing away historic Middle East peace agreements because the administration does not like their predecessor is extraordinarily foolish, it is harmful to the United States, and it is harmful to our friends and allies.

Can you tell this committee, in your judgment, what is the importance of the Abraham Accords and should they be maintained and strengthened or should they be undermined and weakened?

Ambassador LEAF. Senator, I agree with you, those are historic Accords. The Abraham Accords changed and brought a new dynamic to a region that has really had very little in the way of good news in recent years.

There is no question in my mind that they have already contributed and will contribute still more to peaceful coexistence and to economic integration, and that last piece has been very much missing across this region.

I can assure you that, if confirmed, I will make it a top priority not just to help foster the deepening of the roots of those relationships, and each of them has different dynamics according to their own societies and cultures, but I will work with those governments and with the Israeli Government to strengthen and deepen those Accords and then widen the circle, absolutely.

There are more opportunities out there. They are not quite as in a state of readiness, perhaps, as the UAE was. But there are prospects there.

They start with some very significant moves on people-to-people contacts and that is one of the things that really, I think, was most striking in the case of the UAE and Bahrain.

Those governments had begun a very subtle process of beginning to warm their public up to the idea, and that is the sort of thing that, frankly, the U.S. has to push on with other governments and I am ready to do it.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

Ms. Smith, as you know, I am deeply concerned about the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. I think that President Biden made an enormous and, indeed, a generational geopolitical mistake by effectively giving that pipeline to Vladimir Putin.

In your judgment, what will be the national security harms, the economic harms, to Europe and to the United States if and when that pipeline goes online and is operational?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I agree with the president. I agree with you that the pipeline is a bad deal. It is a geopolitical project, as you yourself have noted many times.

It is a project that undermines the safety and security of our friends in Europe, particularly in Ukraine. I do not feel that this deal, this pipeline, in particular, will be something that will bring added security to Europe. Quite the contrary.

I look forward, though, if confirmed, to working with our allies, our partners, on the repercussions of this pipeline as I get to Brussels.

Senator CRUZ. I feel obliged to note the president does not believe that, because the only reason the pipeline is being completed is because Joe Biden waived the sanctions that were passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress.

We had stopped the pipeline for over a year, and the Biden administration decided, because they wanted to make nice with Germany, they would give Putin a generational multi-billion-dollar gift

and they turned an incredible foreign policy victory into a foreign policy failure.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the senator has expired.

I would just note for the record an hour ago the State Department spokesman, Ned Price, was heralding the Abraham Accords and called it as such, and the United Arab Emirates promoted it as part of their Foreign Service movement.

The administration has used and I am sure will continue to use the term Abraham Accords.

Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch.

And, Chairman Menendez, thank you for setting the record straight about both the bipartisan support for the Abraham Accords here and the ways in which the State Department continues to advocate for their full implementation.

To the nominees before us, thank you for your willingness to serve. Let me thank your families and those who have helped support you in your careers and service so far and will support you should you be confirmed.

Let me just ask a few quick questions. I have less than five minutes but I am delighted to have a chance to ask each of you a question or two.

Ms. Bauer, if I might, what lessons did you learn from your time as Ambassador to Belgium about working with the Foreign Service? And you have said to me when we had a chance to talk before this hearing that one of the most important jobs an ambassador faces is protecting State Department employees and other American citizens abroad.

How do you intend to help contribute to that sacred challenge, that obligation, that opportunity, that our diplomats have abroad?

Ambassador BAUER. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Indeed, working with the team at the State Department and the interagency team in Brussels was an incredible privilege. It is a skilled and dedicated group of people and it is part of what made me so excited about the opportunity to potentially serve again was to think of working with the same extraordinary team.

On the security front, I think it is a matter of having really close communication, no silos, working as a team, making sure everyone trusts each other and we are having really regular communications not only within the team in France, should I be confirmed, but throughout Europe and, of course, consulting with the Senate and other important partners.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I did not mean to skip over Ms. Noyes.

If I might, your role is going to be absolutely critical, and as the daughter of Cuban refugees, I think you bring an important and unique perspective to this vital role.

If you would just share with me, briefly, what lessons from your service as ambassador to Croatia would you bring to PRM, and how should the State Department address the visa backlog and how will you work to increase international cooperation on difficult and urgent issues like resettlement of refugees and humanitarian assistance?

Ambassador NOYES. Senator, thank you for that question.

I think I have learned lessons from throughout my career in a variety of different positions, not just as ambassador but even as the Acting Director of FSI, lessons about management, about teamwork, about how I would pick up part of Denise's answer about working with the team and making sure that everyone makes a contribution.

One of my biggest priorities, if confirmed, would be to help rebuild the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, which is badly understaffed at this point at a time when it is really being stretched to carry out a lot of functions.

A big priority would be rebuilding that bureau, and in rebuilding that bureau working to rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, which is critical for America's humanitarian leadership around the world, and working with partners in the State Department and in the interagency on helping to resettle the Afghan refugees.

In so far as the visa backlog question, Senator, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration does not play a specific role on that issue. But I know that my colleagues at the Department of State are working very, very hard to process the remaining Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans and to do whatever is possible to help people at risk in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. I think that is urgent work and I look forward to working with the chairman to ensure that the resources for that are available.

Might I ask two more quick questions or are we—

The CHAIRMAN. Since the senator is the chairman of the Foreign Ops Subcommittee and Appropriations, definitely go ahead.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

If I might, Ms. Smith, NATO has just concluded one of its most important longest missions and it is now, I think, facing a different range of threats, challenges, and adversaries.

China has expanded its influence not just in the Indo-Pacific but in Europe, investing in infrastructure, heightening its emphasis on the Arctic, targeting countries in Eastern, Central, and Western Europe with disinformation campaigns.

And in June, the NATO heads of state issued a statement that Beijing presents systemic challenges. What risk do you think China currently poses to the NATO Alliance and European stability, and how would you, if confirmed, work with NATO to counter China's malign influence?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I do worry about the dangers posed by China in the Euro-Atlantic area. I think about the investments that China is making in critical infrastructure across the continent.

I think about their own investments in disruptive technology, the lessons they are learning from Russia on utilizing disinformation, their evolving maritime presence, what they are doing in the Arctic. I really could go on.

The good news, as you noted yourself, Senator, is that the Alliance now has conducted its first China review in 2019. The Alli-

ance just recently stated at its summit this past June that it is a systemic challenge to the liberal world order.

Going forward, if confirmed, I would look forward to working with the allies as we draft the next Strategic Concept to make sure that the challenges posed by China to the wider Euro-Atlantic region are featured prominently in the Strategic Concept.

I would also look forward to working with them on acquiring better tools to counter some of the malign activities that China is pursuing.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Thank you to all of you. And thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

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

Thank you all for being here today. This is an important hearing. I hope that you move quickly to the floor.

But then you are destined to sit in limbo because we have two members of the Senate, a list that is growing, that have decided to hold up all national security nominees.

This is a growing danger to the national security of this country and I would hope that my Republican colleagues on this committee would help us address this very quickly, because every single day that we do not have ambassadors, every single day that we do not have assistant secretaries, is a day that America is not representing its interests around the world.

A few questions for the panel, and thank you all for your tremendous service to the country. We are so grateful for your willingness to continue it.

Ambassador LEAF, I admit to getting a little confused when I hear the administration talk about the strategy, moving forward, on the JCPOA. Obviously, Senator Menendez and I have slightly different views on this issue.

But what I understand to be the administration's policy is that while we absolutely believe that at the same time we can work on addressing Iran's nuclear program and its support for terrorist groups and its other malevolent behaviors in the region, our belief continues to be that a compliance-for-compliance deal on the JCPOA is meritorious on its own and that if we can get back into the JCPOA then that makes it a lot easier to confront many of their other behaviors around the region.

I just want to confirm that that continues to be the position of the administration, that understanding how difficult it is to figure out how to get back into the agreement that we still believe that it is a priority to get back into the agreement and we are not conditioning the restart of the JCPOA on an additional set of agreements on a whole host of nonnuclear behaviors by the Iranian regime.

Ambassador LEAF. Senator, the only word I would disagree with in that set of statements and that question was whether it would be easier following reentry into JCPOA to deal with all those other problems.

But no, to be serious, the administration is committed to a methodical diplomatic effort to rejoin the JCPOA based on mutual compliance. That is an overriding national security imperative because, at this point, Iran's nuclear program is untrammelled.

The priority is getting it back into a box. But notwithstanding those diplomatic efforts in Vienna, the administration continues in parallel, in tandem, to, on a constant basis, address the regional dimension of Iran's destabilizing behavior.

There is an objective on the part of the administration to then build upon in nuclear terms a longer stronger deal. But the ongoing work is ongoing. It will continue apart.

Senator MURPHY. I am going to submit a question to the record on Lebanon. I will not ask a question to you now.

But Hezbollah is spinning up a very effective narrative there right now about the United States blockade of energy resources into the country and they are offering ships of their own through Iran.

We have got to solve for this very quickly. The narrative is pervasive, and there are ways in which we can creatively try to address the fuel shortage, the crisis in Lebanon right now. But we have to do it very, very quickly.

And so I will submit a question to the record because I wanted to ask one final question here to you, Ms. Smith. I think one of the biggest scams going is the way that we assess NATO contributions to the Alliance.

Despite the fact that the adversaries to the United States and our NATO partners are using all sorts of means other than conventional military pressure to try to undermine the democracies of NATO, we continue to assess whether or not you are a full member in good standing by the amount of your defense spending, even though Russia is delighting in asymmetric warfare that is defended in ways other than aircraft carriers and ships and brigades.

Is there a better way, moving forward, that we can assess whether members of the NATO Alliance are in good standing other than the simple amount of their GDP that they are spending on hard traditional conventional defense spending?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, thank you for that question.

Traditionally, NATO's deterrence and defense posture has been based on three legs of a stool, so conventional capabilities, nuclear capabilities, and missile defense capabilities. And so we always measured allies' contributions in a very conventional framing.

But in recent years, as you noted, increasingly, the NATO Alliance is defining its posture, deterrence, and defense posture in other ways. It is looking at cybersecurity, increasingly working that into operational planning. It is looking at those gray zone threats, the hybrid threats: disinformation, coercion, and other forms of gray zone tactics.

And so, going forward, on this question of burden sharing, there is a lot to do. First and foremost, we have to keep a laser like focus on 2 percent. Allies all made that commitment to get to 2 percent in 2014. Many have gotten there or will get there by 2024. But we have to continue to apply pressure on those that will not yet meet that target by 2024.

Increasingly, I think we have to have conversations with our allies about other aspects: readiness, force generation, capability gaps, broadly defined.

And so, if confirmed, I would look forward to working with our allies on this broader definition of NATO's deterrence and defense posture and the question of burden sharing.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand Senator Van Hollen is with us virtually.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Let me join my colleagues in congratulating all of you on your nominations, and I am impressed with the great depth and breadth of foreign policy experience represented on this panel.

I also want to associate myself with the comments of both the chairman and Senator Murphy that the ever longer line of nominations being held up on the Senate floor hurts our national security and undermines our capacities.

Ambassador Noyes, you have got a huge amount of challenges in the portfolio you have been nominated to oversee, including recent developments in Afghanistan, and I am going to be submitting some questions to the record for you.

Ambassador Leaf, I just returned from a trip to Lebanon, Israel, and the West Bank with Senator Murphy and others, and I have a couple questions related to that trip, starting with Lebanon.

We were pleased to see that after over a year of no government, last Friday we finally have a government in Lebanon. As you know, that is just the first step. They have got to address the economic crisis, bring more accountability and transparency to a system that is rife with political corruption, and keep elections on track for next year.

But the one institution in the country that is almost universally respected is the nonsectarian Lebanese Armed Forces. And my question to you, and it is a simple question, is do you agree it is in our national interests to continue to support that effort?

And I will add one of the things that was highlighted during our visit was that because of the economic crisis, pay for members of the Lebanese Armed Forces has just collapsed.

In fact, there is a story today the Lebanese Armed Forces is providing helicopter rides for tourists in order to raise money, and the pay of the Lebanese Armed Forces is now way below what Hezbollah pays its militias.

A question. So you agree that continued U.S. support for the Lebanese Armed Forces is in our interest of providing some measure of stability respect to interfaith communities, inter-communal stability, and national stability? Just yes or no.

Ambassador LEAF. Yes, absolutely. If you would like, I can offer a few other thoughts on this.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. Let me get on the other questions. If I have time in the end—

Ambassador LEAF. Please.

Senator Van Hollen:—I will circle back.

We also, as I said, went to Israel and the West Bank. In Israel, we affirmed our support for the replenishment of the Iron Dome and our support for the Abraham Accords.

We also discussed both in Israel and the West Bank President Biden's plan to reopen the consulate in Jerusalem that had been

in existence for over a hundred years before the previous administration terminated it.

My question is does the president plan to continue with that commitment to open the consulate and what would be the timetable?

Ambassador LEAF. Yes, Senator, that is the President's commitment, and he believes, and Secretary Blinken spoke to this issue over the last couple months that reopening the consulate provides a critical platform for diplomatic engagement with both the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people.

I am not privy to the plans in the State Department in terms of timing of that. But, if confirmed, of course, I will work to execute the President's commitment.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. In my remaining time, let me now circle back to Lebanon, and in addition to elaborating on the Lebanese Armed Forces just follow up with the issue that Senator Murphy raised, which is, as you know, Iran right now is sending tankers with fuel to Hezbollah via a port in Syria to be transported over land.

Our really great ambassador there, Ambassador Shea, has expressed her strong opposition to that but also proposed an alternative, a much more sustainable plan, a real plan that involves bringing electricity from Egypt through Jordan to Lebanon but would have to transit Syria.

There are issues of whether or not that is compliant with the Caesar Act or whether a waiver would be required. Can you just offer your thoughts on that, in addition to the Lebanese Armed Forces?

Ambassador LEAF. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for calling out Ambassador Shea for her great efforts there on the ground with her team.

Yeah, it is interesting, the issue of this acute energy crisis. It is side by side with the general disintegration of the economy, which is, as you and Senator Murphy saw, is having a terrible deleterious effect across society and is crumbling the foundations of the LAF itself. I mean, the currency has lost 90 percent of its value in the last two years. Imagine what a soldier makes.

On this issue of an energy solution, side by side with this, frankly, PR stunt by Hezbollah, this is a regionally produced solution or proposed solution, which, as you say, it is our partners, Egypt and Jordan, who have teamed together to look at the issue of excess electricity and natural gas to get it across Syria into Lebanon.

This is a project that, as I understand it, is endorsed by the World Bank. So, the State Department is looking at it carefully within the framework of U.S. law and sanctions policy.

But it shows some promise on the face of it and, of course, the Department will consult thoroughly with Treasury on the way forward. But it, certainly, offers the prospect of a cheaper, cleaner, and defensible solution, a short-term fix to what is a larger terrible problem in Lebanon.

And the first step, of course, is that they have finally, after 13 months, put together a government, which is only the first step. Important economic reforms must follow after.

And I will just say, finally, on the LAF, support for the LAF as the true cross confessional institution of public trust and capability in the country will remain a priority for this administration.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Let me follow up on one point that Senator Van Hollen made.

And I look forward to hearing back from the department. I helped write the Caesar Act and I do not want to give relief to the Assad regime.

However, in this particular case for these particular circumstances, if the department makes the determination that that is the only impediment towards an agreement for energy flow into Lebanon, I have asked them to come to me because I think it is important enough to find a way forward.

Let me also follow on. A question, Ambassador Leaf, that was promoted to you by Senator Murphy—and he and I do have a respectful disagreement about the JCPOA—I understood your answer to say that if we can get a compliance-for-compliance deal we will do that, and then the stronger longer comes later. Is that it?

Ambassador LEAF. Senator, what I meant by that was follow-on negotiations would necessarily look at building out on the JCPOA.

The CHAIRMAN. Right, but they would come later?

Ambassador LEAF. Following it. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. That is the problem. The conversations that I have had with the administration is that returning to the JCPOA with a commitment from the Iranians for a negotiation on what is longer and stronger, that is something I could support.

But if it is just compliance-for-compliance and then we wait to see whether the Iranians are actually serious about longer and stronger, that is a problem because they will have received what they wanted.

And let us remember that our circumstances today are different than when we entered the JCPOA. Number one, time has elapsed. The sunset clauses are closer. Some of them have already elapsed on some critical issues.

And Iran has moved forward on its abilities and knowledge in terms of enrichment. We are not in the same place. Even with compliance-for-compliance, we are not in the same place.

I do not hold you responsible for this because even though you work at the NSC it is, I am sure, above your pay grade. But I just want to make it clear that from the chairman's point of view this is a problem.

And so I have given the administration a lot of room under the basis that they are looking for an agreement that goes back to compliance but is also a pathway to longer and stronger, and just that it will happen later on in the hopes that the Iranians will be good actors is not something that I can be supportive of.

I just want to raise that question. I think this question is rather self-obvious, but I just want to do it for the record.

Do you commit to fully supporting Israel's right to self-defense and its qualitative military edge, including through U.S. military assistance?

Ambassador LEAF. Yes, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I want to go to Lebanon as well. This economic crisis has pushed the middle class into poverty, but the country's political elite still have shown no appetite for needed reforms.

This new government, it is my hope that Hezbollah will allow this government to operate.

How do we balance the need to help alleviate suffering in Lebanon while directly contributing to security and stability—which directly contributes to security and stability not only in Lebanon but Israel and throughout the region, but ensure that our assistance is being used to incentivize reforms?

Ambassador LEAF. Thank you, Senator. You have put your finger on the crux of the issue.

There is a situation that in real terms is quite terrifying that confronts Lebanon and I wish the Lebanese political class and its leaders and those who formed the caretaker government have felt the same sense of urgency about the situation that outsiders like the U.S. Government, the French Government, and others have felt about the situation.

There is at play here, a need for pressure and inducements but, really, not inducements in an immediate sense. It is, rather, that this government, having been formed, it is only the first minimal step on what has to be a long road of structural economic reform, which will then unlock, be it international financing, loans, and other forms of foreign assistance.

The Biden administration has been working this set of issues closely with France and several other regional partners to provide that constant pressure on individuals as well as the Government to make it clear that there is no rescue coming from outside.

The solution to Lebanon lies in Lebanese hands. But it is going to be a long slow road ahead.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope we will do what is necessary to try to get them to be part of the decision-making necessary so they can get IMF funding and reforms and move on, and I think there is a great will in the Congress to help Lebanon but Lebanon must help itself in that regard.

And I think if the message is there that we are standing willing to help, then the onus is upon its own leaders to create that opportunity.

Ambassador LEAF. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I just want to touch on Egypt with you and then I will move on.

Egypt is both an incredibly important security partner to us, to the region, to Israel. I was in Greece this summer. I spoke to the foreign minister. He made a very big point about Egypt's stability in the region.

They are a member of the East Med Gas Forum along with Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and Jordan. They worked to deescalate the conflict between Israel and Hamas in the past conflicts. They, obviously, are playing a significant role in that regard.

They have issues as well. They have issues with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, or what we call the GERD. And when I speak to them, I believe that they are serious about their red lines on the GERD. And, though, while they do not seek it, I, certainly,

think the last thing we can avoid is a conflict there, at the end of the day. I hope that you will join whoever is in the administration focused on this to try to find a resolution.

Then, of course, we have our continuing challenges on human rights. I know that the Egyptians argue that, look at what we are doing for the quality of life for the Egyptian people. That should be considered human rights, too.

But imprisonment and unlawful detention is also not acceptable on these set of circumstances. We have to press them on all these different fronts, and I will assume that that is something that you will do, if confirmed.

Ambassador LEAF. If confirmed, I will absolutely do that. And you have sketched out exactly the color, the texture, the complexity of that relationship. But it is quite strategic.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Smith, I have some real concerns about NATO in terms of where we are headed, and your time there will be very important. They fall in two buckets. One is NATO, of course, was created as a security architecture, which has been exceptionally successful.

But it was also founded on a set of principles, of values, that were joined by the member nations. And, of course, the provision of the NATO treaty that says an attack on one is an attack on all is a critical nature of that. We have reaffirmed that.

But what happens in the eventuality that an attack by one NATO member against another NATO member takes place? It is a serious issue, and while we never envisioned that, I am deeply concerned about Turkey's actions in the eastern Mediterranean against another NATO ally, Greece, where we have Souda Bay, where we are deepening our relationship. We are on the verge of signing a new defense cooperation agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, hopefully, in October.

I think that is a discussion that NATO is going to have to have. I would like to get your impressions on that.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

NATO, as you know, recently spent some time drafting this 2030 report thinking about where the allies want to take the Alliance towards 2030 and what capabilities it would need, what new mechanisms it might need, what measures it could undertake to address some new challenges.

But, really, at the heart of that report sits the importance of Alliance cohesion and unity, and that is a theme that runs throughout the report.

And as I noted in my opening remarks, I am concerned about some of the actions we are seeing in some NATO member states that bring into question whether or not each member state is upholding our shared values of democracy, individual liberty, and rule of law.

If confirmed, I would work to ensure that we can return our focus back to Alliance unity, solidarity, and resolve.

On your question about Turkey more specifically, this is an ally inside the NATO Alliance that has played a key role in some of its cooperation with both the United States and other NATO allies in the counterterrorism realm.

But we have also had some really hard questions with Turkey and some tough discussions, particularly about their decision to purchase the S-400s, which all of us have made clear are not compatible with the Alliance, not interoperable, and I think, rightly, past U.S. administrations, other allies, have warned the Turks that these types of purchases cannot be made operational. They cannot be maintained. They should not have been purchased in the first place.

And so we have to continue to drive the message home to our friends in Ankara that it is important that we focus on that Alliance cohesion.

Yes, we can have some tough conversations with our friends in Ankara, difficult discussions about human rights as well, but also acknowledge that Turkey is an ally and that all of us want Turkey to remain facing westward.

The CHAIRMAN. We want them facing westward as long as they are also sharing westward values. When you purchase the S-400, which is in violation of CAATSA, that I helped write—when you—totally not interoperable with the NATO Alliance—when you commit actions that instigate against another NATO ally in Greece—you overfly their airspace, you invade their territorial waters, you threaten their exclusive economic zone—when we say that there are more lawyers and journalists in prison in Turkey than in any other part of the world, and there are some bad parts of the world, that speaks volumes about not sharing on values.

What they did in Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the list is replete. I just hope that you will be going clear eyed with an understanding of this challenge.

Yes, we want them to be everything we aspired of them—the bridge between East and West, the secular, more democratic country, a strong NATO ally, respecting the rule of law.

But under President Erdoğan that is not the reality, and as it is in life, we have to deal with that which is the reality, not that which we aspire to.

I hope you will be thinking about that because we have to answer the question, God forbid, that one NATO ally attacks another what is the answer of the Alliance then.

Secondly, I hope you will pay attention to what is the new hybrid warfare that, particularly, Russia has done.

We need to be able to think about how we respond in that regard when Russia uses forces that are irregular—but they are Russian forces for all intents and purposes, whether they are the Wagner Group or others—and at the end of the day, threatens stability in the region, as well as the new cyber challenges that we have, which are a new form of warfare.

Are those items that you will be paying attention to, if confirmed?

Ms. SMITH. Absolutely. Russia remains the biggest geopolitical threat to the Euro-Atlantic region, certainly, will be the biggest military threat to the NATO Alliance for the foreseeable future, certainly, over the next decade.

NATO has done a lot to enhance its deterrence and defense posture since Russia went into Ukraine in 2014. But as you note, Senator, there is more work to be done. Russia's aggression continues.

We have to hold Russia accountable for their actions across the full spectrum of instruments whether we are talking about conventional capabilities, flying into NATO airspace, acts of intimidation, or cyber attacks.

NATO has done a lot to take on the cyber challenge, particularly in 2016, acknowledging that this is a new domain for the Alliance. But we do have more work to do in that regard.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We look forward to you getting there soon because I think these issues are really percolating as we speak.

Finally, Ambassador Bauer, I do not want you to think you are not the object of my affection in terms of any questions.

Let me ask you, President Macron has sought to advance a concept of strategic autonomy, to use his words, which some have interpreted as France distancing itself from the United States and creating tensions within NATO.

What are your views on this question of strategic autonomy and what would you be saying, upon confirmation, to President Macron about it?

Ambassador BAUER. Thank you for the question.

As Ms. Smith was noting, NATO is the premier transatlantic forum for national security. That is, for us, our top priority is our NATO Alliance.

And France is, indeed, a very good partner on that, and I greatly appreciate their interest in strengthening security in Europe, and I would ask them, perhaps, as their first step to help us in encouraging those who are not meeting their commitments to the 2 percent in NATO and to other capabilities within NATO to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. I get the sense of being stronger. I just hope that it is stronger in complete alignment with NATO. We are all for being stronger. But the last thing we need is a separate parallel effort with NATO when NATO can use all the strengthening it can get. I think that will be one of your important jobs.

And the last thing I would just say, commend to you, that the French care a great deal about Lebanon and we have heard that there has been some engagement. I hope you will deepen that and play with Ambassador Leaf and others a role to bring this whole combination of governments together.

I think the stability in Lebanon is incredibly important. I have had many discussions with the French ambassador here as well as the French foreign minister and some of their negotiators on the Iran portfolio.

We have talked to them about what the administration now describes as stronger and longer, that there has to be more than just a return to the JCPOA.

They seem to suggest that, yes, we recognize that, and I hope that you will be able to deepen that approach if you are confirmed to your position.

Ambassador BAUER. Thank you. That would certainly be a priority for me.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

All right. I have no other members virtually or otherwise. We thank you all for your testimony.

The record for the hearing will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, September 16, 2021. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than Thursday.

We would say to our nominees that there will inevitably be questions for the record for you. We would ask you to answer them fully, and I say that because we very often get answers that are very superficial, which then causes members to hold up a nominee's business meeting and we have to go back to the department to say this answer is not sufficiently answered.

To the extent that you get a question, please answer them expeditiously, answer them fully, so we can have your nominations be brought up at a business meeting.

With the thanks of the committee, to all of you for your willingness to serve, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

LETTER SUBMITTED BY ADMIRAL JAMES STAVRIDIS, USN (RET.), FORMER SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER AT NATO, SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION OF JULIANNE SMITH TO BE U.S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION



September 15, 2021

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch,

I write today to strongly and personally recommend Julie Smith to be the US Ambassador to NATO. I have known and worked closely with Julie for well over a decade, going back to my service as a 3-star Admiral in the Pentagon, most notably during my tour as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, and through the present day in her various defense policy roles in Washington. A few of the key points to be made concerning her career and service include:

- 25 years experience working on transatlantic security issues in government (Pentagon and White House); out of government (CNAS, CSIS, GMF); and overseas (have worked in both France and Germany and speak both languages). She is a committed Atlanticist.
- vast network of contacts in Europe, including at the minister and head of state level, which will help her do her job at NATO.
- deep knowledge of NATO issues, having worked and written about them for the past two decades.
- conceptualized, wrote, and ran CNAS's first two war games with Jerry Hendrix: "Assured Resolve" (which focused on hybrid threats to the Baltic States) and "Forgotten Waters" (which addressed the GIUK Gap and NATO's lack of situational awareness in that region).
- strong record of innovatively working across the aisle. Launched a program after Trump won to bring Europeans to 12 cities around the US to talk to Americans outside of Washington about U.S. foreign policy.
- served as both acting national security advisor and deputy national security advisor to Joe Biden as VP. Will have his ear in Brussels.
- spent the last three years researching and writing on Europe's evolving attitudes and vulnerabilities as they relate to China (with pieces in both the NYT and Foreign Affairs on this subject).

But beyond her deeply impressive biography, what I'd like to convey in this brief letter are her character, determination, and leadership. Again and again, I watched her deal with complicated international issues at the very heart of the NATO Alliance with creativity, energy, and collegiality. Often as Senior Military Assistant to SECDEF as a 3-star and later as SACEUR, I would look to Julie for advice on issues back in Washington and over in Brussels as well. She is uniformly kind, humble, and thoughtful, whether she is dealing with the most junior member of her staff or the Supreme Allied Commander at NATO. In Navy terms, she is a perfect "shipmate."

As SACEUR, I was in constant contact with the US Ambassador to NATO, and have watched that office serve as the fulcrum of US policy within the Alliance. It requires the nicest diplomatic touch alongside a rock-solid knowledge of both Europe and NATO itself: Ambassador Julie Smith would bring both qualities to the halls of this venerable and still vital Alliance. Please approve her nomination! All the best and very respectfully,

Admiral James Stavridis, USN (R)
Vice Chairman, Global Affairs, The Carlyle Group
Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Rockefeller Foundation
16th Supreme Allied Commander at NATO

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How many individuals are in the current P-2 referral queue?

Answer. To date, I understand over 20,000 cases consisting of around 55,000 individuals have been referred to the Afghan P-2 refugee resettlement program.

Question. How will PRM work with individual Afghans who have submitted applications through the P-2 referral process?

Answer. On August 2, 2021, the Department of State announced a new Priority 2 (P-2) designation granting U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members. (See <https://www.state.gov/u-s-refugee-admissions-program-priority-2-designation-for-afghan-nationals/>.) The Department of State has designated certain categories of Afghan nationals as having access to the USRAP by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement. This priority group includes Afghans who are or were employed in Afghanistan by a U.S.-based media organization or nongovernmental organization (NGO). It expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation but are not eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa because they did not have qualifying employment or because they have not met the time-in-service requirement to become eligible for an SIV.

In addition to the P-2 designation noted above, Afghans may also gain access to the USRAP through Priority 1 referrals by a specific entity (U.S. embassy, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or a designated NGO), or Priority 3, reunification of family members of refugees already resettled in the United States.

The Department of State has issued instructions regarding how U.S.-based media and NGOs can submit referrals for P-2 designation for Afghan nationals. (See <https://www.wrapsnet.org/siv-iraqi-syrian-afghan-p2/>.) Organizations can use these instructions to refer to the USRAP any Afghan national staff (plus their spouse and children) who might be in danger now or in the foreseeable future.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program Priority 2 designation expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many thousands of Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation. As President Biden has made clear, assisting these Afghan allies is a top priority for the administration.

I understand that PRM is still receiving P2 referrals from U.S. employers, service members, and qualifying media and non-governmental organizations. The U.S. Government cannot currently process refugee referrals inside Afghanistan, so Afghan nationals who are referred for resettlement will be processed upon leaving the country. I am not aware of a timeline for that process nor a specific number of Afghan P-2 referrals that PRM expects to process in the next year. The administration recognizes the role this new designation and the refugee resettlement program in general will play in the lives of those that risked their safety to assist the United States. As President Biden has made clear, helping these Afghans is an ongoing commitment of the United States.

Question. How long should it take PRM to process P-2 applications during the pre-screening phase?

Answer. It is my understanding that the amount of time it will take for the relevant PRM-funded Resettlement Support Center to pre-screen cases will vary according to region. In general, it takes approximately 12 to 18 months to process a refugee resettlement case from start to finish including pre-screening, the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services interview, and required security vetting.

Question. Do you support expanding the P-2 eligibility to include sub-grantees and sub-contractors of U.S.-funded projects, given that the risks these staff face are no less grave than those of primary recipients? If not, why not?

Answer. I understand the Department's policy is that Afghans who worked for sub-grantees or sub-contractors of U.S.-funded projects may be referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program through an Embassy P-1 referral if the individual is well-known to a U.S. Government official and has imminent or compelling protection concerns. Alternatively, such individuals who register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in a third country may be referred for resettlement in the United States by UNHCR. I understand that sub-grantees and sub-contractors of U.S.-funded projects do not formally qualify for the P-2 program.

Question. Once eligible organizations have submitted referrals, how will employers, organizations, and referred individuals receive information about the status of their applications?

Answer. After the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program has received a referral from a U.S. Government agency, a U.S.-based non-governmental organization, or a U.S.-based media organization, and the individual has relocated to a country where refugee processing can occur, I understand the referred individual will need to contact PRM to begin processing their case. Individuals should follow the guidelines on wrapsnet.org to contact PRM. At that point, PRM will assign the case to a PRM-funded overseas Resettlement Support Center for processing.

Question. What are the administration's plans to process Afghans in third countries?

Answer. Once an individual referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) arrives in a country where processing is feasible and reaches out to PRM, following the guidelines found on wrapsnet.org, I understand that PRM will create and assign a refugee case to the appropriate PRM-funded Resettlement Support Center (RSC) to begin processing the case where the refugee is located. I understand that RSCs will collect data and pre-screen Afghan USRAP applicants, and all individuals will need to complete a refugee interview with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer.

Question. What role and presence, if any, will U.S. agencies have in third countries? What role, if any, will UN agencies and international NGOs play there?

Answer. It is my understanding that there are regional PRM-funded Resettlement Support Centers that process U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) cases for individuals once they reach a third country. I also understand that individuals with urgent protection needs may register and seek assistance from the Government of the country they are in or from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Question. How will PRM specifically ensure that they have access to basic services while awaiting U.S. Government P-2 processing?

Answer. It is my understanding that individuals with urgent needs should follow procedures to register for international protection and assistance with the government of the country where they are located. They may also register and seek assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. If confirmed, I would work with international humanitarian partners and other governments to address their needs for basic services.

Question. What will be the contingency plan should at-risk Afghans' applications for P-1, P-2, and SIV be rejected while they are in a third country?

Answer. Individuals with urgent protection needs should follow procedures to register for international protection and assistance with the government of the country where they are located. They may also register and seek assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. If confirmed, I would work with international humanitarian partners and other governments to address their protection concerns and needs for support. The United States appreciates that other countries have agreed to host and resettle at-risk Afghans, and if confirmed, I would pursue durable solutions for these individuals.

Question. What steps, if any, is PRM taking to provide similar protections or pathways for Afghans employed by international organizations?

Answer. I understand that Afghans employed by international organizations may be referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program through an Embassy P-1 referral, if well-known to a U.S. Government official, or through a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees referral to the United States or another resettlement country.

Question. What will be the process for P-2 eligible Afghans who were paroled into the U.S.?

Answer. It is my understanding that Afghan individuals at risk who are paroled into the United States as a result of the U.S. airlift are transferred temporarily to a U.S. military installation. Following medical and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service processing on the military base, these Afghan parolees can access the Afghan Placement & Assistance (APA) Program once they arrive at their final destination in the United States. The purpose of the APA Program is to provide paroled Afghans with initial relocation services for 30 to 90 days after arrival as they begin

to rebuild their lives in the United States. These services are provided through local refugee resettlement agencies and community partners.

Question. Will the administration modify the P-2 program to allow for processing while in the U.S.?

Answer. It is my understanding that the U.S. Government is currently exploring options under the P-2 program for processing Afghans who have been paroled into the United States.

Question. How is PRM working with other federal agencies and the White House to conduct an assessment of security vetting processes, particularly in light of EO 14013?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department of Homeland Security is the lead agency for vetting of all travelers applying for admission to the United States, including refugees. I understand PRM is working closely with the DHS' Citizenship and Immigration Service and other U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) vetting partners to conduct needed reviews and implement technical improvements to USRAP security vetting. I also understand that includes the goal of incorporating refugee vetting into the National Vetting Center to enhance the efficiency and reduce redundancies in vetting, without compromising the security of the American people.

Question. What steps do you think PRM should be taking with DHS to improve refugee vetting and security checks?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the lead agency for vetting of all travelers applying for admission to the United States, including refugees. As noted previously, I understand PRM is working closely with the DHS' U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and other USRAP vetting partners to conduct the needed reviews and implement technical improvements to U.S. Refugee Admissions Program security vetting. I also understand that includes the goal of incorporating refugee vetting into the National Vetting Center to speed the process and reduce redundancies, without compromising the security of the American people.

Question. Would you commit to reviewing and implementing the reports required by EO 14013 on vetting and SAO checks?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing and implementing fully and completely all of the reports and measures in E.O. 14013 that the President directs, including those focused on the Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) process and security vetting for refugee applicants to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. I believe the security of the American people remains paramount in all Department of State programs and initiatives and will work in keeping with that belief if confirmed.

Question. How is the Department engaging with allies around the world to meet the UN appeals for urgent humanitarian funding to support the needs of Afghans inside Afghanistan, including millions of IDPs?

Answer. I understand that the State Department continues to support the needs of vulnerable Afghans through urgent humanitarian funding, highlighted by the recent announcement of \$64 million in new humanitarian assistance to people affected by the ongoing crisis, bringing the total on behalf of the United States to \$330 million this fiscal year. This new support to United Nations agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and World Health Organization, and to international non-governmental organizations, is part of the nearly \$1.2 billion in humanitarian funding to Afghanistan pledged by nations around the world. My understanding is that the Department continues to engage partners at the highest levels to encourage full funding of urgent appeals and a continued commitment to Afghans in need. If confirmed, I would call for international responsibility sharing to meet humanitarian needs there and around the world.

Question. Should the United States and the international community demand certain commitments from the Taliban before providing development aid? Should we insist that we will only provide support if they uphold the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence?

Answer. My understanding is that the State Department and USAID are reviewing all types of U.S. foreign assistance to Afghanistan. In my view, that review should include discussion of our posture and expectations vis-à-vis the Taliban. I would refer you to my colleagues at USAID and in the South Central Asia bureau at the State Department on the USG's plans to provide development aid to Afghanistan. Insofar as humanitarian aid, I understand that U.S. humanitarian assistance

is provided on the basis of need through international and non-governmental organization partners, not directly to governments. In Afghanistan, more than 18 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the face of food insecurity, protection risks, health crises, climate change, and conflict instability. The United States Government's humanitarian partners have reiterated their commitment to stay and to deliver lifesaving assistance directly to the people of Afghanistan with impartiality, neutrality, and independence; this commitment is based on the needs of the Afghan people, regardless of Taliban undertakings.

Question. What efforts will PRM be making and supporting to bring refugee labor mobility to the United States and expand efforts internationally to scale this additional solution for refugees and other displaced people?

Answer. I understand that the administration's Collaborative Migration Management Strategy (CMMS) includes a specific line of effort to enhance regional labor migration pathways, under which PRM, the U.S. interagency, international organization partners, and partner governments in North and Central America will expand existing and create new temporary work visa programs in the region. This is an important initiative, and if confirmed, I would seek to expand interim solutions, including further resettlement and labor mobility opportunities for refugees and other forcibly displaced people in other parts of the world.

Question. Migration is one of the greatest global challenges we face. Creating safe, legal pathways for migration should be a key component of our response. What is PRM doing to encourage development of refugee labor mobility pathways internationally and to make skilled labor visas accessible to refugee populations into the United States?

Answer. I agree on the critical importance of creating legal migration pathways, particularly in this hemisphere. If confirmed, I will implement the administration's Collaborative Migration Management Strategy (CMMS), which includes a specific line of effort to enhance regional labor mobility pathways. I understand PRM is working with the U.S. interagency, international organization partners, and partner governments in North and Central America to expand existing and create new temporary work visa programs in the region to provide pathways for safe, lawful employment to people likely to migrate seeking economic opportunity.

I respectfully refer you to the Refugee Career Pathways program in the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement for information about employment for refugees who have been resettled to the United States.

Question. What is PRM doing to encourage and ensure that those who come with skills, training, education and English language capability are matched to private sector employment opportunities commensurate with their abilities, so that they can contribute and provide for themselves and their families from the outset of their entry into the United States?

Answer. I understand the Reception & Placement Program, funded by PRM, lays the foundation for refugees to transition successfully to life in the United States. I also understand that a critical component of that success is the ability of refugees to achieve early self-sufficiency through employment. Resettlement agencies carefully consider the availability of appropriate employment opportunities as one of the key factors when determining where to resettle individuals, drawing on information from a network of over 200 local resettlement agency affiliate offices in approximately 150 communities around the country. For more information on refugee employment programming and outcomes, I would refer you to the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What would be your goals and priorities as Assistant Secretary of State for the bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)?

Answer. If confirmed, I would have three overarching goals as PRM Assistant Secretary.

The first goal would be to represent American values and American leadership in the world. To this end, I would lead PRM in promoting protection, providing lifesaving humanitarian aid, and seeking durable solutions through humanitarian diplomacy for over 80 million people in populations of concern. I would promote policies for safe, orderly and humane migration as well as population policies that en-

hance maternal and child health. To these ends, I would be a responsible steward of the taxpayer dollars that make PRM's work possible, emphasizing risk mitigation approaches to ensure aid reaches its intended recipients. I would emphasize greater international burden sharing to meet global humanitarian needs as well as needed reforms in international organizations to make them more efficient, effective, and accountable.

My second goal would be to rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, as directed by the President. I would collaborate closely with partners at the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services and in close consultation with the Congress on this objective, and with PRM's excellent international organization and non-government organization partners, seeking innovations such as private-public partnerships to make the program more effective.

Last but not least, I would seek to rebuild the PRM bureau. PRM's response to recent events in Afghanistan impressed me deeply—people working 14 to 16-hour days, seven days a week, deploying to other locations around the world at short notice, to help people at risk. I would seek to fill the many staff vacancies in the bureau as quickly as possible, both to increase PRM's long-term capabilities and to provide relief for the existing team, and work with the administration to ensure the bureau has the adequate resources needed to accomplish its work. I would hold staff members accountable for their performance and conduct; reward strong performance; increase professional development opportunities for PRM's staff; and emphasize the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion as hallmarks of a strong team.

Question. Please comment on the U.S. Government's international emergency response capacity and contingency planning. How might PRM improve its capacity to protect lives and provide life-sustaining assistance?

Answer. The United States maintains a robust capacity to respond to humanitarian crises which exceed the ability and resources of an affected country to respond. The United States also engages in contingency planning within our own government and with international, local, and multilateral partners to coordinate humanitarian responses, which is particularly important as the scale and scope of disasters increases. I understand PRM is augmenting its own capacity as well as the capacity of its partners to respond to increasing humanitarian requirements and more complex operating environments, and if confirmed, I would continue to support these efforts.

Question. How will you work with USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance to ensure greater alignment, eliminate duplication and waste, expand humanitarian access, mitigate the risk of diversion by armed actors and terrorist groups, and ensure U.S. humanitarian assistance is effectively targeted toward those in greatest need? How will you work with our U.N. partners to do the same?

Answer. I understand that PRM and USAID/BHA are in regular communication from the working level up to leadership on the full range of programmatic and policy issues and have robust coordination mechanisms. One of my top priorities is to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible to reach intended beneficiaries. One element of that is ensuring appropriate coordination with USAID/BHA, leveraging each entity's respective strengths to achieve U.S. humanitarian objectives. Regular engagement with United Nations (UN) partners at the field and headquarters levels also ensures appropriate use of U.S. funding and focuses assistance on those most in need. If confirmed, I will continue this close collaboration between PRM and USAID/BHA and close partnership with U.N. entities.

Question. What is your assessment of the budget allocated to PRM in recent years?

Answer. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance continues to grow year after year, and needs far outpace global resources to respond. Congress has been responsive to this growth in needs, as well as new and evolving requirements such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic and, more recently, Afghanistan. The level of funding appropriated for humanitarian assistance reflects the strong bipartisan commitment to assisting the world's most vulnerable persons and to leading with our values and has accordingly supported PRM in providing a robust and agile response. In FY 2022, I expect PRM will continue to require sustained support to respond to existing crises and any new needs as they emerge. If confirmed, I would also make it a priority to seek increased contributions from other nations and organizations and to foster public-private partnerships to respond to these growing crises, in the interest of international responsibility sharing.

Question. To what extent does the current level of staffing of the PRM bureau address its three fundamental areas of responsibility: population, refugees, and migration?

Answer. PRM has an existing cadre of well qualified, dedicated staff. I understand that Department leadership recently approved 68 new permanent positions in PRM to advance humanitarian diplomacy in critical regions, better implement humanitarian goals and objectives, provide oversight for program integrity, and more efficiently program, manage, and monitor billions of dollars of foreign assistance to international and non-governmental organizations. Once these new positions and other vacancies in the bureau are filled, PRM will be well positioned to address all three fundamental areas of responsibility. If confirmed, I will seek to fill these positions as quickly as possible.

Question. What is your assessment of PRM's level of accountability and effective planning, as well as its ability to conduct program oversight?

Answer. I understand that PRM has a robust planning and programming process to align its allocations of funds with strategic priorities. PRM also regularly monitors its financial awards to non-governmental and international organizations at the field, regional, and headquarters levels to safeguard U.S. taxpayer dollars, as evidenced by excellent, publicly available audit reports. As humanitarian needs have grown around the world, I understand that PRM has sought to increase its staffing and oversight capabilities. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring PRM's programs are effective and accountable both to the beneficiaries and the American public.

Question. What are the key protection and assistance needs of today's refugees, IDPs, and migrants? If confirmed, how would you recommend that PRM marshal its resources to address these challenges? What countries or regions should PRM prioritize?

Answer. Protection and humanitarian assistance needs are immense as numbers of people displaced by conflict and crises globally have reached record levels in recent years. Among the most pressing needs are access—both access for humanitarian aid providers to reach people in need, and access to protection for people fleeing persecution and violence, prevention of and response to gender-based violence, and protection of children and others in particularly vulnerable situations. These urgent needs cut across all countries and regions. If confirmed, I would ramp up bilateral and multilateral U.S. humanitarian diplomacy to advocate for the protection of populations of concern, and leverage U.S. influence to prioritize protection efforts by international organizations and NGO partners.

Question. How has COVID-19 impacted the work of PRM's implementing partners? What do you anticipate will be the priorities for addressing the immediate needs and secondary impacts of the virus on vulnerable and displaced populations worldwide?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected PRM's implementing partners' programming and ability to provide assistance in a timely manner due to increased operational costs, ongoing travel and access constraints, and other movement restrictions. It has also directly affected the health and welfare of marginalized populations around the world and exacerbated pre-existing gaps in health, protection, assistance, education, and livelihoods. I understand PRM's partners emphasize meeting international standards for assistance and protection for the most vulnerable while at the same time advocating for the inclusion of marginalized, displaced, and hard-to-reach populations such as refugees in national plans for vaccine delivery, relief, and recovery.

Question. Please discuss U.S. global humanitarian budget priorities for this fiscal year and next, with particular reference to humanitarian crises, the impact of COVID-19, and the potential consequences for humanitarian portfolios. What changes, if any, would you prioritize in PRM's funding approach to humanitarian response and/or its work with implementing partners, including U.N. agencies and NGOs?

Answer. Total humanitarian needs far outpace global resources to respond, and the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded existing vulnerabilities. I understand PRM's FY 2021 budget priorities will continue to FY 2022 and include response to the global pandemic; urgent humanitarian assistance to support those affected by crises in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Syria, among others; and rebuilding the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

PRM's approach reflects strong bipartisan commitment, demonstrated through successive administrations, to assisting the world's most vulnerable people and to

leading with our values. If confirmed, I am committed to maintaining U.S. humanitarian leadership and working with Congress to respond to existing as well as emerging humanitarian needs.

Question. How does the U.S. Government coordinate its responses to migration crises, such as those in Venezuela or Central America?

Answer. Interagency coordination between the State Department, USAID, and other agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security is critical in responding to migration crises. My understanding is that the National Security Council leads broad coordination through interagency meetings. Outside of that formal process, working level counterparts exchange information through standing meetings, ad hoc huddles, and technical advice on program and policy implementation and evaluation. At diplomatic posts overseas, PRM's Refugee Coordinators facilitate in-country coordination. If confirmed, I will continue this close collaboration between PRM and counterparts in the Department and the interagency.

Question. When and where does PRM take the lead and what, if any, are the differences in its approach as compared to that of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)?

Answer. My understanding is that PRM and USAID play separate but complementary roles in responding to humanitarian crises. PRM takes the lead in providing urgent humanitarian aid and protection to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and vulnerable migrants, working through international organizations and non-governmental organizations. USAID takes the lead in response to natural and man-made disasters, disaster preparedness, and support for internally displaced populations; USAID also provides food aid to refugees. USAID also funds development programs. In situations where PRM and USAID responsibilities converge, I understand they have robust coordination mechanisms in the field and in Washington to ensure the overall efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. assistance. If confirmed, I will continue this close collaboration between PRM and USAID.

Question. What is your assessment of the scope of risks to women and girls, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic? What are ways that PRM programs specifically address these protection needs?

Answer. In times of crisis, women and girls are at enormous risk of gender-based violence (GBV)—from armed groups, strangers, neighbors, and family members. These risks in humanitarian settings were exacerbated by COVID-19 and corresponding mitigation measures, resulting in a “shadow” pandemic of GBV and worldwide spikes in GBV risks and reports. In response, the U.S. humanitarian response to COVID-19 prioritized protection activities, including programs to help prevent GBV and provide psychosocial services to GBV victims, along with healthcare, water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance in the COVID-19 humanitarian response.

UNRWA

Question. What accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that the administration's resumption of funding for UNRWA does not benefit Hamas and its affiliates?

Answer. If confirmed, I am firmly committed to ensuring that U.S. Government funding does not end up in the hand of terrorists, including Hamas. The administration provides assistance to international organizations and non-governmental organizations in a manner consistent with U.S. law and does not provide assistance to Hamas. PRM takes seriously its oversight of assistance provided to U.N. operations, including UNRWA, to ensure U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching the intended recipients, and if confirmed I would maintain this focus. I understand UNRWA employs safeguards to prevent support from reaching terrorist organizations, including vetting of staff, contractors, and beneficiaries; robust monitoring of its programs; thorough investigations of any allegations of abuses; and accountability for those who violate its policies.

Question. What accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that the administration's resumption of funding for UNRWA does not include textbooks that include anti-Semitic material?

Answer. I condemn incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in any form. U.N. agencies, including UNRWA, do not develop their own curricula, but use the curricula of host governments. When concepts contrary to U.N. principles are identified in host governments' educational materials, UNRWA provides instructions and supplementary materials for its staff to address the issue. If confirmed, I will empha-

size the importance of adhering to humanitarian principles, including neutrality, in discussions with UNRWA.

Question. To what extent has the administration considered phasing out its support for UNRWA and transitioning it to other international relief agencies, such as the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)?

Answer. My understanding is that UNHCR does not have a mandate to provide support for Palestinian refugees in the areas where UNRWA works. Only UNRWA has the mandate, set by the U.N. General Assembly, to provide essential services directly to Palestinian refugees in the five regions it covers. In order to fulfill its mandate, UNRWA employs teachers and health care workers who provide services directly to beneficiaries. The UNHCR mandate also includes a focus on seeking durable solutions such as resettlement, repatriation, and local integration for refugees, while UNRWA does not have that mandate. Decisions on resettlement, repatriation, and local integration of Palestinian refugees must be negotiated directly between Israel and the Palestinians as final status issues.

IRAQ P-2

Question. The State Department notified Congress in April 2021 that it had indefinitely suspended the P-2 program for U.S.-affiliated Iraqis. This notification followed a January 2021 State Department statement that the Department of Justice was “prosecuting individuals for stealing U.S. Government records to take advantage of this program,” which triggered a 90-day suspension. With the special immigrant visa program for Iraqis who were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. Government no longer accepting new applications, this P-2 program has been seen as a key avenue for Iraqis who assisted the United States to gain U.S. admission.

- What is the status of the review of the P-2 program for U.S.-affiliated Iraqis? What changes are under consideration for better securing this and perhaps other P-2 programs? When do you expect a revised P-2 program for U.S.-affiliated Iraqis to be reinstated?

Answer. I understand PRM has been working closely with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the State Department and with the Department of Homeland Security to support the investigation into the P-2 program for U.S. affiliated Iraqis and to ensure no individuals identified by the investigation travel to the United States. I also understand PRM has contracted a specialist team to analyze current Iraqi P-2 program operating procedures, develop recommendations to mitigate fraud vulnerabilities once the program reopens, and re-verify the qualifications of cases in the existing Iraqi P-2 pipeline. Once the overall framework for re-vetting cases has been established, it is my understanding that individual screenings and admission of those who pass this enhanced screening will begin.

Question. What was the involvement of former U.S. Embassy Moscow local employee Olesya Leonidovna Krasilova in the Iraqi P-2 fraud scheme?

Answer. I understand that the Department cannot comment on an ongoing criminal investigation. I respectfully refer you to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia for additional information.

Question. Does the U.S. Government suspect her involvement in any other criminal activity, espionage, or improper/inappropriate conduct with coworkers or contacts during her time as an employee of the United States Government?

Answer. As this is an ongoing criminal investigation, I understand that the Department cannot comment on the findings.

Question. In a press briefing on March 6, 2020 (<https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign-policy/news/-/asset-publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4078184>), Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed Krasilova was employed by a “Russian Government-funded agency,” when she was arrested by Spanish authorities pursuant to a U.S. extradition request. Which Russian agency did she work for? How soon after her employment at U.S. Embassy Moscow was terminated did Krasilova begin working for a Russian Government-funded agency?

Answer. I understand that the Department cannot comment on the findings as there is an ongoing criminal investigation. The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia may be able to provide additional information.

P-2 PROGRAMS

Question. Bills have been introduced in the current Congress that would establish new P-2 groups for certain residents of Hong Kong and certain residents of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. If you are familiar with these proposals, can

you offer any feedback on them? Do you have any general suggestions for congressional offices in drafting bills to establish new P-2 groups?

Answer. I am aware of the bills that would establish new P-2 groups for certain residents both of Hong Kong and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. If confirmed, I can assure you that I am committed to working within the Department, with Congress, international partners, and advocacy groups to ensure that all vulnerable individuals, including residents of Hong Kong and Uyghurs, have equal access to protection, including refugee resettlement in the United States and other countries.

Lautenberg Amendment

Question. What is the status of the Lautenberg program? Are there still Lautenberg applicants in Austria? How many Lautenberg applicants are in pipeline?

Answer. I understand refugees suffering religious persecution continue to be resettled under the Lautenberg program, and that the Department expects approximately 1,000 refugees from the Eurasia region to be resettled in the U.S. in FY 2021.

The Lautenberg Iranian program was suspended by the Government of Austria in early 2017, leaving over 800 Iranian applicants in Vienna. It is my understanding that most of those 800 Lautenberg Iranian applicants have since been resettled to the United States, however, approximately 78 Iranian applicants who were denied resettlement in the United States remained in Austria and are believed to have received asylum. I understand PRM and Embassy Vienna are negotiating with the Government of Austria on a potential restart of the Iranian Lautenberg program.

I understand that following a longstanding policy that protects refugee data, locations, and security check statuses, PRM does not disclose USRAP pipeline numbers.

UNFPA

Question. Does UNFPA engage with entities in the People's Republic of China which fund forced sterilization or abortion?

Answer. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) does not condone or support China's coercive population policies. My understanding is that UNFPA's activities in China to advance voluntary family planning that respects human rights, have been credited with positively influencing the partial liberalization of China's one-child policy. UNFPA lists the Republic of China's National Health Commission (NHC) as one of many partners in the current country program document, consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. UNFPA does not provide funding to the NHC, however, and the NHC does not implement any UNFPA activities.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to upholding all provisions of law prohibiting the use of U.S. foreign assistance resources to perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning, to support programs of coercive abortion or forced sterilization, or to lobby for or against the legalization of abortion, including the Kemp-Kasten amendment as it relates to UNFPA?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to upholding all provisions of law related to U.S. foreign assistance including those related to prohibiting the performance or promotion of abortion as a method of family planning, coercive abortion, or forced sterilization.

Afghanistan

Question. Despite the large need of resettlement, will you pledge that if confirmed, the U.S. will continue to use vigorous vetting procedures for all refugee admissions, including those from Afghanistan? My staff asked the Department about vetting protocols, including potential timelines, two weeks ago. If confirmed, would you engage right away on ensuring this information is shared?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and all Members of Congress to achieve timely responses to your inquiries and requests on matters involving PRM, including what role the State Department has in vetting processes. I also commit to working closely with DHS and other vetting agencies to use vigorous vetting procedures for all refugee admissions to uphold the safety and security of the American people.

Question. How will you work with neighboring countries to assist with the large outflows of refugees from Afghanistan?

Answer. The United States is working with its partners to review and strengthen humanitarian preparedness and priority interventions in the region in the event of new refugee outflows from Afghanistan. If confirmed, I will encourage continued coordination between host governments and humanitarian organizations to monitor and respond to the protection and assistance needs of displaced Afghans in the region. I will also urge states to uphold their respective obligations to not return Afghan refugees or asylum seekers to persecution or torture, and to respect the principle of non-refoulement.

Question. In August 2021, DHS announced a new P-2 designation for certain Afghan nationals. The announcement indicated that PRM had created an “Afghan Referrals Workgroup comprised of federal agencies to refer individuals directly” for U.S. refugee resettlement consideration. Please explain the eligibility requirements for this P-2 program, and how the referral system works. How many Afghan nationals does PRM expect to admit as refugees under this program, and when are these admissions expected to occur?

Answer. On August 2, 2021, the Department of State announced a new Priority 2 (P-2) designation granting U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members. (See <https://www.state.gov/u-s-refugee-admissions-program-priority-2-designation-for-afghan-nationals/>.) The Department of State has designated certain categories of Afghan nationals as having access to the USRAP by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement. This priority group includes Afghans who are or were employed in Afghanistan by a U.S.-based media organization or nongovernmental organization (NGO). It expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation but are not eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa because they did not have qualifying employment or because they have not met the time-in-service requirement to become eligible for an SIV.

In addition to the P-2 designation noted above, Afghans may also gain access to the USRAP through Priority 1 referrals by a specific entity (U.S. embassy, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or a designated NGO), or Priority 3, reunification of family members of refugees already resettled in the United States.

The Department of State has issued instructions regarding how U.S.-based media and NGOs can submit referrals for P-2 designation for Afghan nationals. (See <https://www.wrapsnet.org/siv-iraqi-syrian-afghan-p2/>.) Organizations can use these instructions to refer to the USRAP any Afghan national staff (plus their spouse and children) who might be in danger now or in the foreseeable future.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program Priority 2 designation expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many thousands of Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation. As President Biden has made clear, assisting these Afghan allies is a top priority for the administration.

I understand that PRM is still receiving P2 referrals from U.S. employers, service members, and qualifying media and non-governmental organizations. The U.S. Government cannot currently process refugee referrals inside Afghanistan, so Afghan nationals who are referred for resettlement will be processed upon leaving the country. I am not aware of a timeline for that process nor a specific number of Afghan P-2 referrals that PRM expects to process in the next year. The administration recognizes the vital role this new designation and the program in general will play in the lives of those that risked their safety to assist the United States. As President Biden has made clear, helping these Afghans is an ongoing commitment of the United States.

Question. How many U.S. citizens are currently in Afghanistan? Please address the total number of U.S. citizens in Afghanistan, independent of how many may have indicated, at some point, an interest in staying in Afghanistan.

Answer. U.S. citizens are not required to register with the Department of State or an embassy when they arrive in or depart from a country. Based on the requests received, the Department believes that most American citizens who wished to leave have departed. The number of remaining U.S. citizens in Afghanistan who have expressed a desire to leave remains fluid, and the Department remains committed to assisting them.

Question. How many U.S. legal permanent residents are currently in Afghanistan? Please address the total number of U.S. legal permanent residents in Afghanistan, independent of how many may have indicated, at some point, an interest in staying in Afghanistan.

Answer. Like U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) are not required to register with the Department of State or an embassy when they arrive in or depart from a country. The U.S. Government was able to evacuate or facilitate the relocation or evacuation of more than 124,000 individuals, including U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and foreign and Afghan allies, from August 14 to August 31.

Question. How many Special Immigrant Visa applicants are currently in Afghanistan?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken explained during his September 13 testimony, the State Department is working on getting numbers right now. The State Department still continues to receive communications from Special Immigrant Visa applicants in Afghanistan and the commitment to those applicants is ongoing.

Question. How many Special Immigrant Visa applicants' dependents are currently in Afghanistan?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken explained during his September 13 testimony, the State Department is working on numbers right now. The State Department still continues to receive communications from Special Immigrant Visa applicants and their dependents in Afghanistan and the commitment to them is ongoing.

Question. How many Afghans who were identified as at-risk but did not fit into the U.S. citizen, LPR, or SIV categories are currently in Afghanistan?

Answer. It is my understanding that at this time the number of Afghan citizens "at risk" as a result of their affiliation with the United States, or by virtue of their profiles, that have been referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) under either a Priority 1 (P-1) or Priority 2 (P-2) referral, exceeds 20,000. I understand PRM intends to fund U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) domestic and overseas implementing partners at an initial operating level to support 65,000 arrivals at the beginning of FY 2022. PRM will be prepared to increase funding as needed if arrivals surpass this initial operating level, though at this time there is not a precise estimate of the number of anticipated arrivals. While many P-2 submissions to the USRAP program do not meet the program's criteria relating to employment or U.S. affiliation, the volume of submissions continues to rise. Afghan nationals who feel they are at risk cannot self-refer to the USRAP. A P-1 or P-2 referral of an at-risk individual to USRAP for potential resettlement does not convey immigration status and does not confer evacuation assistance. I understand the United States will continue to support the Afghan people through humanitarian aid, diplomacy, and international cooperation.

Question. If the Taliban requires visas for persons to exit Afghanistan, and the U.S. no longer has a diplomatic presence inside Afghanistan, how will the U.S. get visas to those trying to exit the country?

Answer. The Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for the processing and issuance of U.S. visas abroad. My understanding is that the State Department is developing visa processing alternatives so that it can continue to deliver these important consular services for the people of Afghanistan, and respectfully refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for more specific information.

Question. Has the U.S. requested another country to facilitate the distribution of U.S. visas?

Answer. While the subject-matter of your question is not under the purview of PRM, my understanding is that the State Department is developing alternatives so that it can continue to process visas and provide other important consular services for the people of Afghanistan. I refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for more specific information.

Question. How will the State Department facilitate the evacuation of eligible Afghans of any category whose passports or travel documents were destroyed by the U.S. during the withdrawal?

Answer. It is my understanding that, as is standard operating procedure in case of an emergency evacuation from post, Embassy Kabul personnel were forced to destroy sensitive paper record holdings as part of the evacuation, including paper visa records. This was done to minimize the U.S. footprint and reduce the sensitive material remaining for security reasons, and in this case also to protect the identity of our Afghan allies. I understand the Department has been able to recover many of these records and share them with the Department of Homeland Security; for more specifics, I respectfully refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. I further understand the State Department is developing alternatives to deliver consular services to facilitate the safe and orderly travel of U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent

Residents, and Afghans to whom the United States has special commitments, including those whose documents may have been destroyed in the evacuation of the Embassy.

Question. Do you have records of whose passports or travel documents were destroyed?

Answer. While the subject-matter of your question does not fall within the purview of PRM, it is my understanding this is standard operating procedure during an emergency evacuation to minimize the U.S. footprint and reduce the amount of sensitive material remaining. The drawdown and closure of the Consular Section of Embassy Kabul was conducted in accordance with this standard operating procedure. I understand the State Department will review its records for any case where travel documents may have been destroyed per emergency protocol and explore all options to assist affected persons with onward travel. I would refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for more specific information.

Question. How many U.S. citizens did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to the United States?

Answer. I understand that approximately 6,000 U.S. citizens were evacuated from August 14—31. From August 31 through September 15, approximately 60 more U.S. citizens and 25 Legal Permanent Residents departed Afghanistan with U.S. assistance utilizing charter flights and overland crossings. The U.S. Government continues to make good on its pledge to U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghans to whom we have a special commitment and has committed to helping them depart Afghanistan, if and when they choose to do so. These figures continue to change as other U.S. citizens are able to depart from Afghanistan through a variety of means. I refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for more information on U.S. citizens abroad, and the Department of Homeland Security, who will have more detailed information about the arrival of U.S. citizens to the United States.

Question. How many U.S. Legal Permanent Residents did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to the United States?

Answer. The State Department has assisted Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) wishing to depart Afghanistan throughout this effort. The decision on admission category—U.S. Citizen, LPR, Special Immigrant Visa, or other category—for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome, resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of Operation Allies Welcome.

Question. How many SIV principal applicants did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to the United States?

Answer. The United States Government is working on getting numbers right now. The decision on admission category—U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident, Special Immigrant Visa, or other category—for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Question. How many SIV applicants dependents did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to the United States?

Answer. The United States Government is working on getting numbers right now. The decision on admission category—U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident, Special Immigrant Visa, or other category—for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Question. How many Afghans did the USG evacuate to the United States who did not fit into the U.S. citizen, LPR or SIV categories?

Answer. The United States Government is working on getting numbers right now. The decision on admission category for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

toms and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Special Benefit Humanitarian Parole

Question. How many Afghans have received special benefit humanitarian parole?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for granting parole and tracking those numbers, and I respectfully defer to them to respond to this query.

Question. What benefits are Afghans who have been paroled into the country receiving?

Answer. I understand that Afghans granted parole as a result of the U.S. airlift will have access to the Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Program, funded by PRM. The purpose of this program is to provide these Afghans with initial relocation services for 30 to 90 days after arrival as they begin to rebuild their lives in the United States. These services are provided through local refugee resettlement agencies and community partners, which receive a one-time per capita amount of \$2,275 of which \$1,225 is used to fund assistance needs such as housing and basic necessities, including food, clothing, and furnishings. The remainder of this funding supports services including cultural orientation, enrollment in English language instruction, school enrollment, immigration assistance, and referral to other social, medical, and employment services. At this time, I understand these Afghan parolees are not eligible for the same benefits as refugees and Special Immigrant Visa holders such as refugee-specific cash and medical assistance, or mainstream benefits including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid, except parolees are eligible for SNAP benefits if there is a child under 18 in the family.

Question. What are the conditions of their parole?

Answer. I understand that Customs and Border Protection has granted two-year parole status for many Afghan individuals at risk who arrived under the airlift. Consistent with 8 U.S.C. § 1305 and as a condition of their parole, it is my understanding that parolees must provide their address to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) www.uscis.gov/addresschange and must notify USCIS of every change of address no later than 10 days after each move; and must comply with all public health directives, requests for additional information from the Department of Homeland Security and federal law enforcement; and follow local, state and federal laws and ordinances.

For full information on the parole conditions, I respectfully refer you to the Customs and Border Protection service.

Question. What vetting is occurring at U.S. reception centers, such as the Dulles Expo?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants prior to their application for admission to the United States. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, a component of DHS, is responsible for screening applicants upon entry and granting or denying admission to every individual who arrives to the United States and I respectfully refer you to them for information on this issue.

Question. Who is responsible for vetting upon arrival?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States. I refer you to my answer to your question No. 47. PRM was not involved in screening individuals evacuated as part of the U.S. military airlift August 14-31.

Question. Are you collecting biometric data for all Afghans admitted or paroled into the United States?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States and I respectfully refer you to them, though I understand that the screening and vetting process involves biometric and biographic screenings.

Question. Do you have copies of all the flight manifests?

Answer. I understand that U.S. Transportation Command maintains a database of flight manifests of both military and Department of State-chartered flights from overseas sites into the continental United States. I also understand that a number of flights submitted manifests directly to Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) via the

Advance Passenger Information System. The State Department is coordinating with CBP to obtain those manifests missing from the consolidated database, though that work does not fall under the purview of PRM.

Question. Do you provide identity documents for Afghans who do not have any?

Answer. My understanding is that the State Department is not providing identity documents to Afghan nationals. I respectfully refer you to the Department of Homeland Security, which is coordinating Operation Allies Welcome, for further questions.

Question. If so, by what means do you verify identity?

Answer. I understand the State Department is not providing identity documents to Afghan nationals.

Question. What happens to Afghans who fail vetting, for any reason?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States. I would refer you to DHS for more information.

Afghans Evacuated to U.S. Bases

Question. How many U.S. citizens did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to U.S. bases overseas?

Answer. From August 14 to August 31, I understand that approximately 6,000 U.S. citizens were safely evacuated along with eligible family members on USG flights. Since the suspension of embassy operations on August 31 through September 15, an additional approximately 60 U.S. citizens and 25 Legal Permanent Residents have departed Afghanistan with U.S. assistance utilizing charter flights and overland crossings. Most of these citizens and residents were evacuated to or through U.S. military bases overseas. I respectfully refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs to answer questions about its assistance to U.S. citizens overseas, including on U.S. bases.

Question. How many U.S. Legal Permanent Residents did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to U.S. bases overseas?

Answer. I understand that the State Department has assisted Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) wishing to depart Afghanistan throughout this effort. The decision on admission category—U.S. Citizen, LPR, Special Immigrant Visa, or other category—for any individuals ultimately arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Question. How many SIV principal applicants did the USG evacuate from Afghanistan to U.S. bases overseas?

Answer. The United States Government is working on getting numbers right now. Thousands of evacuees were in different stages of the SIV process—many had only just inquired about their eligibility at the beginning of operations. The U.S. Government focused on evacuating American citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghan allies out as fast as possible while the airport was functioning. The decision on admission category—U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident, Special Immigrant Visa, or other category—for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Question. How many SIV applicants' dependents did the USG evacuate Afghanistan to U.S. bases overseas?

Answer. The United States Government is working on getting numbers right now. Persons relocated were in different stages of the SIV process—many had only just inquired about their eligibility at the beginning of the operation. The decision on admission category for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, which will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Question. How many Afghans did the USG evacuate to U.S. bases who did not fit into the U.S. citizen, LPR or SIV categories?

Answer. The decision on admission category—U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident, Special Immigrant Visa, or other category—for any individuals arriving to the United States, including Afghans who were evacuated from overseas as a part of OAW, resides with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection. The Department of Homeland Security, as the lead agency for Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), ultimately will be in the best position to provide the most accurate breakdown of the various categories of Afghans evacuated as a part of OAW.

Question. What vetting is occurring on the bases?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States, and I respectfully refer you to them for a response.

Question. Who is responsible for vetting upon arrival?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, a component of DHS, is responsible for screening upon entry and granting or denying admission to every individual who arrives to the United States.

Question. Are you collecting biometric data for all Afghans admitted or paroled into the United States?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States. I understand that the screening and vetting process involves biometric and biographic screenings. The U.S. Government has worked urgently and carefully to facilitate screening and vetting operations without compromising national security.

Question. Do you have copies of all the flight manifests?

Answer. I understand that U.S. Transportation Command maintains a database of flight manifests of both military and Department of State-chartered flights from overseas sites into the continental United States. I also understand that a number of flights submitted manifests directly to Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) via the Advance Passenger Information System. The State Department is coordinating with CBP to obtain from CBP about those manifests.

Question. Do you provide identity documents for Afghans who do not have any?

Answer. My understanding is that the State Department is not providing identity documents to Afghan nationals. I respectfully refer you to the Department of Homeland Security, which is coordinating Operation Allies Welcome, for further questions.

Question. If so, by what means do you verify identity?

Answer. I understand the State Department is not providing identity documents to Afghan nationals.

Question. What happens to Afghans who fail vetting, for any reason?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States. I would refer you to DHS for more information.

Question. How many U.S. citizens left Afghanistan but have not made it the U.S. are residing in third countries?

Answer. I understand that U.S. citizens are not required to register their presence in a country with the Department of State, and the State Department does not track their whereabouts. The State Department cannot ascertain how many U.S. citizens who left Afghanistan are now residing in third countries. I respectfully refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for answers about their assistance to U.S. citizens still in Afghanistan and abroad after leaving Afghanistan.

Question. How many U.S. legal permanent residents left Afghanistan but have not made it the U.S. are residing in third countries?

Answer. The State Department does not have an exact number of Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) and their immediate family members who have departed Afghanistan. LPRs are not required to register their presence in a country with the Department of State, nor does the State Department track their whereabouts. The State Department cannot ascertain how many are now residing in third countries.

Question. How many SIV applicants left Afghanistan but have not made it to the U.S. are residing in third countries?

Answer. The State Department is working to ascertain those numbers now. I refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for more information.

Question. How many SIV applicants left Afghanistan but have not made it the U.S. are residing in third countries?

Answer. The State Department is working to ascertain those numbers now. I refer you to the Bureau of Consular Affairs for more information. Thousands of Afghans are in different stages of the SIV process—many had only just inquired about their eligibility at the beginning of August.

Question. How many applications have you received from P-1 or P-2 refugee status from Afghans?

Answer. I understand over 20,000 cases relating to approximately 55,000 individuals have been referred to the Afghan P-1 and P-2 refugee resettlement program to date.

Question. What, if any, agreements have you made with foreign governments to host Afghan populations?

Answer. My understanding is that the United States strongly encourages foreign governments to allow entry for Afghans and to coordinate with humanitarian international organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghans in need. The United States also urges states to uphold their respective obligations to not return Afghan refugees or asylum seekers to persecution or torture, and to respect the principle of non-refoulement. The State Department will also continue its existing support of Afghan refugee populations in neighboring countries. This includes supporting third-country resettlement efforts led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and funding appeals from UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration to provide lifesaving protection, emergency food aid, shelter, and livelihood support to Afghan refugees outside Afghanistan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. How has COVID-19 impacted the work of PRM's implementing partners? What do you anticipate will be the priorities for addressing the immediate needs and secondary impacts of the virus on vulnerable and displaced populations worldwide?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted PRM's implementing partners' programming and ability to provide assistance in a timely manner due to increased operational costs, ongoing travel and access constraints, and other movement restrictions. It has also directly affected the health and welfare of marginalized populations around the world and exacerbated pre-existing gaps in health, protection, assistance, education, and livelihoods. I understand PRM's partners emphasize meeting international standards for assistance and protection for the most vulnerable while at the same time advocating for the inclusion of marginalized, displaced, and hard-to-reach populations in national plans for vaccine delivery, relief, and recovery.

Question. How does the U.S. Government coordinate its responses to migration crises, such as those in Venezuela or Central America? When and where does PRM take the lead and what, if any, are the differences in its approach compared to that of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)?

Answer. Interagency coordination between the State Department, USAID, and other agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security is critical in responding to migration crises. My understanding is that PRM and USAID play separate but complementary roles. PRM takes the lead in providing urgent humanitarian aid and protection to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and vulnerable migrants, working through international organizations and non-governmental organizations. PRM also supports efforts to help governments build capacity to protect vulnerable populations and humanely manage migration. USAID takes the lead in response to natural and man-made disasters, disaster preparedness, and support for internally displaced populations; USAID also provides food aid to refugees. USAID also funds development programs in select contexts, such as in Central America, to address root causes of irregular migration and reintegration of returned migrants. In situations where PRM and USAID responsibilities converge, I understand they have robust coordination mechanisms in the field and in Washington to ensure the overall efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. assistance. If confirmed, I will continue this close collaboration between PRM and USAID.

Question. What is your assessment of the scope of risks to women and girls, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic? What are ways that PRM programs specifically address these protection needs?

Answer. In times of crisis, women and girls are at enormous risk of gender-based violence (GBV)—from armed groups, strangers, neighbors, and family members. These risks in humanitarian settings were exacerbated by COVID-19 and corresponding mitigation measures, resulting in a “shadow” pandemic of GBV and worldwide spikes in GBV risks and reports. In response, the U.S. humanitarian response to COVID-19 prioritized protection, including programs to help prevent GBV and provide psychosocial services to GBV victims, along with healthcare, water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance in the COVID-19 humanitarian response.

Question. President Biden indicated that he plans to set the FY 2022 refugee ceiling at 125,000 in his May 2021 statement on refugee admissions. Do you consider the admission of 125,000 refugees in FY 2022 to be achievable? What, if any, changes to the refugee program have been implemented or are under consideration to facilitate increased refugee admissions in FY 2022?

Answer. I expect the U.S. Government will make every effort to reach the target established by the President following consultations with Congress. In the immediate term, I understand PRM intends to fund U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) domestic and overseas implementing partners at an initial operating level to support 65,000 arrivals at the beginning of FY 2022 and will be prepared to increase funding as needed if arrivals surpass the initial operating level.

I understand the President’s Executive Order 14013 on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration directs review of a series of bold reforms and initiatives for the USRAP, to support increased refugee admissions in FY 2022 and beyond. My understanding is that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) aims to increase staffing significantly, upscale in-person “circuit rides” by USCIS employees to interview refugee candidates in person, increase refugee video interviews, identify current bottlenecks, and implement process improvements to its adjudicatory processes. I expect that the USRAP will leverage technological solutions to strengthen data-driven decision-making and streamline refugee processing with the deployment of START and Global, the Department of State’s and USCIS’s respective new refugee applicant case management systems, while enhancing the security of all of refugee processing systems.

Question. In August 2021, DHS announced a new P-2 designation for certain Afghan nationals. The announcement indicated that PRM had created an “Afghan Referrals Workgroup comprised of federal agencies to refer individuals directly” for U.S. refugee resettlement consideration. I am very concerned about the plight of Afghan nationals who have been designated as P-2 refugees. How many Afghan nationals does PRM expect to admit as refugees under this program, and what is the status of current refugees? When are these admissions expected to occur?

Answer. As you note, on August 2, 2021, the Department of State announced a new Priority 2 (P-2) designation granting U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members. (See <https://www.state.gov/u-s-refugee-admissions-program-priority-2-designation-for-afghan-nationals/>.) The Department of State has designated certain categories of Afghan nationals as having access to the USRAP by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement. This priority group includes Afghans who are or were employed in Afghanistan by a U.S.-based media organization or nongovernmental organization (NGO). It expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation but are not eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa because they did not have qualifying employment or because they have not met the time-in-service requirement to become eligible for an SIV.

In addition to the P-2 designation noted above, Afghans may also gain access to the USRAP through Priority 1 referrals by a specific entity (U.S. embassy, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or a designated NGO), or Priority 3, reunification of family members of refugees already resettled in the United States.

The Department of State has issued instructions regarding how U.S.-based media and NGOs can submit referrals for P-2 designation for Afghan nationals. (See <https://www.wrapsnet.org/siv-iraqi-syrian-afghan-p2/>.) Organizations can use these instructions to refer to the USRAP any Afghan national staff (plus their spouse and minor children) who might be in danger now or in the foreseeable future.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program Priority 2 designation expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many thousands of Afghans

and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation. As President Biden has made clear, assisting these Afghan allies is a top priority for the administration.

I understand that PRM is still receiving P2 referrals from U.S. employers, service members, and qualifying media and non-governmental organizations. The U.S. Government cannot currently process refugee referrals inside Afghanistan, so Afghan nationals who are referred for resettlement will be processed upon leaving the country. I am not aware of a timeline for that process nor a specific number of Afghan P-2 referrals that PRM expects to process in the next year. The administration recognizes the role this new designation and the refugee resettlement program in general will play in the lives of those that risked their safety to assist the United States. As President Biden has made clear, helping these Afghans is an ongoing commitment of the United States.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Do you agree that UNRWA is a deeply problematic organization?

Answer. This administration supports the work of UNRWA, which provides critical services to vulnerable Palestinian refugees. UNRWA is a lifeline for thousands of Palestinian refugees in the region, as seen in May during the violence in Gaza. That said, I agree that UNRWA must undertake reforms to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and neutrality, and that UNRWA Commissioner General Lazzarini is leading efforts to this end. It is my understanding that the framework under which the United States resumed funding for UNRWA includes provisions for regular reporting, consultations, and monitoring of U.S.-funded aid. If confirmed, I will focus on management and other reform issues at UNRWA to ensure it is upholding its commitments to neutrality and is as effective and efficient as possible.

Question. As the largest individual donor to UNRWA, do you believe the U.S. should leverage our assistance to seek transparency and reforms from the agency?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will seek reforms related to neutrality, transparency, and management at UNRWA.

Question. The director of UNRWA recently acknowledged that the group's educational materials included inappropriate material. This is an ongoing problem that UNRWA pledges to fix, but never seems to adequately address. If confirmed, will you make it a priority to demand the removal of the incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in UNRWA materials?

Answer. I condemn incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in any form. I understand that UNRWA staff found the unacceptable content in supplemental educational material prepared in response to the pandemic, and UNRWA acted promptly to remove it. UNRWA's Commissioner General has committed to notifying the Agency's Advisory Commission immediately of any violations of its zero-tolerance policy and to collaborating with Commission members on educational issues. If confirmed, I will emphasize the importance of humanitarian principles, including neutrality, in discussions with UNRWA.

Question. I remain deeply concerned about the ongoing humanitarian crises in Latin America, which is in part caused by the Maduro regime refusing to respond to the needs and priorities of the Venezuelan people. There are millions of Venezuelan refugees and migrants seeking asylum in the United States and other countries in the region, who are undoubtedly placing significant strain on those countries' refugee and governance systems. If confirmed, what is your long-term strategy to coordinate the bureau's efforts with these countries' efforts to accept Venezuelan refugees and migrants?

Answer. I share your concerns. The situation in Venezuela is a tragedy. Since FY 2017, the United States has provided over \$1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance, including over \$597 million in PRM programming, to international organizations and non-governmental partners to protect and assist vulnerable Venezuelans in seventeen host countries in the region. My understanding is that PRM assistance includes funding for temporary shelter and access to food, water, and sanitation facilities; legal support for asylum-seekers; capacity-building for regional asylum authorities; and livelihoods opportunities. If confirmed, I would continue to support the Department's engagement in international fora, including the Quito Process to enhance

coordination among host countries and advocate for a regional solution to the Venezuela crisis.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. The Biden administration's unprecedented evacuation of more than 120,000 people from Afghanistan brought many Americans home but it also delivered many Afghans out of harm's way. Those Afghans are now spread out around the world, including in the 13 partner countries that are serving as way points for refugees before they come to the United States. How we take care of these individuals over the coming days, months and years will determine our true commitment to American values. What should the U.S. be doing right now to best serve these Afghans and the communities that are welcoming them?

Answer. It is my understanding that there is ongoing and robust interagency engagement with the partner countries who generously agreed to host Afghans. Secretary Blinken recently traveled to Qatar and Germany to highlight U.S. appreciation for all that those countries and others have done to support the airlift and relocation efforts. Once they arrive in the United States, the recent evacuees are receiving orientation services, health care, and resettlement support from a broad range of U.S. agencies and humanitarian partners, as Secretary Blinken described in his September 14 appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I also understand that the State Department has continued to support the needs of vulnerable Afghans remaining in Afghanistan or who are refugees in other countries through urgent humanitarian funding direct to international and non-governmental organizations and has been clear in its commitment to continuing to work with the international community to make sure these needs are addressed. If confirmed, I would continue this important engagement and support to respond to the needs of at-risk Afghans and the countries that host them.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with our allies to ensure the protection of Afghan refugees around the world?

Answer. I understand that the United States is working with its partners to strengthen humanitarian preparedness and priority interventions in the event of new refugee outflows from Afghanistan and will continue urging states to uphold their respective obligations to not return Afghan refugees to persecution or torture and to respect the principle of non-refoulement. If confirmed, I will encourage continued coordination between host governments and humanitarian organizations to respond to the protection and assistance needs of Afghan refugees, including supporting efforts led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and funding humanitarian partners to provide lifesaving protection, emergency food aid, shelter, and livelihood support to Afghan refugees outside Afghanistan.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with our NGO partners who are crucial to the refugee effort in the United States?

Answer. My understanding is that PRM is working with nine resettlement partners and affiliates across the country to welcome Afghans into American communities. Placement of individuals and families prioritizes reunification with U.S.-based family and friends and also considers the needs and characteristics of each individual and family. With U.S. Government support, the agencies will provide initial relocation support to Afghans to assist with critical needs such as housing, enrolling children in school, and basic necessities such as food, clothing, and furnishings. Additional support from the private sector will be critical to meeting the needs of this population, and I was happy to note the recent announcement of welcome.us and related initiatives to facilitate this important private sector support for our non-governmental organization partners. If confirmed, I would continue to liaise closely with PRM's resettlement partners and private sector supporters on this important work.

Question. My office has sent the names of more than 3,000 vulnerable Afghans to the State Department over the last several weeks. I am very concerned about those who remain behind, especially women and girls whose lives are at risk because of their existence. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that as many Afghans as possible who qualify for a Priority 2 designation are able to be processed and travel to the United States as expeditiously as possible?

Answer. I understand that, to date, over 20,000 cases consisting of around 55,000 individuals have been referred to the Afghan P-2 refugee resettlement program. PRM and its partners are working as quickly as possible to process these cases and have surged staffing as part of this unprecedented effort. The United States Government does not have the ability to process these cases inside Afghanistan at this time, so I understand case processing for these referrals to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program cannot begin until the individual relocates to a country where processing is feasible. Once in such a country, they will need to inform PRM of their current location and provide contact information. PRM will create a case and assign it to the appropriate U.S.-funded Resettlement Support Center for processing.

Question. In your opinion, are there any actions Congress needs to take to support the maximum use of the Priority 2 designation, including ensuring all arrivals receive resettlement benefits? If confirmed and once you are in place, will you commit to working with Congress to ensure the efficiency of the refugee system?

Answer. I am aware of the bill currently in Congress that would provide parolees with access to refugee benefits on arrival in American communities, and understand the administration strongly supports that bill. My understanding is that the Department is surging resources to review the large number of Priority 1 and Priority 2 (P-2) refugee referrals received in recent weeks. If confirmed, I am committed to working within the Department, with Congress, with international partners, with advocacy groups, and with private sector supporters to ensure that the P-2 designation is used appropriately and fully where applicable, and that all Afghans so designated have access to the resources needed to start anew in America. More broadly, I also am firmly committed to working with Congress to rebuild the entire U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and ensure its efficiency for all resettled refugees.

Question. As you know, several countries have offered to host many of the Afghans in transit as they await vetting and processing before entering the United States. For some of those countries, this could pose a tremendous strain on their own resources. What resources do you think will be needed to help house those Afghans destined for the United States, and are there any additional resources we could direct to these countries?

Answer. It is my understanding that interagency teams overseas are closely coordinating the operational and logistical support required to process Afghans destined for the United States and ensure such processing can continue. In the interim, as host governments identify requirements, these interagency teams are working to respond, including via international organizations and other partners. If confirmed, I would continue our engagement with host governments and humanitarian partners managing these operations and would lead PRM's effort to review funding appeals from those partners who request additional resources to host Afghans.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, would you commit to PRM reviewing the vetting process for incoming refugees from Afghanistan to ensure that there are no gaps in the process as a result of the hasty withdrawal process?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States.

If confirmed, it is my intent to review fully and completely the Department of Homeland Security's screening and vetting conducted for Afghans (and other citizens of other nations) applying to come to the United States under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. I commit to working closely with all of PRM's partner agencies to conduct such vetting.

Question. We understand the Embassy destroyed many passports and visas in Kabul. How does PRM vet refugee candidates in the cases where needed national IDs have been destroyed or not available?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security has the lead on the screening and vetting requirements for all applicants for admission to the United States.

With regard to applicants to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which is separate from the U.S. entry of Afghans under Operation Allies Welcome, it is my understanding that PRM and its interagency partners have steadily strengthened security vetting since 9/11. USRAP applicants are subject to more vetting than any other type of traveler to the United States. I am also aware that the

USRAP has the capacity to process refugee applicants who do not possess a national ID or passport.

Question. Of the refugees to be admitted this fiscal year, how many does PRM expect to be from Afghanistan? How does the Afghan refugee program impact refugee applications from other regions, including along the southern border?

Answer. As of September 15, 2021, 729 Afghan nationals have arrived under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) in FY 2021. These Afghans were not relocated as part of the August 14-31 U.S. military airlift and underwent stringent USRAP processing overseas before admission. Neither the Afghans arriving via this airlift who were granted parole into the United States by the Department of Homeland Security, nor the Afghans admitted as refugees via the USRAP, have any impact on refugee applications from other regions.

Question. What steps are the Biden administration taking to support refugee admissions from threatened populations in China?

Answer. The United States is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy. Refugee resettlement is one of several ways the U.S. supports refugees globally and demonstrates its humanitarian leadership.

I understand that eligible Hong Kong residents and Turkic Muslim Chinese citizens who fear persecution from the Government of the People's Republic of China may access the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in any appropriate category—including via referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. As with most refugees from other nations, they must be outside of their country of nationality in order to qualify for refugee status. If approved, they may be resettled in the United States within the regional allocations for resettlement for the fiscal year in which they are admitted.

Question. If confirmed, how would you prioritize supporting threatened populations in China?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to putting democratic values at the center of U.S. foreign policy and to standing up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. I am horrified by the crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang, and the human rights abuses occurring across China. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with colleagues across the interagency and with allies, partners, and humanitarian organizations to advocate for Uyghurs, Hong Kong residents, and Tibetans, among others. I will also work to assist those fleeing persecution and other abuses in the People's Republic of China to find safe haven.

Question. Please discuss PRM's specific priorities to address humanitarian needs along the southern border.

Answer. I understand that in line with President Biden's Collaborative Migration Management Strategy, PRM priorities in Mexico include improving access to protection against human trafficking, exploitation, and other dangers to vulnerable migrants, such as those fleeing violence or torture. For example, I understand PRM supports gender-based violence prevention and response as well as child protection programs for migrants across Mexico. PRM also prioritizes urgent humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants. Key PRM efforts include supporting shelter capacity and COVID-19 mitigation measures, access to legal assistance, healthcare, and psycho-social support.

Question. How will PRM coordinate with other agencies in dealing with the southern border crisis?

Answer. If confirmed, I will coordinate within the Department of State and with the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Agency for International, and other interagency partners in implementing the administration's Collaborative Migration Management Strategy (CMMS) and parallel Root Causes Strategy (RCS) to address conditions in Central America that compel people to flee their homes and seek safety and opportunity abroad. These strategies increase humanitarian assistance and protection programs within the region, expand legal immigration pathways including through the U.S. Refugee Admission Program, and enhance border protection to reduce irregular migration to the southern border. Irregular migration is a deeply rooted challenge requiring short-, medium- and long-term solutions, such as those included in the CMMS and RCS.

Question. Do you expect a change in PRM's role in the interagency process particularly in light of USAID's relatively new Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance?

Answer. I do not expect a change in PRM's role in the interagency process. PRM and USAID/BHA each have important, distinct roles to play in responding to hu-

manitarian crises, and it is imperative they respond in a coordinated manner as one U.S. Government with a common mission. If confirmed, I intend to maintain close coordination between PRM and USAID/BHA to ensure their efforts complement each other and build on their respective strengths.

Question. Looking ahead, what do you anticipate will be the U.S. contribution level to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)? What reforms do you believe are necessary with UNRWA?

Answer. President Biden pledged to restore U.S. economic and humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, and the United States resumed for UNRWA this fiscal year. As with other humanitarian partners around the world, continued financial support will depend on funding availability, global needs, performance, and adherence to commitments to the United States. If confirmed, I would focus on management and other reform issues at UNRWA, including neutrality and financial sustainability.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure all legal conditions are met prior to the disbursement of assistance to UNRWA?

Answer. If confirmed, yes, I will ensure all legal conditions are met prior to the disbursement of assistance to UNRWA.

Question. The director of UNRWA recently acknowledged that the group's educational materials included inappropriate material. This is an ongoing problem that UNRWA pledges to fix, but never seems to adequately address. If confirmed, will you make it a priority to demand the removal of the incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in UNRWA materials?

Answer. Yes, I condemn incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in any form. I understand UNRWA staff found the unacceptable content in supplemental educational material prepared in response to the pandemic, and UNRWA acted promptly to remove it. UNRWA's Commissioner General has committed to notifying its Advisory Commission immediately of any violations of its zero-tolerance policy and to collaborating with Commission members on educational issues. If confirmed, I will prioritize adherence to humanitarian principles, including neutrality, in discussions with UNRWA.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. Is there anything the U.S. should be doing to help Afghans who qualify for P-2 status to leave Afghanistan?

Answer. This administration has been clear about its enduring commitment to supporting our Afghan allies, including those that remain in country as well as those that seek to leave. My understanding is that at this time the U.S. government has no ability to do in-country processing or facilitate evacuation/relocation support for individuals referred to the Priority 1 or Priority 2 program who remain in Afghanistan. However, the administration is urging Afghanistan's neighbors to allow entry for Afghans and coordinating with humanitarian international organizations to provide assistance to Afghans in need. The United States is also reminding countries to respect the principle of non-refoulement. I understand the Taliban has provided assurances that Afghans with travel documents who wish to leave the country will be able to do so, and if confirmed, I would work with colleagues in the Department to ensure those assurances are upheld.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the issue of Afghans who have left Afghanistan, apply for P-2 status while located in a third country, but are denied?

Answer. Individuals with urgent protection needs should register for international protection and assistance with the government of the country where they are located. They may also register and seek assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). If confirmed, I would work with international humanitarian partners and other governments to provide the support needed by those with protection concerns.

Question. Do you believe the Department has sufficiently staffed the job of processing P-2s or do additional staff need to be surged to meet demand?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department is surging resources to review the large number of Priority 1 and Priority 2 refugee referrals received in recent weeks. This includes recruiting volunteers from other bureaus to support the work of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). If confirmed, I will

make filling vacancies in the Bureau, including to address needs such as processing P-2s, one of my first priorities.

Question. To your knowledge, how many P-2 applications have been granted, and in which third countries were successful P-2 applicants located when they applied for and were granted P-2 status?

Answer. Resettlement in the United States under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is a 12-18 month process, so my understanding is that no Afghans who were referred to the program and recently fled Afghanistan have had their cases approved yet. As of September 15, I understand the Department has received P-2 refugee referrals for approximately 20,000 cases involving 55,000 individuals.

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to providing this information to Congress on an ongoing basis?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to providing this information to Congress on an ongoing basis.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JULIETA VALLS NOYES BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. UNRWA committed to provide a semi-annual report to PRM on activities to inform evaluation of conformance with conditions on U.S. contributions to UNRWA. Have they provided that report? If not, when do you anticipate they will? Can you commit to transmitting that report to Congress?

Answer. My understanding is that UNRWA has not yet provided this report to PRM, but that it intends to do so in the near term. This will be an internal report provided by UNRWA to the State Department. If confirmed, I will, subject to the rules on the handling and protection of sensitive information, work with Congress to accommodate its oversight interests, which I recognize and take seriously.

Question. UNRWA committed to preventing the use of local textbooks that include content contrary to UN principles in education materials. The commitment is a reference to concerns—which now go back more than a decade—that UNRWA was facilitating the use of textbooks promoting genocidal anti-Semitism. This year UNRWA officials acknowledged that, indeed, educational materials facilitated by UNRWA include inappropriate material, amid reports that its textbooks included calls for “jihad” against Israeli Jews and accusations that Israeli Jews were spreading diseases to Palestinians. How long do you assess it will take UNRWA to cease the use of textbooks that promote anti-Semitism?

Answer. I condemn incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in any form. Textbooks that promote anti-Semitism or other types of hatred are unacceptable. I understand that UNRWA staff themselves found the unacceptable content you reference in supplemental educational material, and UNRWA acted promptly to remove it. I understand that U.N. agencies including UNRWA do not develop their own curricula but use the curricula of host governments. When UNRWA or others identify concepts contrary to U.N. principles in host governments’ educational materials, UNRWA provides instructions and supplementary materials for its staff to address the issue and the unacceptable materials are not taught. If confirmed, I will emphasize the importance of adherence with humanitarian principles, including neutrality, in discussions with UNRWA.

Question. What is the estimate in the report produced pursuant to Senate Report 113-81 accompanying PL 113-76?

Answer. I have been informed that this report is classified in order to protect Foreign Government Information. In keeping with Department policy, I have not been given access to classified information related to the position for which I have been nominated. If confirmed, I will seek a briefing on this report. It is my understanding that a copy of this report was transmitted to the Congressional committees with jurisdiction in 2015.

Question. What is the State Department’s assessment of the current number of Arab refugees who were displaced in 1948 from territories controlled by Israel?

Answer. The State Department does not have its own assessment of this number. I understand there are 5.7 million registered Palestinian refugees who are potentially eligible for United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) services, but far fewer avail themselves of UNRWA services. Descendants of eligible male “Pal-

estine refugees” are eligible for registration with UNRWA for the purpose of accessing services. As a result, individuals of Palestinian descent born after the initial displacement have registered. This approach to including descendants is similar to the one used by U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in other protracted refugee situations, such as Afghanistan and Somalia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER TO BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Eastern Mediterranean

Question. I have been impressed with the French Government’s support for democracies in the Eastern Mediterranean like Greece, Cyprus and Israel. Turkey continues to violate international norms and I have appreciated the French Government’s willingness to stand up to Ankara’s aggression. This includes in the Caucasus where the French were critical of Turkish support for Azerbaijan in last year’s war. How will you work with France to advance these shared concerns?

Answer. As a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, France is a key partner in promoting peace in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. French President Macron called for EU solidarity following disputes between Turkey and Greece and Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus over national gas reserves and what France sees as an increasingly “aggressive” Turkey. If confirmed, I will seek cooperation with the French on common interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and to maintain dialogue with Turkey to resolve disputes.

On Israel, France supports a two-state solution. If confirmed, I will work closely with French partners to align our perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Strategic Autonomy

Question. President Macron has sought to advance a concept of Strategic Autonomy, which some have interpreted as distancing France from the United States and creating tensions within NATO. What are your views on Strategic Autonomy and are you concerned that it could serve to diminish support for NATO within Europe?

Answer. The Biden administration is committed to re-engaging European allies and revitalizing our alliances. If confirmed, I would welcome European efforts to spend more on defense, which responds to a long-standing U.S. call for more burden-sharing, and help fulfilling Allies’ commitment to NATO to spend two percent of GDP on defense. However, the notion of European strategic autonomy risks undermining the primacy of NATO in ensuring Europe’s defense, duplicating effort between the EU and NATO, and weakening Transatlantic relations. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Allies and collaborating with this committee to reinforce to all Allies the importance of European defense efforts being complementary with NATO.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately. Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of State personnel?

Answer. This is a sensitive ongoing investigation and is a top priority for Secretary of State Antony Blinken. I understand a major interagency effort is investigating what is causing the incidents and how the Embassy community can be protected. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure anyone who reports unexplained health incidents receives immediate and appropriate attention and care, and I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that any employees or their family members who report a possible health incident will receive immediate and appropriate attention and care. If confirmed, I will communicate with our workforce to provide care for affected employees and their family members and work together with partners in Washington and the interagency to do what we can to protect against these inci-

dents and, of course, to find the cause of what has been afflicting these members of our Embassy teams. I will also consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In what areas do you feel we can collaborate more effectively with the French in Africa? How will you as U.S. Ambassador to France, if confirmed, support that?

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 work strategically 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 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.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. We are aware—as I’m sure you are—of President Macron’s calls for Europe to take greater charge of its own security by developing the “strategic autonomy” of the European Union. The United States has long supported the security of Europe, in particular our Allies in NATO.

- What are the implications of a stronger, more independent European defense strategy for the United States, and for NATO? Can Macron’s vision and NATO 2030 coexist?

Answer. NATO, of which France is a founding Ally and one of its most militarily capable, is the primary security organization for defense of the Euro-Atlantic and its members. Efforts to strengthen deterrence and defense in Europe must be complementary to and not duplicate NATO efforts, enhance NATO-EU cooperation, and strengthen Transatlantic relations. If confirmed, I will reinforce to all Allies and partners that NATO is the essential forum for consultation and action on Transatlantic security and defense issues while promoting greater cooperation with the EU.

Question. We have heard the current U.S. travel ban restricting entry of Europeans for more than a year now is harming relations. I know this is an area of deep frustration for the French, and I have received a letter from a French counterpart relaying their concern.

- What should be done to address these restrictions? How can we establish parameters for safe travel?

Answer. The Biden administration has prioritized protecting American citizens during this extraordinary pandemic, and the National Interest Exception policy is one way to ensure we facilitate critical travel while also being mindful of ongoing concerns about the spread of COVID-19, including the Delta variant. The administration is constantly reviewing the situation and the scientific data and adjusts policy accordingly. If I am confirmed, I will ensure we continue to implement the administration’s policy as efficiently as possible, and that we are communicating the policy clearly to the French public. If confirmed, I will also be sure to quickly share any additional information regarding shifts in the travel restriction policy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, how will you cooperate with the French Government on addressing the global terrorist threat?

Answer. The United States and France exchange information and share best practices on countering violent extremist threats, and France leads on countering terrorism in the Sahel, where it has eliminated leaders of ISIS, Al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates. If confirmed, I will not only ensure our cooperation continues, but will look for ways to reinforce that partnership. Of course, if confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community and all Americans in France and Monaco.

Question. In your opinion, how might our existing cooperation with France be enhanced?

Answer. France is the United States' oldest Ally and is among our most capable and reliable military Allies. Our relationship is built on shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. There are also extensive cultural and economic ties between our nations. If confirmed, I will work with French leaders to promote close transatlantic coordination on the development of a policy agenda based on our shared values.

Question. Do you agree with President Macron's assessment of cooperation with China?

Answer. Along with the European Union (EU), France publicly characterizes the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a partner, competitor, and systemic rival, an understanding the United States shares. France agrees on the need for joint U.S.-European Union efforts to address the PRC's human rights abuses, coercive trade practices, and aggressive foreign policy. France seeks to cooperate with China when possible in multilateral fora, like the UN Security Council. In addition, France identifies China as a key partner for combatting climate change and addressing global public health concerns. If confirmed, I will work with French leaders to promote close transatlantic coordination on the development of a policy agenda based on our shared values.

Question. If confirmed, how would you use your position to encourage France to increase its vigilance over Chinese attempts to influence its political and economic systems, such as the EU's Comprehensive Agreement on Investment?

Answer. France and the United States are fundamentally aligned in ways that the PRC and France are not. France recognizes that aspects of PRC governance and economic philosophy are fundamentally at odds with international norms. At the same time, France and China have significant economic ties. French Officials have repeatedly called China a "partner, competitor, and systemic rival." If confirmed, I will work closely with France to address the significant challenges the PRC poses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DENISE CAMPBELL BAUER BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, would you support greater U.S.-French military collaboration to support greater capacity development for a key NATO ally?

Answer. France is among our most capable and reliable military allies and I look forward to working together to strengthen our cooperation through NATO. Our bilateral relationship is important for our larger goal of increasing cooperation and raising the level of ambition of our relationship with all of our NATO Allies. France contributes to NATO activities, such as air policing and the enhanced Forward Presence to ensure deterrence and defense on the Alliance's eastern flank. The U.S. and France exchange information and share best practices on countering violent extremist threats, and France leads on countering terrorism in the Sahel. If confirmed, I will not only ensure our cooperation continues, but will look for ways to strengthen our partnership, and will be forthright when we do not see eye-to-eye.

Question. What is the Biden administration doing to encourage France and our NATO allies to maintain and strengthen defense capabilities in the face of continued aggression by Russia in Eastern Europe?

Answer. The Biden administration works in coordination with France and other NATO allies and partners to hold Russia accountable for their destabilizing activities, human rights abuses, and violations of international norms. France contributes

to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence on the Alliance's eastern flank. France is an active member of both the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism and the EU's Rapid Alert System efforts to counter Russian disinformation and malign influence.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the French Government so that the NATO Alliance continues to improve its deterrence and defense posture. I will also work closely to ensure continued close cooperation with France as part of our broader effort with other Allies and partners to hold Russia accountable for its actions, and maintain pressure on the Kremlin to adhere to its international commitments and obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIANNE SMITH BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. NATO is going through a planning process to identify strategic priorities for the coming years. What are your views on this process and how it can be used to advance U.S. interests?

Answer. The process of drafting and adopting a new Strategic Concept is critical to the future of NATO. It provides a clear roadmap for the work Allies must take to ensure our collective security. If confirmed, I will work hard with Allies in Brussels to make sure the Strategic Concept reflects the changing security environment of today, especially Russian aggression, threats we face in cyberspace, and the People's Republic of China's malign activities. I will also work to ensure that actions we take to address new challenges do not detract from the Alliance's core task of ensuring a strong deterrence and defense for all Allies.

Question. How do you think the Alliance can best and appropriately respond to the challenge posed by China?

Answer. In recent years, Allies have devoted substantial effort to better understanding and addressing PRC policies and activities that affect Allied security since 2019, culminating in the thorough treatment of PRC issues in the 2021 Summit Communiqué. Allies agreed in 2021 that PRC policies and actions pose a systemic challenge to the international rules-based order and identified, *inter alia*, the PRC's nuclear and conventional military expansion, non-transparency, and influence over Allied critical infrastructure as key areas of concern. If confirmed, I will consult closely with Allies to build consensus on effective approaches to the PRC through the work of the North Atlantic Council and its committees, and in policy documents, including the Strategic Concept.

Question. Are you at all concerned that this could divert attention from the threat posed by Russia to NATO members or the threat posed by terrorism to those countries in southern Europe?

Answer. Russia is the pre-eminent nuclear and conventional military threat to the Alliance, just as terrorism is one of the greatest asymmetric challenges to Alliance security. Without losing sight of these threats, NATO must be alert and responsive to the problems posed by the PRC. Fortunately, the Alliance has a strong history of addressing multiple threats simultaneously through its "360-degree approach" to security. Although the PRC is not presently an imminent military threat to Europe in the way Russia is, if confirmed, I would strongly support efforts to ensure NATO addresses the challenges PRC's international behavior and military expansion pose to Transatlantic security. If confirmed, I will continue our close collaboration with Allies to address these challenges realistically, strategically, and systematically.

Question. Beyond the commitment by all NATO members to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense, how should we assess the other contributions that NATO members can make?

Answer. Allies have committed, as recently as the June 2021 NATO Summit, to continue to share the responsibility of our collective security against new and existing threats, both conventional and non-conventional. If confirmed, I will urge those Allies that are not on track to meet the Wales Pledge by 2024 to continue making progress toward that shared and important goal. In addition, I will urge allies to focus on other important aspects of their national defense, including readiness, force generation, and capability gaps. I will also work with Allies, and with Congress, if confirmed, on a shared understanding of NATO burden sharing that captures the wide range of tasks—including cyber security—that the Alliance is now undertaking. We must ensure the Alliance has the sufficient, capable, and ready inte-

grated defense posture required to maintain a credible defense and deterrence in the 21st century threat environment.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIANNE SMITH BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Should expansion of NATO be a priority of the alliance going forward?

Answer. Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty states Allies “may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede.” Membership decisions are based on shared values, capacity to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security, and Allied consensus to invite them to join. NATO’s newest member, North Macedonia, joined in 2020 and has already proven itself a valuable Ally, including by contributing to NATO operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo. If confirmed, I will consider any possible enlargement from the perspective of U.S. interests and the good of the Alliance as a whole.

Question. Do you believe NATO allies are apprehensive of further NATO expansion due to the emerging shortcomings of some members, or because of other concerns?

Answer. Allied perspectives vary regarding NATO enlargement. Membership decisions are based on shared values, capacity to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security, and Allied consensus to invite them to join. This is described in Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to which all Allies have agreed. If confirmed, my approach to issues of NATO enlargement will be based on these criteria, U.S. interests, and the good of the Alliance. I look forward to dialogue with this committee on these issues.

Question. What do you see as the greatest current threat to NATO unity and cohesion?

Answer. For over 70 years, Allies have maintained cohesion to provide collective defense and prosperity to member nations. NATO has adapted to new threats and challenges during past inflection points such as 1989, 2001, and 2014. Today, NATO is again adapting to new and emerging threats and challenges. The key to NATO’s success is its ability to maintain unity, and the NATO 2030 agenda adopted at the June 2021 Summit affirmed the importance of consultation to the Alliance’s success. If confirmed, I look forward to increasing our engagement with Allies, including having difficult but necessary conversations. I will also work to maintain bipartisan support for NATO and look forward to consulting with Congress and welcoming congressional delegations to Brussels.

Question. What are the advantages of Strategic Autonomy for European nations themselves? What are the disadvantages?

Answer. The Biden administration is committed to re-engaging European allies and revitalizing our alliances. If confirmed, I would welcome European efforts to spend more on defense and build capacity, which responds to a long-standing U.S. call for more burden-sharing. However, we must ensure that those efforts to not risk undermining the primacy of NATO in ensuring Europe’s defense by avoiding unnecessary duplication and waste. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Allies and collaborating with this committee to reinforce to all Allies the importance of European defense efforts being complementary with NATO.

Question. What are the advantages of Strategic Autonomy for United States security interests? What are the disadvantages?

Answer. The Biden administration is committed to re-engaging European allies and revitalizing our alliances. If confirmed, I would welcome European efforts to spend more on defense and build capacity, which responds to a long-standing U.S. call for more burden-sharing. However, we must ensure that those efforts to not risk undermining the primacy of NATO in ensuring Europe’s defense by avoid unnecessary duplication and waste. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Allies and collaborating with this committee to reinforce to all Allies the importance of European defense efforts being complementary with NATO.

Question. What are the advantages of Strategic Autonomy for security interests across the NATO alliance as a whole? What are the disadvantages?

Answer. The Biden administration is committed to re-engaging European allies and revitalizing our alliances. If confirmed, I would welcome European efforts to spend more on defense and build capacity, which responds to a long-standing U.S. call for more burden-sharing. However, we must ensure that those efforts do not risk undermining the primacy of NATO in ensuring Europe's defense by avoid unnecessary duplication and waste. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Allies and collaborating with this committee to reinforce to all Allies the importance of European defense efforts being complementary with NATO.

Question. Do you believe that the U.S.' execution of the withdrawal and evacuation mission from Afghanistan makes a continental separation of European defense from NATO more likely?

Answer. NATO is the foundation of Euro-Atlantic collective defense. It guarantees the security, freedom, and values of one billion citizens in North America and Europe. The Alliance has experienced and overcome divisive issues in the past because of the strength of our approach based on consultation and consensus. As the Secretary General has said, the United States consulted with the Allies throughout the process of ending NATO's military presence in Afghanistan and this was a decision taken together by all Allies. NATO benefits from European Allies developing greater defense capabilities. If confirmed, I will continue this tradition of close consultation that prevents any issue from detracting from NATO accomplishing its core tasks.

Question. Do you believe that the recent defense agreement between the U.S., U.K., and Australia, which has greatly angered France, and irked the European Union, makes a continental separation of European defense from NATO more likely?

Answer. A stronger, more capable Europe is in our shared interest, and our long-standing ties with NATO Allies and the EU are essential to deal effectively with 21st century challenges, as are complementary EU and NATO capabilities. Ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific is a shared interest between the United States and Europe, and if confirmed, I will continue to work to deepen transatlantic cooperation regarding the Indo-Pacific and around the world. We will not succeed without enhanced NATO-EU cooperation, something I will strongly support, if confirmed. Such cooperation should uphold NATO's role as the premier Transatlantic security and defense forum, and EU defense efforts must not detract from or duplicate NATO efforts.

Question. What is your understanding of the reason that Turkey decided to purchase S-400s from Russia instead of Patriot Missiles from the United States?

Answer. Turkey had the opportunity to purchase Patriot surface-to-air missile systems, and other NATO-interoperable air defense systems, but chose to purchase the Russian S-400. Ankara's acquisition and testing of an S-400 surface-to-air missile system from Russia undermine Allied interoperability and threaten Alliance systems. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Turkey not to retain the S-400 system and to refrain from purchasing any additional Russian military equipment. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any major new Russian arms purchases would risk triggering CAATSA Section 231 sanctions separate from and in addition to those already imposed.

Question. The U.S. has removed Turkey from the F-35 program and sanctioned it for its purchase of the S-400. What further actions, if any, do you believe the U.S. should take to urge Turkey to divest the S-400s?

Answer. Turkey knows what it needs to do to secure relief from existing CAATSA Section 231 sanctions. Ankara's acquisition and testing of an S-400 surface-to-air missile system from Russia undermine Allied interoperability and threaten Alliance systems. The United States continues to urge Turkey at every level not to retain the S-400 system and to refrain from purchasing any additional Russian materiel. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any major new Russian arms purchases would risk triggering CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020.

Question. How would you work with NATO partners to discourage Turkey from moving forward with its S-400 Air Defense integration?

Answer. The Biden administration has clearly expressed that Russian S-400s are incompatible with NATO equipment and its NATO commitments. If confirmed, I will join administration colleagues in continuing to urge Turkey not to retain S-400 and not to purchase additional Russian materiel. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any new purchase of Russian military equipment would risk triggering CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in De-

ember 2020. Our Allies, including Turkey share interests in countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and ensuring regional stability. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and our Allies to convince Turkey to change course.

Question. NATO's last strategic concept was written in 2010. In that time, new threats have emerged: Russia's expansionism in Crimea, eastern Ukraine, and Syria, China's emergence as a military and strategic power, democratic backsliding within NATO countries, the advent of new technologies and threats like cyberwarfare. Which elements do you believe that any new Strategic Concept should focus on the most?

Answer. The process of drafting and adopting a new Strategic Concept is critical to the future of NATO. It provides a clear roadmap for the work Allies must take to ensure our collective security. If confirmed, I will work hard with Allies in Brussels to make sure the Strategic Concept reflects the changing security environment of today, especially Russian aggression, threats we face in cyberspace, and the People's Republic of China's malign activities. I will also work to ensure that actions we take to address these new challenges do not detract from the Alliance's core task of ensuring a strong deterrence and defense for all Allies. I look forward to dialogue with this committee on the Strategic Concept.

Question. NATO's Black Sea littoral allies are increasingly vocal about their concerns of growing Russian threats in the region. What more do you believe NATO should do to help deter further Russian aggression in the Black Sea and help augment the military capabilities of the littoral nations?

Answer. The Biden administration has expressed clear support for our Black Sea Allies, and through cooperation with NATO Allies and partners is bolstering collective security in the Black Sea region. As the Biden administration has made clear to Russia, further aggression is unacceptable in the territory and territorial waters of its sovereign neighbors. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and our Allies to develop and implement a Black Sea security strategy that bolsters cooperation among our littoral state Allies and partners.

Question. What do you see as the largest obstacles to NATO's military mobility throughout the European continent?

Answer. NATO must be able to flow combat power across the Euro-Atlantic area to be effective, not only from the United States to Europe but in Europe, across borders, and utilizing Allies' infrastructure. The current level of investment into capabilities varies across the spectrum of different Allies. If confirmed, I would work with our NATO Allies on the way ahead to ensure infrastructure and other mobility challenges are never limiting factors for deterrence and defense.

Question. If Russia were to put military presence in Belarus, how do you think the U.S. should respond? How should NATO respond?

Answer. Respectfully, I'm unable to provide a complete answer to a hypothetical. If confirmed, I would work with Congress as well as the Departments of State and Defense to maximize benefit to Alliance strength and security.

Question. In such a scenario, would putting more troops in Poland and the Baltics be a useful response or a harmful one?

Answer. Respectfully, I'm unable to provide a complete answer to a hypothetical. If confirmed, I would work with Congress as well as the Departments of State and Defense to maximize benefit to Alliance strength and security.

Question. Do you believe that nuclear weapons are inherent to NATO's strength in deterring and defending against enemies of the alliance?

Answer. NATO utilizes an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities for its deterrence and defense. As Allies reiterated in their June 2021 Brussels Summit Communique, "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance." If confirmed, I commit to work with Allies to provide for our collective security, including maintaining a safe, effective, and credible nuclear deterrence.

Question. Do you commit to maintaining NATO's nuclear arsenal?

Answer. As Allies reiterated in the June 2021 Brussels Summit Communique, "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance." If confirmed, I will coordinate with Allies to support NATO's deterrence and defense posture, including NATO's nuclear deterrence posture, which relies on U.S. nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and the capabilities and infrastructure provided by Allies concerned.

Question. What role do U.S. military exercises with NATO Allies play in strengthening U.S. and Allied warfighting capabilities, building interoperability between NATO members, and signaling resolve both to other Allies and adversaries like Russia?

Answer. NATO conducts a variety of posture management activities, which are critical to maintaining NATO's deterrence and defense posture. NATO's exercises credibly demonstrate its ability to deliver warfighting capabilities where and when needed. United States military exercises with Allies test and improve interoperability and are a concrete manifestation of NATO's resolve. If confirmed, I commit to work with Congress, the Department of Defense, and our Allies and partners to continue to build capabilities, increase readiness, and signal resolve to our adversaries.

Question. Do you believe the current scope, scale, and frequency of U.S. military exercises in Europe is sufficient to fulfill these objectives? If confirmed, do you commit to working with Allies to expand-or at least maintain-the current scope, scale, and frequency of U.S. military exercises in Europe?

Answer. NATO is the most successful Alliance in history, preventing the outbreak of war between major powers in Europe for over 70 years. U.S. and NATO's exercises are essential to maintain deterrence, readiness, and interoperability and reassure our Allies. If confirmed, I will work with our Allies to strengthen NATO's credible deterrence and defense posture, including through exercises.

Question. Do you believe U.S./NATO military exercises are provocative to Russia? If confirmed, how will you reconcile Russian concerns with the need to enhance NATO's warfighting capabilities and strengthen Allies?

Answer. Russian accusations that the United States and NATO demonstrate hostile intent through exercises are disingenuous. NATO's activities are predictable, transparent, defensive, and designed to improve readiness and demonstrate the Alliance's capability and resolve to repulse armed attack. U.S. and NATO's exercises are essential to maintain deterrence, readiness, and interoperability and reassure our Allies. If confirmed, I will work with our Allies to strengthen NATO's credible deterrence and defense posture, including through exercises.

Question. Do you believe it is accurate or fair to equate U.S. multinational exercises like Defender with large-scale Russian exercises like Zapad?

Answer. The United States is transparent about its activities; Russia is not. We are transparent about our exercises, conduct them safely, and notify Russia appropriately. U.S. and NATO exercises help reassure our Allies, and transparency as undertaken by the United States and NATO contribute to stability and predictability with Russia. Russia misuses the Vienna Document notification system to thwart transparency of its exercises and conducts large-scale snap exercises, such as its buildup along the border with Ukraine in spring 2021. If confirmed, I pledge to work with Allies to ensure that false Russian narratives about U.S. and NATO posture management activities do not undermine Allies' determination to signal Allied resolve and build readiness and interoperability through planned, challenging exercises.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIANNE SMITH BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What do you view as the key challenges to alliance cohesion within NATO? What role do you see for the U.S. administration and the U.S. Congress in addressing these challenges?

Answer. For over 70 years, Allies have maintained cohesion to provide collective security and prosperity to member nations. Today, however, the weakening of democratic values in some member states is tearing at Alliance cohesion. As the recent NATO 2030 report stressed, the key to NATO's success is its ability to maintain unity and resolve. If confirmed, I look forward to increasing our engagement with Allies, including having sometimes difficult but necessary conversations about both our shared values and our shared challenges. I will also work to maintain bipartisan support for NATO and look forward to consulting with Congress and welcoming congressional delegations to Brussels.

Question. How should NATO respond to political developments in NATO member states, such as Turkey, that run counter to the democratic principles on which the alliance was founded?

Answer. NATO is a defensive Alliance. Simultaneously, NATO is an Alliance of values, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. NATO takes decisions on the basis of consensus, and Allies must find ways forward on common priorities. Allies must also be ready to voice—either privately or publicly—concern about actions inconsistent with Allies’ commitments, including concerns about democratic backsliding in Allied member states. If confirmed I look forward to working with Congress to foster a constructive dialogue in the Alliance about these issues.

Question. Should NATO consider monitoring or sanctioning member states that violate NATO’s foundational principles?

Answer. The North Atlantic Treaty states in Article 2 that “all Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being.” For over 70 years, Allies have maintained cohesion to provide collective security and prosperity to member nations. The key to NATO’s success is its ability to maintain unity and resolve, and, if confirmed, I will ensure we hold Allies accountable to the same set of values.

Question. Will you, as Ambassador, continue to press for increased allied defense spending?

Answer. Allies have committed, as recently as the June 2021 NATO Summit, to continue to share the responsibility of our collective security against new and existing threats, both conventional and non-conventional. If confirmed, I will urge those Allies that are not on track to meet the Wales Pledge by 2024 to continue making progress toward that shared and important goal. In addition, I will urge allies to focus on other important aspects of their national defense, including readiness, force generation, and capability gaps. I will also work with Allies, and with Congress, if confirmed, on a shared understanding of NATO burden sharing that captures the wide range of tasks—including cyber security—that the Alliance is now undertaking. We must ensure the Alliance has the sufficient, capable, and ready integrated defense posture required to maintain a credible defense and deterrence in the 21st century threat environment.

Question. How do you view the potential for burden-sharing that looks beyond national defense budgets to include available military capabilities, contributions to allied missions, and efforts to counter hybrid threats?

Answer. Allies have committed, as recently as the June 2021 NATO Summit, to continue to share the responsibility of our collective security against new and existing threats, both conventional and non-conventional. If confirmed, I will urge those Allies that are not on track to meet the Wales Pledge by 2024 to continue making progress toward that shared and important goal. In addition, I will urge allies to focus on other important aspects of their national defense, including readiness, force generation, and capability gaps. I will also work with Allies, and with Congress, if confirmed, on a shared understanding of NATO burden sharing that captures the wide range of tasks—including cyber security—that the Alliance is now undertaking. We must ensure the Alliance has the sufficient, capable, and ready integrated defense posture required to maintain a credible defense and deterrence in the 21st century threat environment.

Question. How adequately is NATO addressing the defense and security implications of increased Chinese investment and political influence in Europe?

Answer. This administration is deeply concerned about the dangers posed to Transatlantic security by the PRC’s investments in critical infrastructure, advanced technologies, and modern military capabilities, including missiles that can target all NATO Allied countries. At the June 2021 NATO Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government declared that the PRC’s “stated ambitions and assertive behavior present systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to areas relevant to Alliance security.” If confirmed, I will continue our close collaboration with Allies to address the challenge from Beijing realistically, strategically, and systematically.

Question. To what extent is there consensus within the alliance on how best to respond to security challenges from the Chinese Government?

Answer. Decision-making by consensus is never easy, especially with 30 Allies with individual opinions and threat perceptions. However, Allies have come together and found common ground to chart a path to the future throughout the past 70 years, on many global challenges. Today is no different. If confirmed, I commit to consult closely with Allies to build consensus on approaches that advance U.S. policy objectives on the PRC. Allies showed the ability to find common ground on complicated policy issues like how to address the PRC in the recent NATO Summit Communiqué, and I am confident we can find a way to address the security environment in the next Strategic Concept as well as other venues.

Question. How effective are current U.S. and NATO efforts to deter Russian aggression in Europe, and what more can be done?

Answer. The United States has worked with Allies at NATO to maintain a firm message to Russia that there can be no return to “business as usual” until there is a clear, constructive change in Russia’s behavior. The NATO Alliance pursues a dual track approach to Russia, balancing openness to political discussion—on the basis of reciprocity—with strong and credible deterrence and defense, including on NATO’s eastern flank. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our Allies to ensure NATO continues to bolster its deterrence and defense posture, increases focus on capabilities, readiness, and force generation, and maintains unity in the face of Russian aggression.

Question. To what extent do you expect sustained political support in Europe for NATO’s firm stance on Russia?

Answer. Allies agree Russia is the primary geopolitical threat in the Euro-Atlantic area. At the June 2021 NATO Summit, Allies publicly affirmed that NATO has suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia, while remaining open to political dialogue. Until Russia makes clear and constructive changes to its behavior, there can be no return to “business as usual”. Allies also affirmed that NATO will respond to the deteriorating security environment by enhancing its deterrence and defense posture, including by a forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance. If confirmed, I will work to maintain Allied unity in the face of Russian aggression.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIANNE SMITH BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. What are the implications for the security of NATO’s Baltic members from Belarus’ planned installation of Russia’s S-400 Air Defense systems?

Answer. Since Russia’s 2014 invasion of Ukraine, NATO has implemented the most significant reinforcement of its eastern flank in the post-Cold War era, including the Baltic Air Policing mission. President Lukashenka’s comments that Belarus may procure new systems from Russia, including the S-400, is of concern. NATO is committed to the security of the entire Alliance, including Baltic Allies, and will respond appropriately to the deployment of additional Russian military capability in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the Departments of State and Defense, Congress, and NATO Allies on appropriate measures of support for Baltic Allies and NATO’s regional partners.

Question. How will you engage with NATO to counter the growing belligerence of Russia and its encroachment into Belarus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Allies at NATO to maintain a firm message to Russia that there can be no return to “business as usual” until there is a clear, constructive change in Russia’s behavior. I will also ensure NATO continues to bolster its deterrence and defense posture. The Alliance has taken several steps to express deep concern over the situation in Belarus, from restricting Belarusian access to NATO HQ to condemning Lukashenka’s actions in the June 2021 Summit Communiqué. If confirmed I will seek ways to continue to hold both Russia and Belarus accountable for destabilizing activity.

Question. How does the situation in Afghanistan affect our relationship with NATO allies?

Answer. U.S. standing within NATO remains strong. After twenty years, Allies agreed to end our military engagement in Afghanistan. This reflects our success delivering justice to those who attacked us on September 11th and disrupting terrorists seeking to use Afghanistan as a safe haven to attack us. Allies decided to reassess where it made the most sense to position our militaries based on the global

threat picture as it exists today, not two decades ago. The United States worked side by side with Allies and partners in Afghanistan, strengthening the ability of our military and civilian personnel to work effectively together. If confirmed, I will continue the close consultations with Allies, as we have done since before the withdrawal, when all Allies decided to leave with us. I will also look forward to consulting with the Allies on the “lessons learned” process they are currently conducting on the broader mission in Afghanistan.

Question. Message to NATO allies about the U.S. commitment to coordinated operations in defense of the alliance?

Answer. NATO remains history’s strongest military alliance, and the United States will continue our leadership role within it. The U.S. commitment to the Alliance and to Article 5 is ironclad. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to support NATO defensive operations, as well as operations that enhance regional security in other ways. For example, NATO Mission Iraq is expanding to broaden the capacity of the Iraqi Government’s security institutions. Kosovo Force (KFOR) has bolstered the regional security environment in the Balkans for twenty years.

Question. How would you work with NATO partners to discourage Turkey from moving forward with its S-400 Air Defense integration?

Answer. The Biden administration has clearly expressed that Russian S-400s are incompatible with NATO equipment and Turkey’s NATO commitments. It is a policy priority for the United States to prevail on Turkey not to retain S-400 and not to purchase additional Russian materiel. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any new purchase of Russian military equipment would risk triggering CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020. At the same time, Turkey is our Ally, and the United States and Turkey share interests in countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and ensuring regional stability. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and engaging Turkey.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIANNE SMITH BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. I recently had a call with 26 Ambassadors from NATO-allied countries, and all were unanimous in their calls for NATO coordination on Afghanistan. Many of our allies in NATO and others in Europe have also publicly expressed their frustrations regarding how the United States handled the withdrawal and the lack of coordination with them. I am concerned with how this may affect the strength of the Alliance in the immediate future.

- How do you see the current state of relations with our NATO allies following our withdrawal from Afghanistan? What will you do to reassure our allies of our commitment to coordination through NATO, if confirmed?

Answer. Since Allies invoked Article 5 and went into Afghanistan after al-Qaeda, we have adhered to the “in together, consult together, leave together” approach. Indeed, as the Secretary General confirmed in recent days, the United States consulted with the Allies throughout the process of ending NATO’s military presence in Afghanistan. NATO is the foundation of Euro-Atlantic collective defense. The Alliance has experienced and overcome divisive issues in the past because of the strength of our approach based on consultation and consensus. If confirmed, I will continue this tradition of close consultation that prevents any issue from detracting from NATO accomplishing its core tasks.

Question. How do you think the United States should respond to the calls for greater European security independent of NATO and the United States?

Answer. The Biden administration is committed to re-engaging European allies and partners and revitalizing our alliances. If confirmed, I would welcome European efforts to strengthen European defense including by spending more on defense, insofar as this contributes to Allies’ fulfillment of their Wales Pledge commitments. However, the notion of European strategic autonomy risks undermining the primacy of NATO in ensuring Europe’s defense, duplicating effort between the EU and NATO, and weakening Transatlantic relations. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Allies and partners to reinforce to all Allies the unparalleled value of the Transatlantic Alliance, rooted in the sacrosanct Article 5 commitment.

Question. The Taliban has tried to tell the world that it is different than it was in 1996. But their approach and perspective on women has clearly not evolved and as such, we must continue to hold the Taliban to account, in partnership with our allies.

- If confirmed, how will you work through NATO to find ways to support the rights of Afghan women and girls under Taliban rule? What specific actions should NATO take as a bloc?

Answer. NATO has been clear that it will continue to hold the Taliban to its commitments, especially on counterterrorism and with respect to the rights of all Afghans. The Taliban has said many things, but we have told them in no uncertain terms we are watching their actions to assess our possible future direction with them. The United States and NATO Allies are considering how to use our full diplomatic, economic, and assistance toolkits to support the peaceful, stable future the Afghan people deserve. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with you on ensuring the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, in particular, remain in the Alliance's focus.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to reassure our allies in NATO of the strong U.S. commitment? What specific steps will you take to strengthen coordination with and within the Alliance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will reassure Allies our commitment to collective defense under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is ironclad. For over 70 years, Allies have maintained cohesion to provide collective security and prosperity to member nations. The key to NATO's success is its ability to maintain unity, and the NATO 2030 agenda affirmed the importance of consultation to the Alliance's success. If confirmed, I look forward to increasing our engagement with Allies, including having difficult but necessary conversations. I will also work to maintain bipartisan support for NATO and look forward to consulting with Congress and welcoming congressional delegations to Brussels.

Question. I am concerned by the actions of an emboldened Russia in the Black Sea region, following several recent aggressive incidents by the Russians.

- What more can be done to support freedom of navigation in the Black Sea?

Answer. The Biden administration attaches high importance to security and stability in the Black Sea littoral. Through cooperation with NATO Allies and partners, including presence and exercises, the United States is bolstering collective security in the Black Sea region. As the Biden administration has made clear to Russia, aggression is unacceptable in the territory and territorial waters of its sovereign neighbors, as well as in international waters and airspace. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and our Allies to develop and implement a Black Sea security strategy that bolsters cooperation among our littoral state Allies and partners.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIANNE SMITH BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Nord Stream 2

Question. If Nord Stream 2 is brought online it will provide Russia with energy hegemony over our NATO allies. Those allies have conveyed in public that they will be significantly more vulnerable not just to energy coercion but to military aggression, across NATO's Eastern flank.

- Please assess the security risks to NATO, and especially NATO's eastern flank, that would be created if Nord Stream 2 was completed.

Answer. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a Russian geopolitical project that undercuts the energy security of a significant part of the Euro-Atlantic community. U.S. opposition to Nord Stream 2 centers around the Kremlin's malign activities, including its aggression against Ukraine and past use of energy as a weapon through gas supply cut-offs and disruptions. The administration continues to work with Germany, Ukraine, and other Allies and partners to reduce the risks of an operational Nord Stream 2 pipeline, including through the package of measures detailed in the July 21, 2021 U.S.-Germany Joint Statement on support for Ukraine, European Energy Security, and our Climate Goals. If confirmed, I will work with our NATO Allies and partners to both address the repercussions of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and strengthen European energy security.

Question. If Nord Stream 2 is brought online it will provide Russia with energy hegemony over our NATO allies. Those allies have conveyed in public that they will be significantly more vulnerable not just to energy coercion but to military aggression, across NATO's Eastern flank.

- In your understanding, what can the United States still do to stop Nord Stream 2 from being completed, in order to avert these risks?

Answer. The Biden administration opposes Nord Stream 2 and believes that this Russian geopolitical project is a bad deal for both Ukraine and Europe. That said, the pipeline was over 90 percent complete when this administration came into office, and sanctions could not stop its construction. Gazprom announced on September 10, 2021 that construction on the pipeline was complete. Throughout the process of testing, inspecting, and certifying, and otherwise operationalizing the pipeline, the United States will continue to oppose Nord Stream 2 and work with Allies and partners to reduce the risks of an operational Nord Stream 2 pipeline, including through the package of measures detailed in the July 21, 2021 U.S.-Germany Joint Statement on Support for Ukraine, European Energy Security, and our Climate Goals. The administration remains committed to implementing PEESA, as amended; it has sanctioned seven persons related to Nord Stream 2 and identified 16 of the vessels as blocked property and continues to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BARBARA A. LEAF BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Israel

Question. This week marks the one year anniversary of the historic Abraham Accords, normalizing relations between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain, which have the potential to increase security and prosperity for Israel and other countries in the Middle East.

- Will you commit to fully supporting Israel's right to self-defense and Qualitative Military Edge, including through U.S. military assistance?

Answer. Yes. The United States has a long-standing, unshakable commitment to Israel's security, one important component of which is substantial security assistance to preserve Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over potential regional threats. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to continue this legacy.

Iraq

Question. The U.S. remains committed to a sovereign, stable and democratic Iraq. The recent agreement on July 26 between President Biden and Prime Minister Kadhimi to end U.S. combat operations signals a hopeful new phase in the U.S.-Iraqi partnership. However, Iran continues to exercise malign influence in the country and its militias continue to target U.S. facilities while extorting and murdering ordinary Iraqis.

- What should the U.S.'s assistance priorities be in Iraq? What further steps can the U.S. take to boost Iraq's ties with its Arab neighbors and make the country less dependent on Iranian energy?

Answer. U.S. assistance in Iraq should focus on democratic and economic reforms to reduce corruption, facilitate investment, develop a domestic private sector that can generate badly-needed employment for Iraq's youthful population, and improve the lives of the Iraqi people.

The United States continues to press Iraq to do more in terms of generating and delivering electricity for the public, reducing its reliance on Iranian electricity and gas. This requires Iraq to capture flared gas, employ grid modernization to reduce transmission losses, develop renewable energy potential, and to import power from other neighbors. The United States is ready to help develop Iraq's renewable energy sector.

With regard to electricity grid interconnections, the United States has championed the work to connect Iraq's grid to that of the GCC Interconnection Authority. This interconnection would allow Gulf countries to sell 500 megawatts of power to Iraq. The United States also supports an interconnection between the Iraqi and Jordanian grids. While Iraq is contracting out its portion of the transmission lines, USAID is supporting the Jordanian side. Iraq has moved slowly on implementing its side.

Question. What is your assessment of the current U.S. diplomatic footprint in Iraq? Should the U.S. boost that footprint to better counter Iranian influence? What resources would be required to do that safely and do you commit to working to swiftly restore consular operations at Embassy Baghdad?

Answer. U.S. policies. In Summer 2021, the Embassy conducted a fresh staffing review given changing circumstances, and Department leadership is currently considering the results. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring all of our posts, including Baghdad, are secure and appropriately staffed for their mission.

If confirmed, I commit to working to restore consular operations at Embassy Baghdad. Several Compound Access Control (CAC) points sustained damage in the December 2019/January 2020 attack, leading to a suspension of consular operations. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) worked with Diplomatic Security to establish an interim consular screening facility for use by U.S. citizens. OBO is currently in the process of awarding a design and construction contract for the repair of the Main CAC to allow full consular services to be restarted.

Question. How important is it to reopen the U.S. Consulate in Basra? If confirmed, what conditions will you need to see before moving to reopen it?

Answer. I view it as vitally important that the United States engage with all segments of Iraqi society, including Basrawis and others in southern Iraq. Basrah remains one of the key economic engines of Iraq given its vast oil and gas resources, but also remains one of the poorest provinces and suffers from climate change and a lack of potable water. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the State Department and throughout the administration to expand our diplomatic outreach across Iraq. There are many issues that would have to be taken into consideration before resuming operations at the consulate in Basrah, such as the necessary security measures, as well as congressional and legal requirements.

Lebanon

Question. Lebanon's economic crisis has pushed middle class Lebanese into poverty but the country's political elite still show no appetite for needed reforms and still seem to expect a no strings attached bailout if the suffering in Lebanon gets bad enough.

- How does the US balance the need to help alleviate suffering in Lebanon which directly contributes to security and stability not only in Lebanon but in Israel and the region more broadly but also ensure our assistance is being used to incentivize reforms?

Answer. Current U.S. assistance programs in Lebanon are designed to directly support the Lebanese people as they weather the current economic and humanitarian crisis, as well as support key partners and institutions, such as the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces, which are critical to stability in Lebanon and the region. If confirmed, I will reinforce to the Lebanese Government that concrete actions remain crucial—indeed, a condition—to unlocking longer-term structural support to Lebanon.

Question. What is your assessment of the new Lebanese Government? Is it capable of delivering for the Lebanese people and being a capable partner for the United States?

Answer. The United States welcomed the announcement that Lebanon's leaders agreed to form a new government under the leadership of Prime Minister Najib Mikati. The formation of a government is just the first step to halting Lebanon's terrible downward spiral; the follow-on steps must include enacting reforms to address the economic crisis, bring more accountability and transparency to a system that is rife with political corruption, and keep elections on track for next year. The solution to Lebanon's dire problems lie in Lebanese hands. If confirmed, I stand ready to support the new government as well as hold its members accountable for the hard work ahead.

Lebanon and Syrian Sanctions Liability

Question. I recognize the need to import energy from Egypt and Jordan to ease the suffering of hard-hit Lebanese and to prevent Iran and Hezbollah from capitalizing on a crisis that they are in large part created. I am also aware that the infrastructure for such a project already exists and I appreciate the willingness of Jordan and Egypt to help the people of Lebanon. However, I am also concerned about such a project running afoul of U.S. sanctions on Syria the risk that such imports could normalize the Assad regime's brutality.

- What sanctions liability do you see in such an import project and how do we balance these competing needs by getting the Lebanese people the relief they need without rewarding the Assad regime for more than ten years of atrocities against its own people?

Answer. Lebanon is currently experiencing an acute energy crisis that is having a tremendous impact on critical infrastructure such as hospitals and the water supply. U.S. assistance programs are designed to directly support the Lebanese people; Egypt and Jordan have recently offered a set of potential bilateral and multilateral agreements that could help Lebanon begin to address its power crisis in a sustainable and transparent manner. U.S. sanctions on the Assad regime remain an important tool to press for accountability, to include for its atrocious record of human rights abuse. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Treasury and our partners to ensure that any potential deal our partners reach is consistent with U.S. law, our broader policy priorities to mitigate any benefits to the Assad regime, and all relevant U.S. sanctions, and look forward to continuing to consult with Congress on this important issue.

Syria

Question. I am concerned that the Assad regime's apparent success in reestablishing full control of Daraa, despite prior diplomatic agreements that ensured a measure of local autonomy, will pave the way for an increased presence of Iranian backed militias, including Hezbollah, where they can continue to brutalize or displace the local population while menacing Israel and Jordan.

Question. Do you share these concerns and if so, what diplomatic measures can the administration take, both bilaterally and at the United Nations, to prevent additional civilian displacements and ensure Iranian militia activity does not further threaten Israel and Jordan?

Answer. The United States continues to engage with partners and allies as well as the U.N. to encourage all parties to adhere to ceasefires in Syria. The United States is also strongly committed to countering Iran and the militia groups it supports in Syria and will work with allies and partners to push back against Iran's destabilizing activities. The Biden-Harris administration is concerned by the grave conditions in Dara'a that resulted in the displacement of civilians and the blockage of humanitarian aid and has raised these concerns at the U.N. and with key Security Council members. If confirmed, I will continue our support for humanitarian organizations that are trying to deliver aid and will continue to push for increased access.

Syria-U.N.-led Political Process for Syria

Question. It is broadly acknowledged that the U.N.-led political process for Syria under UNSCR 2254 is broken due to Russian-enabled Assad regime intransigence. There is further a push by both Russia and the Assad regime to normalize ties with other Arab states like Jordan the UAE and Bahrain.

- What alternatives does the administration have to advancing the goal of an end to Syria's civil war in light of the gridlock in the U.N. process?

Answer. There is little question that unstinting Russian and Iranian military and other support have enabled the Assad regime to deflect international demands for accountability and political change for over a decade. The United States is engaged with U.N. Special Envoy Geir Pedersen, our allies, and other international partners in order to explore options and encourage all possible efforts to advance a political resolution to the conflict. The Biden-Harris administration supports the U.N.-facilitated, Syrian-led process laid out within the parameters of UNSCR 2254, including a nationwide ceasefire, the release of arbitrarily detained Syrians, and free and fair elections monitored by the U.N. If confirmed, I will continue to engage diplomatically to press for an end to the Syrian people's suffering.

Question. What do you see driving our Arab partners' increasing engagement with Damascus and how can U.S. diplomacy halt this creeping normalization?

Answer. There appears to be a belief among some countries in the region that engagement with Assad will lead to a reduction of the latter's relationship with Iran. I am skeptical on that score. The United States will not itself reestablish or upgrade diplomatic relations with the Assad regime. If confirmed, I will urge states in the region to consider carefully what they might require of the regime on behalf of the Syrian people—whether accountability for the missing or detained, or access to humanitarian aid and security, which the regime currently denies much of the country. The United States will remain engaged with the U.N., our allies, and other international partners on the best way forward in Syria.

Question. Do you think we can be doing more to ensure accountability and good governance in the Autonomous Administered Areas of North East Syria?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration understands political and economic stability are key to the ability of our local partners in Syria to focus on fighting ISIS. In one of its first acts, the administration lifted the U.S. freeze on stabilization assistance for Syria and announced in March almost \$50 million for U.S. stabilization efforts in northeast Syria and will continue these efforts with FY 21 resources; the administration's FY 22 request for Syria reflects further robust support. U.S. assistance in northeast Syria prioritizes stabilization activities that contribute to the restoration of daily life by closing gaps in local authority capacities; supporting transitional justice, justice and accountability, and civil society programs; and addressing vulnerabilities previously exploited by ISIS.

Egypt

Question. What do you see as the largest priorities for security assistance to Egypt? How can U.S. engagement promote further energy development and security cooperation between Egypt and its neighbors, especially in the realm of clean and renewable energy?

Answer. I see the highest priority security challenges for Egypt as being the threat stemming from extremist groups in Libya and the Sahel, border security and maritime security. U.S. security assistance is appropriately focused on helping Egypt develop and maintain the capacity to address those priorities while emphasizing professionalization of its forces and support for human rights and international humanitarian law. Egypt has enormous solar and wind potential, and has made significant investments in the past decade to increase the share of renewables in its energy production. I am eager to work with Egypt to fulfill its aspirations to export clean energy to its neighbors, which will require significant investments in upgrading regional energy connectivity.

Question. Egypt faces the very real prospect of reduced flow from the Nile River. What more can the US do to help Egypt cope with such a future?

Answer. I well appreciate the singular importance of the Nile flow to Egypt's economy, especially its agriculture. I am pleased to see that Egypt is taking steps to modernize its agricultural systems and increase efficiencies in water use to better manage the growing demands for this critical resource in the future. U.S. assistance has brought improved education, clean water, better health, economic growth, and other benefits to the Egyptian people. The Department is working with Egypt to promote economic growth that underpins stability, and to advance our commercial and environmental goals.

Question. If confirmed, what message will you send to Egypt regarding its purchase of Russian Su-35's?

Answer. Dissuading Egypt from acquiring Su-35 fighter aircraft or any other major new military equipment from Russia is a key priority for the United States. The U.S. Government has consistently warned Egypt at the highest levels that accepting delivery of Su-35s or any new major military acquisitions from Russia risks triggering mandatory CAATSA Section 231 sanctions and negatively affecting our defense relationship and security cooperation. If confirmed, I will reinforce this message to the Government of Egypt.

Question. If confirmed, what message will you send to Egypt regarding ongoing human rights abuses, including the harassment and detention of the family members of U.S.-based activists? What leverage does the U.S. retain in this regard?

Answer. I share your concerns about the human rights situation in Egypt. If confirmed, I will communicate U.S. expectations to the Government of Egypt of tangible and sustained progress on improving its human rights record. The Biden-Harris administration supports greater space for Egyptian civil society and human rights organizations, as well as respect for freedom of expression. Secretary Blinken's recent decision on Foreign Military Financing showed that the Biden-Harris administration considers human rights to be a national security interest. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Egypt to address these human rights concerns. Promoting a stable, prosperous Egypt, where the Government protects the human rights of all individuals and fulfills the aspirations of the Egyptian people, is a core objective of U.S. policy.

Peace Agreement in Libya

Question. The peace agreement in Libya and the national unity government that it brought about present an important opportunity for Libyans and their neighbors

in Africa and around the Mediterranean to turn the page on ten years of violence and chaos. However, challenges remain, most notably the continuing presence of Russian and Turkish-backed mercenaries, which represent, in my mind, the biggest threat to stability in Libya and the elections scheduled there for December.

- What steps can be taken, with the Libyan Government, along with the international community to get foreign fighters out of Libya?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is in discussions with European and regional allies and partners, the interim Libyan Government, and others on how progress can be made towards the full withdrawal of all foreign military forces, foreign fighters, and mercenaries consistent with the October 23, 2020 Libyan ceasefire agreement. To that end, if confirmed, I am committed to charting a path forward toward national elections with the interim Libyan Government, regional partners, and the U.N. Those elections will themselves be a critical point along the way of getting foreign forces out of Libya. If confirmed, I am also committed to supporting the October 23, 2020, Libyan ceasefire agreement and its full implementation as called for in UNSCR 2570.

Question. What further steps should the US take to ensure that presidential and parliamentary elections are held on schedule in Libya?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is in discussions with Libyan political leaders on the urgent need for them to agree on a constitutional and legal framework for elections. The Biden-Harris administration is also coordinating with European and regional allies and partners to ensure a united position from the international community on the importance of holding on-time elections. USAID has helped the Libyan High National Election Commission advance technical preparations for the elections so that they are prepared to hold the elections quickly once a legal basis is agreed. Ultimately, it will be up to Libyan political officials to forge compromises to ensure elections take place on December 24, and the administration has vigorously pressed the parties to do so.

Turkey and Libya's Maritime Border Agreement

Question. I have been vocal in my criticism of the maritime border agreement between Turkey and Libya's previous Government of National Accord, which I believe was based on a flawed understanding of international maritime law and a complete disregard for the legitimate claims of neighboring Mediterranean countries, including Greece and the Republic of Cyprus.

- What steps can the U.S. take to ensure that any such agreement is coordinated with Libya and Turkey's Mediterranean neighbors and takes into account their legitimate claims in the Mediterranean?

Answer. The Memorandum of Understanding on maritime boundaries between Turkey and Libya's former Government of National Accord has raised tensions in the region and has been unhelpful to efforts to negotiate a solution to the conflict. The United States has called on all parties to refrain from actions that risk heightening tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a longstanding policy, the United States encourages states to resolve their disputes peacefully in accordance with international law.

U.S. Influence in Libya

Question. If confirmed, what facts would you need to see on the ground to move forward with a permanent U.S. diplomatic presence inside Libya? What further resources would you need?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration's intent is to resume regular diplomatic activities in Libya when the security situation permits and the necessary security measures are in place. The process for resumption of diplomatic operations entails a thorough Department analysis and review, careful logistical and security planning, interagency coordination to meet security, policy, and legal requirements, and congressional notification procedures. The administration will keep Congress informed with regard to any resources it would need.

Question. In the meantime, what further steps can be taken to maintain U.S. influence in the country?

Answer. Since the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli suspended operations in July 2014, officers with the Libya External Office in Tunis have conducted periodic day-trips into Libya for diplomatic engagement and frequently engaged with Libyan interlocutors in third-country locations. The administration, including Special Envoy Ambassador Richard Norland, also coordinates closely with European allies, countries in the region, and the United Nations. The United States co-chairs the Berlin Process Eco-

conomic Working Group through which international partners help Libya make crucial economic reforms. Foreign assistance also boosts U.S. influence in the areas of the economy, access to water, and combatting climate change.

Tunisia

Question. How can U.S. engagement most effectively help Tunisia reach a sound economic footing?

Answer. The United States shares the Tunisian people's goal of a democratic government that can address the immediate economic and health crises facing the country. In that connection, our assistance promotes sustainable, inclusive economic growth and mitigates the effects of COVID-19. If confirmed, I will urge President Saied to designate a Prime Minister without further delay and enable formation of a government so that the United States and our partners can more effectively assist Tunisia in economic growth and development, particularly via the IMF.

Question. What more can the U.S. do to bolster both Tunisian civil society and the successful and productive security relationship between our two countries?

Answer. U.S. assistance, consistent messaging, and diplomatic engagement will continue to support civil society and civic engagement, which will be key to the success of any political and economic reforms. If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening our bilateral security relationship, through which the U.S. Government has provided over \$928 million since 2011. This aid has improved the ability of the Tunisian military and civilian law enforcement agencies to conduct counter terrorism operations, secure the country's borders, provide citizen-oriented policing, and protect human rights while operating within the rule of law.

Yemen

Question. The administration's renewal of assistance to northern Yemen and insistence that the Houthis allow further humanitarian access there has helped to hold off a drastic worsening of an already terrible humanitarian crisis. However, the Houthis ongoing advance on Marib threatens to displace hundreds of thousands of already desperate Yemenis and shows a lack of interest by the Houthis in a peaceful end to the fighting, especially when coupled with their ongoing attacks against Saudi Arabia using Iranian missiles and drones.

- What is behind the Houthis determination to press on with a costly and destructive offensive? What steps can the U.S. take to bring them back to the negotiating table?

Answer. The Houthis remain intransigent and focused on their military offensive against Marib, which is the single biggest impediment to a national ceasefire and follow-on political negotiations. Apparently determined to take the oil-rich province, the Houthis are demonstrating wholesale indifference to the humanitarian cost. The offensive is exacerbating Yemen's humanitarian crisis, puts at immediate risk some one million IDPs and other civilians and is triggering broader instability. There is an international consensus on the urgency of resolving this conflict; if confirmed, I will work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push the Houthis to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions. The United States continues to work with our international partners to apply pressure on the Houthis, to include via domestic and U.N. sanctions, and, if confirmed, I will continue that critical work.

Question. The lack of fuel imports remains a major humanitarian concern. What more can the U.S. do to push Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Government to allow more fuel imports to be allowed into Yemen?

Answer. The United States remains committed to addressing the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We closely monitor and consistently raise the need for unrestricted fuel imports at Hudaydah with the highest levels of the Yemeni and Saudi Governments. In response to continued U.S. advocacy, the Republic of Yemen Government has cleared 17 fuel ships to enter the port of Hudaydah since March 2021. Food and other commodities for commercial and humanitarian purposes continue to flow through Hudaydah at normal rates, according to the U.N. Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM). Fuel imports through other Yemeni ports have increased, such that nationwide fuel imports are actually higher than average. That said, it is time for a different approach by the Hadi Government and the Saudi Government.

Jordan

Question. As you know, the current assistance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. and Jordan is set to expire next year.

- What should be the U.S.'s priorities for the next MOU?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure U.S. assistance to Jordan through the next MOU is targeted to bolster the economic stability of this critical ally. A stable and secure Jordan allows us to jointly pursue shared regional security and economic goals. Economic Support Funds should foster self-reliance and capacity development of government and private sector counterparts towards implementing critical economic reform. To the degree the U.S. Government can incentivize needed structural reforms, Jordan can more rapidly open new pathways to economic growth. Foreign Military Financing should help ensure Jordan can continue to act as a close partner on a variety of shared security goals, including as a contributing member in the Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

Question. What further political and economic reforms do you think are needed to help Jordan get on to a more secure and sustainable footing?

Answer. If confirmed, I will promote private-sector-led and inclusive economic growth in Jordan. The country requires reforms to enable the private sector to grow more rapidly, to attract foreign investment, increase the capacity of firms to compete on the global market, and significantly expand current employment levels. Other important reforms include improving public sector effectiveness; improving the business climate; deepening electricity and water sector sustainability; and including more women and youth in the formal economy.

Question. What further ways can the U.S. support sustainable water sources in Jordan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage Jordan to complete its national water desalination project, the Aqaba-Amman-Conveyance Project, in a timely and effective manner so that it addresses Jordan's water needs.

On July 8, Jordan and Israel announced an agreement to allow Jordan to purchase an additional and much needed 50 million cubic meters of water this year. If confirmed, I will encourage Jordan and Israel to finalize the agreement and continue to look for additional ways to increase water cooperation in the coming years. Expanding cooperation on the water issue will present additional opportunities to foster a healthier political relationship between the two countries.

Question. What is the potential for further cooperation between Israel and Jordan on the Red Sea-Dead Sea water project?

Answer. Both Israel and Jordan have indicated they no longer plan to pursue the Red Sea-Dead Sea water project. If confirmed, I will encourage Jordan to move out expeditiously on its national water desalination project, the Aqaba-Amman Conveyance Project, in a timely and effective manner so that it addresses Jordan's water needs.

Gulf

Question. Saudi Arabia's direct diplomatic engagement with Iran, facilitated by Baghdad, has been widely reported and is broadly considered an indicator that the Gulf states are not comfortable relying on JCPOA negotiations as a guarantor of their security against Iran's regional meddling. As a former US Ambassador to the UAE, I am confident you are very familiar with these sentiments.

- How do you perceive the utility of these ongoing talks and if confirmed, how will you work to ensure our regional partners, including the Gulf States as well as Israel, are integrated into Iran's nuclear talks?

Answer. I am aware of reports of multiple rounds of Saudi-Iranian talks facilitated by Iraq. Direct contacts and discussions between countries in the Gulf and Iran can be constructive in reducing tensions in the region; for the Gulf countries, these channels are also useful for making clear their requirements of Iran, including non-interference in their affairs. The UAE started such discussions in the summer of 2019, at a time of severely heightened tensions in the Gulf, and those exchanges continue today. Diplomacy is not a reward in this sense, but a vital means for securing their interests. Our Gulf partners and Israel have valid security concerns over Iran's destabilizing activity in the region. If confirmed, I will work with the Special Envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, to ensure our partners are consulted in the course of the JCPOA negotiations, as well as coordinate on U.S. efforts to deal with Iran's regional activities and to help our partners do the same.

Red Sea / Horn of Africa

Question. From the GERD dispute between Egypt and Ethiopia, to competition between Gulf States in the Horn of Africa, to maritime security along both sides of

the Red Sea, there is significant overlap between NEA and the Africa Bureau, especially along the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa.

- What aspects of cooperation between the two bureaus do you think are going well? What areas need improvement?

Answer. Bureaus in the department, including Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) and African Affairs (AF), must work closely together to ensure full coordination and cooperation on the full range of shared and overlapping issues, and across the geographical/bureaucratic seam. Sustained communication at the leadership level in Washington and in the field ensures that both Bureaus can overcome these seams, and if confirmed I will promote mechanisms to encourage such communication. If confirmed, I will provide the leadership and model the kind of close cooperation with AF that is critical for the success of our respective work. I will also work closely with the Department's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffery Feltman, and ensure that NEA missions work collaboratively with AFRICOM.

If confirmed, I will also ensure that Red Sea and African issues are part of our regular conversations with key NEA Governments.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to improve cooperation with the Africa Bureau on issues that span this divide and to ensure that such issues facing sub-Saharan Africa are raised with governments in the Middle East?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead by example, and ensure that NEA staff coordinate closely with colleagues in the AF Bureau and with the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeffery Feltman, as well as with AFRICOM. If confirmed, I will ensure that Red Sea and African issues are part of our regular conversation with key NEA Governments. If confirmed, I will also continue to ensure diplomacy, defense and development tools are brought together to address cross-cutting issues through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

Eastern Mediterranean Energy and Security

Question. Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority have all joined the EastMed Gas Forum alongside Greece, Cyprus and Israel, greatly increasing the potential for cooperation among the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean on energy development and security, especially for clean and renewable energy sources.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to coordinate with both the European Affairs Bureau and the Bureau of Energy Resources to promote increased cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead by example, and ensure that NEA staff coordinate closely with colleagues in the European Affairs and AF Bureaus and with the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeffery Feltman, as well as with AFRICOM. If confirmed, I will ensure that Red Sea and African issues are part of our regular conversation with key NEA Governments. If confirmed, I will also continue to ensure diplomacy, defense and development tools are brought together to address cross-cutting issues through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

Great Power Competition in the Middle East

Question. The administration has repeatedly insisted that it is pivoting away from the Middle East to focus on great power competition with Russia and China.

- How do you see your job unfolding within this new paradigm?

Answer. Global power competition happens around the globe, including in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to rebuilding and restoring U.S. partnerships across the region. If confirmed, I will energetically promote the value of a sustained and strategic partnership with the United States, a partnership that stands in stark contrast to the transactional relationships offered by the People's Republic of China and Russia. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues in the Bureaus of European Affairs (EUR) and East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) to ensure that strategic priorities with respect to Russia and the People's Republic of China are regular agenda items in discussions with regional partners.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take as Assistance Secretary to counter Russian and Chinese influence in the Middle East and North Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues in the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR) and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) to ensure that strategic priorities with respect to Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) are regular agenda items in discussions with regional partners. This will include empowering the three Regional China Officers deployed at embassies across the region to increase reporting, analysis, and engagement on PRC-related

issues. If confirmed, I will also work with our Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, as well as our Bureau of Political Military Affairs, to ensure an approach that maintains our position as the premier partner in the region while elevating our values, including respect for human rights.

The administration's commitment to reducing regional tensions, banking the fires of conflict, building deep partnerships based on an affirmative agenda, and demonstrating the value of a sustained partnership with the United States remains the best approach to countering Russian and PRC influence across the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BARBARA A. LEAF BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Great power competition often occurs outside of the Pacific. How do you plan to compete with Russia and China given the administration's apparent retreat from the Middle East?

Answer. The President's vision for a collaborative partnership with the countries of the Middle East comes in the wider context of a growing global challenge to our values of open societies and open economies. This challenge comes primarily from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia. Our strength as a nation resides in the very commitment the U.S. Government has demonstrated over decades to our partners, and to the values the United States brings to those relationships.

The administration seeks to deepen diplomatic, security, cultural, and economic engagements through an affirmative agenda grounded in our democratic values. If confirmed, I will work to demonstrate that partnership with the United States remains our best strategy for addressing global competition in the Middle East, now and into the future.

Question. The Iranian regime received an approximately \$4-5 billion windfall in sanctions relief as a result of the JCPOA. In 2017, Sec. Blinken indicated that the "few billion dollars that have wound up in Iran's coffers that had huge debts to pay and the money that was freed up as a result of the deal has mostly gone to pay those debts and to bolster the economy." However, a vast body of follow-on reporting indicates that a majority of sanctions relief was instead funneled to the regime's proxies in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen. As the Biden administration pursues sanctions relief as a part of its return to the JCPOA, what tools and safeguards exist that would prevent Iran from directing future sanctions relief to malign activities?

Answer. As the U.S. Government acknowledged at the time, although Iran devoted most of the resources it obtained through sanctions relief under the JCPOA toward bolstering its economy, it did use some of it for its military and its regional activities. Iran and its proxies and partners engaged in these activities prior to the JCPOA, after the conclusion of the JCPOA, and with increased aggressiveness after the U.S. exit from the JCPOA in 2018. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would present a threat of a far greater magnitude. The U.S. Government maintains a range of tools to combat terrorist financing and will continue to use these to counter Iran's destabilizing activities and support for terrorism. The administration will continue to use its considerable leverage—including sanctions that would remain in place in the event of a U.S. return to the JCPOA, the threat of sanctions re-imposition, and other joint action with our allies and partners—to protect U.S. interests.

Question. Both the Israelis and our partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council, who sit much closer to the Iranian threat, bemoaned a lack of consultations prior to the U.S. entry into the JCPOA. Further, many have characterized Special Envoy Malley's consultations as "one-way" and not responsive to their concerns. Do you commit to extensive consultations with Israel and our regional partners prior to making concessions to Iran? Will you seek Israel's concurrence before finalizing any proposed agreement or arrangement related to Iran's nuclear program?

Answer. Department officials, and in particular Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley, have been in close contact with partners in Israel and among the Gulf Arab states and will continue consulting closely with these key partners as this process proceeds. Every one of us shares a common interest: seeing to it that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. How do you address criticisms that the Biden administration re-engagement with Iran has only served to isolate Israel and our Gulf partners?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has an ironclad commitment to Israel's security. Alongside that commitment, the administration is focused on de-escalating tensions, banking the fires of conflict in Yemen, Libya and Syria, and enhancing stability throughout the Middle East. The Department has updated Israeli and Gulf counterparts regularly before and after negotiation rounds and is regularly engaged in discussions on our work to constrain and contain Iran's destabilizing regional activities. All of the Gulf countries have opened diplomatic channels with Tehran and are using them energetically for de-escalation; most of the channels pre-date the Biden-Harris administration.

Question. The JCPOA confronted the international community with several problematic sunset provisions on Iran's ability to receive and transfer conventional weapons (expired in 2020) and nuclear-related ballistic missile activity (expires in 2023). How will the Biden administration address re-imposing these restrictions in a more lasting manner—particularly given Russian and Chinese objections?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration remains concerned about Iran's nuclear capabilities as well as its ability to receive and transfer conventional weapons. The Department is working with its partners to address these, and the many other issues of concern with Iran. The administration believes that diplomacy is the best path forward on the nuclear challenge at this time, but is prepared to leverage all applicable authorities, including sanctions, against Iran for its provocative and destabilizing activities, including its ballistic missile development and provision of weapons to armed groups and other violent partners and proxies.

Question. Explain your strategic approach to promote sovereignty, diminish Iranian influence, and separate Iranian-backed proxies from legitimate security guarantors in Iraq and Lebanon.

Answer. I am committed to working closely with regional and European allies to diminish Iran's destabilizing activities across the region, including in Iraq and Lebanon.

The administration will 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 and to promote wider security and stability in the region. If confirmed, I will deepen the good work led by our missions in the field, supporting and empowering moderates—whether in government or civil society—who support rule of law and the sovereignty of the state.

Question. How does the October 2020 expiration of the conventional weapons embargo affect Iran's ability to exert influence in the region?

Answer. The expiration of the U.N. conventional weapons arms embargo has not resulted in any discernable change in Iran's ability to exert influence in the region. For decades, Iran has taken actions that destabilize the region, including support for terrorism, developing its ballistic missile program, and providing weapons and materiel to proxy groups. The Biden-Harris administration will continue to use domestic authorities to dissuade countries from providing arms to Iran or buying them from Iran.

Question. In recent years, China has become Iran's preeminent oil and trading partner, providing Iran with crucial technological support to help develop its energy resources and other forms of infrastructure. In June 2020, China and Iran allegedly entered into a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership', which includes a maximum investment of \$400 billion to improve Iran's oil, gas, and transportation infrastructure. What impact does Chinese economic investment have on the efficacy of the international sanction regimes against Iran? What gains does China receive from such investment? How would the Chinese Government, or Chinese-based companies, benefit from the lifting of U.S. sanctions against Iran?

Answer. In March 2021, the PRC and Iran signed a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement, building on a bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signed in 2016. Such PRC partnerships are not unique. The PRC has Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships with a number of other countries in the region, which often include investment proposals that never materialize. The PRC's recently concluded agreement with Iran also likely includes such proposals.

Nevertheless, the Department is watching Iran's economic activities closely, including its economic engagement with China. The administration's current Iran-related sanctions remain in effect unless and until they are lifted, and the U.S. Government will of course continue to address efforts at sanctions evasion.

Question. How does the United States drive a wedge between or shape CCP-Iranian relations?

Answer. While competition defines the U.S. relationship with the People's Republic of China, there are other areas of cooperation; one of those is the effort to constrain Iran's nuclear program. Beijing has no interest in seeing Iran develop a nuclear weapon, given the profoundly destabilizing impact that would have in a region upon which China depends for its oil and other energy imports.

The Department will continue to engage with the PRC on this common interest and discourage Beijing from taking steps vis-à-vis Iran that threaten our interests.

Question. Please provide your view of the Abraham Accords and their impacts for regional security, economic cooperation, and prosperity in the region.

Answer. The Abraham Accords of 2020 between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan represent an important new dynamic and a key opportunity to enhance peaceful co-existence and economic integration. The Accords have already proven to be a vehicle for economic growth, having spurred new trade and investment deals that previously would have been unthinkable. Over time, these unfolding relationships and the new economic partnerships they are fostering will create opportunities for the young and marginalized communities across the region.

Question. How do plan to expand on the Abraham Accords to broker additional normalization agreements and ensure that existing agreements reap tangible economic and security benefits?

Answer. I very much welcome the Abraham Accords. If confirmed, I am committed to working with countries across the region to deepen both the new relationships as well the historical relationships with Egypt and Jordan, and foster new ones. I will do this by engaging our missions throughout the region, highlighting the economic and security benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. If confirmed, I also look forward to learning from Israel's new partners in the region to better understand how we can work together to advance new normalization agreements and strengthen the existing ones.

Question. In 2016 John Kerry argued that there would be no "separate peace" between Israel and Arabs without first solving the issue of Palestinian statehood. What are your views on Palestinian statehood and its ties to additional normalization agreements? Doesn't re-inserting Palestinian statehood back into the peace process hinder prospects of further normalizations with Israel?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state solution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and support for terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to restore calm in the West Bank and Gaza and keep flash point issues from flaring into violence. There are issues of good governance and accountability that affect the standing of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of the Palestinian public, and that lie within the PA's hands to advance; there are at the same time steps that the Israeli Government can consider for enhancing the role of the PA in delivering services and economic opportunities. It is incumbent upon both sides to adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, positive steps for providing the Palestinian people—whether in Gaza or the West Bank—greater economic opportunities while restoring the conditions that will make possible eventual direct negotiations of a two-state solution.

Question. In your view, how do Israeli-Arab normalization agreements affect the prospects for Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations?

Answer. All such agreements—whether the Abraham Accords, the historical peace agreements between Jordan and Egypt and Israel, or additional normalization agreements—contribute to diminishing the deep antipathy that has characterized Arab-Israeli perspectives for decades. In opening new channels for constructive dia-

logue and diplomacy, and for unprecedented people-to-people engagement between Israel and the Arab world, these normalization agreements have the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, progress towards a negotiated two-state solution may encourage other states in the region to take steps towards normalization. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance normalization between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as advance the conditions for direct negotiation of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. Provide your views on the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and United States recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. What is your view on the reversibility of these U.S. policies?

Answer. This administration recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. The administration also recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; the U.S. Embassy will remain in Jerusalem. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, the administration above all gives great weight to Israel's security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran remains active in 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.

This administration has not reversed U.S. policy on these important issues. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that all issues related to Jerusalem and Israel's security are handled with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Despite opening the aperture of ESF and INCLE to the Palestinians, the State Department has achieved no progress on the pay-to-slay policy. Please provide your roadmap for addressing this egregious practice.

Answer. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. I, and this administration, are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and "martyr" payments in a manner that addresses longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform on this heinous practice.

Question. At great cost, the United States has worked to support a sovereign independent Iraq, reframe the U.S.-Iraq bilateral relationship, and foster regional stability. How do you plan to continue to further U.S. interests in Iraq? What are your priority lines of effort linked to U.S. national security interests? What role will institutional reform and anti-corruption efforts play in this strategy? What role will countering Iranian influence play in this strategy?

Answer. A sovereign, stable, democratic, and prosperous Iraq is in the national interest of the United States as well as our partners in the Middle East. U.S. policies and programs are focused on that strategic objective. With Iraq's parliamentary elections scheduled for October 10, the Department's efforts are focused on increasing political participation by increasing trust in the elections' credibility, including by leading international efforts to fund the U.N. Assistance Mission to Iraq's electoral monitoring and technical assistance programs. U.S. assistance and engagements in support of institutional reform and anti-corruption efforts also contribute to more responsive, transparent, and inclusive democratic governance and institutions.

Since 2014, the United States has led international efforts to enable the return of displaced people to their homes and consolidate the Iraqi Government's control over areas liberated from ISIS. These initiatives and others are hampered by Iran's malign influence, including its support for militias operating outside state control, and their repeated efforts to target civil society activists and protestors for assassination. Iran-backed militias are a continuing threat to the Iraqi state. To effectively counter this, it is essential that the United States continue its efforts to build the capacity of the Iraqi Government and its democratic institutions.

Question. How do you plan to address the presence of Iranian-backed militias?

Answer. The administration shares your concern about Iran's destabilizing activities, including its support for proxies and militias. Iran's unacceptable support for terrorism threatens our forces, diplomatic personnel, and partners in the region. The President is committed to countering any Iranian threat to our personnel and our vital interests and has and will continue to respond to any such threats using

all appropriate means. If confirmed I will work within the Department and inter-agency, using the full spectrum of tools available, to address the threat Iranian-backed militia groups pose to United States personnel, interests, and partners.

Question. Critics point to President Obama's withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 as one of the biggest errors of his presidency. The Obama administration departed without securing a Status of Forces Agreement, allowed the Iraqi Security Forces to atrophy, did not adequately address the abuses of the Maliki Government, and failed to address Sunni disenfranchisement that ultimately set conditions for the Islamic State's unchecked movement across the Iraqi border in 2014. Please provide your perspectives on the root causes of the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq as they related to U.S. policies, views on current troop levels as they relate to State Department objectives, and recommendations on key State Department initiatives for preventing an Islamic State resurgence.

Answer. There were many factors that contributed to ISIS' rise. The Syrian civil war opened a battleground that attracted terrorists from across the world to Iraq's doorstep. ISIS has roots in Iraq, but in Syria it became a conventional force, asserting control over territory and capable of attacking a sovereign state. At the same time, Iraq's Government ruled in a sectarian manner and failed to adequately address the needs of minority communities, creating a permissive environment for a brutal offensive that captured significant Iraqi territory in 2014-2015. The United States then led a Coalition to assist the Iraqi Security Forces, including the Kurdish Peshmerga, in taking back their territory. At the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue held in July, the two delegations decided that the U.S. military presence would remain in Iraq, transitioning fully to advising and assisting the Iraqi forces. U.S. troop levels reflect the current stage of the Defeat-ISIS mission and the increased capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces.

Question. How important is continued U.S. troop presence to Iraq's stability?

Answer. U.S. forces are in Iraq at the request of and in coordination with the Government of Iraq. The Biden-Harris administration supports maintaining a small number of military service members to coordinate intelligence-sharing and to advise and assist Iraqi counterterrorism forces as they lead the ground fight against the continuing threat of ISIS, so it cannot re-emerge to again threaten Iraq, the American people, or our partners.

Question. How appropriate are current bilateral diplomatic agreements (exchange of notes) for a sustained diplomatic and security cooperation mission?

Answer. The administration assesses that we have sufficient arrangements with the Government of Iraq to continue the fight against ISIS and to develop the long-term capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces.

Question. Iraq's security apparatus remains dependent on DoD-administered Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) and congressionally-appropriated foreign military financing (FMF). Additionally, nearly 50% of Iraq's FMF expenditures are consumed with maintaining existing contracts. Please provide your thoughts on transitioning Iraq from CTEF to more traditional forms of Title 22 security cooperation, and 'right sizing' the Iraqi Security Forces in a manner that the Government of Iraq can sustain given current budget shortfalls.

Answer. Iraqi officials tell us at every opportunity that U.S. and Coalition support are necessary to maintain our military gains, as ISIS remains a threat in Iraq. While anticipating that Iraq will continue to receive substantial assistance from DoD in the short term via the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), DoD's future spending in Iraq is still to be determined. The Biden-Harris administration is focusing FMF on long-term security priorities in Iraq. The Office of Security Cooperation—Iraq (OSC-I) continues to pursue opportunities that will make Iraq more self-sufficient, especially in terms of maintenance. The U.S. Government wants to be Iraq's partner of choice and will work to wean Iraq off expensive contract maintenance as part of the maturation of the Iraqi Security Forces. The Department's efforts are focused on leveraging FMF as a vital instrument for developing Iraq's long-term capability and capacity to defeat threats to Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Question. Lack of United States engagement and enforcement of chemical weapons 'redlines' during the Obama administration opened the door to increased Russian involvement and allowed the civil war and abuses against the Syrian people to continue unabated. Current progress towards a political reconciliation under UNSCR 2254 have similarly stalled. Please provide your views on the United States' role in Syria and accelerating progress on UNSCR 2254.

Answer. The United States is engaged with the U.N., including Special Envoy Geir Pedersen, our allies, and other international partners, in order to explore options and encourage all possible efforts to advance a political resolution to the conflict. While this has been the least kinetic year in a decade of conflict in Syria, it has proven to be the most disastrous one in economic terms, with 90 percent of the Syrian people falling below the poverty line. The immediate focus of the administration has thus been: ensuring the robust provision of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people; sustaining ceasefire lines to prevent further violence; and providing the necessary resources to support and demonstrate our continued commitment to the enduring defeat of ISIS. If confirmed, I commit to working to advance efforts to promote progress toward a political resolution within the parameters of UNSCR 2254.

Question. U.S. Syria policy is broadly governed by UNSCR 2254 and associated sanctions regimes. Does Bashar al Assad's expanded military control and the de facto ceasefire change alter the prospects of a political settlement under UNSCR 2254? Do we need a new construct apart from UNSCR 2254 for Syria policy?

Answer. The Assad regime controls some 70 percent of Syrian territory, but that increased exercise of control has not provided the regime any greater legitimacy, given the terrible record of the past decade. The United States remains focused on three priorities: ensuring the robust provision of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people; sustaining ceasefire lines to prevent further violence; and providing the necessary resources to support and demonstrate our continued commitment to the enduring defeat of ISIS (); these priorities fall within the larger framework of advancing a political settlement to secure the future stability of the Syrian people, however remote that settlement appears at this time. If confirmed, I will continue to engage diplomatically to mitigate the Syrian people's suffering and press for accountability for the crimes against humanity committed by the regime. The United States will remain engaged with the U.N., our allies, and other international partners to encourage all efforts to advance the political track. To this end, the United States has been working with our partners and allies to support U.N. Special Envoy Geir Pedersen's efforts to advance the political process in Geneva.

Question. What is the linkage between U.S. troop levels in Syria, countering the Islamic State, blunting Iranian designs, influencing Turk and Russian Syria calculus, and associated impacts on political UNSCR 2254 discussions?

Answer. The U.S. military mission in Syria is there for one mission: preventing an ISIS resurgence. The mission requires demonstrated U.S. commitment and continued U.S. stabilization assistance to our partners. The Syrian Democratic Forces cannot continue to take on ISIS without U.S. support. The administration will continue to work with Turkey on our shared objectives in Syria, while addressing areas of disagreement. 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 advancing a political resolution to the conflict, as laid out in UNSCR 2254. If confirmed, I will use all diplomatic tools available to ensure that the political process moves forward.

Question. What relative effect would a U.S. troop withdrawal have on U.S. influence over future negotiations?

Answer. The United States continues to retain a limited military presence in NE Syria for the campaign against ISIS in partnership with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and is deeply committed to this partnership. The SDF cannot continue to root out ISIS terrorists on its own or guard the tens of thousands of ISIS detainees who are still in their custody, without U.S. support. Furthermore, preventing a resurgence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, as well as its branches and networks beyond the Middle East, demands revitalized U.S. engagement, along with our 82 partners and allies within the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

Question. The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act is intended to prevent rehabilitation of the Assad regime, seek accountability for the regime's atrocities, and advance a political solution to the conflict. Please provide your views on the role of Caesar legislation in furthering U.S. objectives in Syria.

Answer. The State Department is committed to advancing accountability for atrocities committed by the Assad regime, as well as for abuses by terrorist organizations and other parties in Syria. The Caesar Act, and our other Syria and Syria-related or applicable sanctions authorities, are important tools to press for accountability and limit the ability of the Assad regime and others to fuel or profit from the ongoing conflict. Members of Congress spoke clearly on this issue when they voted for the Caesar Act. On July 28, the Biden-Harris administration imposed sanctions in

the spirit of the Caesar Act on Assad regime institutions and officials implicated in human rights abuses, illustrating the administration's push for accountability and justice for victims. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools and authorities to target persons perpetrating human rights abuses in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime.

Question. Turkey's objectives in northeast Syria run counter to U.S. interests while we tacitly support their activities in the northwest. How do we reconcile and balance Syria and Turkey policy? Can you balance Syria-Turkey policy without finding a Kurdish solution?

Answer. Turkey is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, and we share an interest in sustainably ending the conflict in Syria. The United States will continue to work together with Turkey toward our shared objectives in Syria and to address areas of disagreement. Turkey has remained an important partner in ensuring Syrians have access to life-saving assistance, as demonstrated by Ankara's advocacy for the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2585 to reauthorize the provision of cross-border humanitarian assistance through Turkey into northwest Syria. The United States will work together with Turkey and our local Syrian partners for the safety and security of U.S. forces, partner forces, and civilians.

Question. The U.N. experts report on Libya accused the warring parties and their international backers—the United Arab Emirates, Russia, and Egypt on one side and Turkey and Qatar on the other—of violating the arms embargo with total impunity. Similarly, the issue of foreign mercenaries has plagued the run-up to Libya's December elections. How do you plan to address reported violations of the U.N. arms embargo? How do you impose costs on arms embargo violators without harming U.S. objectives in other areas? How do you impose costs on mercenaries and their sponsors?

Answer. Ensuring the rights of all Libyans to choose their leaders is critical as Libyans seek to regain their sovereignty after years of destructive foreign interventions. The October 23, 2020, ceasefire agreement calls for respecting the U.N. arms embargo and for the removal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. For the first time in many years, there is a broad international consensus on both the ceasefire agreement and the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum's roadmap for presidential and parliamentary elections in December. This consensus includes some, if not all, of those who previously engaged in supporting Libyan factions against each other. I am committed to working with the interim Libyan Government, regional partners, and the U.N. to support the ceasefire agreement and its full implementation as called for in UNSCR 2570, including the immediate withdrawal of all foreign military forces, foreign fighters, proxy groups, and mercenaries. Holding the December elections is a U.S. priority, as a new national government will be able to make informed, sovereign decisions, including on defense issues.

Question. While current policy has been to publicize Russian adventurism in Libya, how does the United States impose real costs for Russia's use of private military contractors, i.e. Wagner, in Libya?

Answer. Russia has increased its use of private military companies like the Wagner Group in disparate parts of the globe, to destructive and destabilizing effect; their use represents an attempt to increase Russian influence while providing the Kremlin with a thin veil of deniability. The United States has sanctioned PMC Wagner and its personnel, including its president, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, and has publicized Wagner activities in Libya and sub-Saharan Africa. The U.S. Government also supports the work of the U.N. Panel of Experts to identify violations of the arms embargo. The U.S. Government continues to support the Libyan-defined path towards elections, which could pave the way for a new Government to establish control over its territory, an essential step for removing foreign forces.

Question. Egypt is located at a strategic crossroads between the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Africa, remains an important U.S. partner in the region, and is important to Israel's security. However, in light of Egypt's growing cooperation with Russia and reports of potential Su-35 sales, is Egypt pivoting irrevocably towards Russia?

Answer. Egypt is a strategic partner for the United States and the bilateral defense relationship—more than four decades old—advances important U.S. national interests. Egypt's recent decision to apply a billion dollars of its own national funds towards refurbishment of its Apache helicopters, the largest ever nationally funded procurement of U.S. defense articles, underlines that Egypt, too, recognizes the strategic nature of the bilateral relationship. Cairo still views the United States as its security partner of choice, but we unquestionably face intensified competition in the

defense procurement arena. Over the last decade, Egypt has been diversifying its arms purchases, including with French, German, and Italian procurements. The administration continues to reinforce the advantages of purchasing U.S. systems, including in terms of quality and interoperability with U.S. and regional partners. In the case of the potential acquisition of Su-35 fighter aircraft or other major new military equipment from Russia, the administration has emphasized the serious risk of triggering mandatory sanctions under CAATSA Section 231. We have by no means lost the battle for influence and primacy of position. That said, the U.S. Government must continue to focus energy on dissuading Egypt from potential significant Russian arms purchases.

Question. The Egyptians cite holds under the Obama administration for their outreach to Russia. Similarly, the Biden administration recently held \$170M in FMF conditioned on political prisoners. Please provide details of the cases associated with the administration's FMF hold and the implications of holding FMF over non-American imprisonments.

Answer. Secretary Blinken recently decided to condition the use of \$130 million in FMF on the Government of Egypt fulfilling specific human rights-related requests, which have been the subject of a private dialogue. The Biden-Harris administration has engaged with the Government of Egypt privately to communicate these requests, and believes this approach affords the best prospects for making serious progress on this important set of issues.

Question. Would you characterize a potential Egyptian purchase of Su-35s from Russia as a significant transaction as described under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the relevant State Department offices and U.S. Government agencies to closely review any delivery of Su-35 aircraft from Russia as potentially a significant transaction under Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act.

Question. Have the Abraham Accords set conditions for a renewed Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) or a derivative? What multilateral structures you suggest to maintain stability in the Middle East while simultaneously reducing U.S. commitment?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to helping Israel build partnerships that further integrate it into the region. Any sustainable regional economic and security dialogue will need to include Israel, and normalization efforts have opened that door. If confirmed, I will use diplomacy to press for a structured regional dialogue—with support from other members of the United Nations Security Council—that explores ways to reduce tensions, create pathways to de-escalation, and manage mistrust, particularly between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Question. Would these multilateral structures force the United States to rely on imperfect partners with imperfect human rights records? How does the United States strike the appropriate balance between U.S. presence and reliance on imperfect partners to maintain security and accomplish U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The President has made clear that the administration will not give our partners in the Middle East a blank check to pursue policies at odds with American interests and values. If confirmed, I will have frank conversations with our partners about our elevation of human rights as a foreign policy priority. The deep and strategic relationships between the United States and our closest regional partners allows us to advance regional security and engage in a constructive dialogue on human rights that will make our relationships stronger and more sustainable. If confirmed, I will pursue both while supporting our closest partners in the face of threats to their security.

Question. During a November 2019 primary debate, then President-elect Biden said he would limit arms sales to Saudi Arabia and make them the "pariah that they are." President Biden has since suspended offensive arms sales to the kingdom and ceased offensive support to the Kingdom's operations in Yemen (although this was largely symbolic). Isolating Saudi Arabia would likely have negative consequences for U.S.-Saudi counterterrorism cooperation, would diminish U.S. efforts to improve Saudi Arabia's human rights record, and would eliminate Saudi Arabia's potentially helpful role in a broader Middle Eastern multilateral security construct.

- How do you frame the U.S. Saudi relationship in a manner that best promotes U.S. national security interests and doesn't push Saudi Arabia to [the People's Republic of] China ?

Answer. Saudi Arabia remains a key Middle East partner of the United States and can play a constructive role in resolving regional disputes and conflicts, as well as contribute to solutions to global challenges such as climate change. U.S.-Saudi counterterrorism cooperation over many decades has saved countless lives, and directly contributed to the fight to defeat ISIS. The U.S. commitment to support Saudi Arabia in defending its territory, home to more than 70,000 U.S. citizens, is a cornerstone of our strategic partnership and is unmatched by any potential rival to U.S. interests in the region. The United States also needs this partnership to reflect our values. If confirmed, I will support the administration's recalibration of the U.S.-Saudi relationship to bring greater transparency and accountability to it, while anchoring human rights on the bilateral agenda and preserving our underlying strategic partnership in everything from counterterrorism, to pushing back against Iranian malign activities, to higher education and climate change. This is a multifaceted and deep-rooted partnership that must address areas of concern and advance areas of shared opportunity.

United Arab Emirates Policy

UAE's Role in the Middle East

Question. UAE has served as an important U.S. partner in the Middle East and Afghanistan. UAE led efforts to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel under the Abraham Accords, and has a deep economic relationship with the United States. What is the UAE's role in the broader Middle East vis-à-vis U.S. national interests?

Answer. The UAE has been one of our closest economic, diplomatic, and security partners in the Middle East. It has built some of the most effective institutions and companies in the region and demonstrated that it can play a constructive role in resolving or de-escalating regional conflicts. The UAE Government provided tremendous support to Operation Allies Refuge, housing, feeding and caring for thousands of Americans and Afghans whom the U.S. Government removed from harm's way, as they made their way to the United States. The UAE has shown, in its historic agreement to establish relations with Israel, as well as its productive recent diplomatic efforts with Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, that it can contribute meaningfully to a more peaceful Middle East and broader region. That is not to say that the U.S.-UAE relationship has not faced challenges. The 2017 Gulf rift divided U.S. partners in the region; the UAE's and Qatar's animosity exacerbated conflicts in Libya and the Horn of Africa. Doha and Abu Dhabi have made significant progress in reconciling these differences since the Al Ula Declaration of January 2021, which formally brought the Gulf rift to an end. If confirmed, I will encourage continued work to repair relations between these two important U.S. partners, and will look to the UAE to continue its close and multifaceted partnership with the United States.

Question. How does the United States moderate UAE's often expeditionary Muslim Brotherhood-oriented foreign policy and encourage it to take a more productive role?

Answer. The UAE has been a capable, productive diplomatic and security partner for the United States for decades. That is the case today as well, on issues such as Libya and in the UAE's helpful efforts on the fraught issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, an issue that has threatened to bring Egypt and Sudan into outright conflict with Ethiopia. While we do not always agree with the UAE on its course of action, our history of collaborative work—including on multiple security operations, from Afghanistan to the campaign to defeat ISIS—provides the U.S. Government with ample influence. Experience in Yemen and Libya has also taught the UAE important lessons about the ease of getting into conflicts and the difficulty of exiting from them. From defense cooperation to bilateral trade to diplomatic work to deepen the regional benefits of the Abraham Accords, I see significant benefits that can be achieved via collaborative work with Abu Dhabi.

UAE, Russia and China

Question. Despite being a key U.S. partner in the region, and central to normalization efforts with Israel, UAE also has a history of deepening cooperation with Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) that runs counter to U.S. interests. How does the department plan to address the UAE's partnership with Russia and [the People's Republic of] China?

Answer. Several U.S. partners in the Middle East have deepened cooperation with Russia and the PRC in recent years. The administration has been clear that the United States has no issue with normal economic relations. Some areas of cooperation with these two countries, however, run up against U.S. interests, where they pose a threat to the security of sensitive weapons systems, U.S. defense and com-

mercial technology, and information technology. If confirmed, I plan to address these issues forthrightly with the United Arab Emirates and other partners to convey U.S. red lines. We will not compromise on these issues.

Question. Please provide an update on UAE's relationship with the PRC as it relates to the F-35 sale.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has signaled its intent to move forward with these proposed defense sales to the UAE, even as the two governments continue discussions to ensure there are unmistakably clear mutual understandings with respect to Emirati obligations and actions before, during, and after delivery. Congress and the administration are focused on the same important issues about this sale, and if confirmed I will ensure they continue to be addressed. Projected delivery dates on these sales, if implemented, would be several years in the future. Thus, the administration anticipates a robust and sustained dialogue with the UAE to ensure that any defense transfers meet mutual strategic objectives to build a stronger, interoperable, and more capable security partnership and are employed in a manner consistent with international human rights law and the law of armed conflict.

The UAE continues to be a key regional partner for the U.S. Government, and its defense procurements help regional security. If confirmed, I will work to ensure a continued constructive U.S.-UAE relationship while ensuring the UAE understands and respects the administration's concern about the PRC's efforts to increase its strategic cooperation with the UAE.

UAE and Libya

Question. In your assessment, how closely are the Emiratis coordinating with the Russian state, as well as its subsidiaries like Wagner, in Libya? What forms does this coordination take? Are there instances in which it has escalated into concrete and tangible support, whether that be to the Russian state or Russian-aligned operators?

Answer. The United States has called on all external parties, including the UAE, to respect Libyan sovereignty and the October 23, 2020 ceasefire agreement, which called on all foreign forces and mercenaries to depart the country. The UAE has supported forces aligned with General Haftar in recent years. The Defense Department's Office of the Inspector General reported in 2020 that the UAE may have supported the Wagner Group in Libya, as well. Recently, the administration has urged the UAE, in alignment with the international community's consensus, to use its influence with any Libyan political figures to help resolve the current impasse over the electoral framework, so that presidential and parliamentary elections may be held on time in December 2021.

UAE and Syria

Question. There is growing concern over the prospect of the UAE normalizing ties with Bashar al-Assad. Do you share this concern? Are there tools the U.S. can employ to prevent the UAE from normalizing relations with the Assad regime, including through the provision of reconstruction funds to Syria?

Answer. I am concerned that any government would consider normalizing ties with the Assad regime in Damascus without any measure of progress on the myriad requirements laid out in UNSCR 2254. The United States will not reestablish or upgrade our diplomatic relations with the Assad regime, and will continue to consult closely with our partners and allies in the region on the best way to achieve progress in Syria. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the UAE and other regional partners to consider what they might require of the Assad regime—on behalf of the Syrian people—before any potential engagement with Damascus. Syrians consistently say that the issue of first priority for them is gaining an accounting for missing and detained family members, for example.

Question. In your assessment, is there more the U.S. can do diplomatically to end the war in Yemen? If so, what?

Answer. The United States welcomes the appointment of the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg; his appointment, and his announced intention to focus on bottom-up political work in Yemen presents additional opportunities to muster the requisite pressure on the Houthis to agree to a national ceasefire. The U.S. Government remains committed to supporting a U.N.-led peace process to achieve a durable resolution to the conflict, but a ceasefire is a necessary starting point. Sustained engagement by U.S. Special Envoy Lenderking has helped create unprecedented international consensus on ending this war through inclusive political talks. If confirmed, I will work with him and the U.N. Special Envoy to urge

all parties to engage with the U.N., with each other, and with civil society, without pre-conditions. I believe there is an opportunity to achieve peace in Yemen and we must seize it.

Question. Do you believe UNSCR 2216 properly reflects the current context in Yemen? Will the new administration seek to modify this UNSCR?

Answer. The administration is committed to exploring all possible options, taking into consideration the timing, sequencing, and ramifications of any new resolution. The United States continues to work with partners in the region, U.N. Security Council members, and the U.N. Special Envoy to advance the peace process. Revitalized diplomatic engagement in support of the U.N.-led peace effort is crucial for ending the war. A new resolution may be appropriate after further progress has been made in inclusive political negotiations, which remains a key objective of the administration. If confirmed, I will continue to strongly support the targeted arms embargo and sanctions designations of UNSCR 2216 as key elements of the UNSCR 2140 Yemen sanctions regime.

Question. Despite the August 4 explosions and unrest that followed, Lebanon's political elites have continued to cling to power. Current policy has been to withhold broader financial assistance absent reforms targeting corruption and transparency. Please describe your policy objectives in Lebanon and how they differ from previous approaches.

Answer. Lebanon is facing accelerating political, economic, security, and public health crises, made worse by the failure of Lebanese political elites to form a government and institute critical economic reforms. The United States, in coordination with like-minded partners, has been pressing Lebanese leaders for the past 13 months to form a government; those efforts appear to have paid off. The formation of a government under PM-designate Najib Mikati is only the first step; the Government must take on structural reforms, and work to end endemic corruption. That is the focus of U.S. diplomatic efforts, in tandem with other like-minded regional and European partners. Given the dire humanitarian situation, the United States also continues to provide support directly to those in most need and is working to bolster key legitimate institutions that can strengthen Lebanese sovereignty in the face of the malign influence of Hizballah. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage key partners in Europe and the Gulf to assist the Lebanese people and keep up their political engagement in a united effort to push Lebanese leaders to make long-overdue reforms.

Question. What conditions would Lebanon need to meet in order to qualify for U.S. financial support? If confirmed, will you continue sanctions against corrupt and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) linked officials to advance these reforms?

Answer. The formation of a government was just the first step in Lebanon's long road to arrest the spiraling economic crisis; the next steps will necessarily include enacting reforms to address the economic crisis, bring more accountability and transparency to a system that is rife with corruption, and keep elections on track for next year. The Mikati Government must act, and act swiftly. If confirmed, I stand ready to support the new government with the hard work ahead. If confirmed, I will also support efforts to use economic tools, such as targeted sanctions, to pursue Hizballah's financial networks and hold accountable those individuals who impede a reform agenda. I will also urge other countries to take national-level action to designate, ban, or otherwise restrict the group.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to working to ensure the \$11B in CEDRE, IMF, 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 work with the international community to ensure that Lebanese leaders understand that meaningful reforms remain crucial to unlocking long-term structural support to Lebanon.

Question. Many in Congress see the Lebanese Armed Forces as a vital counterweight to the influence of LH and Lebanon's legitimate security guarantor. What role do you see for the LAF in Lebanon?

Answer. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) are the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon, are reliable U.S. partners, and are an important counterweight to Hizballah's malign influence. The LAF also remain the only cross-confessional institution with broad support from all elements of Lebanese society, transcending sectarian and party affiliations. A strong, stable LAF undermines Hizballah's assertion

that its arms are necessary to defend Lebanon from external aggression. If confirmed, I will ensure the LAF remain critical partners for the United States.

Question. Do you commit to continued FMF assistance to the LAF, barring information that indicates otherwise?

Answer. The LAF is one of our primary partners in achieving U.S. objectives in Lebanon. FMF assistance has become especially critical as the LAF has assumed responsibilities beyond its normal remit in response to the compounding crises facing the country. If confirmed, I commit to using FMF assistance to further the strong partnership between the United States and the LAF in support of our security objectives.

Question. Will you commit to consult with Congress before modifications to LAF assistance?

Answer. U.S. foreign policy is optimized when there is constant communication and collaboration between the executive and legislative branches of government. If confirmed, I pledge to continue our cooperation on these issues, and I will work through the interagency and with Congress to ensure the delivery of appropriated funds to Lebanon.

Question. Despite efforts to the pivot to the Pacific, competition with China must also occur outside the IndoPacific region and on a global scale. China's Belt and Road initiatives are prospering in Africa, South Asia, and are making lasting inroads in the Middle East. Given a diminished U.S. commitment to the Middle East under the Biden administration in favor of the IndoPacific, how do you plan to contend with the growth of Chinese strategic expansion?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to rebuilding and restoring U.S. partnerships across the globe, including in the Middle East. This is not a diminishment of the U.S. commitment. If confirmed, I will continue to demonstrate to our partners the value of a sustained and strategic partnership with the United States through diplomacy, economic engagement, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges. This stands in contrast to the transactional nature of investments by the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The United States distinguishes itself from Beijing's state-led approach by promoting private-sector driven alternatives. The United States focuses on partnerships and on strengthening local capacity to promote development, innovation, and prosperity. The United States will continue to promote entrepreneurship, transparency, good governance, fair practices, and internationally recognized environmental, social, and labor standards.

Question. How does the United States remain the partner of choice in the Middle East given CCP encroachment and lack of Chinese focus on human rights issues?

Answer. U.S. values—our support for essential freedoms of expression and worship, as well as our emphasis on respect for universal human rights—offer a potent counterpoint to PRC-style autocracy. U.S. higher education and entrepreneurship, and American culture are also powerful draws for the societies of the Middle East, and if confirmed, I will continue to promote them through energetic advocacy and programming. U.S. leadership in addressing global challenges like the pandemic and climate change is also a key source of our strength as a country.

The Biden-Harris administration is leading as well on efforts to encourage de-escalation in the region, and with increasing success. The Gulf rift of 2017 is largely mended, there are encouraging signs of outreach between previously adversarial countries like Egypt and Turkey, and a re-alignment of regional countries around a common effort to resolve conflicts in Yemen and Libya. The U.S. effort resonates with countries across the region, demonstrating the value of a long-term strategic partnership with the United States.

Question. The U.S. has growing concerns with China's economic relationship with Israel. Given the relative weakness on Israel's committee on foreign investment and issues highlighted by the CCP's involvement in Haifa port, how do you effectively decouple the CCP from Israel?

Answer. The administration remains deeply concerned by attempts by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use technology through acquisitions and investment in Israel. The administration welcomes efforts by all countries to enhance investment in quality infrastructure development. I believe that such an investment must be within the confines of strong regulatory structures that ensure all companies investing in Israel do so in a responsible manner, consistent with international practices, that benefits the people of Israel, and does not undermine Israeli national security. While Israel's establish-

ment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, given the voluntary nature of its coverage and its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to minimize exposure to national security risks, including the acquisitions of critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. The Department of Defense recently disbanded the Defeat ISIS Task Force and dismissed the Task Force Director. Similarly, State Department eliminated the Special Envoy to Counter ISIS (SECI) as an independent entity and placed the office under the CT Bureau. What are your views on the threat posed by ISIS?

Answer. ISIS in Syria and Iraq remains a serious threat and ensuring its enduring defeat remains a central priority of the Biden-Harris administration. The dual-hatting of the CT Coordinator and Special Envoy does not reflect 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 Defeat-ISIS mission within the established CT Bureau architecture. Doing so enables the Defeat-ISIS campaign to more effectively leverage CT Bureau civilian counterterrorism capacity-building assets to counter ISIS branches and networks globally.

Question. Thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and their families remain in Syrian Democratic Forces prisons or makeshift camps in Syria. Repatriation efforts to return these fighters and families to their countries of origin have been wildly unsuccessful. These fighters and their families represent a strategic vulnerability to the region. How will you address repatriation, de-radicalization, and demobilization efforts?

Answer. The best long-term solution for foreign terrorist fighters and their family members is repatriation, followed by prosecution, rehabilitation, and/or reintegration, as appropriate. If confirmed, I intend to deepen our diplomatic outreach to press countries of origin to repatriate their citizens from northeast Syria. I will collaborate with the U.S. interagency in their work to support countries' efforts to repatriate their nationals, including through U.S. Government assistance with logistics and planning of repatriations, such as use of U.S. Government assets to transport foreign fighters and associated family members out of the region, and assistance in building partners' counterterrorism capacities for investigations, prosecutions, and rehabilitation.

Question. What civilian security, democracy, and human rights programs would you highlight or pursue to address the seeds of conflict that led to the Islamic State's rise and allure and have not been effectively addressed?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration understands stability and its drivers are key to enabling our local partners in Syria to focus on fighting ISIS and ensuring its enduring defeat. In one of its first acts, the administration lifted the U.S. freeze on stabilization assistance for Syria. In March, the administration announced almost \$50 million for U.S. stabilization efforts in northeast Syria and will continue these efforts with FY 2021 resources. U.S. assistance in northeast Syria prioritizes stabilization activities that contribute to the restoration of daily life by closing gaps in local authority capacities; supporting transitional justice, justice and accountability, and civil society programs; and addressing vulnerabilities previously exploited by ISIS.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BARBARA A. LEAF BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. The Israel-Gaza conflict continues to flare up, according to recent news reports that Israel's military bombed Palestinian militant weapons sites in the Gaza Strip early Sunday, August 22 in response to a violent demonstration on Saturday August 21 at the perimeter fence that left an Israeli police officer critically injured. As Assistant Secretary for NEA, what recommendations would you make to President Biden regarding next steps to help manage the tensions there?

Answer. The May 21 Gaza ceasefire has mostly held, but we are engaging multiple partners who have a role to play in calming the situation. The August 21 protests ended with the death of one Israeli police officer, as well as the death and injuries of a number of Palestinians. There have been Israeli airstrikes in response to

incendiary balloons and rocket attacks from Gaza. The situation remains tense because many of the factors that contributed to the May violence remain unresolved. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as international partners, in maintaining calm in the West Bank and Gaza and keeping flashpoint issues in Jerusalem from reigniting the situation. President Biden has been clear in his conviction that a negotiated two-state solution would best secure the future of a democratic, Jewish Israel, and provide equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity to both Israelis and Palestinians. I would recommend an affirmative and practical approach that encourages constructive, positive and tangible steps by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities to keep the possibility of a negotiated two-state solution alive.

Question. As Assistant Secretary for NEA, how are you planning on addressing the dismal human rights situation in Egypt even after the administration decided against appropriately responding to the Congressional provision?

Answer. I share your concerns about the human rights situation in Egypt. The Biden administration has made clear its intention to elevate the role of human rights in our foreign policy, and that includes in the U.S.-Egyptian relationship. The Secretary's decision on FMF—the first time a Secretary of State has not waived the Congressionally-mandated human rights certification requirement—is only one facet of the Department's engagement on human rights. The Department supports greater space for civil society and human rights defenders, and freedom of expression. The administration's human rights dialogue with the Egyptian Government is focused on seeing steady, enduring progress on such fundamental rights.

Question. As Assistant Secretary for NEA, how will you address these troubling reports out of Tunisia and continue to stand on the side of Tunisia's democracy?

Answer. The United States shares the Tunisian people's goal of a democratic government that is responsive to the country's needs. If confirmed, I will urge President Saïed to appoint a new head of government to address Tunisia's immediate economic and health crises, announce concrete plans for a return to the democratic path, and pursue reforms through an inclusive process that recognizes the Tunisian people's demand for reforms that improve the functioning of their democracy. These steps must include diverse political actors and civil society as well as respect for the rule of law and fundamental freedoms.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BARBARA A. LEAF BY TODD YOUNG

Question. What is your view of the U.S.-Israel relationship? If confirmed, what will you do to maintain and strengthen this relationship?

Answer. Israel is a critical partner to the United States and the two are united by shared values and strategic interests; those include a commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security. Israel is a stable country in an unstable region, and the U.S. Government's closest security partner in countering a broad spectrum of threats, ranging from cyber-attacks to Iran's destabilizing proliferation of advanced weaponry to its network of proxies. With an open and free society that is largely accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals, Israel has been dedicated to the cause of women's empowerment and gender equality since the founding of the state. If confirmed, I will commit to maintaining and strengthening all aspects of this relationship.

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?

Answer. Yes, I fully support Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks and strongly condemn these attacks, no matter where they come from.

Question. What is the status of the recently notified U.S. direct commercial sale of \$735 million in U.S.-origin precision-guided munitions to Israel?

Answer. I understand the notification was approved and authorizes the export of precision-guided munitions, including any technical data and defense services, to Israel to support weapons integration, flight tests, and hardware delivery of Joint Direct Attack Munition variants and Small Diameter Bomb Increment I variants.

Question. Do you support maintaining the Palestine Affairs Unit at the Embassy in Jerusalem? How would opening a separate consulate in Jerusalem serve U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leadership. The U.S. Government has been clear that our Embassy will remain in Jerusalem. Currently, the Palestinian Affairs Unit within the embassy is the primary point of contact with the Palestinian people. In May, Secretary Blinken stated “the United States will be moving forward with the process to reopen our consulate in Jerusalem. That’s an important way for our country to engage with and provide support for the Palestinian people,” I understand that this is part of the administration’s renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership.

Question. What would be your strategy for strengthening the Abraham Accords while persuading more countries to normalize relations with Israel? How would you build on the success of the Abraham Accords?

Answer. As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have said, this administration welcomes and strongly supports the Abraham Accords and 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 U.S. Government interagency, to deepen existing agreements and urge other countries to normalize relations with Israel.

If confirmed, I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to engaging with Israel’s new partners in the region to find ways to improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike to help create the conditions for a durable two-state solution.

Question. What do you believe are the most pressing security challenges Israel faces, and what role do those threats play in convincing regional partners that Israel is the not the cause of instability in the region?

Answer. Israel believes Iran is the greatest threat to its security. As Secretary Blinken and other senior U.S. officials have said, the United States 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. An Iran with a nuclear weapon is likely to act even more provocatively when it comes to these issues. The administration has fundamental problems with Iran’s actions across a series of issues—including its support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, and its destabilizing actions in the region. Our partners in the region share a similar concern.

Question. If confirmed, how would you seek to use your connection and experience in the region to garner more regional support for the vital humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people?

Answer. I am proud that the United States continues to lead the humanitarian response to this crisis, with over \$4 billion worth of assistance provided to the Yemeni people since 2014. If confirmed, I will work closely with key countries in the region and around the world, as well as the United Nations, to ensure pledges are disbursed, humanitarian organizations are adequately funded, and the needs of the most vulnerable Yemenis are addressed in a coordinated and effective manner. I will also work with the U.N. and other partners to promote unfettered access for humanitarian assistance throughout Yemen to ensure aid reaches those in need.

Question. What would be your approach, alongside Tim Lenderking, in breaking the diplomatic stalemate that exists in Yemen?

Answer. The U.S. Government has welcomed the appointment of Hans Grundberg, the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen, and remains committed to supporting a U.N.-led peace process to achieve a durable resolution to the conflict. Sustained engagement by U.S. Special Envoy Lenderking has helped create unprecedented international consensus on ending this war through inclusive political talks. If confirmed, I will urge all parties to engage with the Special Envoy, the U.N., with each other, and with civil society, without pre-conditions. I will also ensure the governments of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Yemen are taking the steps necessary to advance peace, and will work with key international and regional partners to press the Houthis to cooperate with the U.N.-led process. We have an opportunity to achieve peace in Yemen, and we must seize it.

Question. Do you believe that the Iranian-backed Houthis desire a political settlement? Or does Iran desire to maintain a footprint and instability from which to target Saudi Arabia? Do you believe that the Houthis have the autonomy to decide this for themselves?

Answer. The Houthis remain singularly focused on their military offensive against Marib, the greatest impediment to U.N. and U.S. peace efforts. The offensive is also exacerbating Yemen's humanitarian crisis, threatening directly some one million IDPs and other civilians in harm's way. The Houthi leadership must show they are committed to a political settlement by engaging with the new U.N. Special Envoy in good faith. In addition to continuing to prosecute the war inside Yemen, the Houthis, with Iranian support, have also launched more than 240 cross-border air attacks on Saudi Arabia this year alone, endangering the Saudi people and more than 70,000 U.S. citizens residing in the Kingdom. If Iran wants to show it can be a responsible actor in the region, Yemen is a good place to start, by ending lethal aid and training to the Houthis.

Question. Denying the Houthis access to key weapons and technology from Iran is critical to both reducing the threat the group poses to our regional partners and pressuring the group to cease attacks and negotiate in good faith. Do you agree? If so, how should the U.S. expand cooperation with partners and allies to expose and interdict the flow of key Iranian weapons, materiel, and equipment to the Houthis?

Answer. I agree. The Houthis rely on Iranian weapons, intelligence, training, and support to conduct horrific attacks impacting civilian targets as well as infrastructure in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Denying the Houthis access to this lethal support from Iran is a critical part of the Department's regional strategy. If confirmed, I will continue with this comprehensive approach using a variety of tools—from sanctions to interdiction to support for Saudi Arabia's legitimate self-defense needs—to counter Iran's lethal aid to the Houthis and other armed groups, as well as it destabilizing behavior more broadly in the region. The Department will also continue to prioritize the implementation and enforcement of U.N. Security Council resolutions barring the unauthorized transfer of weapons to the Houthis.

Question. What are the biggest dangers Iran poses to the international community and how would you rank them in order of urgency?

Answer. The most serious threat that Iran poses globally is its untrammelled nuclear program. That is why the Biden administration prioritizes constraining Iran's program through measured, determined diplomacy. Iran poses additional threats through a spectrum of regional and global activities, including but not limited to its plots to kidnap our citizens, its abhorrent practice of using wrongfully detained Americans and foreign nationals as political tools, its support for terrorism, its lethal support to armed groups, proliferation of advanced weaponry to these groups, and its ballistic missile program. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would pose an even greater threat when it comes to these issues.

Question. Secretary Blinken has said that any replacement of JCPOA needs to be "longer and stronger." How would you define longer and stronger? What are the minimum requirements for a "longer and stronger" deal?

Answer. Iran's unchecked, unconstrained nuclear program poses a threat to global security. Constraining it is therefore the overriding priority for the United States and its P5+1 partners. To achieve that immediate objective, the administration is pursuing a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. If the Department is successful in doing so, the intent is to build on that as part of a comprehensive approach using a variety of policy tools to strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address other issues of concern.

Question. Do you believe the United States should learn any lessons from Hamas's heinous rocket campaign it unleashed on Israel in May, especially concerning Iran's destabilizing proxy campaign it is waging throughout the region?

Answer. Hamas's heinous rocket attacks on Israel in May only reinforced the Biden-Harris administration's ironclad resolve on Israel's security, including through deterring and countering Iran's destabilizing regional activities. This includes the need to work with Israel and other allies and partners to counter the flow of materiel and financial support to Hamas and other Gaza-based militant groups.

Question. Can you explain why it would be a prudent policy to pursue a nuclear agreement with Iran without doing anything to stop Iran's other destabilizing activities?

Answer. Even as the administration pursues a diplomatic effort to constrain Iran's nuclear program, it continues to address Iran's destabilizing regional activities. The Biden administration is committed to continuing to counter the threats posed by Iran using the various tools at its disposal, including sanctions, and working in close coordination with allies and partners.

Question. How can we look our partners in the face and tell them convincingly that we are committed to their security when we permit Iran to keep funding terrorist proxies, to keep launching attacks on international shipping and energy infrastructure, to keep testing ballistic missiles?

Answer. Iran's destabilizing regional activities are nothing new. Tehran has posed such threats for decades, across multiple administrations. The Biden administration is unwavering in its commitment to its allies and partners and continues to engage closely with them as part of a comprehensive approach that includes sanctions, interdiction, defense and intelligence cooperation, and support for Israel's freedom of action to counter Iran's destabilizing activities. In fact, the administration's sustained diplomatic engagement with allies and partners has ensured a more united, better coordinated, and more consistent approach in countering the Iranian threat and advancing our shared goals in the region.

Question. In your view, are the LAF a viable counterweight to Hezbollah's influence within Lebanon?

Answer. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon, a reliable U.S. partner, and an important counterweight to Hizballah's malign influence in the country. A strong, stable LAF undermines Hizballah's assertion that its arms are necessary to defend Lebanon from external aggression. The LAF remains the only cross-confessional institution with broad support from all aspects of Lebanese society, transcending sectarian and party alliances.

Question. Since the U.S. began funding the Lebanese Armed Forces, have they taken any meaningful steps to confront Hezbollah?

Answer. According to a December 2019 GAO Report, the LAF's border security and counterterrorism capabilities notably improved from 2013 to 2018. With the support of U.S. training and equipment, the LAF has defeated ISIS in Lebanon, reasserted control over territory along its border with Syria, and increased its presence in southern Lebanon in support of UNIFIL. These improvements undercut Hizballah's unfounded argument that its weapons are necessary to protect Lebanon's sovereignty. If confirmed, I will continue to use all the tools at our disposal to push back on Hizballah's terrorist activities and destabilizing influence in Lebanon and across the region.

Question. Given the deterioration of the Lebanese state, can you assure the committee that U.S. equipment provided to the LAF will not fall into the hands of Hezbollah?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to undertake rigorous measures to minimize the likelihood that Hizballah or any other terrorist organization will benefit from our assistance, including thorough oversight, vetting, and robust risk mitigation practices carried out by the U.S. Government and implementing partners. The LAF is a strong U.S. partner with an exemplary end-use monitoring record. The Department continues to hold the LAF accountable for its use of U.S. assistance funds and have no reason to believe that any U.S. equipment has fallen into the hands of Hizballah.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BARBARA A. LEAF BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Just last week Lebanon announced a new government formation under Prime Minister Mikati. While this is a positive step in the formation of a government, I remain concerned about the deep economic crisis in the country.

- What are U.S. priorities in engaging with the new Government? How can the U.S. help as the country's economy continues to collapse further?

Answer. Lebanon must implement significant reforms to address the spiraling economic crisis it faces, on an urgent basis and in a sustainable way. If confirmed, I will build on the work by the Department and our embassy, and in concert with key partners, to keep up the pressure on PM Mikati's new government to implement long-overdue economic and governance reforms; these reforms are demanded by the

Lebanese people, and should be done ideally in partnership with the IMF, Lebanese civil society, and other key actors. The Mikati Government should also prepare the country to hold parliamentary elections in May 2022 as scheduled. The United States and our international partners have been clear that Lebanon's leaders must act in order to unlock potential financing programs and structural support, but the hard work must start immediately. The United States stands with the Lebanese people, and will continue to support it and key institutions, to help the most vulnerable weather the crisis.

Question. How can we work with civil society, as well as the Lebanese Government, to support transparent and efficient parliamentary elections next spring?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to hold PM Mikati's new Government accountable for ensuring transparent parliamentary elections are held next spring. I will also support our existing programs aimed at assisting reform-minded actors to respond to the needs of citizens through transparent and democratic processes. If confirmed, I will ensure my team works closely with Lebanese civil society, which deserves our continued support as it both holds the new Government accountable and assists it in implementing needed reforms, as well as election monitoring initiatives. I will also work with the international community to press for a transparent electoral process to obtain credible elections that represent the will of the people, untainted by foreign malign influence.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BARBARA A. LEAF BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. Please transmit copies of those emails. The Washington Free Beacon reviewed at least two of them.

Answer. As a nominee I am not in a position to act on behalf of the State Department with regard to its records. I take my responsibilities with respect to Congressional oversight seriously and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to respond to your concerns.

Question. Please transmit any other internal guidance - emails, memos, cables, notes, decision memos, briefing papers, instructions, etc. - that instructed staffers not to use the phrase "Abraham Accords."

Answer. As a nominee I am not in a position to act on behalf of the State Department with regard to its records. I take my responsibilities with respect to Congressional oversight seriously and if confirmed I look forward to working with you to respond to your concerns.

Question. In your testimony on September 15 you indicated that you are supportive of the Abraham Accords. Can you commit to ensuring that any guidelines or policies prohibiting using the phrase "Abraham Accords" are revised and reversed?

Answer. My understanding is that the Biden-Harris administration refers to the agreements known as the Abraham Accords as such. I certainly do. If confirmed, I will continue to use that moniker.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, the administration gives great weight to Israel's security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly 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. This administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. This administration has not altered U.S. policy on this important issue. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will 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. 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 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. 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 handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. What are the regional security opportunities for the U.S. now that Israel is part of CENTCOM?

Answer. Now that Israel is part of the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility, regional security opportunities for the United States range from enhanced communication between our two countries to expanded opportunities for regional multilateral engagements, such as exercises and planning conferences.

Question. How do you plan to maximize Israel's integration into our regional security architecture?

Answer. If confirmed, I would promote Israel's integration into our regional security architecture in close coordination with my colleagues at the Department of Defense, including CENTCOM.

Question. Please describe any new significant sanctions that have been imposed on Iran since the inauguration of President Biden.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has imposed the following Iran-related sanctions since it took office:

- On September 17, the Treasury Department sanctioned international financial networks supporting terrorism, including providing support to Lebanese Hizballah and Iran's Qods Force;
- On September 3, Treasury sanctioned an Iranian intelligence network targeting an Iranian-American activist in the United States;
- On August 13, Treasury sanctioned an oil broker network supporting the Qods Force;
- On June 10, Treasury sanctioned an international network enriching the Houthis and Qods Force in Yemen; and
- On March 9, the State Department designated Iranian officials pursuant to Section 7031(c) of the FY2021 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriation Act due to involvement in gross violations of human rights.

Question. Please describe the details of any arrangements, deals, or agreements that are being contemplated by the Biden administration to reduce pressure on Iran other than reentry into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Answer. There have been no such arrangements, deals, or agreements contemplated to reduce pressure on Iran.

Question. What measures has the Biden administration taken to insulate our diplomats from engaging with Iranian officials connected to international terrorism or who have been sanctioned?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon, and diplomacy, in coordination with our allies and regional partners, is the best path to achieve that goal. However, the U.S. Government has yet to engage in any direct discussions with the Iranian Government or its officials as their Government currently bars such interactions. Additionally, State Department policy generally limits USG personnel from interacting with Iranian officials, and specifically restricts interactions with officials known or suspected to be members of terrorist organizations or subject to sanctions designations.

Question. To what degree was the State Department aware of Ghani's departure beforehand?

Answer. I am currently not a State Department employee and am not privy to Department knowledge on this issue.

Question. Did you or any State Department officials, to your knowledge, engage in conversations with any governments under NEA's purview to request that they

provide Ghani with safe haven, including the governments of Qatar or the United Arab Emirates?

Answer. After President Ghani departed Kabul for Uzbekistan and the Government of Uzbekistan informed the U.S. of his presence on Uzbek soil and that he wished to travel onward to the UAE, the administration conveyed to both Governments of Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates that such arrangements would be a bilateral one between those governments and Ghani himself.

Question. Do you believe that it would be in America's national security interest for resources to go to the Government of Lebanon even if that government was controlled or unduly influenced by Hezbollah?

Answer. Hizballah is a terrorist organization, and the United States undertakes rigorous measures to safeguard U.S. assistance from conferring benefits to Hizballah or any other terrorist group, including thorough oversight, vetting, and robust risk mitigation practices. As part of its security assistance, the U.S. Government conducts End-Use Monitoring (EUM) to mitigate the risk of unauthorized transfer or use of U.S. technology and equipment. The Lebanese Armed Forces continues to comply fully with all EUM reporting and security requirements.

Question. On August 19, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Shea said that the Biden administration intends to waive sanctions on the Assad regime in order to provide energy to Lebanon: "There is a will to make this happen. There will be some logistical things that need to happen too, but I think that it will all fall into place fairly easily." The waiver will facilitate the transfer of gas and resources through Assad-controlled Syria and to Lebanon and its Government. Do you support waiving such sanctions?

Answer. Lebanon is currently experiencing an acute energy crisis that is having a terrible impact on critical lifesaving infrastructure such as hospitals and the water supply; the crisis needs a long-term solution, but shorter-term measures are also urgently needed, given the deleterious effect on the public. These potential bilateral and multilateral agreements proffered by regional states, which have been endorsed by the World Bank, could help Lebanon begin to address its power crisis in a sustainable and transparent manner. I understand that the Department of State is currently conferring with those partners to gain further detail on the proposals and is conferring with the Department of Treasury as well. U.S. sanctions remain an important tool to press for accountability for the Assad regime, to include on its atrocious record of human rights abuses. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Treasury and our partners to ensure that any potential deal our partners reach is consistent with our broader policy priorities and all relevant U.S. sanctions. I look forward to continuing to consult with Congress on this important issue.

Question. On September 15 you testified that the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) are an important partner in the Middle East and serve as a check against Hezbollah. Do you support calibrating support for the LAF on the degree to which it fulfills those functions? Under what conditions would you support restricting assistance to the LAF?

Answer. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon, a reliable U.S. partner, and an important counterweight to Hizballah's malign influence in the country. The LAF is also a cross-confessional institution with broad support from all aspects of Lebanese society, transcending sectarian and party alliances. A strong, stable LAF undermines Hizballah's assertion that its arms are necessary to defend Lebanon from external aggression. If confirmed, I will continue to build the LAF's capacity to serve as a counterweight to Hizballah and act in the interests of the Lebanese people.

Question. What percent of U.S. assistance to Lebanon was used for activities or operations aimed at disarming Hezbollah in 2019 and 2020? A rough estimate or a range will be sufficient.

Answer. U.S. military assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is focused on developing the LAF's capabilities and professionalism, as well as developing it as an institution that acts as a counterweight to Hizballah's influence. Since 2006, the United States has provided more than \$2.5 billion in security assistance to the LAF. This assistance has helped increase its capacity to serve as the exclusive legitimate defender of Lebanon's sovereignty and violent extremist organizations, including ISIS.

Question. What percent of U.S. assistance to Lebanon was used for activities or operations aimed at disrupting Hezbollah activities short of disarming them in 2019 and 2020, e.g. through roadblocks? A rough estimate or a range will be sufficient.

Answer. U.S. assistance to Lebanon is one of the many tools the Department uses to support the Lebanese people, civil society, and institutions critical to building a sovereign state responsive to its people's legitimate needs. U.S. security assistance also supports partners, such as the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces, that are critical to stability and security. A government that reflects the will and is able to meet the needs of all Lebanese, and security institutions that can defend Lebanese sovereignty, undermine Hizballah's illegitimate and illegal actions, as well as its malign influence in Lebanon and the region.

Question. Please describe the degree to which, in your assessment, Hezbollah continues to influence or control over the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport or facilities located within the airport.

Answer. The U.S. Government remains concerned about Hizballah's influence at ports of entry into Lebanon, including at the airport. In PM Mikati's new cabinet, a Hizballah minister was appointed Minister of Public Works and Transport.

Question. Please describe the degree to which, in your assessment, Hezbollah continues to influence or control over the Port of Beirut or facilities located within the port?

Answer. The influence Hizballah exerts over ports of entry remains of considerable concern and also denies the Lebanese people the benefit of customs revenue, which is significant given the large budget deficits Lebanon continues to face. In PM Mikati's new cabinet, a Hizballah minister was appointed as Minister of Public Works and Transport. The Department will continue to evaluate the impact of this appointment and report on the situation. To combat Hizballah's influence, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated under Executive Order 13224 Hizballah security official Wafiq Safa for acting for or on behalf of Hizballah. As head of Hizballah's security apparatus, Safa exploited Lebanon's ports and border crossings to smuggle contraband, enable Hizballah travel, and facilitate the passage of illegal drugs and weapons into the seaport of Beirut, routing certain shipments to avoid scrutiny.

Question. Is the administration withholding \$130 million in aid from Egypt on the basis of the conditions described in the *Washington Post* report? If the report is inaccurate, what parts are inaccurate?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration's goal with regard to this decision is to seek progress on human rights. The administration supports further strengthening the bilateral security and defense relationship with Egypt, while also seeking sustainable improvements in the Egyptian Government's approach to human rights. The Department has focused on specific human rights issues of concern, including cases of political detention and restrictions on civil society.

As noted in Congressional Notification 20-271 (September 14), the Secretary could not certify that Egypt is taking sustained and effective steps related to the human rights-related conditions in section 7043(a)(3)(A) of the FY 2020 SFOAA. The Department will make available \$300,000,000 in FY 2020 FMF for Egypt for counterterrorism, border security, and nonproliferation programs, consistent with the exception to the certification requirement under section 7041(a)(3)(A) of the FY 2020 SFOAA. However, because serious human rights concerns remain, the Department will not move forward with the application of \$130,000,000 of these funds to Foreign Military Sales cases for Egypt unless the Government of Egypt affirmatively addresses specific human rights-related conditions. The \$130,000,000 will not be deposited into Egypt's interest-bearing Federal Reserve Bank account and may be reprogrammed if Egypt fails to meet the conditions within the prescribed timeframe. It is the administration's goal to continue to work with Egypt as a strategic partner to encourage progress on improving respect for human rights. To this end, the Department expects that the Government of Egypt can and will meet the conditions presented to them.

While I cannot speak to the accuracy of press reports, I take seriously the authority of Congress to conduct oversight, and if confirmed I look forward to working with you on these and other important issues.

Question. Please provide a list of any individuals, including if relevant, the 16 referred to in the *Washington Post* story, who are the subject of conditions imposed on aid to Egypt. For each individual on the list, please list the following:

- Their names;
- Their organizational affiliations;
- The specific charges that the Egyptian Government has brought against them, which the U.S. is asking the Egyptians to dismiss; and

- Whether the individual is a U.S. citizen, or if not, whether the individual holds a Legal Permanent Resident Card, or if not, if the individual has applied for immigration or visa status and what that status is.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration's goal with regard to this decision on FMF is to seek progress on human rights. The administration supports further strengthening the bilateral security and defense relationship with Egypt, while also seeking sustainable improvements in the Egyptian Government's approach to human rights. The Department has focused on specific human rights issues of concern, including cases of political detention and restrictions on civil society.

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President Biden and President al-Sisi in May agreed on the importance of a constructive dialogue on human rights. Since then, the administration has pressed the Government of Egypt on multiple levels to address specific human rights concerns, including during Secretary Blinken's discussion with President al-Sisi in Cairo in May. Although the Department has and will continue to publicly raise concerns about Egypt's human rights record, administration officials have also conveyed these specific requests privately, in an effort to avoid Egyptian Government sensitivities about responding to foreign pressure. The Department anticipates hosting a ministerial Strategic Dialogue session with Egypt later this year to advance the U.S. - Egypt partnership and secure positive steps on human rights.

While I cannot speak to the accuracy of press reports, I take seriously the authority of Congress to conduct oversight, and if confirmed I look forward to working with you on these and other important matters.

Question. Additionally, for any individual on the list described above who is not a U.S. citizen, please also describe:

- The process through which the State Department or as relevant the broader interagency reviewed the cases and came to the determination that their cases should be used as conditions for aid.
- Whether they are affiliated with groups that promote Islamist ideologies, distribute anti-Semitic materials, or distribute political disinformation.
- Whether the Biden administration intends to grant U.S. visas to them should the Egyptian Government release them.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration supports further strengthening bilateral security and defense relationship with Egypt, while seeking and sustainable improvements in the Egyptian Government's approach to human rights. The Department has focused on specific human rights issues of concern, including cases of political detention and restrictions on civil society.

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While I cannot speak to the accuracy of press reports, I take seriously the authority of Congress to conduct oversight, and if confirmed I look forward to working with you on these and other important matters.

Question. Please describe the role played by Iran and the Houthis in deepening the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

Answer. The Houthis, with continued Iranian support, remain intransigent and focused on their military offensive against the city of Marib. That offensive is the single biggest impediment to a national ceasefire and follow-on peace talks; it is exacerbating an already-dire humanitarian crisis, placing at risk a million internally displaced persons who found refuge in Marib after escaping fighting in other parts of the country. The Houthis also exacerbate the humanitarian consequences of the fuel situation at Hudaydah port by stockpiling fuel and manipulating fuel prices, driving up costs far beyond the reach of most Yemenis. In addition, the Houthis continue to interfere in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

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. The Biden-Harris administration revoked the terrorism designations of Ansarallah, sometimes referred to as the Houthis, in recognition of the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen and the adverse impact the designation immediately had on NGOs and private commercial importers of food and other basic goods. Shortly after the FTO designation announcement, the administration began to hear of derisking—by banks, insurance firms, and transport companies—putting at risk near-term food imports. The administration listened to concerns voiced by the United Nations, humanitarian groups, and bipartisan members of Congress, among others, regarding potential impacts of the designation on Yemenis' access to basic commodities. 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. According to U.N. data, food and other humanitarian assistance items are now moving through Yemeni ports at normal rates except in some areas under Houthi control.

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. The short time that passed between the designations and the revocations limited the adverse impact that designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports. In Marib, the escalation of hostilities by the Houthis has caused additional needs and secondary displacement. The lifting of sanctions, however, has helped ensure the safe delivery of life-saving food, emergency shelter, water, and sanitation and hygiene supplies, as well as essential non-food items, such as blankets and water containers.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 (p.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., via video-conference, Senator Coons, presiding.

Present: Senators Coons [presiding], Cardin, Kaine, Booker, Schatz, Van Hollen, Young, and Hagerty.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

Senator COONS. Good afternoon. It is my honor to call this hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to order.

I welcome the chance to serve as chair of this hearing and appreciate Chairman Menendez asking me to take this on as we consider five highly qualified nominees, and I welcome, as ranking member for this hearing, Senator Hagerty and the five nominees who are before us.

Let me briefly introduce them, and I will make a very brief statement and then invite Senator Hagerty to make whatever opening statement he may care to.

Our five nominees for this afternoon's hearing are Dr. C.S. Eliot Kang, to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation; Adam Scheinman, to be Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation; Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat, to be Director General of the Foreign Service; Bathsheba Nell Crocker, to be U.S. Representative to the Office of the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva; and Dr. Michael Carpenter, to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Let me begin by thanking all five of you, thanking you for your willingness to continue your service to this Nation. And let me extend my thanks to your families, who normally, if we were in person, would, many of them, be physically with us, and so I would have a chance to greet them. I do not know if any of them are hovering just off the screen, but please convey to them my gratitude for their support for your career and service.

Before we proceed into the substance of your opening statements, our colleague from New Jersey Senator Booker will introduce Ambassador Bernicat. Let me also, before we proceed to that, do two more things. I am going to ask all of our nominees today to please keep your statements to roughly 5 minutes in length. The com-

mittee will accept your written testimonies in full and submit them for the record.

And I also want to note for all members and staff who may be listening that questions for the record for this confirmation hearing will be due by the close of business this Thursday, September 16th.

With that, let me invite Senator Hagerty to make any opening comment he would like to. Then we will proceed to an introduction by Senator Booker.

Senator Hagerty?

**STATEMENT OF HON. BILL HAGERTY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator HAGERTY. Chairman Coons, thank you very much. And I want to thank Senator Risch for inviting me to serve as the ranking member today. And I also want to thank the nominees for appearing before our committee today. I appreciate your willingness to serve our great Nation. I am looking forward to hearing from each of you.

I would like to start with the nomination to the Director General of the Foreign Service. This position has the unique responsibility of recruiting, retaining, and sustaining the Foreign Service and the civil service workforce of the State Department.

As a former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, I recognize that the people of the State Department are critical to the success of American diplomacy. For the United States to tackle the growing number of complex global challenges, we should seek to build the finest diplomatic corps in the world. I look forward to hearing from the nominee about how we will achieve this goal.

Next I would like to turn to the nomination to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation. As strategic adversaries such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea continue to expand their arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, the world is becoming more dangerous each day.

The United States should look for opportunities to expand counterproliferation efforts in ways to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction. I am particularly interested to hear from the nominee about his views on the increasing WMD threats from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea and what the United States should be doing.

I would like to turn next to the nominee to be the Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation. There are a growing number of countries, such as China and Iran, that pose significant challenges with respect to nuclear energy and nonproliferation norms. I look forward to hearing from the nominee about ways to update the NPT for the 21st century.

Now I would like to turn to the nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I just returned from NATO, and it is clear that following the withdrawal from Afghanistan, we are at a critical juncture with many of our European allies and partners, and they need to know that the United States can and will be a reliable partner. This is even more important, considering Russia's efforts to spread malign influence throughout Europe. I look forward to hearing from the nominee about these issues.

And now I want to turn my attention to the nominee to be the Representative of the United States to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva. As the lead U.S. official representing over 100 U.N. bodies in Geneva, you will be responsible for advancing U.S. interests in many multilateral organizations. As we all know, China and other strategic adversaries are looking to expand their influence by remaking global institutions in their image. I look forward to hearing from the nominee about what steps she intends to take to fight for America.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Hagerty.

Let me now invite Senator Booker of New Jersey to offer an introduction of Ambassador Bernicat.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CORY A. BOOKER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator BOOKER. Well, this is an extraordinary honor, Senator Coons. Thank you very much.

I am really elated, frankly, to be able to introduce President Biden's nominee to serve as Director General of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Marcia Bernicat. We are currently, as you know, facing tremendous challenges all across the globe that will not only define the history of the world but will most certainly define the history of our Nation. Challenges like the global crisis of climate change to taking on the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to cause such tragedy around the world.

And we know this, for all of us Senators who have been traveling, America's diplomatic leadership is now needed more than ever. And that is why we need this great Jersian Ambassador Bernicat leading the diplomatic corps responsible for representing the United States of America and advancing our interests around the world.

I can think of no one more qualified for this extraordinarily important position. She has served as a Foreign Service officer for three decades starting, I think, when she was 2 or 3 years old. Ambassador Bernicat has had a career that is not just impressive, but impactful.

She most recently served as senior official for economic growth, energy, and the environment at the State Department and prior to that served as the Ambassador to Bangladesh and previously concurrently as the Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Over the course of her diplomatic career, she has received extraordinary honors and respect from those who she served with. She is somebody that is both well respected and looked up to, but also someone in which folks have great confidence in.

She has served in Barbados, Malawi, Morocco, India, Nepal, France, and Mali. All across the world she has made an impact and left a lasting legacy. She represents the best of the United States of America, and I would say, coming from the great State of New Jersey, she represents the best of New Jersians. Born in the wonderful Red Bank, New Jersey.

Ambassador Bernicat probably has many, many accolades, but perhaps her two best living legacy examples of her success is her two sons, who she has raised while serving in the Foreign Service.

As we Senators in a bipartisan effort work to reinvest in the diplomatic efforts to keep America safe, rebuild our alliances and partnerships, and live up to our collective values here at home and abroad, Ambassador Bernicat is exactly the kind of leader that we need.

I urge my colleagues not because of fealty to New Jersey, I urge my colleagues because of fealty to the United States of America to support her nomination.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Booker. I appreciate that introduction.

We are now going to proceed to hear opening statements from each of our five nominees in the order in which they were noticed for this hearing by the committee.

So no disrespect, Senator Booker, we are going to begin with Dr. C.S. Eliot Kang, and then we will proceed through the five nominees in the order that they were noticed.

Senator BOOKER. No disrespect taken, but go ahead.

Senator COONS. It is just part of the traditions of this committee. So, if I might, Dr. Kang, your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND NONPROLIFERATION)

Dr. KANG. Yes, sir. Thank you very much.

Senator Booker, I am also from New Jersey. Ocean County, Lakewood, New Jersey.

Senator BOOKER. Yes.

[Laughter.]

Dr. KANG. Yes. Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am grateful to President Biden for nominating me to be the Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation.

I am also grateful to Secretary Blinken for his trust and faith in supporting my nomination.

Crossing the Pacific as a 9-year-old immigrant almost half a century ago, my only ambition was to taste a real hamburger. No doubt my mother and father, who made the fateful decision for my family to start a new life in the United States, had more lofty hopes for me and my sister, Myung. However, I am sure they never imagined the honor of me appearing before this august body to be examined for my worthiness to serve this great Nation as an Assistant Secretary of State.

If confirmed, I pledge to continue working tirelessly for the American people. Indeed, public service is in my DNA. I have been following the footsteps of my late father, a decorated combat pilot and a Government official. And my mother, a lifelong educator and recipient of New Jersey Governor's award for outstanding teaching.

I started my career in my mother's profession, but the events of September 11, 2001, led me to my father's path of Government service. It has not been an easy path to tread, but unwavering support from my wife, Michelle, and the understanding of my two sons, Gregory and Wesley, have strengthened my steps and resolve.

In 2003, I first joined the State Department's Bureau of Political and Military Affairs and then Bureau of Arms Control as a William C. Foster Fellow, which was a congressionally established program for bringing academics into the Government's—into the Department's arms control and nonproliferation work.

I became a career civil servant in 2005, and since 2006, I have held various leadership positions in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, working to protect the American people from dangers posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

As a career officer, I have endeavored across four presidential administrations to minimize the threat of nuclear, chemical, biological, and advanced conventional weapons and the destabilization these weapons can cause.

However, despite tremendous bipartisan efforts and the steadfast leadership of this committee to stem the tide of the most destructive and horrible weapons, the challenges only appears to be growing. Indeed, the explosion of technology seems to create as many problems for our security as it solves for our society.

In the late hours of the evening, I reflect upon the increasing challenges we face, and I arrive to work every morning resolved and determined to do something about them. In this commitment, I am not alone.

I am privileged to serve the American people alongside a remarkable group of colleagues who share my dedication, the men and women serving in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation who frustrate our adversaries and are respected by allies and friends throughout the world. I am inspired by these public servants who gladly accept personal sacrifices to serve our Nation.

The President's confidence in me, a career officer, is an honor for me and my family, but it is also a testament to the expertise and ability of the remarkable professionals in the Bureau. Indeed, the Bureau is an extraordinary collection of civil servants, Foreign Service officers, and contractors with expertise in the physical sciences, engineering, intelligence, military sciences, communications, and program administration. Many are leading subject matter experts with international reputations. I am in awe of the tremendous skill and knowledge and dedication they bring to tackle some of the most pressing security problems facing the world and the Nation.

If confirmed, I will work even harder to empower my colleagues to tackle the challenges this committee expects us to meet.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, the ranking member, and the members of the committee for your time and attention today and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kang follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee; thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

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Crossing the Pacific as a nine-year-old immigrant almost a half-century ago, my only ambition was to taste a real hamburger. No doubt, my mother and father who made the fateful decision for our family to start a new life in the United States had more lofty hopes for me and my sister, Myung. However, I'm sure they never imagined the honor of me appearing before this august body to be examined for my worthiness to serve this great nation as an Assistant Secretary of State. If confirmed, I pledge to continue working tirelessly for the American people.

Indeed, public service is in my DNA. I have been following the footsteps of my late father, a decorated combat pilot and government official, and my mother, a lifelong educator and recipient of New Jersey Governor's Award for Outstanding Teaching. I started my career in my mother's profession, but the events of September 11th, 2001 led me to my father's path of government service. It has not been an easy path to tread but unwavering support from my wife, Michelle, and the understanding of my two sons, Gregory and Wesley, have strengthened my steps and resolve.

In 2003, I first joined the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and then Bureau of Arms Control as a William C. Foster Fellow, which was a congressionally established program for bringing academics into the Department's arms control and nonproliferation work. I became a career civil servant in 2005, and since 2006, I have held various leadership positions in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation working to protect the American people from the dangers posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. As a career officer, I have endeavored across four presidential administrations to minimize the threat of nuclear, chemical, biological, and advanced conventional weapons and the destabilization these weapons can cause. However, despite tremendous bipartisan efforts and the steadfast leadership of this committee to stem the tide of these most destructive and horrible weapons, the challenges only appear to be growing. Indeed, the explosion of technology seems to create as many problems for our security as it solves for our society. In the late hours of the evening, I reflect upon the increasing challenges we face; and I arrive to work every morning resolved and determined to do something about them.

In this commitment, I am not alone. I am privileged to serve the American people alongside a remarkable group of colleagues who share my dedication: the men and women serving in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, who frustrate our adversaries and are respected by our allies and friends throughout the world. I am inspired by these public servants who gladly accept personal sacrifices to serve our nation. The President's confidence in me, a career officer, is an honor for me and my family, but it is also a testament to the expertise and ability of the remarkable professionals in the Bureau. Indeed, the Bureau is an extraordinary collection of civil servants, foreign service officers, and contractors with expertise in the physical sciences, engineering, intelligence, military sciences, communications, and program administration. Many are leading subject matter experts with international reputations. I am in awe of the tremendous skills and knowledge and dedication they bring to tackle some of the most pressing security problems facing the nation and the world. If confirmed, I will work even harder to empower my colleagues to tackle the challenges this committee expects us to meet.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, the Ranking Member, and members of the committee for your time and attention today and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Dr. Kang.
Mr. Scheinman?

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT FOR NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Ambassador SCHEINMAN. Thank you, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Hagerty, and all other members of the committee present today. It is really an honor to appear today as President Biden's nominee for Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation.

I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the confidence placed in me, and I am very pleased to be here today with my old friend Eliot Kang and all other nominees here today.

Mr. Chairman, this is my second time nominated to serve in this position. The first followed more than two decades in the Federal civil service working on issues related to nuclear weapons proliferation and related nuclear risks. And for the last 4 years, I served on the faculty of the National War College which, among other benefits, was a welcome opportunity to step back and view nuclear matters through a wider lens.

At the War College, we teach that major U.S. national security challenges are best met using all instruments of power—diplomatic, military, economic, and informational. And in partnership with friends and allies and, on occasion, our competitors. A perfect illustration is nuclear proliferation. It is a challenge to our vital interests and one for which there are no purely military or political solutions.

There is no doubt that the international system is in transition. It is increasingly competitive. It is less predictable, and in a time of turbulence, some would ask whether the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, or the NPT—an agreement conceived in the Cold War period—was still fit for purpose. To my mind, the answer is a resounding “yes.” There is no nuclear weapons challenge facing the United States for which the NPT limits our strategic options or for which better options would be available in the treaty’s absence.

On the contrary, the NPT is a force multiplier and extends the range and reach of our nuclear diplomacy and global confidence in nonproliferation norms and all the supporting institutions. This, I think, explains the continuity of U.S. bipartisan support for the NPT, support that spans 12 presidencies—6 Democratic and 6 Republican administrations from President Kennedy to President Biden.

As in prior decades, it certainly remains true that nuclear proliferation dangers are best tackled not alone, but through collective action, and the NPT anchors that action. It is the basis for assembling diplomatic coalitions to confront countries like Iran and North Korea. Its wide, robust international safeguards came into being, and we continue to strengthen them. And it provides a framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation and restraint on transfers of the most sensitive nuclear technologies.

It also permeates U.S. alliances that are themselves potent instruments of nonproliferation policy. Same time we have to acknowledge that the NPT is not immune from pressures that could erode its appeal. Regional grievances, rising frustration of parties over the slow pace on nuclear disarmament actions are really serious problems for the NPT’s political process. And no one here needs any imagination to guess at the consequences for the treaty and for international security if Iran were to take the path of North Korea and withdraw from the treaty to develop nuclear weapons.

If confirmed, I look forward to doing my part to advance a broad U.S. strategy to strengthen the NPT in all aspects. There is much work to do, from strengthening the institutional machinery for nonproliferation to reassuring allies that they can depend on the United States for defense and deterrence and providing the arms control enterprise that President Biden has started with the agreement with Russia on a 5-year extension of the New START Treaty.

These are important steps, and I hope they lay the groundwork for additional measures.

Most significantly, our NPT agenda requires steady U.S. leadership. We were present at the creation of the nonproliferation regime. No other state has our reach or our influence to sustain it. And if confirmed, I pledge to do my part to carry forward the legacy of U.S. leadership, working closely with Congress, with my interagency colleagues and our foreign partners to preserve and strengthen this vital instrument.

So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome any questions you or members of the committee may have.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Scheinman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM M. SCHEINMAN

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee for Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me. I am also very pleased to be here today with my fellow nominees.

Mr. Chairman, this is my second time being nominated for this position. The first time capped more than two decades in the federal civil service dedicated to preventing nuclear weapons proliferation and related nuclear risks. More recently, I served on the faculty of the National War College, which was a welcome break from the day-to-day rhythms of government work but also an opportunity to step back and view nuclear matters through a wider lens.

At the war college, we teach that major U.S. national security challenges are best met using all instruments of power—diplomatic, military, economic and informational—and in partnership with friends, allies, and on occasion our competitors. A perfect illustration is nuclear proliferation, a challenge to our vital interests and for which there are no purely military or political solutions.

There can be no doubt that the international system is in transition, increasingly competitive and less predictable. In a time of such turbulence, some ask whether the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—or NPT, an agreement conceived in the Cold War era—is “fit for purpose.”

To my mind, this question answers itself resoundingly in the affirmative. There is no realistic nuclear weapons challenge facing the United States for which the NPT limits our strategic options or for which better options would be available in the treaty's absence. To the contrary, the NPT is a force multiplier, extending the range and reach of U.S. nuclear diplomacy and global confidence in nonproliferation norms, rules and supporting institutions. This explains the continuity of U.S. bipartisan support for this treaty, support that spans twelve presidencies, from President Kennedy to President Biden—that's six Democratic and six Republican administrations.

As in prior decades, we recognize today that nuclear proliferation dangers are best tackled not alone but through collective action. The NPT anchors such action. It is the basis for assembling diplomatic coalitions to confront Iran and North Korea. It is why robust international nuclear safeguards came into being and continue to strengthen. It provides a framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation and restraint on transfers of sensitive nuclear technologies. And it permeates U.S. alliances that are themselves potent instruments of nonproliferation policy.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the NPT is not immune to pressures that over time may erode its appeal. Regional grievances and rising frustration of many parties over the slow pace of nuclear disarmament actions are serious problems that roil the NPT's political process. And one needs little imagination to guess at the consequences for the treaty and international security if Iran were to take the path of North Korea by seeking to withdraw from the treaty to develop nuclear weapons.

If confirmed, I look forward to doing my part to advance a broad U.S. strategy to strengthen the NPT in all its aspects. There is much work to do, from strengthening international safeguards, to expanding peaceful nuclear cooperation without adding to proliferation dangers, to enhancing the security incentives of states to support the NPT. Reassuring allies that rely on the United States for defense and deterrence is one such measure. Another is reviving the nuclear arms control enterprise, as the Biden administration has advanced by reaching agreement with Russia

on a five-year extension of the New START Treaty. The agreement to resume a high-level dialogue on strategic stability is another welcome development, one that can lay the groundwork for additional measures.

Most significantly, our NPT agenda requires steady U.S. leadership. We were present at the creation of the nonproliferation regime and no other state has our reach or influence to sustain it. If confirmed, I pledge to do my part to carry forward the legacy of U.S. leadership, working closely with Congress, my interagency colleagues, and our foreign partners to preserve and strengthen a treaty system that contributes so much to the nation's security.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. I welcome any questions you or other members of the committee may have.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Scheinman.

We will now turn to Ambassador Bernicat.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT
OF NEW JERSEY, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN
SERVICE, CLASS OF THE MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOM-
INATED TO BE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERV-
ICE**

Ambassador BERNICAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Coons, Ranking Member Senator Hagerty, distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today.

I sincerely thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Director General of the Foreign Service and to serve as Director of Global Talent Management. If confirmed, I will work with the members of this committee to build a workforce better able to confront the breadth and depth of challenges we face in the 21st century.

Supporting the more than 76,000 women and men who make up our diverse global team would be the highest privilege of my four-decade career. I am inspired by my colleagues who so dutifully serve our Nation, too often in harm's way. They deserve our full support, and their welfare will be my north star.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to acknowledge my aunt and uncle, Blanche and Robert Stephens; my sister and brother-in-law, Kathryn and Luther White; and brother and sister-in-law, Rodney and Cindy Bloom. I would also like to thank my sons, Sumit Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, and their father, Olivier, who hold a special place in my heart in no small part for having shared this Foreign Service journey with me across the globe.

As Secretary Blinken noted when he came before this committee, when America does not lead on the global stage, others who do not necessarily have our best interests at heart and mind fill the void, or the challenges simply go unaddressed. In order to lead with diplomacy, we need a strong State Department.

Our team has been tested in unprecedented ways over the last 20 months. Most recently mobilizing to evacuate more than 123,000 people, including 6,000 U.S. citizens, 2,800 locally employed staff from Afghanistan, one of the largest noncombatant evacuations in U.S. history. And this effort was preceded in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic by our coordinating the repatriation of over 100,000 Americans from 136 different countries and territories in less than 6 months.

A 21st century workforce must reflect our diverse Nation. If confirmed, I will prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility so the Department is fully representative of the American people

and is a workplace where every employee is treated with dignity and respect and has an equal opportunity for professional development and promotion. I will work with Ambassador Winstanley, the Department's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, to ensure the initiatives she leads are embedded at every level of our organization.

Mr. Chairman, over the past 20 months we have adapted to unprecedented circumstances. At State, we are building on that experience to invest in a workforce that is more mobile, agile, and expeditionary, especially one that gets outside capitals more often to directly engage local communities.

The virtual world provides new tools and expanded outreach, for example [inaudible]. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we are prepared to return to the workplace while taking full advantage of a more hybrid workforce and environment.

We will also need to build a broader knowledge set to meet the challenges our Nation faces—from preventing the next pandemic, harnessing the full potential of emerging technologies, and addressing climate change, to strengthening our alliances and countering our adversaries.

Our diversity as a nation gives us strategic advantage. By seeking the best talent, most creative minds, and our fellow citizens' varied experiences and backgrounds, State is better equipped to advance America's security, its other interests, our values, and commitment to democracy. In our diversity, we embody the values to which our Nation aspires, and we also inspire Americans to pursue a life of service and give young people across the globe hope for a better future.

Finally, if confirmed, I will work to strengthen accountability, empowering our employees to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and assume greater responsibility for their decisions. And I will endeavor to make healing central to all my efforts—from a pandemic that robbed us of too many colleagues and family members, from the withdrawal from Afghanistan where so many of our employees served over the past two decades, and from the racial and social strife that has rocked our country and our workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bernicat follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I sincerely thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent Management.

If confirmed, I will work with the members of this committee to build a workforce better able to confront the breadth and depth of challenges we face in the 21st century. Supporting the more than 76,000 women and men who make up our diverse, global team will be the highest privilege of my four-decade career. I am inspired by the women and men who so dutifully serve our nation, too often in harm's way. They deserve our full support and their welfare will be my north star.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to acknowledge my Aunt and Uncle Blanche and Robert Stephens, the matriarch and patriarch of our family, my sister and brother-in-law Kathryn and Luther White and brother and sister-in-law Rodney and Cindy Bloom. I'd also like to thank my sons, Sumit Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, and

their father Olivier, who hold a special place in my heart in no small part for having shared this Foreign Service journey with me across the globe.

As Secretary Blinken noted when he came before this committee, when America does not lead on the global stage others who do not necessarily have our best interests in mind fill the void, or the challenges simply go unaddressed. In order to lead with diplomacy, we need a strong State Department.

Our team has been tested in unprecedented ways over the last 20 months, most recently mobilizing to evacuate more than 123,000 people, including 6,000 U.S. citizens and 2,800 Locally Employed Staff from Afghanistan, one of the largest non-combatant evacuations in U.S. history. This effort was preceded, in the wake of the COVID pandemic, by coordinating the repatriation of 101,386 Americans from 136 countries and territories in less than six months.

A 21st century workforce must reflect our diverse nation. If confirmed, I will prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility so the Department is fully representative of the American people and is a workplace where every employee is treated with dignity and respect and has an equal opportunity for professional development and promotion. I look forward to working with Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley, the Department's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, to ensure the initiatives she leads are embedded at every level of the organization.

Mr. Chairman, over the past 20 months we have adapted to unprecedented circumstances. At State we are building on that experience to invest in a workforce that is more mobile, agile and expeditionary; especially one that gets outside capitals more often to directly engage local communities. The virtual world also provides new tools for outreach. Our national network successfully recruited record numbers of outstanding, diverse candidates for the Pickering, Rangel, and Foreign Affairs IT Fellowships, and pursued ambitious efforts focused on diversity for career candidates. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management to ensure we are prepared to return to the workplace while taking full advantage of a more hybrid workforce and environment.

We will also need to build a broader knowledge set to meet the challenges and benefits from the opportunities our nation faces—from preventing the next pandemic, harnessing the full potential of emerging technologies and addressing climate change, to strengthening our alliances and countering our adversaries. Our diversity as a nation gives us strategic advantages. By seeking the best talent, most creative minds, and our fellow citizens' rich and varied experiences and backgrounds, State is better able to advance America's security, interests, values, and commitment to democracy. In our diversity we embody the values to which our nation aspires, inspire Americans to pursue a life of service and give young people across the globe hope for a better future.

Finally, if confirmed, I will work to strengthen accountability, empowering employees to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and assume responsibility for their decisions. And I will endeavor to make healing central to all my efforts—from a pandemic that robbed us of too many colleagues and family members; from the withdrawal from Afghanistan, where so many of our employees served over the past two decades; and from the racial and social strife that has rocked our country and our workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ambassador.

Next we will turn to Ms. Crocker.

STATEMENT OF HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you, Senator Coons, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of this committee.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Representative of the United States to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva.

I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken for this opportunity to again serve my country.

I am so grateful for the love and support of my husband, Milan Vaishnav, our daughters, Asha and Farrin, and for their sacrifice, should I be confirmed to take on this important role. I am also thankful for the support of my father, Chester Crocker, and my sisters and their families, and I am thinking today of my mom, who would have so proud to witness me appearing before this committee again.

My parents instilled in me a deep commitment to public service. I have had no greater honor than serving my country, side by side with our career diplomatic corps. And I am especially proud that my father and I are the only father-daughter Assistant Secretaries of State in State Department history.

My previous roles as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs at the United Nations and overseeing CARE USA's humanitarian work have shown me that the United Nations works most effectively when the United States leads and leverages all of the tools at our disposal to advance U.S. national security interests across and through the United Nations system.

My previous experiences position me well to represent the United States across the many different organizations in Geneva and ensure sound oversight of the U.S. contributions to those organizations. I am committed to advancing reforms to make those organizations more efficient and effective and to ensuring the United States is best positioned to lead, to collaborate, and, where necessary, to outcompete, so that the United Nations system remains grounded on its foundational values of advancing human rights, democracy, economic opportunity, and international peace and security.

China, Russia, Cuba, and others are threatening those values, seeking to co-opt multilateral institutions, including Geneva-based organizations, to impose their national agendas and reshape the rules-based international organizations. For example, at the International Telecommunications Union, the People's Republic of China and Russia aimed to undercut U.S. efforts to protect the open Internet. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the United States and our like-minded partners can drive the discussion and the rules of the road, at the ITU and other standard-setting bodies, and support strong candidates for leadership in the Geneva-based organizations.

The Biden-Harris administration decided that the United States should run for re-election to the U.N. Human Rights Council to ensure that body focuses on the world's worst human rights violators. The Geneva-based organizations are critical to U.S. efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen global health security, and support effective and efficient provision of humanitarian assistance in crisis and conflict situations around the world. The World Health Organization is a central pillar of the global house security architecture.

If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. leadership in the efforts to strengthen the WHO through reforms that promote transparency, accountability, cost effectiveness, sustainability, and equity across the agency and its programs. I am committed to ensuring that the

organization can more effectively and transparently tackle COVID-19 and future emerging global health threats in collaboration with other U.N. and international partners.

During my time at CARE USA, I saw firsthand the key role, the vital role that the United States plays in leading and supporting humanitarian efforts around the globe. In Geneva, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization on Migration, the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, and the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are key partners in those efforts. And if confirmed, I will ensure robust U.S. leadership and oversight at those agencies and look to leverage U.S. contributions to drive needed reforms and ensure other countries step up.

At their best, Geneva-based organizations are valuable partners across an array of U.S. priorities, including global health security, human rights, humanitarian assistance, technology, and other standard-setting efforts, climate change, intellectual property, trade disarmament, and more.

If confirmed, I will aim to reestablish U.S. relationships and leadership so that we can effectively leverage the unique multilateral platform Geneva offers to work with allies and partners, the private sector, and civil society to advance U.S. goals and push back on PRC and others' efforts to undermine those organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I look forward to your questions and, if confirmed, to working with this committee to ensure that USUN Geneva effectively meets the challenges of today's strategic landscape.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Crocker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER

Thank you, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of this committee.

I am honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken for this opportunity to again serve my country.

I am so grateful for the love and support of my husband, Milan Vaishnav, and our daughters, Asha and Farrin—and for their sacrifice should I be confirmed to take on this important role. I am also thankful for the support of my father, Chester Crocker and my sisters and their families, and am thinking today of my mom, who would have been so proud to witness me appearing before this committee again.

My parents instilled in me a deep commitment to public service. I have had no greater honor than serving my country side-by-side with our career diplomatic corps, and I am especially proud that my father and I are the only father-daughter Assistant Secretaries of State in State Department history.

My previous roles as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, at the United Nations, and overseeing CARE USA's humanitarian work have shown me that the United Nations works most effectively when the United States leads and leverages all the tools at our disposal to advance U.S. national security interests across and through the United Nations system.

My previous experiences position me well to represent the United States across the different organizations in Geneva and ensure sound oversight of the U.S. contributions to those organizations. I am committed to advancing reforms to make those organizations more efficient and effective and to ensuring the United States is best positioned to lead, to collaborate, and, where necessary, to out-compete—so that the United Nations system remains grounded on its foundational values of advancing human rights, democracy, economic opportunity, and international peace and security.

China, Russia, Cuba, and others are threatening those values, seeking to co-opt multilateral institutions, including Geneva-based organizations, to impose their national agendas and reshape the rules-based international order.

At the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the PRC and Russia aim to undercut U.S. efforts to protect the open internet. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States and our like-minded partners can drive the discussion and the rules of the road—at the ITU and other standard-setting bodies—and support strong candidates for leadership in the Geneva-based organizations.

The Biden-Harris administration decided that the United States should run for re-election to the U.N. Human Rights Council to ensure that body focuses on shining a spotlight on the world's worst human rights violators.

The Geneva-based organizations are critical to U.S. efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen global health security, and support effective and efficient provision of humanitarian assistance in crisis and conflict situations.

The World Health Organization is a central pillar of the global health security architecture. If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. leadership in the efforts to strengthen the WHO through reforms that promote transparency, accountability, sustainability, cost effectiveness, and equity across the agency and its programs. I am committed to ensuring that the organization can more effectively and transparently tackle COVID-19 and future emerging global health threats in collaboration with other U.N. and international partners.

During my time at CARE USA, I saw firsthand the critical role the U.S. plays in leading and supporting humanitarian efforts around the globe. In Geneva, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization on Migration, the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, and the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are key partners in those efforts, and, if confirmed, I will ensure robust U.S. leadership and oversight at those agencies and look to leverage U.S. contributions to drive needed reforms and ensure other countries step up.

At their best, the Geneva-based organizations are valuable partners across an array of U.S. priorities, including global health security, human rights, humanitarian assistance, technology and other standard setting efforts, climate change, intellectual property, trade, disarmament, and more. If confirmed, I will aim to re-establish U.S. relationships and leadership so that we can effectively leverage the unique multilateral platform Geneva offers to work with allies and partners, the private sector, and civil society to advance U.S. goals and pushback on PRC and others' efforts to undermine those organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I look forward to your questions and, if confirmed, to working with this committee to ensure that USUN Geneva effectively meets the challenges of today's strategic landscape.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ms. Crocker.

Dr. Carpenter, you are our last of our five nominees today. We look forward to your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Dr. CARPENTER. Thank you, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Hagerty, and members of the committee for this opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

It is a tremendous honor to be nominated for this position, and I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I would also like to thank my parents, my spouse, and our two children for their endless love and support.

My mother immigrated to this country from Poland. She was born during World War II while my grandparents, both physicians, were fighting the Nazi occupation as clandestine officers in the underground Home Army. After the war, the Communist dictatorship

rewarded their heroism by confiscating their property and torturing my grandfather to divulge the names of his fellow officers. He refused, even when it cost him his job at the local hospital. Over four decades later, though, he lived to see the Solidarity movement sweep aside the oppressive Communist regime.

My family's struggles against totalitarianism instilled in me an appreciation for the democratic freedoms we enjoy as Americans and a conviction that they must never be taken for granted. I graduated from high school in 1989, the very year that communism was defeated in Central Europe. After earning a doctorate studying democratic movements, I joined the Foreign Service.

I was working on the South Caucasus when Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, and I was serving as NSC Director for Russia when it invaded Ukraine in 2014. Later, at the Pentagon, I led efforts to strengthen and support the sovereignty and territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the countries between NATO and Russia.

Today, the optimism of 1989 seems distant. Democratic institutions are under assault, and increasingly aggressive authoritarian regimes seem to weaken and divide democratic states against one another. A Communist dictatorship in China is trampling human rights and using economic coercion against other states.

A revanchist Russia is repressing civil society and using active measures to disrupt and weaken democratic rivals. In many countries within the OSCE space, anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance are gaining ground. Judicial independence is eroding. Journalists are harassed. And ruling parties with no interest in fair electoral competition are capturing state institutions.

Recognizing the enormous challenges that lie ahead, I would highlight the following three vital areas, where, if confirmed, I would seek to partner with the members of this committee as well as with the Helsinki Commission.

First, to promote comprehensive security across all three OSCE dimensions—politico-military, economic and environmental, and human rights. Participating states must address not just conventional military threats, but also hybrid threats, such as election interference, energy coercion, disinformation, dark money, cyber operations, and transnational repression. We need to find ways not only to shine a light on these malign activities, but also to defend ourselves and our democratic partners against them.

Second, to promote prosperity and rule of law, participating states must establish stronger anti-corruption measures, both east and west of Vienna. Corruption erodes economic growth, it undermines security, and it enables state capture. Like-minded states must work together to fight kleptocracy, using tools like criminal statutes against bribery, Global Magnitsky-style sanctions, and collective action against offshore secrecy.

Third, our allies and partners must work together to strength the resilience of frontline democracies. In Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, and many Balkan countries, OSCE institutions offer a range of tools for strengthening democratic resilience. Supporting religious freedom, media pluralism, electoral reform, and judicial independence all fall into this basket, as do efforts to bridge societal divides and resolve longstanding conflicts.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the instrumental role that Congress plays in achieving these goals. Whenever Members of this body observe an election, condemn human rights abuses, or demand push back against foreign coercion, you serve as a force multiplier. If confirmed, it will be an honor to work the members of this committee, the Helsinki commissioners, and other Members of Congress to advance our shared interest in democracy, transparency, prosperity, and security for the American people.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Carpenter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee for this opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee for Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is a tremendous honor to be nominated for this position and I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I would also like to thank my parents, my spouse, and our two children for their endless love and support.

My mother immigrated to this country from Poland. She was born during World War II while my grandparents, both physicians, were fighting the Nazi occupation as clandestine officers in the underground Home Army. After the war, the Communist dictatorship rewarded their heroism by confiscating their property and torturing my grandfather to divulge the names of his fellow officers. He refused, even when it cost him his job at the local hospital. Over four decades later, though, he lived to see the Solidarity movement sweep aside the oppressive Communist regime.

My family's struggles against totalitarianism instilled in me an appreciation for the democratic freedoms we enjoy as Americans and a conviction that they must never be taken for granted. I graduated from high school in 1989, the very year Communism was defeated in Central Europe. After earning a doctorate studying democratic movements, I joined the Foreign Service. I was working on the South Caucasus region when Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and was serving as NSC Director for Russia when it invaded Ukraine in 2014. Later, at the Pentagon, I led efforts to strengthen and support the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the countries between NATO and Russia.

Today, the optimism of 1989 admittedly seems distant. Democratic institutions are under assault and increasingly aggressive authoritarian regimes seek to weaken and divide democratic states against one other. A Communist dictatorship in China is trampling human rights and using economic coercion against other states. A revanchist Russia is repressing civil society and using "active measures" to disrupt and weaken democratic rivals. In many countries within the OSCE space, anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance are gaining ground. Judicial independence is eroding, journalists are harassed, and ruling parties with no interest in fair electoral competition are capturing state institutions.

Fortunately, the OSCE is uniquely suited to addressing these challenges. The Helsinki Final Act's linkages between security, economic relations, and human rights and its insistence that the latter are not an internal matter but a legitimate concern for all members of the international community have been transformational. Today, all participating States are held to account for their adherence to OSCE principles and commitments. If confirmed, I will continue speaking up for human dignity, freedom, and justice wherever they are challenged in the OSCE region. There are also bright spots and positive changes occurring. Though often less visible, OSCE field missions in Central Asia, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe do highly impactful work to promote security, human rights, and rule of law at the local level.

Recognizing the enormous challenges that lie ahead, I would highlight the following three vital areas where, if confirmed, I would seek to partner with the members of this committee as well as the Helsinki Commission:

First, to promote comprehensive security across all three OSCE dimensions—political-military, economic and environmental, and human rights—participating States must address not just conventional military threats but also "hybrid" threats such as election interference, energy coercion, disinformation, dark money, cyber operations, and transnational repression. We need to find ways not only to shine a light on these malign activities but also to defend ourselves and our democratic partners against them.

Second, to promote prosperity and rule of law, participating States must establish stronger anti-corruption measures both east and west of Vienna. Corruption erodes economic growth, undermines security, and enables state capture. Like-minded states must work together to fight kleptocracy, using tools like criminal statutes against bribery, Global Magnitsky-style sanctions, and collective action against off-shore secrecy.

Third, our allies and partners must work together to strengthen the resilience of frontline democracies. In Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, and many Balkan countries, OSCE institutions offer a range of tools for strengthening democratic resilience. Supporting religious freedom, media pluralism, electoral reform, and judicial independence all fall into this basket, as do efforts to bridge societal divides and resolve longstanding conflicts.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the instrumental role that Congress plays in achieving these goals. Whenever members of this body observe an election, condemn human rights abuses, or demand pushback against foreign coercion, you serve as a force multiplier. If confirmed, it will be an honor to work with the members of this committee, the Helsinki Commissioners, and other members of Congress to advance our shared interest in democracy, transparency, prosperity, and security for the American people.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And now I am going to begin an initial round of 5 minutes. We have a robust participation in this virtual hearing, and I will ask just a few brief questions. I will try to direct one to each of the nominees, and then we will proceed to a first round. And if members are interested in a second round, if you please convey that to my team while we are doing these questions, that would be quite helpful.

Dr. Kang, if you would just briefly describe to me what would the ISN Bureau's highest priorities be under your leadership?

Dr. KANG. Thank you for that question, Senator Coons.

I have—my career has been focused on nuclear matters, whether it be related to nuclear security, nuclear safeguards, even nuclear safety. But my biggest fear has always been a biological weapon that is unleashed on the world. And the COVID-19 pandemic right now is a wake-up call, and this is an area I have been very concerned about for many, many years.

Four years ago, when I was Acting Assistant Secretary during the transition between President Obama and President Trump, I tried very much to increase our capability in this area in the Bureau. We have a very small staff even now, less than a half a dozen. Most of them, fellows, are from elsewhere. But when I consider that I had led diplomacy and engagement with our foreign partners and elsewhere to make everyone cognizant of a danger a radiological device could create, the mayhem that it could create and wreak on our economy and the casualties it could cause, just imagine what if COVID-19 was a purposely designed biological weapon.

Now, state parties would be hesitant to use such a weapon. But I could clearly see a nihilistic group of terrorists and the threshold for creating something like this is not as high as creating a nuclear weapon without apparatus of a state with its engineering and manufacturing capabilities.

So that is my greatest fear. Yet at the same time, the international instrument that at least my Bureau is responsible for, the Biological Weapons Convention, is the least institutionalized, least developed, and in many ways least significant of the many non-

proliferation regime out there. So, sir, this is one area where I will be focused like a laser beam and trying to make some advances.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Dr. Kang. I will ask one more question, and then I will be asking in a second round.

Mr. Scheinman, if I could? The NPT tries to balance peaceful use of nuclear energy with the goals of preventing the proliferation of sensitive fuel cycle nuclear technologies in enrichment and reprocessing and reducing the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. How should the United States balance those two goals, and what would you do to help improve the effectiveness of the NPT?

Ambassador SCHEINMAN. Thank you very much for the question, Senator Coons. It is really a critical issue for the long-term success of the nonproliferation system because if we do not adequate controls over peaceful use of nuclear technology, we are very likely to see additional proliferation down the road.

There are two areas where I think we need to spend a lot of time and energy. One is ensuring that the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency's verification system is as strong and robust as possible, that we have agreements among states to make it as strong and robust as possible, so that we have a very clear firebreak between a country's peaceful nuclear program and any potential that that program might be put to weapons.

The system has worked pretty well, but it could certainly be improved. And one area in particular that we hope to see improvement on is gaining global support for the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement, which is essential if we are going to ferret out undeclared nuclear programs. Absolutely essential.

The other area is perhaps a bit outside of the NPT, but it deals with supplier policies. I worry about the spread of the most sensitive nuclear fuel production technologies, enrichment and reprocessing, because if that spreads to additional countries, it would be very, very challenging to prevent countries from not using that for military purposes down the road. So we have to work with the export control supply regime, the nuclear suppliers group to encourage the highest level of restraint in those transfers.

We need to work with other nuclear suppliers so that we have understandings that when we sign contracts, it is not going to include enrichment and reprocessing technology. And we should acknowledge in the NPT itself that certain technologies are more dangerous than others, and we ought to erect the highest possible barriers. So that is some of the ways I think we can look at that.

Senator COONS. Okay, thank you, Mr. Scheinman. I look forward to a next round where I will try to question our three other nominees.

Senator Hagerty? Senator Hagerty, you are muted.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Bernicat, I would like to start with you. I would like to begin with a quote from Ambassadors Bill Burns and Linda Thomas-Greenfield, and this is the quote. "The personnel evaluation process consumes 3 months of an officer's time, with no commensurate accountability for, let alone improvement in, individual or collective performance."

As U.S. Ambassador to Japan, I worked with some very talented colleagues in the State Department, but I can certainly sympathize with that statement, given the amount of time that people spent on performance evaluations. And I recall a saying that if one wants to offer criticism at the Department of State that one does it by damning someone by faint praise, as they say. I cannot tell you how many 5s I saw on personnel evaluation forms. And I strongly advocate for having a more rigorous evaluation process to ensure that accountability is at the center of the State Department's personnel process.

So my first question is do you agree with the characterization of the State Department's personnel evaluation process as described by Ambassadors Burns and Thomas-Greenfield?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Senator, thank you very much for that question, and you know from your own experience how time-consuming our performance evaluation process is.

I have to say, having served with Linda Thomas-Greenfield when she was Director General and being a colleague of Bill Burns over the years, I know that Linda in particular worked very hard to reform the EER process, which we did. I can tell you, if confirmed, I will rededicate my efforts to further reforms, which I understand are already being considered.

The evaluation process is the sole means by which we promote people, but it is really the penultimate activity in what should be a year's worth of performance evaluation. And as a supervisor, I have always—and a leader, I have always encouraged my team, if you are a supervisor, to provide honesty feedback throughout the year and with the notion of improving performance because no one is perfect. And then as to my employees to seek that kind of critical feedback because it is very hard to see our blind spots, and our performance in those blind spots change from time to time. So I assure you that we have improvements we can make, and we should make them.

Senator HAGERTY. I am glad to hear it and look forward to working with you to talk through metrics. And again, I do not mean critical in a bad sense, but as I said, the performance evaluations seem so inflated to me as a business person that it is hard, it is hard for a person to see how they might improve when anyone—when everybody gets such high scores in the system.

One more place I want to turn is the issue of promotion in the State Department, Ambassador. Again, I am going to come back to Bill Burns and Linda Thomas-Greenfield. They also said this, that opportunities for mid-career graduate or professional education are scarce—and here is what gets me—and they carry little weight with promotion panels.

The effect is often to penalize employees who receive extra training or undertake assignments to other agencies, or they work in Congress because they have gone outside of the State Department system and spent time there. And if what they say is true, it really seems counterproductive to me to building a diplomatic corps, that we want to have the type of breadth of experience and preparation for the 21st century. And if confirmed, I would love to hear how you would ensure that professional education, experiences like

working on the Hill, are something that actually inures to the credit of our State Department employees.

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes, well, thank you. I would say three things on this issue.

One is that expanding your skill set as a Foreign Service officer at whatever point in your career is considered a valuable and credible reason to promote someone. In and of itself, the training is not a promotable function, if you will, but have you applied the skills that you learned in that additional training or time off?

Secondly, the promotion boards. Again, my experience as an employee and as a supervisor, promotion boards have been instructed to in recent years to give added weight to those experiences.

And thirdly, and this is a real key, Senator, we have had a roller-coaster experience with hiring, both in terms of budget and in terms of hiring freezes over the course of my career. It is really difficult to allow people the time that they need to take to get training when we are short on personnel. And so, I know that our budget requests are looking to once again build in the kind of cushion where we can let people take time off without harming the core mission.

And Senator, if I can just add parenthetically, I had a year of university training at Berkeley before going to India, and I believe it directly helped lead to my promotion after that. So I would say when we use those training opportunities, build in those exchange opportunities, then they strengthen a person's promotability.

Senator HAGERTY. I am glad to hear you say that, and that is your perspective. I know talking with my employees at the Embassy in Japan, there was a perception that it may—you know, it may actually be a disadvantage to take that time off, and I understand the resource constraints that make it difficult and challenging. But I look forward to working with you because I do think those sort of broadening experiences make a real difference.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield my time back. Look forward to a second round.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And first, let me thank all of our nominees for their willingness to continue to serve our country. We thank you. We thank your families.

Dr. Carpenter, I first want to appreciate the meeting that we had and your statements today about working with the members of the Senate and the Helsinki Commission members and the Helsinki Commission itself. I think we share the same objectives. I was very pleased to hear your three priorities.

In regards to the hybrid threat, you are exactly right. I call your attention to a report I authored when I was ranking on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about Mr. Putin's use of an asymmetric arsenal to bring down democratic states. I think you will find a lot of the issues you talk about. We document Russia's specific use of these tools to compromise democracies.

And that is why resiliency of frontline democracies so much needs to be a priority. We have seen a decline of democracies globally, and certainly within the OSCE region, there has been a significant decline of democratic states.

And then, lastly, the corruption issue. You and I have talked about this. The corruption is the fuel that allows the autocratic regimes to stay in power. So I am going to ask your help in three bills that are moving through the Congress because sometimes we do not get the full cooperation of the executive branch and the missions within the State Department.

One would set up a tier rating system for how well every state in country—every country in the world is dealing with corruption. The other makes the Global Magnitsky statute permanent and strengthens some of the provisions within it. And the third establishes a fund that we can use when an opportunity presents itself to deal with—dealing with corruption in countries.

All three are bipartisan, and all three are very strongly supported. There has been positive action in our committee. But I would ask your support for these initiatives because I think it very much will help you in regards to your mission.

So I look forward to working with you, and I will be glad to hear a response.

Dr. CARPENTER. Thank you, Senator Cardin, for your incredible leadership on these issues. And it has been so heartening to see the Helsinki Commission, and you in particular, leading the effort on anti-kleptocracy. And I would note that the anti-kleptocracy act now has, I believe, seven different bills attached to it, all of which strike at key elements of global corruption.

This is a problem, as you just noted, Senator, that is inextricably linked to the growth of authoritarianism around the world. Often we see regimes that consolidate political power that start out by using corrupt means, whether it is doling out procurement contracts or using other forms of graft and bribery, to be able to accumulate economic power.

So those two things, sort of the oligarchization of politics around the world and the growing authoritarianism of politics around the world, go together. And of course, some of our biggest competitors, both Russian and China, are experts at weaponizing corruption against democratic states.

So I value these efforts, the incredible number of ideas and bills that have come out of the Helsinki Commission, many of which you have cosponsored, and look forward to advancing this agenda, if confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. I look forward to working with you.

Dr. Kang and Ambassador Scheinman, I would like to ask you about probably the greatest the threat we have on nuclear proliferation, and that is Iran. We are in a somewhat difficult decision right now not to be part of the JCPOA. Which we have seen Iran violate the JCPOA, and yet we are, it looks like, supporting a path that will not allow for international sanctions. I want to know your strategies for how you will advise President Biden and the administration on what can work in making sure Iran does not have nuclear weapons.

Dr. KANG. Perhaps I should start, sir? Absolutely Iran should never obtain a nuclear weapon. The President is absolutely committed to that, and that is consistent passed over a number of administrations. But return to the JCPOA advances our national security interest. And it is the intention of the President to build a

longer and stronger deal, which encompasses regional destabilization that Iran is responsible for, but also the ballistic missile development they have, which could threaten certainly the regional neighbors but perhaps, over time, ultimately the United States.

So, yes, there has been a break in conversations and negotiations between our lead negotiator, Rob Malley, who is in charge of this, since June, but there also has been an election in Tehran. Now the Supreme Leader makes the ultimate call, but nonetheless, it is left to the presidential administration to implement and negotiate their position with us. So we are still waiting for a positive response from Iran, but nonetheless as, Senator Cardin, you point out, the Iranians are creating plants underground, which has nothing to do with peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Enrichment up to 60 percent for uranium, also producing uranium metal of 20 percent, these are dangerous moves. So while we have not imposed a deadline for these negotiations, I think Secretary Blinken made it clear and stated that we are very conscious that as time proceeds, Iran's nuclear advances will have a bearing in its view, our view of returning to the JCPOA. And President also said the process will not be open indefinitely.

And sir, as someone who had pioneered in many ways and also been at the front edge of many nonproliferation and counterproliferation sanctions targeting, whether it be DPRK, Syria, or Iran, all those machineries and authorities—and thanks for tools that Congress has armed us with—we are ready to make sure that Iran makes the right decision not just for, well, for itself, for the sake for the Iranian people.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COONS. We are next going to hear from Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman. I will stick with the topic of Iran for starters here. Since both Dr. Kang and Mr. Scheinman are up for related and somewhat overlapping positions, I would like you each to speak to your views on the following questions.

Just to lay the foundation here, at the last moment, the IAEA struck a deal with Iranian officials on September 12th to continue nuclear monitoring. However, in that deal, the storage cards for the monitoring cameras are sealed and cannot be viewed until the United States and Iran resume JCPOA talks. But this, of course, is a critical time when Iran is actively moving towards having enough material for a bomb.

I would like to know what each of you believes is a realistic time-frame before Iran has enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon. How much time are we dealing with here?

Dr. KANG. Ambassador Scheinman, are you comfortable dealing with it? Perhaps as a sitting official—

Senator YOUNG. Dr. Kang, go ahead, please.

Dr. KANG. Yes, perhaps I am in a better position because I do not believe Mr. Scheinman is privy to some of the latest information and assessment.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, go ahead, sir.

Dr. KANG. Yes, sir. So the platform, of course, this particular platform is not ideal for transmitting the most accurate and precise information to you, sir. So, if confirmed, I certainly will be happy to brief you on this matter.

Senator YOUNG. Okay, okay.

Dr. KANG. But it is true, I mean, they have, as when they were complying with JCPOA, they were about a year away from producing enough fissile material for a viable weapon.

Senator YOUNG. Sure. Well, there has been——

Dr. KANG. Now they are months away. Yes?

Senator YOUNG. I understand, if you are read into this, you, of course, would not want to provide any classified estimates, which is good. You passed that test. But open source, you know, materials indicate that a couple of months is some of the latest estimates that may or may not be accurate.

I will ask each of you to answer the following. What alternatives is the Biden administration considering if the resumption of talks fails? Dr. Kang?

Dr. KANG. Yes, sir. So, ultimately, that would be up to the President and the Secretary and others at a much higher pay scale than myself. But it is clear that what my mission would be, and our Bureau is very well equipped to apply those necessary sanctions, interdiction, and other measures to make sure that there is sufficient incentive for Iran to reconsider its position.

Senator YOUNG. Okay, so your job would not be to offer counsel on such matters?

Dr. KANG. Well, I would definitely voice my opinion, sir, and I will be part of the interagency process. But I have been dealing with proliferators all my career here at State Department.

Senator YOUNG. Yeah.

Dr. KANG. DPRK, Syria.

Senator YOUNG. You mention sanctions, Dr. Kang. We had sanctions before this administration came in. So what other options might you recommend?

Dr. KANG. Well, certainly there are other things that once again I cannot fully discuss with you in this platform. But as a general matter, interdiction is something we are very good at. There are varied export control measures that we lead, and we will turn those on, right back on.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, sir.

Mr. Scheinman, will you be involved consultatively with the administration in your role on such matters?

Ambassador SCHEINMAN. Yes.

Senator YOUNG. And if so, if you would kindly indicate what alternatives the administration should consider if these talks fail.

Ambassador SCHEINMAN. Thank you, Senator. I would note that my responsibilities will not include our direct negotiations with Iran. That is handled by others in the administration. I will probably look at the issue through the lens of the Nonproliferation Treaty and what do we do if Iran were to break out of the Nonproliferation Treaty.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. Well, my time is winding down. I would just note I also had question for Ms. Crocker pertaining to an unrelated matter. It relates to the Human Rights Council and——

Senator COONS. Just be briefly, if you might, Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, I will, indeed. The step they took of establishing a permanent commission of inquiry to investigate Israel, the only such permanent agenda item on the council. We will ask

you about that in writing. Perhaps you could offer your views on the propriety of that matter.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Young.

Senator Schatz?

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Bernicat, to all of you, thank you for your willingness to serve. I understand that Special Envoy Kerry and his team are doing a lot of work in terms of how to make sure taking action on climate is a routine part of how our Foreign Service thinks about their mission on a day-to-day basis. Can you talk a little bit about where you see the opportunities to make climate action part of recruitment, training, and promoting Foreign Service officers so that it becomes a permanent part of the Foreign Service and the State Department and does not swing wildly depending on who the Secretary is and who the President is?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Thank you so much, Senator Schatz, for that question that has been teasing all of us and especially in my current role as Acting Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment, and Scientific Affairs. Our goal is to increase the literacy Department wide on [inaudible] environment—

Senator COONS. Ms. Ambassador Bernicat, in a demonstration of the need for greater investment in State Department IT, your signal is cutting out very, very badly.

[Crosstalk.]

Ambassador Bernicat:—and health issues, it begins with recruiting. But of course, the bulk of our corps is generalist, and so—I did improve the audio. Is that working?

Senator COONS. Sure. Why do we not try and continue now?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Can you hear me?

Senator SCHATZ. The audio seems to be working. Go ahead.

Ambassador BERNICAT. Okay. I have also changed location. So tell me if that helps.

[Inaudible.] Thank you, Senator Hagerty.

Recruiting more people with the STH skills as well as promoting stem education are part of the plan, but I can assure you, sir, if confirmed, that we will also look for ways to improve training for all officers and staff as well as to bring more people into the various bureaus who have specific responsibility for these issues. In no small part because they are tied not just to environment, but to energy, to increasing jobs, and to everything related to the environment, including health.

Senator SCHATZ. You know, I think that is a good start, but I want to be really crisp with what I am asking. I am looking for the kinds of changes that are institutionally difficult to reverse and do not depend on who the President is. And just an emphasis on who you hire is not an unreasonable start, but I am looking for processes, training manuals, curricula, and all of that to change because climate is not going to go away as a threat multiplier and as a diplomatic challenge. So I look forward to working with you on that.

Ambassador, as you know, we pass a defense authorization every year, and we sometimes pass a Coast Guard authorization every year, and I am wondering if you can talk about in your mind's eye

what it would be like if the Congress passed an annual State Department reauthorization, as we do for the Department of Defense, and how that might help to address the challenges that you see with the Foreign Service.

Ambassador BERNICAT. Well, sir, thank you for that question, and let me just say, thank you, I look forward to working with this committee and with Congress on a whole host of issues related to the health and function of our staffs and the State Department in general.

I would say that, you know, in general, our greatest resource is our people. And so, the ability—as you say, recruiting is a good start, but we also need to make sure that we are retaining and developing that talent pool all along the way in their career, and to be able to do that in a steady funding, to be able to plan workforces out over a period of time is really important.

We are, parenthetically, right now the youngest Foreign—excuse me, State Department in terms of seniority that we have been years, and that has a lot to do with the hiring surges that took place under Secretary Powell and Secretary Clinton, as well as a good number of retirements, especially in our civil service corps.

In terms of processes related to the environment, there are a whole host of things from legislation that requires specific actions. We are—we are leading again from the front on environmental issues, and we are committing ourselves to a number of actions that have multiple-year execution in order to make them happen. And so we are looking to build in ways to make sure that we are supporting not only our commitments, but the countries that we are asking to make those commitments.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, can I have another minute?

Senator COONS. One question, if you would, Senator Schatz.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

Just, Dr. Kang, the Biden administration is continuing the previous administration's proposals to expand U.S. nuclear capabilities, including a new low-yield nuclear sea-launched cruise missile that many of us believe is dangerous and unnecessary. I understand that some of the true bad actors are not persuaded by anything or by much, and that sort of calls of hypocrisy are not particularly compelling. But I am also wondering about the rational countries that we are trying to persuade not to pursue their own nuclear ambitions and how we square our pursuing of these low-yield nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles with our desire to stop proliferation among some of our allies and adversaries who are considering whether they want to go down the wrong path.

Dr. KANG. Thank you for that question, Senator.

I will try my best to answer that question because that would not be in the area of responsibility for the Bureau of ISN. It will be for the companion bureau, AVC, Arms Control and Verification and, of course, Under Secretary Bonnie Jenkins, who has the Department lead on this. But having said that—

Senator SCHATZ. In the interest of time, in the interest of time and clarity, do you see that as a challenge for the United States?

Dr. KANG. Oh, yes, sir. I mean, there is intimate link between arms control and nonproliferation. Those who have—possess nu-

clear weapons in the context of the NPT, a nuclear weapons state, they have an obligation to reduce and ultimately seek disarmament. So it would set a bad example. For example, China massively expanding its nuclear strategic capability is counter-productive, and it runs counter to nonproliferation.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

Senator COONS. Senator Van Hollen?

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Hagerty, and congratulations to all of you on your nominations. It is great to see a panel of such experience.

And Ambassador Bernicat, congratulations on the nomination to be the Director General of the Foreign Service. I am thrilled with the appointment. As you may know, I come from a Foreign Service family and very interested and focused on ensuring the strong morale and support for the Foreign Service.

And Senator Dan Sullivan, Republican from Alaska, and myself formed the Foreign Service Caucus a number of years ago, when we introduced legislation called the Foreign Service Families Act. And that act would extend different benefits to Foreign Service families to try to bring them up on a par with the benefits that are extended to military families serving overseas. And I know that the most recent Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review found, and I am quoting, "Ensuring opportunities for spousal employment should be an integral part of plans to retain and motivate staff."

Do you agree with that?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Oh, my goodness, Senator Van Hollen, I have to just express enormous gratitude for the work that you, Senator Sullivan, and others have done particularly on behalf of our families. We have almost 2,000 family members now working overseas. They bring—and back here in Washington. They bring amazing talents to augment our often barebones operations. And so, looking for ways to ensure that we can take advantage, but also that makes it easier to serve as families.

You know, Senator, I cannot help but—I cannot resist when you mention Foreign Service families, I do not think Bathsheba knows this, but I studied under her father at Georgetown University. And so in the spirit of being mentored, I do not think I would be here today if it were not in part for Chet Crocker. So, Bathsheba, I am also part of the family.

Senator Van Hollen: Well, thank you, Madam Ambassador, for mentioning that as well about Chet Crocker, and it is great to see Bathsheba here and others. Let me—and just on the Foreign Service Families Act, we have asked the chairman of the full committee to put it on the next markup calendar, and we are waiting for a green light from the ranking member of the full committee, and I see no reason for opposition, but we are continuing to push.

So, Dr. Kang, thank you for your current service in the acting position, and I look forward to supporting you in this confirmation process.

On the issue of nuclear nonproliferation, Saudi Arabia, as you know, has been engaged with successive administrations with nuclear cooperation talks but continues to have in place—Saudi Arabia, that is—the lowest standard of safeguards with the IAEA. And

again, they say they want at least two nuclear power plants as part of a program going forward, and they seem intent on mastering the front end of a nuclear fuel cycle and developing enrichment capabilities.

So my question to you is, has the administration, has the Biden administration made any attempt in either bilateral or multilateral settings to push Saudi Arabia to sign and implement the additional protocol with the IAEA?

Dr. KANG. Senator, thank you for that question.

We have been in negotiation with Saudi Arabia since 2012. I think that says something. And of course, President Biden has made it clear that he will recalibrate our relationship with Saudi Arabia in human rights and other matters that complicate the relationship.

Now in terms of having the lowest standard, well, Saudi Arabia is party to the NPT, and it has in force a comprehensive safeguard agreement. And that in terms of their ambitions are very high, and certainly, they have the financial resources to make it happen, just as we have seen what UAE has done. But having said that, they have not made significant moves in actually gaining capability.

The United States has supported the universalization of additional protocol, and that is policy. And also we discourage enrichment and reprocessing where these capabilities do not already exist.

And so, we are pursuing a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia because precisely because 123 agreement is a nonproliferation tool. So we are, of course, briefing members, as well as staff, as if there are any movement on this, and of course, it will always be a pleasure to brief you on this matter.

Senator Van Hollen: Well, I appreciate that. I see the time is expired, but we will follow up with you on that, and I will be submitting a question for the record on the administration's full compliance with the BRINK Act, which was to ensure we plug a lot of the loopholes in the sanction regime against North Korea. We saw the recent reports about their firing missiles, and so I will put that in the record. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen.

And I do not believe Senator Kaine is still with us. Is that correct? So I believe every member who is participating has had a chance at a first round. Senator Hagerty, I know you have got additional questions you would like to ask, and I have a few more I will ask, but let me defer to you to begin the second round, Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. That is very kind of you, Chairman Coons. I appreciate it.

I would first like to turn to Dr. Carpenter, talk about Nord Stream 2.

Dr. Carpenter, you previously said, and I want to quote this, "To make sanctions against Russia work, the United States and its allies need to dispense with symbolic gestures and impose stronger sanctions that will have an immediate economic impact." Dr. Carpenter, I just want to say that I wholeheartedly agree with that statement.

And in 2019, you stated the following. “The European Union has, unfortunately, lacked the political will to implement its own anti-monopoly rules and stop Nord Stream 2 from coming to fruition, which means the U.S. Congress is now the only body that can prevent the pipeline from being built.”

Dr. Carpenter, I wholeheartedly agree with that statement, too. Yet, in May, the Biden administration waived U.S. sanctions against Nord Stream 2 AG and sanctions against its chief executive. And last week, Gazprom announced that it has now completed the pipeline.

So, Dr. Carpenter, my question is this. With the pipeline now complete, what do you feel will be the impact on energy security in Europe?

Dr. CARPENTER. Well, thank you for the question, Senator. I am very concerned by the geopolitical consequences of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. This is a project by the Kremlin that brings no new gas molecules from Russia to Europe but merely bypasses Ukraine and the Central European countries and delivers that very same gas directly to Germany, thereby giving the Kremlin enormous leverage over Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, and other countries in Central Europe.

Going forward, if I am confirmed, I will work to reinvigorate the second dimension of the OSCE, the economic and environmental dimension that deals with energy security, and I will seek to work very closely with my friend Amos Hochstein, who is the senior adviser to the Secretary on Energy Security, to build resilience for our partners, and particularly Ukraine, in terms of energy supply, so that Russia cannot continue to use energy supplies as a form of political weaponization of energy and energy coercion.

And last thing I will say on this, Senator, I think it is very important that the United States continue to have a—continue to be ready to use all of the authorities contained within PEESA and CAATSA, which are the laws of the land when it comes to this.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, I know the OSCE will have many divergent opinion in terms of Nord Stream 2, and I wish you the best with that, Dr. Carpenter.

Dr. Kang, can I turn with you now to focus on North Korea. You know, we worked enormously hard with Japan, with the U.N. Security Council, to impose three different, three successively more abiding sets of economic sanctions on North Korea. They had an immediate and very, very important effect on North Korea’s economy. Yet China has continued to undercut our position there.

And at the same time, North Korea has persisted in working in secret on their nuclear program, and there is an example I would like to highlight. And that is according to nongovernmental experts, North Korea is producing uranium at a covert facility, covert uranium enrichment facility, known by the U.S. intelligence community as the Kangson enrichment site.

It is not surprising that North Korea would build secret facilities to produce fissile material, but it poses significant proliferation challenges, especially considering Pyongyang’s previous efforts to provide Syria with a nuclear reactor. If confirmed, you are going to be responsible for spearheading the State Department’s efforts

to reduce WMD-related threats by promoting bilateral and multi-lateral initiatives to prevent proliferation.

So, my question is, Dr. Kang, if confirmed, will you commit to providing regular updates to the committee about the administration's efforts to address North Korea's declared and undeclared nuclear and missile facilities and programs?

Dr. KANG. Absolutely, Senator. I have a long relationship with our lead on re-engagement with North Korea, Ambassador Sung Kim. I have extensive relationship in the Government talking with Korea, as well as Japan. This will be a top priority.

As you know, North Korea is an awfully hardened state, and as you rightly point out, there is always this escape valve of China. China made a decision some time ago that it is tolerable for North Korea to have nuclear weapons as long as it is a buffer state. So it is difficult proposition, but I believe the President is on a right path. We have got to calibrate a practical approach, and this is something Ambassador Sung Kim and myself during the Bush administration have some practical experience in.

Senator HAGERTY. I have had the privilege of working with Ambassador Sung Kim as well, and I look forward to continue to working with both of you as we address this challenge.

Mr. Chairman, if you would permit me, I have just a follow-on question, if I might, for Assistant Secretary Crocker?

Senator COONS. Of course. Please.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you so much.

Assistant Secretary Crocker, I want to focus on China's growing influence among international organizations. You mentioned this in your opening remarks. And while you served as the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations during the Obama administration, China took over leadership of multiple international organizations and staffed them with Chinese nationals.

But in 2017, our posture towards China's malign behavior changed. And if confirmed, I hope that you will continue that posture developed during the previous administration to continue to counter China's influence in global institutions. And further, I fully expect you to fight for American influence by supporting qualified candidates in leadership positions and look to increase positions for Americans, such as greater positions in the Junior Professional Officers Program at the U.N. and, as you mentioned, representation like at the ITU. But I hope to see much more participation there.

And so, my question is, if confirmed, what actions will you take to make certain that qualified United States candidates are in leadership positions at U.N. bodies in Geneva?

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you for that question, Senator, and I think, as you noted, this is a strategic priority for China, and it needs to be a strategic priority for the United States. And indeed, the State Department and the administration are making a concerted effort working with like-minded partners and allies to ensure that we are able to both identify and then robustly support qualified, viable, independent candidates for leadership positions in international organizations, be they American candidates or other like-minded candidates.

And if confirmed, this will be a top priority for me. It is an effort that I fully support, and I would look to use my role and the role

and the resources of the U.S. mission in Geneva, working closely with the State Department and across the interagency, to ensure that we are best positioned diplomatically and—and in terms of resources to support the candidacies.

You mentioned the ITU, where, of course, there is an American candidate up for Secretary General, for an election that will take place in September of 2022. And if confirmed, I would consider this to be one of my highest priorities on getting out to Geneva to support that candidacy and ensure that the mission is doing everything it can to support the candidacy.

And I think, again, looking at both election for leadership positions but also, as you mentioned, making sure that we are strategically focused on ensuring that we are looking also at staffing up and down the system. The Chinese are doing that, as you note, from the junior political officer level all the way up, and we need to do that. And if confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to make sure—and this committee to make sure—that we have appropriate resources to do that.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, I am very pleased to hear that, Assistant Secretary Crocker. Thank you.

And I will be submitting a question for the record for Mr. Scheinman about China and the NPT. I am very concerned their obligations as signatory to that treaty and the fact that they are not living up to those obligations. That will be in the QFRs coming forward, Mr. Scheinman.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for indulging me with some extra time.

Senator COONS. Of course. Thank you, Senator Hagerty, and thank you for a series of, I think, reasonable and balanced questions. Ironically, the last question you asked of Assistant Secretary Crocker was the question I was going to ask.

Senator HAGERTY. I am sorry.

Senator COONS. And I will add—no, no, I think it is well worth focusing on for a moment. One of the things that I was most enthusiastic about in terms of actions of a member of the previous administration, there was a heated contest for leadership of the World Intellectual Property Organization. And Andrei Iancu, the former PTO Director, successfully mobilized an effort amongst all of our allies to ensure that the successful nominee was from a country and a person with experience that would suggest a commitment to protecting IP rather than someone who might be more questionable in terms of their commitment to IP.

There are so many organizations that you will have some role in that I just want to emphasize, and I agree with Senator Hagerty that it is important that we, the United States and our partners, pay attention to the ways in which China is expanding its influence throughout the U.N. system.

Let me ask one last question then, if I might, Ms. Crocker. There is a number of entities of the United Nations, the Human Rights Council, for example—UNESCO is another—where we have withdrawn, either because of previous conduct, I think it was Senator Van Hollen who referenced the sort of permanent agenda item on the Human Rights Council questioning Israel that we had found objectionable, or whether it is some of the ways in which UNESCO,

by admitting Palestine, has run afoul of our priorities and views. We are now in significant arrearages both with the U.N. as a whole and with some of the specialized agencies or entities.

In your view, just speaking broadly, are we better off being at the table and current in our payments and pushing back on adversaries who have competing perspectives on entities, whether it is the WHO or the ITU or otherwise, or are there certain circumstances where we need to withdraw from U.N. entities because of the ways in which they have conducted themselves?

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you for that question, Chairman Coons.

It is my view, and agree very much with the position and approach of the Biden-Harris administration on this, that we are far better served to be at the table and in good standing in terms of our financial payments to the organization in order to be able to effectively drive the kinds of reforms that we want to see across the system around accountability, efficiency, effectiveness. And also dealing with some of the credibility issues that, frankly, exist in different parts of the system, whether that is the anti-Israel bias at the Human Rights Council that you and Senator Young also raised earlier or some of the issues—or some of the issues at UNESCO.

So I think for sure it is better for us to be in good standing from a financial perspective. But also I think it is just important to recognize, and this gets also to Senator Hagerty's questions earlier, that it is important for us to be able to be at the table with the full weight of United States from a diplomatic perspective backing us.

And I certainly saw firsthand when I was Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, the important role that our bilateral and multilateral missions faced—they play and the importance of making sure that they are well resourced. And that we have strong people across the board able to raise these issues and raise them at the right levels in countries around the world because when we are operating at full strength diplomatically as the United States, there is no one that can really go to bat with us.

So if we want to go whether it is toe to toe with the Chinese or with the full strength that we need to be at to push the reforms we want to see across the system, I fully agree that we need to both be in good financial standing and also in our strongest position possible from a diplomatic perspective.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you. Thank you both for that answer and to all five of our nominees today for your willingness to continue your service to the United States and for your dedication to taking on these important posts and positions.

As I referenced at the beginning of this hearing, questions for the record are due by the close of business this Thursday the 16th. A number of members who have participated today have indicated they intend to submit QFRs. So please do so respond promptly so that we can conclude the hearing process and hopefully move forward with your confirmation votes.

Thank you, Senator Hagerty, for serving as the ranking member of this confirmation hearing.

And to the five of you, congratulations, good luck. I personally look forward to supporting your nominations and hope to stay in

regular touch with you as we go forth to serve the people of the United States, depending on the action of the Senate in the coming weeks and months.

So, with that, this hearing is concluded. Thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:57 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. As you noted during your hearing and in your meeting with SFRC minority staff, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is the least developed of the nonproliferation regimes. What practical steps must we take to strengthen the BWC?

Answer. There are a range of practical steps that can be taken to strengthen implementation, increase transparency, and promote the safe and secure use of the life sciences for peaceful purposes - but only if its members can find the political will. If confirmed, I will work to break the longstanding political deadlock in the BWC and advance such practical steps.

Question. Given the limitations of the BWC, what new actions must the U.S. take outside the convention to address biological threats?

Answer. The BWC reflects the global norm against biological weapons and provides international legal underpinning for measures taken by responsible countries to prohibit and prevent BW, but complementary U.S. efforts are essential. New efforts to raise the bar for international biosafety and biosecurity are needed. International capabilities to detect, respond to, and attribute BW use need to be strengthened as well - and because such use could mimic a natural outbreak, this means that the links between international public health and international security institutions must be reinforced.

Question. According to 1 FAM 457.3, the Biological Policy Staff is charged with "developing and promoting measures to prevent misuse of advances in the life sciences, to include participation in U.S. Government and international groups on health security issues; outreach to the scientific community and private industry; and promoting international standards and norms." During your tenures in ISN, what specific initiatives or steps have you spearheaded or participated in to fulfill that mandate? Please provide examples. What would you like to do more of to meet this challenge?

Answer. Although the Biological Policy Staff is constrained by its small size, it has taken a number of steps in this area, including briefing on U.S. experiences and advocating that other countries develop oversight mechanisms for potentially high-risk research; organizing and participating in workshops to assess, test, and refine qualitative frameworks for assessing risks and benefits; establishing ties between the U.S. National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity and its French equivalent; and a G7 Experts' Meeting on Strengthening Laboratory Biorisk Management last year. More work in all these areas is needed.

Question. According to the Department of State website, the Biological Policy Staff works with foreign partners on the oversight of emerging technologies such as synthetic biology. What specific initiatives and steps have you spearheaded or participated in to address the challenges posed by synthetic biology?

Answer. A number of offices in ISN work to address issues posed by synthetic biology and other emerging technologies. This has included promotion of voluntary screening guidelines for providers of synthetic DNA; collaboration with iGEM international on outreach regarding dual-use awareness and risk assessment; work in the BWC and elsewhere to evaluate and promote risk assessment frameworks, including the approach set out by the National Academies recently in Biodefense in the Age of Synthetic Biology; and promoting new export controls on desktop DNA synthesizers and related technology.

Question. Does ISN have the authorities, personnel, and resources it needs to address the proliferation of biological weapons?

Answer. ISN has significant authorities to address BW proliferation, highly qualified and motivated personnel, and an important suite of threat reduction programs. However, biological weapons proliferation is an enormous challenge both politically and technically. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to identify and address specific needs and opportunities to ensure our effectiveness in this important mission.

Question. Does ISN play any role in 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, even if such collaboration is funded by another federal agency? If so, please describe ISN's involvement.

Answer. ISN does not fund nor directly approve any life sciences research. The United States has policies pertaining to Federally funded research on high consequence pathogens and dual-use research of concern, which are applicable regardless of where the research is conducted. These policies establish a high bar for funding based on a careful assessment of risks and benefits and require steps to mitigate any risks. ISN ensures that Federal policy development takes into account our international obligations and urges other countries to adopt similar policies that minimize the potential misuse of life sciences research.

Question. Do you agree that ISN must have a stronger role in decisions to share weaponizable biotechnology with China and other countries that may not be in compliance with BWC obligations?

Answer. ISN is the focal point within the State Department for policies to prevent the misuse of life sciences, and we participate in the interagency processes that establish the oversight policies for sharing research [and technology] that might pose concern. Our role ensures that the policy development considers both our international obligations from the BWC and the international implications of our policies. We believe this requires careful consideration of risks and benefits, and where appropriate, measures to mitigate the risks, including for sharing technology with those we have concerns regarding their compliance with the BWC.

Question. What is the U.S. doing to address Russia's offensive biological weapons program?

Answer. As the lead bureau on the BWC, ISN works closely with the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, as well as others within the Department and the interagency to address this and other threats. To counter Russia's offensive biological weapons program, the United States has engaged with allies and partners and imposed export restrictions on certain Russian organizations associated with Russia's BW program. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts through direct bilateral information exchanges with key allies and partners and consider a variety of export-control and sanctions related actions against Russia.

Question. Does the loss of Afghanistan to the Taliban increase the likelihood of terrorist bioweapons labs on Afghan territory? What must the U.S. do to address any such threats, or other terrorist BW capabilities?

Answer. The accessibility of weaponizable biological materials is of great concern to me. If confirmed, I will increase assistance to countries in South and Central Asia to reduce threats emanating both out of and into Afghanistan.

Question. China is growing its nuclear arsenal at an alarming rate. What impact will this have on the NPT? How should the U.S. address it, in the context of the NPT?

Answer. The PRC's nuclear weapons build-up risks undermining decades of international progress toward nuclear disarmament, one of the pillars of the NPT. It is urgent for China to take on greater responsibility, transparency, and restraint with respect to its nuclear weapons arsenal. The United States will pursue those objectives both in bilateral engagements with China and in multilateral fora such as the NPT Review Conference.

Question. Should the IAEA be subject to political considerations of any particular government and its negotiations on other matters, or should the IAEA only consider strict compliance issues?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the professional, technical, and independent work of the IAEA to verify States' compliance with their NPT-required safeguards agreements and to undertake additional monitoring and verification activities as requested by the IAEA Board of Governors. A strong, credible international safeguards regime is a core United States national security interest.

Question. At what point do the advances of the Iranian nuclear program make any return to the nuclear deal irrelevant?

Answer. I am carefully evaluating Iran's expansion of nuclear activities, as reported by the International Atomic Energy Agency. As Secretary Blinken has made clear, continued Iranian nuclear advances bring us closer to the point where a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action would fail to reproduce the nonproliferation benefits the deal originally delivered. The administration remains committed to pursuing a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program. If confirmed, I will make clear the window of opportunity will not remain open indefinitely.

Question. Iran has successfully stymied the IAEA's investigation of Iran's past nuclear activities. How can the IAEA restart this investigation and keep it going effectively?

Answer. I am deeply concerned that Iran has yet to provide the IAEA with the information it needs to resolve questions regarding potential undeclared nuclear material. Iran must cooperate fully and substantively with the Agency without further delay in a way that leads to resolution of these issues. The U.S. is working with Allies and partners to reinforce support for the IAEA and the Director General (DG) as they pursue these serious issues. If confirmed, I will be watching closely whether Iran provides the necessary level of cooperation, starting with the DG's meetings with senior Iranian officials in Vienna this week and in Tehran in the near future.

Question. Considering the Iran nuclear archive and the findings in the 2021 Arms Control report, can the U.S. confirm today that Iran has solely peaceful intentions for its nuclear program?

Answer. I would refer you to the Intelligence Community regarding Iran's intentions. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action provided the strongest verification and monitoring measures ever negotiated to help ensure Iran's nuclear activities are exclusively peaceful. Resumption of mutual compliance with the deal would ensure the renewed implementation of these important measures, as well as restrictions on the size and scope of Iran's nuclear activities.

Question. Do you believe that Iran engages in nuclear hedging? Why or why not? In that context, is it advisable in your view to lift nuclear and terrorism sanctions on Iran?

Answer. The 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. If confirmed, I would remain committed to engaging in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a return to mutual compliance with JCPOA commitments, and would recommend against providing the sanctions relief described in the JCPOA unless there is a return to mutual compliance. Regardless of the status of the JCPOA, the administration will continue to utilize sanctions to respond to Iranian policies that are contrary to U.S. national security interests.

Question. If confirmed, how would you plan to work within the administration to encourage the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to investigate Iran's potentially ongoing nuclear weaponization work, which the nuclear archive indicates Tehran hid and dispersed at research institutes, universities, and military sites after 2003?

Answer. Iran's history of deception regarding its past nuclear weapons program is not new. Verifiably ensuring Iran never resumes such activities, despite Iran's past denials, is a core purpose of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which provides for the most intrusive verification and monitoring procedures ever negotiated. The administration will continue to seek a mutual return to compliance with JCPOA commitments, which would ensure that its critical verification and monitoring measures are restored.

Question. If confirmed, how can you assure Congress that political considerations or multilateral issues are not used to avoid holding Iran accountable for its non-compliance with safeguard agreements?

Answer. The United States has made clear our serious concerns regarding potential undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, as reported by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is essential that Iran fully comply with its legally binding obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA to resolve these important matters without further delay. The stability of any diplomatic outcome regarding Iran's nuclear program relies on the credible resolution of these serious issues and Iran's full compliance with its safeguards obligations.

Question. Do you support the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)? If confirmed, will you fully implement it?

Answer. Yes, I support and, should I be confirmed, am fully committed to implementing CAATSA, especially Section 231, for which the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation leads U.S. implementation. If confirmed, I will urge all our partners and allies to refrain from major new purchases of Russian military equipment that could risk mandatory sanctions under CAATSA Section 231.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. How do you envision the United States' role in bolstering the international nuclear nonproliferation regime?

Answer. The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance—issued less than two months after the President took office—noted that the threats posed by WMD proliferation, “cannot be effectively addressed by one nation acting alone. And none can be effectively addressed with the United States on the sidelines.” The United States led in the creation of the international nuclear nonproliferation regime, such as the establishment of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and it is vital that we continue to lead efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons.

Question. Should the United States continue to work to prevent new states from possessing their own nuclear weapons?

Answer. Yes. The President's Interim National Security Guidance states that “as we re-engage the international system, we will address the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons.” The Guidance also states that nuclear proliferation poses an existential danger. Addressing these threats requires that we minimize the number of states possessing nuclear weapons, and the administration places a high priority on using the tools of national security to achieve this objective. Renewed American nonproliferation leadership will be essential to reducing the dangers posed by nuclear weapons.

Question. Which new or expiring agreements require the bureau's near-term focus? How should the United States balance the goals of increasing states' access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with the nonproliferation goals of preventing the further spread of sensitive fuel cycle nuclear technology?

Answer. The United States is in negotiations for peaceful nuclear cooperation agreements with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Thailand. If confirmed, I would support the negotiation of additional peaceful nuclear cooperation agreements, which are needed for significant exports of U.S. nuclear material and equipment, to increase access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the highest standards of nuclear security and nonproliferation and continue the United States' longstanding policy of limiting the spread of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities around the world.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. What are your views on the threats posed by biological dual-use research of concern?

Answer. I take threats posed by dual-use research of concern (DURC) seriously. In fact, one of ISN's missions is to prevent the life sciences from being misused for biological weapons development. Dual-use research of concern warrants careful oversight and risk/benefit analysis. The ISN Bureau has advocated for thoughtful national oversight of such research in international forums, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, for almost a decade and, if confirmed, I will continue to do so.

Question. Would Chinese interest in dual-use research of concern be consistent with your understanding of the Chinese national strategy of military-civil fusion?

Answer. Military-Civil fusion seeks to develop a singular ecosystem within which all dual-use technology is simultaneously advancing military and civilian programs. Key to this is the removal of the traditional barriers between the national defense

and national economic systems. Whether specific types of dual-use research of concern might be exploited in this way would likely depend on the extent to which the research was specifically relevant to People's Republic of China military applications and objectives.

Question. Should the United States be involved in, or support, potential dual-use research of concern conducted in China?

Answer. The United States has federal funding and oversight policies for research that might pose particular concerns, including dual-use. These policies require careful consideration of risks and benefits, and where appropriate, measures to mitigate those risks. Policy development is led by the National Security Council and by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and decisions about the funding of specific research proposals are made by the responsible funding agency. The ISN Bureau ensures that policy development considers both our international obligations and the international implications of policy choices.

Question. Can you explain the ISN Bureau's international outreach related to dual-use research of concern in their role as ex-officio member of the Nation Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB)?

Answer. The ISN Bureau's international outreach on dual-use research of concern has consisted of a variety of advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, including participating in or organizing workshops and briefings and working to develop common understandings internationally. With the exception of efforts to facilitate collaboration between the NSABB and its French counterpart, this outreach is unrelated to the ex-officio role.

Question. Did the ISN Bureau, in their role on the NSABB, support lifting the moratorium on gain of function research with viruses in the United States in 2017?

Answer. The Department of State's role on the NSABB is a non-voting ex officio position. ISN neither advocated for lifting of the moratorium nor participated directly in the decision taken by the NSABB.

Question. Would Chinese military research into weaponizing pathogens such as coronaviruses be a concern under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)?

Answer. Research into the weaponization of any pathogen by any BWC State Party would be a matter of concern. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance to address any concerns regarding compliance with the Convention.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to undertake a full-scale investigation into the transfer of dual-use technology, know how, and money by the U.S. Government to Chinese research institutions engaged in synthetic biology and engineering chimeric pathogens through gain of function experiments?

Answer. A number of mechanisms exist to guard against the risk that transfers of U.S. technology will be misused. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these mechanisms are effective and are fully utilized, taking into account lessons learned.

Question. At any time, were you instructed to shudder or stop the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance (AVC) investigation into the potential Chinese BWC concerns by Biden State Department appointees or other administrative staff?

Answer. No. As I understand it, the AVC Bureau, under the previous administration, commissioned an internal inquiry into COVID origins. This ad hoc inquiry was conducted as part of a larger contract. I defer to the AVC Bureau about details of this contract. I understand the group briefed State Department staff during both the Trump and Biden administrations.

Question. What was your role as acting T Assistant Secretary in supporting the AVC Bureau's research into potential Biological Warfare links to the PLA's Academy of Military Medical Science, (AAMS) which was referenced in the January 15 Fact Sheet?

Answer. I had no role in relation to this research, nor in the development of the January 15 Fact Sheet.

Question. I understand the ISN and AVC office directors responsible for Biological Warfare warned of a potential "can of worms" that would be opened if AVC investigated Chinese BW programs and potential ties to research being done at the WIV. What, specifically, was the concern with regard to a "can of worms?"

Answer. ISN personnel at no point objected to such an investigation by AVC or warned against such investigation. Assertions to the contrary are incorrect.

Question. Why would the State Department Weapons of Mass Destruction programs, who are responsible for holding the PRC accountable to their international obligations, not opt to investigate every potential lead? If confirmed, will you allow the State Department investigation to continue into potential military links to the research at the WIV?

Answer. The Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance has primary responsibility for issues related to assessing compliance with arms control agreements, and continues to monitor and assess information related to countries' compliance with the BWC, working closely with IC colleagues and others in the inter-agency. If confirmed, I will work closely with AVC and other partners to address such concerns.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. What can the United States do to reinforce the norms of the Chemical Weapons Convention?

Answer. The Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC) Bureau is the lead on the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, if confirmed, I commit to implementing Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act while also coordinating with AVC to limit the proliferation of chemical weapons.

Question. Is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) up to the task? What reforms would you recommend to make it more effective?

Answer. The Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC) Bureau is the lead on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). If confirmed, I commit to coordinating with AVC to limit the proliferation of chemical weapons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, are you committed to fully enforcing INKSNA and other U.S. non-proliferation sanctions?

Answer. Yes. Sanctions are a critical tool that contribute to nonproliferation goals. If confirmed, I would join the Department's commitment to implementing its sanctions authorities, including the requirements of the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA). The Department recently transmitted five INKSNA reports to Congress—in Feb 2020, Sept 2020, Nov 2020, Jan 2021, and July 2021—clearing a backlog of previously delayed reports. This has led to sanctions against 46 foreign entities/individuals for proliferation activities, including against 18 entities for supporting Iran's missile program.

Question. What is your assessment of the effectiveness of sanctions measures in supporting nuclear non-proliferation?

Answer. Sanctions are an effective tool in impeding, rolling back, and countering proliferation and changing the behavior of those who provide aid or support to proliferators. Sanctions are one of a number of important tools in the counterproliferation toolkit, and they can be deployed in a targeted and strategic manner.

If confirmed, I will work closely with other agencies, particularly with the Department of the Treasury, to fully implement all U.S. nonproliferation sanctions, and to work with allies and partners to ensure U.N. sanctions are also implemented and enforced.

Question. Is Iran in compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty? If so, how could Iran be compliant with the NPT when it has not answered the IAEA's questions on undeclared nuclear material and activities?

Answer. Iran is obligated under its NPT-required safeguards agreement to declare to the IAEA all peaceful nuclear material and related 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 and raises serious questions regarding Iran's compliance with its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations. These concerns are under active discussion in the IAEA Board of Governors. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA's ongoing investigation in Iran into indications of possible undeclared nuclear mate-

rial and activities, as well as continued IAEA Board action as necessary to ensure Iran complies with its NPT-related obligations.

Question. Do you think the Biden administration should commit to not lifting or waiving sanctions on Iran until it, at a minimum, complies with the IAEA's requests on undeclared nuclear material and activities?

Answer. The long-term stability of any diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear challenge relies on the credible resolution of these serious safeguards concerns. The administration strongly supports the IAEA's ongoing investigations regarding possible undeclared nuclear material in Iran. Iran must provide the IAEA full cooperation without further delay. The foundation for any long-term solution is strong and credible verification; credible resolution of the serious safeguards concerns reported by the IAEA Director General must be a brick in that foundation. In addition to the assurances that would be provided if it does so, a mutual return to compliance with JCPOA commitments, which include the strongest verification and monitoring measures ever negotiated, would ensure that these critical measures are restored.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. The four Nuclear Security Summits successfully led to elimination or downblending of global civilian stocks of weapons usable fissile material. If confirmed, what diplomatic efforts will you take to encourage countries to reduce stocks of fissile material in their military programs and other non-military stocks that are not subject to IAEA safeguards?

Answer. The United States will continue to lead by example in eliminating surplus plutonium and downblending highly enriched uranium that are no longer needed for defense purposes. The United States has called on states to declare moratoria on production of fissile material for weapons, and if confirmed I will continue those efforts. In addition, I will support U.S. and international efforts and diplomacy related to placing fissile material no longer required for military purposes under IAEA safeguards and arranging for its appropriate disposition.

Question. Extension of the State Department travel ban to North Korea and the need to obtain a specific license from the Treasury Department have made it more difficult for generous Americans and others to provide life-saving assistance to North Koreans—assistance that is explicitly exempted under U.S. law. If confirmed, will you work with your State and Treasury Department colleagues to issue new guidance that clearly defines what additional goods related to food and medicine to be exempted from U.S. sanctions?

Answer. The U.S. Government actively seeks to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance in the DPRK as a matter of U.S. policy, and maintains a number of sanctions exemptions and authorizations related to humanitarian aid. It has also led efforts to streamline the process for humanitarian exemptions in the U.N. Security Council DPRK sanctions committee. The DPRK 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 vulnerable people in the DPRK.

Question. In 2019, President Trump unsigned the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)—a global treaty that regulates the conventional arms trade—despite the fact that the treaty simply requires other countries to uphold the same domestic legal standard we have: to not transfer arms to countries if it is believed they will be used to violate international humanitarian law. Will the United States rescind the Trump administration's letter to the United Nations stating that the United States did not intend to ratify nor fulfill the obligations of this 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 the larger context 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.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. In April 2019, then-nominee to be Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation Jeffrey L. Eberhardt confirmed in writing to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that “given Iran’s past noncompliance with both its safeguards agreement and its NPT obligations, its failure to fully address IAEA questions related to past activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device, and the emergence of new questions surrounding Iran’s motives for retaining and concealing documents, equipment, and personnel related to its past nuclear weapons program, Iran’s standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as ‘good.’” Do you agree with Mr. Eberhardt’s assessment? If not, why not?

Answer. If being in “good standing” means being in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), then the United States has, including in the 2021 Compliance Report, indicated concern with regard to Iran’s compliance with Article III of the NPT. Given Iran’s past non-compliance with its obligations under the NPT and Iran’s NPT-required safeguards agreement and its present failure to fully address the IAEA’s current questions related to implementation of that safeguards agreement, Iran’s standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as “good.”

Question. 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. In 2005, the United States found Iran to be in non-compliance with Articles II and III of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—as well as its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—and reported these findings to Congress. These findings concerned activities related to Iran’s pre-2004 efforts to develop a nuclear weapon, records of which were retained in the Iranian “nuclear archive” acquired by Israel in 2018. The IAEA is now seeking to resolve issues involving possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and still awaits the necessary substantive cooperation from Iran on its safeguards investigations. The IAEA Board of Governors has expressed serious concern regarding the lack of progress on these issues and has called on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA without further delay.

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. In 2005, the United States found Iran to be in non-compliance with Articles II and III of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—as well as its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—and reported these findings to Congress. These findings concerned activities related to Iran’s pre-2004 efforts to develop a nuclear weapon, records of which were retained in the Iranian “nuclear archive” acquired by Israel in 2018. The IAEA is now seeking to resolve issues involving possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and still awaits the necessary substantive cooperation from Iran on its safeguards investigations. The IAEA Board of Governors has expressed serious concern regarding the lack of progress on these issues and has called on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA without further delay.

Question. Do you believe that Iran should be entitled to the use of civilian nuclear technology even if they are not a member in good standing of the NPT? If so, why? If not, why not?

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 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 obligation under Article II of the NPT not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons.

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Question. Paragraphs 10-15 of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231 describe a so-called ‘snapback mechanism’ which reverses the termination of sanctions on Iran described in paragraph 7(a) of that resolution. The resolution requires a “JCPOA participant state” to notify the U.N. Security Council of an issue it believes constitutes “significant non-performance” of commitments under the JCPOA. By no later than December 2019, the State Department had conducted a legal analysis which concluded that “there is a legally available argument we can assert that the United States can initiate the snapback process under UNSCR 2231 by submitting a notification to the Security Council of an issue that the United States believes constitutes significant non-performance.” Do you agree with that conclusion, i.e. that there is a legally available argument for the United States to initiate the snapback process? If not, why not?

Answer. The U.S. initiation of the “snapback” of previous U.N. sanctions on Iran in 2020 resulted in an impasse at the U.N. Security Council that, as a practical matter, undermined its ability to address Iran’s destabilizing activities. The United States will continue to use domestic authorities to address Iran’s proliferation activities—including Executive Order 13949, which authorizes blocking sanctions related to the supply, sale, or transfer of arms or related materiel to or from Iran.

Question. Do you believe that Russia would be in violation of INKSNA if Russia sold advanced weapons to Iran, including missile technology?

Answer. The Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA) requires reports to Congress identifying, and the discretion to impose sanctions against, foreign persons that transfer or receive items controlled by the four multilateral export control regimes, (the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement), as well as other sensitive items, involving the subject countries. I understand that the Department is committed to implementing sanctions under INKSNA. For example, in July 2021, sanctions were imposed against three Russian entities, Asia-Invest LLC, Charter Green Light Moscow (CGLM), and NPP Pulsar LLC (Russia), for transferring sensitive items to Iran’s missile program.

Question. Do you believe that China would be in violation of and INKSNA if China sold advanced weapons to Iran, including missile technology?

Answer. The Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA) requires reports to Congress identifying, and the discretion to impose sanctions against, foreign persons that transfer or receive items controlled by the four multilateral export control regimes, (the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement), as well as other sensitive items, involving the subject countries. I understand that the Department is committed to implementing sanctions authorities under INKSNA, and that, for example, in November 2020, sanctions were imposed against two PRC entities, Chengdu Best New Materials Co Ltd and Zibo Elim Trade Company, Ltd. for transferring sensitive items and technology to Iran’s missile program.

Question. Do you assess that China is in violation of its Article VI obligations?

Answer. The State Department’s most recent Compliance Reports does not find China to be in violation of its obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty’s. The AVC Bureau has the lead on compliance reporting to Congress.

Question. What leverage does the United States currently possess to dampen China’s nuclear buildup?

Answer. The answer to this question involves a range of national security instruments, but given the responsibilities of the position for which I have been nominated, I will respond from the perspective of nonproliferation. The PRC's nuclear weapons build-up risks undermining decades of international progress toward nuclear disarmament, one of the pillars of the NPT. It is urgent for China to take on greater responsibility and demonstrate greater transparency and restraint with respect to its nuclear weapons arsenal. The United States will pursue those objectives both in bilateral engagements with China and in multilateral fora such as the NPT Review Conference.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. C.S. ELIOT KANG BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. Do you agree that greater enforcement of international sanctions against North Korea would strengthen U.S. leverage in nuclear talks with Pyongyang?

Answer. Yes. The DPRK's unlawful weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs constitute serious threats to international peace and security and the global nonproliferation regime. A series of United Nations Security Council resolutions have put in place sanctions to address the threat posed by the DPRK Government's weapons programs and proliferation activities and to deny it the means to advance its WMD and ballistic missile programs. If confirmed, I will continue to promote their full global implementation and look forward to supporting the administration's efforts to pursue calibrated and practical diplomacy with the DPRK.

Question. What steps would you recommend the administration take to pressure other countries, in particular China, to enforce international sanctions against North Korea?

Answer. DPRK-related sanctions implementation by other countries, including the PRC and Russia, has been uneven. I am clear-eyed that while our interests on the Korean Peninsula overlap at times, our priorities often differ significantly. If confirmed, I will continue to engage the PRC and Russia on DPRK issues and encourage both to play a positive role. I will continue to work with other U.N. Member States to promote full global sanctions implementation and enhance their capacity to fulfill their U.N. obligations.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to fully comply with the Otto Warmbier North Korea Nuclear Sanctions and Enforcement Act of 2019 (title LXXI of Public Law 116-92; 133 Stat. 2244)?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department's compliance with the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act, including as amended by the Otto Warmbier North Korea Nuclear Sanctions and Enforcement Act of 2019.

Question. In your view, does cooperation on naval nuclear propulsion constitute an allowable peaceful use under the U.S.-Australian civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, submitted to Congress pursuant to section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended [P.L. 83-703; 42 U.S.C. §2153 et seq? If not, would such cooperation require congressional approval?

Answer. The 2010 U.S.-Australia Agreement Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy would not apply to cooperation on naval nuclear propulsion. Any cooperation will be undertaken consistent with requirements of the Atomic Energy Act, including with respect to any necessary agreements and requisite Congressional review in accordance with its provisions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. China is growing its nuclear arsenal at an alarming rate. What impact will this have on the NPT? How should the U.S. address it, in the context of the NPT?

Answer. The PRC's nuclear weapons build-up risks undermining decades of international progress toward nuclear disarmament, one of the pillars of the NPT. It is urgent for China to take on greater responsibility, transparency, and restraint with

respect to its nuclear weapons arsenal. The United States will pursue those objectives both in bilateral engagements with China and in multilateral fora such as the NPT Review Conference.

Question. How will you evaluate if the NPT Revcon is a success? If confirmed, what will you do to make it a success?

Answer. NPT Review Conferences are held every five years to review the operation of the Treaty. There are no fixed standards for success, and past RevCons have reached consensus on various forms of final outcome documents. At a minimum, I expect that NPT Parties will recognize the continuing importance of the Treaty and reaffirm their commitment to the Treaty. If confirmed, I will work to build the broadest possible consensus on principles, goals, and specific actions to strengthen the NPT regime.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Are the provisions of the NPT still relevant over fifty years later? How do you assess the effectiveness of the treaty for U.S. nonproliferation policy?

Answer. I believe that the provisions of the Treaty are still highly relevant and vital to the preservation of U.S., as well as international, security. The NPT is the international legal foundation for efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, one of the greatest threats to our national security. Almost all countries have joined the Treaty, which has helped forestall the widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons predicted in the 1960s. The Treaty is among the most effective international regimes, contributing to the norm against nuclear proliferation as well as robust international nuclear safeguards, common nuclear supplier policies, and action on nuclear arms control.

Question. How do you view the NPT's three tenets, nonproliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy? Should one be prioritized over the others?

Answer. Each of these tenets—or “pillars,” as we often call them—represents a common interest of all NPT Parties. All states benefit from and can contribute to each. They should not be treated as competing interests. However, since some other Parties often emphasize the disarmament or peaceful uses pillars, we encourage all Parties to recognize that nonproliferation is an essential foundation for these other two. Further steps toward disarmament will be hindered if more nuclear proliferation occurs, and states are reluctant to supply nuclear wherewithal to others unless they are assured it will be used for solely peaceful purposes.

Question. How should the United States balance the goals of increasing states' access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with the nonproliferation goals of preventing the further spread of sensitive fuel cycle nuclear technology (enrichment and reprocessing)?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work within the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to make good on its objective of expanding access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while promoting the highest standards of nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation and continuing the United States' long-standing policy of limiting the spread of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities around the world. Proliferation of such technologies is not necessary to meet the NPT States Parties' peaceful uses needs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The United Arab Emirates Ambassador to the United States earlier this year asked why under current U.S. policy an adversary—the regime in Iran—would be allowed to have an enrichment program while U.S. partners and allies were committed to nuclear programs without enrichment or reprocessing. How would you answer the ambassador's question?

Answer. The United States has long sought to limit the spread of uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing capabilities. Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran committed to strict limits on both the level and scale of its enrichment program and related research and development activities, as well as

limits on reprocessing. The administration believes that diplomacy and a mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA are the best path to reestablishing limits on Iran's nuclear program and ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

I have long applauded the constructive decision by the United Arab Emirates in 2008 to voluntarily refrain from domestic enrichment and reprocessing-related activities. If confirmed, I will continue to urge other countries to follow in a similar path and will support using all measures at our disposal to limit the spread of these sensitive technologies both in the region and globally.

Question. How should the administration address Middle Eastern states seeking enrichment and reprocessing capabilities to match Iran's if Washington re-enters the JCPOA and accepts the continued existence and future growth of Tehran's enrichment program?

Answer. The United States has a longstanding policy of limiting the further spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to the greatest extent possible, and we employ a range of tools to that end. The United States shares a common interest with regional partners in ensuring through diplomacy that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I will urge regional states to rely on the existing international market for nuclear fuel and services, rather than seeking to acquire or develop such capabilities, and to apply the highest nonproliferation standards, including by bringing into force an IAEA Additional Protocol if they have not yet done so.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. What leverage do we still have with Iran to halt further development of their nuclear program and restrain their destabilizing actions in the region?

Answer. If confirmed as Special Representative, I would not have direct responsibility for these issues, but I believe the high priority Iran places on sanctions relief gives us leverage in the negotiations on a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). A mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA and to build on that basis are central to the administration's efforts to restrict Iran's nuclear program, secure diplomatic support for this goal, and address Iran's destabilizing activities in the region.

Question. I am pleased that the Biden administration has extended the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (new START) until 2026. However, I remain concerned about Russia's nuclear program, particularly given its continued malign actions near and far beyond its borders. What more can be done to ensure continued dialogue with Russia on this matter, and how will you, if confirmed, ensure that we are able to conduct inspections as agreed to in New START?

Answer. The Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC) Bureau is the lead on bilateral nuclear arms control with Russia. If confirmed, I commit to coordinating with AVC to ensure that Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) States Parties are appropriately informed of U.S. dialogue and bilateral treaty implementation with Russia. The administration has launched a Strategic Stability Dialogue with Russia to discuss strategic stability issues, including future arms control and risk reduction. The administration is also working with Russia to determine when New START inspections can be resumed safely.

Question. How can we build on the New START extension to cover tactical (i.e. short range missiles, nuclear artillery, etc.) and emerging nuclear weapon technologies (i.e. Skyfall, nuclear warhead unmanned subsurface vehicles, etc.)?

Answer. The Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC) Bureau is the lead on bilateral nuclear arms control with Russia. If confirmed, I commit to coordinating with AVC to ensure that Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) States Parties are appropriately informed of U.S. dialogue and bilateral treaty implementation with Russia. The administration will use the time provided by 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 arms.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. In April 2019, then-nominee to be Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation Jeffrey L. Eberhardt confirmed in writing to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that “given Iran’s past noncompliance with both its safeguards agreement and its NPT obligations, its failure to fully address IAEA questions related to past activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device, and the emergence of new questions surrounding Iran’s motives for retaining and concealing documents, equipment, and personnel related to its past nuclear weapons program, Iran’s standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as ‘good.’” Do you agree with Mr. Eberhardt’s assessment? If not, why not?

Answer. The United States has, including in the 2021 Compliance Report, indicated concern with regard to Iran’s compliance with Article III of the NPT. Given Iran’s past non-compliance with its obligations under the NPT and Iran’s NPT-required safeguards agreement and its present failure to fully address the IAEA’s current questions related to implementation of that safeguards agreement, Iran’s standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as “good.”

Question. 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. In 2005, the United States found Iran to be in non-compliance with Articles II and III of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—as well as its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—and reported these findings to Congress. These findings concerned activities related to Iran’s pre-2004 efforts to develop a nuclear weapon, records of which were retained in the Iranian “nuclear archive” acquired by Israel in 2018. The IAEA is now seeking to resolve issues involving possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and still awaits the necessary substantive cooperation from Iran on its safeguards investigations. The IAEA Board of Governors has expressed serious concern regarding the lack of progress on these issues and has called on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA without further delay.

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. In 2005, the United States found Iran to be in non-compliance with Articles II and III of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—as well as its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—and reported these findings to Congress. These findings concerned activities related to Iran’s pre-2004 efforts to develop a nuclear weapon, records of which were retained in the Iranian “nuclear archive” acquired by Israel in 2018. The IAEA is now seeking to resolve issues involving possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and still awaits the necessary substantive cooperation from Iran on its safeguards investigations. The IAEA Board of Governors has expressed serious concern regarding the lack of progress on these issues and has called on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA without further delay.

Question. Do you believe that Iran should be entitled to the use of civilian nuclear technology even if they are not a member in good standing of the NPT? If so, why? If not, why not?

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 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 obligation under Article II of the NPT not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons.

Question. Do you consider Iran to be specifically 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 obligation under Article II of the NPT not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons.

Question. Do you assess that China is in violation of its Article VI obligations?

Answer. I understand the State Department examined the issue of China's compliance with NPT Article VI in connection with the 2021 compliance report and determined it did not merit inclusion. If confirmed, I commit to follow up with the AVC bureau, which is the Department lead on compliance reporting, and to support and advocate for the administration's efforts to engage China in nuclear risk reduction talks.

Question. What leverage does the United States currently possess to dampen China's nuclear buildup?

Answer. The PRC's nuclear weapons build-up risks undermining decades of international progress toward nuclear disarmament, one of the pillars of the NPT. It is urgent for China to take on greater responsibility and demonstrate greater transparency and restraint with respect to its nuclear weapons arsenal. The United States will pursue those objectives both in bilateral engagements with China and in multilateral fora such as the NPT Review Conference.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ADAM SCHEINMAN BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. In your view, has China exhibited good faith efforts to pursue nuclear negotiations with the United States or any other party of the NPT?

Answer. The PRC's nuclear weapons build-up risks undermining decades of international progress toward nuclear disarmament. It is urgent for China to take on greater responsibility, transparency, and restraint with respect to its nuclear weapons arsenal. If confirmed, I would work to pursue those objectives both in bilateral engagements with China and in multilateral fora such as the NPT Review Conference.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing regular updates to the committee on the Biden administration's effort to determine whether or not China has violated Article VI of the NPT?

Answer. The Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC) Bureau has the lead on compliance reporting to Congress. If confirmed, I commit to working with them and Congress on matters related to the NPT.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

State Department Attrition

Question. The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy recently released a report that found that almost a third of current foreign service officers are seriously considering leaving the Department. This finding reflects a broader trend of attrition within the foreign service over the past decade.

- What steps will you take, if confirmed, to improve foreign service retention and to ensure that the foreign service is motivated, engaged, and functioning to the highest degree of their professional capabilities? What steps will you take to en-

sure that the Department retains foreign service officers from a diversity of backgrounds?

Answer. On his first day in office, Secretary Blinken addressed the Department's workforce and underscored that our task "starts with rebuilding morale and trust" within our ranks. The Department is developing new approaches in support of the President's directive to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. As part of this effort, the Secretary appointed Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley as the Department's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and, if confirmed, I plan to work closely with her to ensure that diversity and inclusion practices are integrated strategically into personnel-related policies. I also plan to promote workplace flexibilities and to highlight for the workforce resources available to assist employees: FSI workshops and engagements; 24/7 online access to WorkLife4You to address personal issues, including mental health; and TalentCare, the single touchpoint for resources for well-being, community, safety, and workplace flexibilities.

If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening our efforts to support, retain, and develop our already top notch Foreign Service and Civil Service employees to confront the foreign policy challenges of the 21st century.

Question. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to address foreign service officers' concerns regarding assignments, promotions, bias, and family matters?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ask Department experts to examine whether there is a significantly higher rate of attrition for certain populations, and I commit to further analyzing mitigation measures to ensure the Department remains an employer of choice for all of our employees. Understanding why employees leave the Foreign Service is a crucial step in increasing retention. The Department has launched a revamped centralized exit survey to better understand the reasons employees may decide to leave, and the Department has utilized the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to drill down on bureau level issues that affect retention in support of the President's directive to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. I am committed to examining employee concerns, including assignments, promotions, bias, family member employment, education of dependents, and any other areas, which lead to a loss of our most valuable human resources. If confirmed, I will pursue programs and solutions that remove barriers to retention of our top talent.

Diversity

Question. I remain extremely concerned that the foreign service does not sufficiently reflect the makeup of this country and lags behind most of the rest of the federal government in hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. I appreciate that Secretary Blinken has made this a priority from day one. The fact remains, however, that much work lies ahead. Our diplomats and State Department personnel represent America to much of the world. It is critical that we have foreign service and civil service professionals who represent all the richness that our nation has to offer.

- How do you intend to ensure that the foreign service recruits and retains a diverse workforce?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead GTM in its role to recruit and retain a workforce that represents America. I will ensure that GTM continues to integrate diversity and inclusion practices strategically into personnel-related policies in alignment with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer's vision and the Secretary's and administration's priorities. This includes fair and transparent interviewing and hiring, workplace flexibilities, and encouraging a culture of inclusion, including through professional development and advancement.

If confirmed, I am committed to listening to our members of the Foreign Service 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 inter-agency and other detail opportunities, and create more viable pathways to ensure professional growth.

Question. How do you plan to ensure that diversity is represented at all levels of the workforce, especially at senior levels? What specific steps do you plan to take with respect to mentoring young and mid-level professions, to eliminate bias in promotions, and to otherwise improve access to senior positions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will partner with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) to ensure that the Department represents the diversity of the American people. The Department is developing new approaches in support of the President's di-

rective to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. GTM and the CDIO's office are working to track and ensure progress on performance metrics on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as outlined in the soon-to-be released Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The Department has already taken steps to widen the candidate pool of applicants for senior-level positions through mentorship programs, outreach to employee affinity groups, and the inclusion of interviewing parameters to ascertain the candidates' commitment to diversity and inclusion. In addition, the Department ensures that every promotion board panel is racially and ethnically diverse, gender balanced, and that all panel members receive unconscious bias training. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to develop our diverse workforce, reach a wider candidate pool, and include more candidates from underrepresented backgrounds for senior positions.

Question. How will you promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in your own hiring and leadership?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead GTM in its role to recruit and retain a workforce that represents America. I will ensure that GTM continues to integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility practices strategically into personnel-related policies in alignment with the Secretary's and administration's priorities. This includes fair and transparent interviewing and hiring, workplace flexibilities, and encouraging a culture of inclusion through professional development and advancement for both the Foreign Service and Civil Service.

If confirmed, I will partner with Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley to ensure that the Department represents the diversity of the American people. As the Secretary has said, diversity and inclusion make us stronger, smarter, more creative, and more innovative. The CDIO and her office are building on the efforts established by the Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) and GTM will collaborate with the CDIO on the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan which will lay out the framework to implement wide-reaching diversity and inclusion initiatives along with concrete benchmarks and performance metrics.

Question. Do you commit to establish and demonstrate inclusive leadership practices and to build and maintain a safe work environment? How will you each carry that out in practice?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to establish and demonstrate inclusive leadership practices and to build and maintain a safe work environment. If confirmed, I will expect everyone in the workforce to promote a culture of inclusion where every voice is heard, respected, and valued. As a senior leader at the Department of State and two-time Ambassador, I have led numerous teams comprised of employees from a wide variety of backgrounds and worked deliberately to foster inclusive work environments.

I previously served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources, now the Bureau of Global Talent Management, where I worked directly on accountability mechanisms. If confirmed, I will use this experience to work with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Office of Civil Rights to strengthen these accountability mechanisms, which are a key component of a culture of inclusion.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I remain extremely concerned that the Department's response to attacks on personnel, so-called Anomalous Health Incidents, remains woefully inadequate and that the Department is not consistently providing prompt and equitable treatment for affected personnel and family members.

- Do you commit to making the response and treatment of personnel a top priority if confirmed?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to making the response and treatment of personnel a top priority of mine.

Question. Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of State personnel?

Answer. Yes, I agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of State personnel.

Question. What steps, specifically, will you take to improve communication with affected personnel, ensure the workforce is sufficiently aware of the symptoms to watch for and how to report suspected incidents, and ensure all medical treatment is covered and reimbursed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Care Coordination Unit and Health Incidents Response Task Force (HIRTF) team on communication with affected personnel and the workforce writ large, and ensure that employees are apprised of their benefits. The Senior Care Coordinator and her team will continue to meet regularly with the group of injured employees and will remain available for individual meetings with those employees. If confirmed, I will meet with these employees as well. I will ensure that the GTM team also works with HIRTF to establish a webpage with information for Department personnel and will help amplify the page in our DG Digest and other communications. DS and MED has and will continue to take every opportunity to remind members of the State Department family of the response protocols for all personnel under COM security responsibility.

Assignment Restrictions

Question. I remain concerned about how assignment restrictions are imposed, the limitations they impose on State Department personnel, and the ability for personnel to appeal restrictions. Such restrictions have historically had a disproportionate effect on communities of color, and can impede career advancement.

- Do you share these concerns, and how do you intend to address these concerns, if confirmed?

Answer. I share your concerns about assignment restrictions. If confirmed, I will support the Department's review of legally available options and broader policy reforms regarding this process, with the goal to better leverage the expertise and capabilities of our entire workforce as well as to increase transparency. Assignment restrictions are based on a number of factors and are intended to mitigate security concerns related to foreign preference and foreign influence, where security clearances for individuals with these circumstances would otherwise be denied, leaving them wholly unable to serve the Department. Individuals who are restricted from serving in one or more countries have capabilities and expertise that contribute to the Department's overall mission and vision. The Department is determined to leverage the diversity and skills of our workforce in ways that make our policy more robust and transparent, while ensuring our national security information remains protected and security concerns are mitigated.

Question. What steps will you take to help improve the promotion board process and ensure that promotions are based on merit and not unduly influenced by bias?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's efforts to increase the accountability for diversity & inclusion in evaluations.

Global Talent Management (GTM) makes every effort to make the Department's Selection Boards as diverse as possible, in accordance with the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The Department ensures that every promotion board panel is racially and ethnically diverse, gender balanced. Diversity of experience and perspective is also valued and this coming year, GTM will recruit Foreign Service Specialists to serve on Generalist Boards. Board members are also required to take diversity awareness and unconscious bias training, prior to beginning service. GTM has revised Selection Board procedures to focus on assessing potential for success at the next level versus past performance, valuing multifunctionality, and complexity of work over geography - and ensure that each Board member receives consistent guidance and training.

Workforce Training

Question. Workforce training is a key element to professional development, especially as it relates to improving management practices.

- Do you believe the Department should provide more opportunities for professional development training, particularly for management, and if so, what steps will you take to do so?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully support expanding professional development opportunities for our Civil and Foreign Service workforce, including for managers and supervisors, by increasing both the number of programs offered and the number of employees participating. This includes incentivizing supervisors to empower employees to take advantage of long-term training opportunities, developmental rotations, domestic and overseas TDY opportunities, and details, as well as filling gaps left behind due to staffing shortages. For example, creating "backfill positions," (which in and of themselves would also provide professional development experience) would support bureaus experiencing staffing gaps when Civil Service employees are pursuing career development opportunities.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are incorporated into professional development training and mentorship opportunities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are incorporated into training, professional development opportunities, and mentoring programs throughout the Department in support of the Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP). This includes continuing to train and educate supervisors about the importance of recruiting and retaining diverse teams and emphasizing that creating an environment of inclusion is essential aspect of good leadership. While training alone cannot transform the Department, I fully believe that it plays a central role in promoting culture change. If confirmed, I look forward to building a stronger, more inclusive State Department.

Mental Health

Question. As you know, the recent events in Afghanistan will likely bear heavily on many State Department personnel, whether that be because they previously served in Afghanistan or because they worked closely on the evacuation efforts.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to ramp up mental health services and to encourage State Department employees to seek counseling and support when needed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our colleagues in the Bureau of Medical Services (MED) to ensure that we, as an organization, continue to hone processes to lower the barriers, perceived or otherwise, that stand in the way of our employees seeking and receiving the care they need. I will support the Department's efforts to communicate to employees that the act of seeking help from a counselor, psychotherapist, or other mental health professional to address grief, anxiety, family or marital issues, or other concerns, by itself, is not considered derogatory in a security clearance determination, and to dispel the perceived notion that seeking mental health care might adversely affect clearances and career trajectory.

Question. How will you communicate the availability of mental health resources and improve accessibility to them?

Answer. If confirmed, I will meet State Department personnel on the channels and platforms they listen to and learn from. We will use all available conduits, including staff emails, internal webpages, internal TV channels (a.k.a. BNET), newsletters, handouts, webinars, and message boards to make mental health resources and mental health care part of the ongoing, daily discussion at the Department of State. These will complement the in-person communication of available resources already happening through MED's psychologists and social workers in Employee Consultation Services (ECS) as well as psychiatrists overseas.

If confirmed, I will aim to improve accessibility and destigmatize mental health care. I will support the Department in making resources easily available where and when they are needed, meeting State Department personnel where they are overseas and at home. The Department does this now in-person whenever possible through Regional Psychiatrists posted overseas or ECS clinicians domestically. ECS has also expanded capacity recently to travel to overseas sites to work collaboratively with our psychiatrists to address crises, deteriorating morale, or burnout at posts. If confirmed, I will ensure that we are able to maintain this valuable service. I will work with MED to ensure continued availability and leverage of technologies such as WebEx, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom for the benefit of our employees and families.

Work-Life Balance

Question. The Department has made significant improvements regarding work-life balance, but many aspects, particularly related to moving and living overseas, reflect an outdated reality.

- What steps can the Department take to improve work-life balance for all employees, including those balancing family obligations? What do you intend to focus on to further improve work-life balance, if confirmed?

Answer. As our community readies for a return to on-site work, I am committed, if confirmed, to preserving the workplace flexibilities upon which employees have come to depend. This includes supporting the ongoing implementation of the Mobility Assessment Tool (MAT) to assess telework eligibility for domestic positions based on job function, training needed for a more efficient hybrid and remote workforce, and further expanding the Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas (DETO) program, which enables domestic direct hire Department employees under certain con-

ditions to telework from overseas in order to accompany their spouse to foreign posts of assignment. If confirmed, I will also listen to and assess workforce needs, including through Global Talent Management's (GTM) Innovation Portal.

Civil Service

Question. As you know, many have commented that a stark divide exists between the foreign service and the civil service, in part due to the opportunities that are available to foreign service officers, but not to those in the civil service.

- What is your assessment of the civil and foreign service divide? If confirmed, what steps will you take to help bridge this gap?

Answer. The strength of the Department's workforce is due in large part to the blending of unique but complementary skills and experiences among the various corps. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to strengthen our partnership and bridge any perceived gap. If confirmed, I'm committed to listening to the entire workforce and ensuring we develop and retain high performers. I support expanding professional development opportunities and increasing not only the number of programs, but the number of employees participating.

If confirmed, I will also invest in Civil Service professional development tools and training that chart career progression, prepare employees to take on leadership roles earlier in their careers, and create pathways for those aspiring to the Senior Executive Service.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to develop the State Department workforce capabilities with respect to strategic competition with China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the continued efforts of the Bureau of Global Talent Management, the Foreign Service Institute, and the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs to create stronger incentives for officers to increase their Chinese language skills and regional expertise. Concepts already in progress include a Trans-Pacific Fellowship program in Taipei; revamping language and hardship incentives; and revising the promotion precepts to place additional emphasis on super-hard language skills in promotion reviews. Currently, the Department has 24 additional Chinese Language designated positions worldwide that are not located in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs has several lines of effort with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, the interagency, and the Secretary to grow and develop our pool of China experts to coordinate State's policy, outreach and engagement with partners and allies on China, to implement cutting-edge policies with rapid interagency input, and to advise Department, interagency, and like-minded government partners on effective competition with China.

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.

If confirmed, I will also encourage deploying our employees with China expertise to Posts throughout the world to better track China's activities globally.

Question. What is your view on the assignments restrictions process? What steps can be done to conduct such a process with greater transparency and clarity?

Answer. Though assignment restrictions presently affect a small percentage of the Department's workforce, the Department is reviewing legally available options and broader policy reforms regarding this process. The aim is to better leverage the expertise and capabilities of our entire workforce as well as to increase transparency. Assignment restrictions are based on a number of factors and are intended to mitigate security concerns related to foreign preference and foreign influence, where security clearances for individuals with these circumstances would otherwise be denied, leaving them wholly unable to serve the Department. Individuals who are restricted from serving in one or more countries have capabilities and expertise that contribute to the Department's mission and vision. The Department is determined to leverage the diversity and skills of our workforce in ways that make our policy more robust and transparent, while ensuring our national security information remains protected and security concerns are mitigated.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Diversity

Question. The Director General of the Foreign Service has traditionally played a significant role with respect to State Department diversity and inclusion programs.

- If confirmed, what specific knowledge and experiences from your time at the State Department will you apply to your work in diversity and inclusion?

Answer. As a senior leader at the Department of State and two-time Ambassador, I have built and led numerous teams comprised of employees from a wide variety of backgrounds, and worked deliberately to foster inclusive work environments. If confirmed, I will expect everyone in the workforce to promote a culture of inclusion where every voice is heard, respected, and valued.

I previously served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources, now the Bureau of Global Talent Management, where I worked directly to strengthen accountability mechanisms. If confirmed, I will use this knowledge to work with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Office of Civil Rights to strengthen these accountability mechanisms, which are a key component of a culture of inclusion.

Question. How will you collaborate on these matters with the State Department's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, who is occupying a newly created position? Please explain the intended contours of your working relationship.

Answer. If confirmed, I will partner with Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley to ensure that the Department represents the diversity of the American people. As the Secretary has said, diversity and inclusion make us stronger, smarter, more creative, and more innovative. The CDIO and her office are building on the efforts established by the Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) and GTM will collaborate with the CDIO on the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan which will lay out the framework to implement wide-reaching diversity and inclusion initiatives along with concrete benchmarks and performance metrics.

If confirmed, I will lead GTM in its role to recruit, develop and retain a workforce that represents America in support of the President's directive to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. I will ensure that GTM continues to integrate diversity and inclusion practices strategically into personnel-related policies in alignment with the CDIO's vision and the Secretary's and administration's priorities. This includes fair and transparent interviewing and hiring, workplace flexibilities, and encouraging a culture of inclusion through professional development and advancement for both the Foreign Service and Civil Service, as well as our Locally Employed Staff.

Professional Education and Training

Question. Many stakeholders, including former State Department officials, have long expressed concern that the State Department values and emphasizes the professional education and training of its personnel to a much lesser degree than not only other U.S. agencies, but also the diplomatic corps of other countries such as China. Some note that this issue partially reflects agency culture and management practices, observing that there are widely-held views in the State Department that education and training programs do not enhance one's career and may damage promotion prospects.

- Please share your views on whether the State Department's agency culture and management practices discourage personnel from pursuing training and professional development opportunities, especially in the Foreign Service. What changes, if any, should the State Department consider with respect to Foreign Service promotion criteria, time-in-class restrictions, or other policies to provide more incentives for personnel to seek out such opportunities?

Answer. The Department of State recognizes that our greatest asset is our people. Both Civil Service and Foreign Service employees are encouraged to participate in details and long-term professional development opportunities, many of which are highly sought after and prestigious. Time-in-class extensions are granted for periods of long-term training, including language training, to ensure employees will not be penalized by pursuing opportunities that enhance their skills. Foreign Service Selection Boards are instructed to place an emphasis on continued development of professional expertise and multifunctionality and to consider positively the successful acquisition and/or use of a foreign language. If confirmed, I will continue to explore incentives for Department personnel to pursue training and professional develop-

ment to ensure our workforce has the skills and expertise needed to further U.S. security.

Professional Education and Training. Many stakeholders, including former State Department officials, have long expressed concern that the State Department values and emphasizes the professional education and training of its personnel to a much lesser degree than not only other U.S. agencies, but also the diplomatic corps of other countries such as China. Some note that this issue partially reflects agency culture and management practices, observing that there are widely-held views in the State Department that education and training programs do not enhance one's career and may damage promotion prospects.

Question. As Director General, what changes would you propose to training and professional development programs for Foreign Service and Civil Service staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully support expanding professional opportunities for our Civil and Foreign Service workforce by increasing both the number of programs offered and the number of employees participating. The Department is developing new approaches in support of the President's directive to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. This includes incentivizing supervisors to empower employees to take advantage of long-term training opportunities, developmental rotations, domestic and overseas TDY opportunities, and details, as well as filling gaps left behind due to staffing shortages. For example, full-time professional development and training/backfill positions would support bureaus experiencing staffing gaps when Civil Service employees are pursuing career development opportunities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. For years now, Government Accountability Office reports have pointed out the lack of diversity in the Department of State, and in particular at higher levels of leadership. These recommendations were repeated again in the latest report last year, which Secretary Blinken acknowledged, and yet we have not seen the numbers change.

- If confirmed, what will be your first steps as Director General to truly address diversity at the State Department? Will you commit to ensuring a fair assignments process, and to making data on diversity in the various bureaus and posts widely available?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead GTM in its role to recruit and retain a workforce that represents America in support of the President's directive to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. I will ensure, if confirmed, that GTM continues to integrate diversity and inclusion practices strategically into personnel-related policies in alignment with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer's vision and the Secretary's and administration's priorities. This includes fair and transparent interviewing and hiring, workplace flexibilities, and encouraging a culture of inclusion through professional development and advancement. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the continuation of a fair assignments process, and to making data on diversity in the various bureaus widely available consistent with applicable law, including PII privacy laws, and the EEOC's regulatory requirements.

Question. Is the State Department still deploying Foreign Service Officers to posts where reports of directed energy attacks have taken place? If so, what assurances are you providing to these individuals? If confirmed, how will you prepare our Foreign Service officers accordingly?

Answer. The interagency community is actively examining a range of hypotheses but has made no determination about the cause of these incidents or whether they can be attributed to a foreign actor. All Foreign Service employees receive regular updates about anomalous health incidents (AHI) through various means of communication. AHIs have been a top priority for Secretary Blinken, who set clear goals for the Health Incident Response Task Force (HIRTF) to strengthen the Department's communication with the workforce, provide care for affected employees and family members, and better protect against these events in the future as the Department continues to work closely with the interagency to find the cause of these AHI. If confirmed, there is nothing I will take more seriously than the health and security of the workforce. HIRTF is actively working to communicate response protocols to the field, in the form of ALDACs, via Regional Executive Directors to their respective bureaus, and workforce messaging from the desk of the Secretary. Regional Security Officers cover AHIs during their newcomer and regular security

briefings at overseas posts. Further, if confirmed, I will collaborate with HIRTF and the Foreign Service Institute to deploy AHI-related content into the Security Overseas Seminar (SOS). The SOS is mandatory for all direct-hire federal employees posted overseas and highly recommended for Eligible Family Members (EFMs) and Members of Household.

Question. Can I get your commitment that, if confirmed, you will ensure that it will be State Department policy for all individuals who desire it to have access to the Walter Reed medical facility?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to ensure all our employees have access to the best medical care available. The Department has established relationships with several centers of medical excellence including Walter Reed Medical Center. I will continue to advocate for access to Walter Reed along with other health care centers recommended by the Bureau of Medical Services or preferred by the individual.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Promoting Diversity

Question. Prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at the State Department is essential. Ensuring that the Department's personnel is representative of the American people is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of our diplomacy and ensuring that the United States leads by example when championing human rights around the world. To remove barriers low-income students and students of color face to participating in internship opportunities and help foster a more diverse Foreign Service and workforce at the Department of State, I have introduced a bipartisan bill, the Department of State Student Internship Program Act, to ensure that internships at the State Department are remunerated. This is just one of many steps that can be taken to improve diversity.

- What other changes do you think could be made to help increase diversity in the State Department's recruitment?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing conversations with you and others in Congress on the one-semester paid internship program in your bill and the House-passed Department of State Authorization Act of 2021.

The Department's top recruitment priority is enhancing diversity among career candidates, in support of the President's directive to revitalize the foreign policy and national security workforce. If confirmed, I will review proposals to continue the Department's efforts to build a more diverse workforce. The recruitment team created a new Volunteer Recruitment Corps which leverages the Department workforce, particularly members of the Department's employee affinity groups, to augment outreach to prospective applicants. The team added virtual private sector recruitment best practices, including candidate sourcing via national networks and databases.

The Department expanded the Pickering and Rangel Fellowships by 50 percent, starting with the 2021 program year, and recruited record numbers of outstanding, diverse candidates for both. 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 (FAIT).

Question. My internship bill will help to address recruitment, but retention of employees of color has been another major problem at the State Department. What do you believe are the most important steps the State Department can take to increase retention?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead GTM in its role to recruit, develop and retain a workforce that represents America. I will ensure that GTM continues to integrate diversity and inclusion practices strategically into personnel-related policies in alignment with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer's vision and the Secretary's and administration's priorities. This includes fair and transparent interviewing and hiring, workplace flexibilities, and encouraging a culture of inclusion through professional development and advancement for both the Foreign Service and Civil Service.

If confirmed, 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 training and interagency and other detail opportunities, and create viable pathways for those in the Civil Service and Foreign Service as they aspire to advance their careers.

Question. My internship bill will require additional financial resource. What initiatives can the State Department pursue immediately to increase diversity that do not require additional resources?

Answer. Currently 16 regional Diplomats in Residence are based around the country, hosted by universities but responsible for recruitment of professionals and students in a geographic region, not just on campus. Seven are hosted by Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions. The all-virtual environment enabled our Diplomats in Residence and recruiters to attend more virtual career fairs, host online information sessions, intensify activity on social media platforms to include working professionals, and reach far more people across the country in FY 2020 than in the previous years, including a 39 percent increase in participation in diversity-focused events. If confirmed, I will encourage even more digital engagement with diverse, prospective candidates with skills sets that will enhance our national security.

The State Department encourages all employees to recruit diverse talent by using their professional affiliations and networks to amplify Department career opportunities. The new Volunteer Recruiter Corps, launched in January 2021, has opened recruitment activities to more Department employees, leveraging the Department's existing talent and diversity. Half of the initial 500 participants are members of the Department's 17 Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs) and all EAGs are represented in the Volunteer Recruiter Corps. If confirmed, I will consult with the recruitment team on broadening and further engaging the Corps.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

Question. As the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) marks its 70th anniversary, global displacement is at an all-time high. Demands for life-saving assistance will only increase as the disaster in Afghanistan, exacerbated by a hasty U.S. withdrawal, continues to unfold, forcing hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Afghan to seek safety and shelter as refugees.

Question. If confirmed, how will you approach ameliorating conditions for the existing 2.6 million registered Afghan refugees (2.2 million of whom are registered in Iran and Pakistan, which presents extraordinary challenges), in addition to the inevitable exodus of hundreds of thousands more Afghans feeling rule by the Taliban?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage actively with the leadership of the key U.N. humanitarian agencies in Geneva as well as NGOs to ensure coordination and help monitor evolving needs inside and outside Afghanistan. The United States is currently working with these and other partners to review and strengthen humanitarian preparedness and priority interventions in the region in the event of new refugee outflows from Afghanistan, and the Geneva-based agencies will be crucial to this ongoing effort. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. mission in Geneva coordinates closely across the interagency and engages regularly with the Geneva-based humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR, and with key donors and other partners to ensure the U.N. system is appropriately responding to Afghan's evolving needs, inside and outside Afghanistan.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that U.S. assistance for Afghan refugees provided through U.N. agencies, including UNHCR, reaches its intended beneficiaries and does not materially benefit the Taliban?

Answer. The United States is the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and we will continue our life-saving support for vulnerable populations in Afghanistan and in the region. If confirmed, I will support all efforts to ensure humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan directly benefits the people of Afghanistan. U.S. humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of need through our international and non-governmental partners, and not through the Taliban. U.N. agencies that deliver U.S. humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan follow similar risk mitigation requirements as other implementers of U.S. assistance. These risk mitigation measures include extensive vetting to reduce the risk of the diversion of funds and other resources. Monitoring and strict notification requirements are in place to flag issues that could impact assistance delivery.

If confirmed, I will support the Department's close coordination with international partners to stress the importance of remaining united in our approach to Afghanistan and delivering humanitarian assistance with impartiality, neutrality, and inde-

pendence. If confirmed, I will also support the Department's work with the international community to encourage unhindered humanitarian access, freedom of movement and employment opportunities for aid workers of all genders, and the safety and security of humanitarian staff.

At the same time, humanitarian access in places like Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen remains highly constrained. With humanitarians increasingly under attack, these areas have become the most dangerous places in the world for aid workers. To further complicate matters, some UNHCR-supported camps (most notably in the DRC following the Rwanda genocide in 1994, but also more recently in the displaced persons camps in South Sudan), have served as hotbeds for recruitment by armed actors and other abuses, including extreme violence against women and girls.

Question. What more can UNHCR do to facilitate and secure humanitarian access, prevent diversion by malign actors, protect humanitarians and beneficiaries from attack and abuse, and promote accountability?

Answer. As the world's largest single donor to global humanitarian response efforts, the United States has a longstanding commitment to ensuring appropriate access and effective delivery of assistance. By working with partner nations and through important international mechanisms, including, *inter alia*, the U.N. Security Council, the United States has always been a leading voice to reinforce the crucial principle of U.N. neutrality and push for all appropriate access.

If confirmed, I will work with UNHCR, other U.N. humanitarian agencies, NGOs, and other member states to identify, highlight, and address factors that hinder humanitarian access and accountability, from risks to humanitarian staff to bureaucratic obstacles imposed by governments that delay or divert assistance, as well as mechanisms, such as biometrics, that could be used to strengthen accountability around assistance. While the United States is the largest single donor to UNHCR, close coordination with other like-minded actors also supports the effective delivery of life-saving assistance to those in need with the safety and security of aid workers at front-of-mind. If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. leadership on these issues through engagement with diplomatic counterparts, U.N. humanitarian agency leadership, public facing engagements, and through governing and other executive bodies on which the United States sits.

Question. Under what circumstances, if any, should assistance to camps for displaced persons be halted?

Answer. Considerations for halting assistance to camps is a complex process and must take into account the context of the camps and the conflict. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the U.S. continues to provide support on the basis of need, whether those in question are in camps or are integrated with host communities, and that assistance to refugee camps is delivered according to international standards. If confirmed, I will actively pursue burden-sharing with other donors, national refugee inclusion policies with refugee host countries, and work to advance relief to development coherence where possible.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to impressing upon the U.N.'s Geneva-based humanitarian assistance agencies, and UNHCR in-particular, the importance of establishing and utilizing biometrics and other verification mechanisms that will enable the agencies to track refugees and internally displaced persons throughout the life of their displacement, improve operational planning, eliminate redundancies, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of donor contributions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these methods are implemented in an effective and transparent manner that improves accountability for donor contributions and contributes to the larger goal of providing quality assistance to beneficiaries. If confirmed, I will also urge reluctant states to conduct joint biometric registrations with UNHCR, where possible, with the aim of building the capacities of host nations to eventually take over the responsibility for registering refugees on their territories. Finally, if confirmed, I will encourage other states to utilize biometric registration and identity management for refugees, particularly those unwilling or unable to do so, while attentive to the risk of such data falling into the hands of those who might misuse it.

Question. What concrete steps do you plan to take to reform the U.N. Human Rights Council in order to eliminate Agenda Item 7 and improve council membership?

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. When the U.S. has had a seat at the table, we have been able to advocate

on Israel's behalf, and have seen changes, such as a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel. If confirmed, I will prioritize working closely with U.S. friends and allies, as well as non-traditional partners, to address the Council's problematic anti-Israel bias and will engage regularly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to make clear U.S. opposition to problematic anti-Israel mandates.

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 and support countries with better records to run for seats. More broadly, if confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. friends and allies to push back on the People's Republic of China's efforts to erode respect for human rights in favor of its authoritarian aims and will work to expand space for civil society engagement in the Council's work, something the PRC has worked to restrict in recent years.

Question. What points of leverage will you use to secure reforms at the U.N. Human Rights Council?

Answer. I am committed to seeking reforms of the U.N. Human Rights Council, if confirmed. U.S. engagement at the HRC can be a force for positive change, and we must continue to prioritize needed reforms as part of our re-engagement. If confirmed, I will ensure U.S. leadership on a robust reform agenda. Past experience has shown that when the United States is at the table, working closely with U.S. friends and allies, as well as non-traditional partners, we can make progress on addressing the Council's problematic anti-Israel bias. If confirmed, I will also press for U.N. member states to more carefully consider the human rights records of countries running for election to the Council and encourage countries with good records to run. If confirmed, I will ensure that U.S. expectations around Council reforms are prioritized in our diplomatic engagements in Geneva.

Question. What would you define as "success" for U.N. Human Rights Council?

Answer. The United States firmly believes that we advance America's national interests best when we have a seat at the table in the multilateral system, including the Human Rights Council (HRC). Through robust U.S. advocacy since our return to the Council as observers in February, we have pushed to ensure the Council has shined a powerful light on Beijing's human rights abuses in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong; pressured regimes around the world, such as Belarus, Burma, Eritrea, Syria, and Venezuela, by sharpening investigative mechanisms into their human rights violations and abuses; and worked to advance equality for all, protecting women's human rights, advancing the human rights of LGBTQI+ individuals, and assuming a leadership role on racial justice.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure the Council focuses on its core mission—to shine a light on the world's worst human rights abusers—and on the need to protect civilians. I will also work closely with other member states to improve the Council's record through a considered reform effort and to address the Council's credibility gap due to its anti-Israel bias and its poor membership.

Question. If the Council does not eliminate Agenda Item 7, will the United States continue to run for election at the UNHRC?

Answer. Yes. U.S. membership on the Council puts us in a much stronger position from which to continue to push against anti-Israel actions at the HRC and pursue our broader human rights agenda, including ensuring the HRC addresses other serious human rights situations around the world. If confirmed, I will prioritize continued efforts to eliminate Agenda Item 7 as well as other needed reforms of the HRC.

Question. In May, the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) created a new commission of inquiry to investigate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The new commission's mandate is much broader in scope chronologically, geographically, and substantively than the mandates of its predecessors.

The Biden administration has chosen to reengage with the UNHRC, with Secretary Blinken asserting that despite the Council's flawed record on Israel "the best way to improve the Council is to engage with it and its members in a principled fashion." Blinken committed that the U.S. would be at the Council "table using the full weight of our diplomatic leadership" and said we "strongly believe that when the United States engages constructively with the Council, in concert with our allies and friends, positive change is within reach." Yet the mandate and membership of the new UNHRC commission of inquiry represents a change for the worse rather than the better.

Answer. The United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council following the conflict in Gaza in May, 2021. The session ex-

emphasizes the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel. The establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and likeminded partners to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states. If confirmed, I will also engage regularly with the High Commissioner for Human Rights to make clear U.S. opposition to the Commission. The United States does not intend to cooperate with the Commission.

Question. If confirmed, will you use the full weight of our diplomatic leadership to stop the UNHRC from attacking Israel?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to working with Israel and our other allies and partners to reduce and eventually eliminate the HRC's attacks on Israel. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States uses the full weight of our diplomatic leadership, in Geneva and in our bilateral and multilateral missions around the world, to address the Human Rights Council's longstanding anti-Israel bias.

Question. How specifically would you plan to defend Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize working closely with U.S. friends and allies, as well as non-traditional partners, to address the Council's problematic anti-Israel bias and will engage regularly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to make clear U.S. opposition to problematic anti-Israel mandates. If confirmed, I will work to reduce the number of Israel-related resolutions at the Council, make clear U.S. opposition to all anti-Israel mandates and aim to reduce the impact of such mandates, and bolster the number of countries aligned with U.S. views on the need to permanently tackle the Council's bias against Israel. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States uses its voice and position in Geneva to push back on efforts to unfairly single out Israel, works to counteract existing mechanisms that are biased against Israel, and consistently makes clear U.S. opposition to anti-Israel efforts.

Question. Will you ensure that no U.S. taxpayer dollars are used to fund this UNHRC commission of inquiry?

Answer. The Commission of Inquiry, like all other HRC mandates, is funded by the U.N. regular budget. As such, there is no means to ensure that no funding for this mandate comes from the United States regular contributions to the U.N. budget. However, if confirmed, I will ensure that the United States uses its voice strongly at all opportunities to register our opposition to this commission.

Question. The People's Republic of China (PRC) Government is actively trying to reshape international institutions to advance its malign economic and governance model, including the United Nations. If confirmed, how will you work with our democratic allies and partners to build resiliency to attempts by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to undermine the integrity of multilateral institutions and longstanding, widely held democratic values, including with regard to the important work of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization, and the World Intellectual Property Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to strengthen our alliances and partnerships as well as improve outreach to other countries based on shared multilateral priorities, both in Geneva and through bilateral channels. The United States has had success coordinating with allies and partners to advance an affirmative vision that supports and defends the rules-based international order and deters the PRC's attempts to undermine core U.N. principles. As part of this effort, if confirmed, I will ensure we make clear through our diplomatic engagements that the PRC's actions to bully and coerce undermine the U.N.'s foundational principle of sovereign equality. If confirmed, I will also prioritize working with allies and partners to support qualified and independent candidates for senior leadership positions at the Geneva-based organizations and counter the PRC's attempts to set the agenda in standard-setting bodies and to include ideological language in U.N. documents. This will enable us to better defend and improve the work of U.N. institutions in Geneva, including the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization, and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Question. Do you commit to monitoring such attempts and taking appropriate actions?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities. The United States is best able to address these issues when we are actively engaged and leading at the U.N. and its specialized agencies and related organizations. If confirmed, I will use our re-engagement with the U.N. system to reassert U.S. leadership and work with our allies and partners to defend the foundational values of the U.N. and international rules, standards, and norms. If confirmed, I will seek to improve the U.N.'s effectiveness, transparency, and impartiality; take targeted actions to oppose harmful PRC efforts, such as its use of the U.N. and international organizations to promote the Belt and Road Initiative or incorporate its ideology into U.N. documents. If confirmed I will also support qualified and independent candidates for key positions and ensure that we advance our priorities on issues ranging from human rights to emerging technologies, including in standard-setting organizations.

Question. China has focused intensely on securing leadership roles in various U.N. agencies, particularly those overseeing technical standards that will shape the future. In many cases, these leaders have overtly advanced CCP goals, instead of acting independently to advance the global good. It is clear the United States has had mixed success with elections for heads of International Organizations in the past and is taking more robust and coordinated steps to advocate for qualified and independent candidates in U.N. bodies. If confirmed, will you prioritize robust strategies to secure the election qualified and independent candidates to lead the highly specialized U.N. agencies based in Geneva?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be the election and appointment of qualified, independent candidates to leadership positions in the U.N. system. Such personnel are critical to ensuring the U.N. operates effectively and in line with its foundational principles and values. They also bring strong technical and policy skills that enhance the performance and outcomes within the U.N. system, which, in turn, bolster U.S. efforts on U.N. reform and good governance. The Bureau of International Organization Affairs has established a new office focused in part on managing, supporting, and coordinating elections and appointments for qualified U.S. and like-minded candidates for leadership roles in the U.N. system. That office works closely with our multilateral missions, including Geneva, to ensure the United States identifies and advocates on behalf of interested candidates for key positions across U.N. organizations and agencies. If confirmed, I will prioritize engaging with top U.N. leadership and our partners and allies to advocate for the placement of qualified applicants and candidates, including U.S. citizens, at the U.N. and in specialized and technical agencies.

Question. How do you propose to counter China's malign influence at the WHO? Please be specific.

Answer. The United States is best able to respond to this challenge when we are engaged and leading at organizations, including the WHO. If confirmed, I will use our re-engagement with the WHO to reassert U.S. leadership and work with allies and partners to push back against the PRC's attempts to reshape international institutions, rules, standards, and values.

The United States is taking a leadership role in discussions on strengthening and reforming the WHO as an opportunity to push forward critical reforms that will, *inter alia*, focus on better pandemic preparedness and response, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, and accountability. This includes working to improve WHO transparency and accountability through more effective implementation of the International Health Regulations and insulating the WHO Director-General from political influence and pressure. If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. leadership on these and other reforms to improve WHO's performance and accountability and bolster global health security. U.S. leadership on these issues at the WHO is critical both to ensuring progress on strengthening global health security and rebuilding WHO credibility but also to pushing back on the PRC's efforts to undermine the organization's accountability, transparency, and governance. If confirmed, I will also ensure close engagement with like-minded partners and WHO leadership to push for Taiwan's meaningful participation at the WHO, including participation at the World Health Assembly.

Question. How will you ensure that COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the WHO-supported Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, does not become a vehicle for subsidizing and distributing substandard Chinese vaccines?

Answer. Gavi will not use funds from the generous U.S. contribution supporting COVAX to purchase vaccines produced by Chinese companies. U.S. funds have either already been spent down to purchase vaccines made by non-Chinese manufacturers or are being used to support the purchase of Pfizer vaccines or vaccine readiness efforts in recipient countries. Given the immense need for vaccines around the

world to help control and end the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Government is supportive of COVAX's efforts to rapidly roll-out vaccines authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as safe and effective. We understand that a condition for distribution via COVAX is a WHO authorization via an emergency use listing (EUL). If confirmed, I will ensure close engagement with Gavi to understand its current and future plans for vaccine roll-out and work with the organization as it tries to identify additional sources of vaccine to address its supply challenges, with more vaccines made by non-Chinese companies expected to come online in the coming months.

Question. What are the top five reforms that you believe the United States should pursue at the WHO?

Answer. The World Health Organization is in need of reform and, if confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to make the WHO stronger, more independent, and fit for purpose. The United States is using its leadership role on WHO strengthening and reform efforts to focus on improving WHO's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to future pandemics by:

- Improving surveillance and alert systems, including through partnerships with Member States and nonstate actors;
- Increasing transparency and the ability of the WHO and Member States to quickly and effectively respond to outbreaks, especially through strengthened implementation of and compliance with the International Health Regulations; and
- Increasing the WHO's cost effectiveness and sustainability.

The May 2021 World Health Assembly (WHA) established a Member State Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness for and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR) to propose actions for WHO reform based on the recommendations by three independent review panels and Member States for consideration at the next World Health Assembly. If confirmed, I am committed to energetically supporting these efforts, ensuring strong U.S. leadership to push for a set of practical and meaningful reforms that will address performance, management, and accountability issues at the organization.

Question. Do you believe the WHO should lead emergency health operations, or would it be better placed to focus on the technical and normative aspects of its mission?

Answer. The WHO engages in vital emergency health work around the world, including, for example, the work it is doing to provide critical healthcare assistance, including to combat the polio epidemic in Afghanistan. But the COVID-19 pandemic revealed troubling gaps in global public health investments, capacities, and norms. The United States reengaged in the World Health Organization in January in order to advance critically needed reforms, reassert our role as a leader in global health security, and help the world combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States took an active role in working with G7 and other partners to lay the groundwork to strengthen WHO's global health emergency preparedness and response. If confirmed, I will support a more transparent, effective, and agile WHO that will be better placed to detect, report, and respond to emerging health emergencies.

Question. In preparing for the next World Health Assembly, do you agree that diplomatic engagement, including with regard to negotiating governance reforms at the WHO, would be best left to competent diplomats reporting to the Secretary of State while the technical aspects of the International Health Regulations are left to the Department of Health and Human Services? Do you see a difference?

Answer. The Department of State continues to advance WHO reforms in close collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We take a whole-of-government approach that leverages all agencies' competencies. For example, the U.S. delegation to the WHO Working Group on WHO Strengthening for Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies includes key representatives with subject matter expertise and multilateral skills from State, HHS, USAID, and the National Security Council. The strong cooperation between State, HHS, and other relevant agencies will ensure that the United States achieves the best possible results from the WHO reform process. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.S. brings to bear the full weight of its diplomatic and technical leadership to drive WHO reform efforts and the ongoing work and oversight of the organization.

Question. If confirmed, will you work to ensure that Taiwan is granted full observer status at the WHO and the World Health Assembly, regardless of Chinese obstructionism?

Answer. It is deeply unfortunate that Taiwan's expertise and experience on COVID-19 were missing from the 2021 World Health Assembly and for the previous several years. The United States has continued to express its concern to the World Health Organization leadership, and if confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to build support for Taiwan's participation at the World Health Assembly through diplomatic engagement with WHO member states, WHO leadership, and media and other outreach to raise public awareness.

If confirmed, I will continue U.S. policy to work closely with like-minded partners to counter the PRC's efforts to restrict Taiwan's meaningful participation at the WHO, World Health Assembly, and other U.N. bodies, as well as its efforts to shrink space for civil society's meaningful participation in U.N. fora.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. As we know, women's access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care like modern contraceptives, plays a significant role in their empowerment. It also dramatically reduces maternal and newborn deaths. Yet the previous administration undertook a campaign against inclusive policies and language that has undermined U.S. credibility on gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Can you speak to how you will work within the U.N. system in Geneva to promote access to health care for women?

Answer. The United States is best able to promote access to health care for women when we are engaged and leading in international organizations. If confirmed, I will contribute to the administration's re-engagement across the multilateral system by working with partners and allies to improve global health capabilities and equitable access to health care for women and girls. The administration has prioritized the promotion of women's global health and equity, and that action is evident in U.S. efforts to increase access to comprehensive health care for women and girls; to restore appropriate references to gender in U.N. documents; to address health disparities; to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights; to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV); and to address the gender-specific health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If confirmed, I will advance these priorities across the U.N. organizations in Geneva, including through raising these priorities with leadership of key U.N. humanitarian organizations, working with likeminded partners, and ensuring the United States uses its voice in governing and executive boards to ensure continued progress and to make clear the strong U.S. support for women's health and gender equity.

Question. Will you commit to ensuring that the United States talks about gender—both by once again using the word and promoting the idea—in our engagement with the United Nations?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will promote gender equity and equality and women's empowerment across the full spectrum of Geneva-based agencies and in all the work they conduct. This will include promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTQI+ persons and the return of U.S. use of and support for the term "gender" in our statements at the U.N. and in negotiated U.N. documents.

If confirmed, I will also restore the U.S. voice in support of women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to voluntary family planning, as a key element of the Biden-Harris administration's broader commitment to promoting women's health and advancing gender equity and equality in the United States and around the world.

Question. Women's access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care like modern contraceptives, plays a significant role in their ability to advance their education, participate in the economy and support their families and communities.

- Can you speak to how you will work in this post to promote access to comprehensive health care across U.N. offices in Geneva?

Answer. The best way to promote equitable health care access, including for women, is for the United States to demonstrate leadership on these issues on the global stage, including within international organizations such as the U.N. If confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration's determined reengagement and leadership by working across the U.N. agencies in Geneva and with likeminded

partners to identify and pursue all appropriate means of promoting equitable and comprehensive access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care.

This means not only strengthening actions through bodies such as the World Health Organization, but also ensuring that women's and girls' health remains a central objective for organizations such as the U.N. Refugee Agency, U.N. Women, UNICEF, the U.N. Population Fund, and others charged with supporting human health and wellbeing. If confirmed, I look forward to invigorating U.S. diplomatic engagement in Geneva to focus on these crucial needs.

Question. If confirmed, how will you approach restoring relationships with U.S. allies and U.S. leadership within the U.N. system?

Answer.

The Biden-Harris administration has charted a course to mend and, where needed, modernize America's alliances. If confirmed, I will support those efforts by strengthening U.S. leadership at the Geneva-based international organizations, rebuilding partnerships, advocating for qualified and independent U.S. and likeminded candidates for U.N. positions, and pushing for necessary reforms. I firmly support the administration's belief that the United States is most influential when it is at the table, working in partnership with allies, and when it is engaged across the multilateral system from a position of strength and leadership.

That is the intent in seeking election to the U.N. Human Rights Council, and in returning with renewed vigor to dozens of other multilateral bodies. If confirmed, I will prioritize reestablishing strong relationships with likeminded partners and allies to advance common priorities and forming relationships with non-traditional partners that can be critical to U.S. efforts to ensure the U.N. system remains grounded on its foundational principles and aims and is not co-opted by those who seek to undermine the rules-based international order.

Question. In your opinion, has the lack of U.S. leadership at the U.N. allowed for countries that seek to overturn democratic norms to push their agendas within the U.N. system? Where should we be most concerned about this, and what are the first steps to undoing these efforts?

Answer. The United States is best able to address efforts to undermine and weaken the U.N. system when we are engaged and leading at the U.N. and its specialized agencies and related organizations. If confirmed, I will use our re-engagement with the U.N. system to reassert U.S. leadership and work with our partners and allies to push back against attempts to reshape the U.N. and international rules, standards, and values. We are seeing these attempts play out in different ways across the U.N. system, including in the human rights space, in specialized and technical organizations, and in standard-setting bodies.

If confirmed, I will seek to improve the U.N.'s effectiveness, transparency, and impartiality; take targeted actions to oppose efforts by some countries to use the U.N. and international organizations to promote signature foreign policy platforms or insert national ideology and policy into U.N. documents; support qualified and independent candidates for key positions; and ensure that we advance our priorities on issues ranging from global health security to humanitarian assistance and human rights to emerging technologies, including in standard-setting bodies.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. The U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has a long history of anti-Israel bias. The Council has repeatedly chastised Israel and held it to a double standard, while ignoring gross human rights abuses around the world. To this day, Israel is the only country subject to a permanent spot on the Council's agenda.

- If confirmed, how will you counter anti-Israel bias at the U.N. Human Rights Council and other U.N. agencies?

Answer. The United States is committed to seeking reforms of the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC), particularly with respect to the HRC's disproportionate focus on Israel and the HRC's 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. If confirmed, I will prioritize working closely with U.S. friends and allies, as well as non-traditional partners, to address the HRC's problematic anti-Israel bias and will engage regularly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to make clear U.S. opposition to problematic anti-Israel mandates. If confirmed, I will ensure that

the United States uses its voice and position in Geneva to push back on efforts to unfairly single out Israel, works to counteract existing mechanisms that are biased against Israel, and consistently makes clear U.S. opposition to anti-Israel efforts.

Question. Following the launching of thousands of rockets toward Israel from Gaza this May, the Human Rights Council took the ridiculous step to establishing a permanent commission of inquiry to investigate Israel. What are your thoughts on the commission? Should the U.S. cooperate with commission?

Answer. The United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) following the conflict in Gaza in May 2021. The session exemplifies the HRC's disproportionate focus on Israel. The establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states. The United States does not intend to cooperate with the Commission.

Question. The Biden administration has chosen to reengage with the UNHRC in the hopes of improving the council's record. Yet this mandate and membership of the new UNHRC commission of inquiry represents a change for the worse rather than the better.

- If confirmed, will you use the full weight of American diplomatic leadership to stop the UNHRC from engaging in anti-Israel bias?

Answer. I am committed to working with Israel and our other allies and partners to reduce and eventually eliminate attacks on Israel by the Human Rights Council. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States uses the full weight of our diplomatic leadership, in Geneva and in our bilateral and multilateral missions around the world, to address the HRC's longstanding anti-Israel bias.

Question. The Chinese Communist Party has sought to use U.N. bodies—including the UNHRC—to aggressively promote a new definition of human rights. For instance, in 2017 and 2018, the CCP was able to offer resolutions that called for “people-centered development,” building a “community of common human destiny,” and “mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights.” These resolutions—which passed—downplay an individual's inherent human dignity and gives authoritarians around the world tacit acceptance for abuse.

- If confirmed, how will you combat the CCP's sophisticated efforts to revise international human rights norms at the U.N.?

Answer. The United States will continue to be vigilant and work with others to ensure we have the broadest possible defense of the multilateral system's values and norms and are best placed to counter the PRC's efforts to erode global human rights norms and pursue its authoritarian aims. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to strengthen current alliances and partnerships as well as improve outreach to other countries based on shared human rights priorities, both in Geneva and through bilateral channels. As part of this effort, the U.S. will also make clear that the PRC's actions to bully and coerce undermine the U.N.'s foundational principle of sovereign equality. If confirmed, pushing back on the PRC's efforts to reshape global human rights norms at the U.N. will be one of my top priorities, and I will use the full weight of U.S. diplomatic leadership toward these efforts.

Question. One of the many consequences of the Biden administration's disastrous Afghanistan decision is that the Taliban is now in a position to appoint a new envoy for Afghanistan at the U.N. If appointed, this envoy will assume Afghanistan's membership on the Commission for the Status of Women. This is ludicrous considering the Taliban has been and still is, one of the worst oppressors of women's rights.

- If confirmed, how will you encourage the U.N. to invoke Rule 29 to ensure a Taliban appointee does not become Afghanistan's envoy to the U.N.?

Answer. The United States has consistently emphasized the importance of any future government in Afghanistan to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Afghans. This includes the rights of women, children, and minority groups. The United States is closely watching the Taliban's actions across the country in this regard, and we will judge them by their actions, including with respect to their representational efforts at the U.N.

As Secretary Blinken has said, the Taliban want international legitimacy. It is vital that the international community work in unison to send a clear message that

legitimacy is earned through concrete actions. If confirmed, I will work to reinforce these efforts across the Geneva-based organizations, including ensuring appropriate focus of the U.N. Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

Question. If confirmed, how will you use your position to ensure that U.N. humanitarian assistance does not benefit the Taliban?

Answer. The United States is the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and we will continue our life-saving support for vulnerable populations in Afghanistan and in the region. If confirmed, I will support all efforts to ensure humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan directly benefits the people of Afghanistan. U.S. humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of need through our international and non-governmental partners, and not through the Taliban. U.N. agencies that deliver U.S. humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan follow similar risk mitigation requirements as other implementers of U.S. assistance. These risk mitigation measures include extensive vetting to reduce the risk of the diversion of funds and other resources. Monitoring and strict notification requirements are in place to flag issues that could impact assistance delivery.

If confirmed, I will support the Department's close coordination with international partners to stress the importance of remaining united in our approach to Afghanistan and delivering humanitarian assistance with impartiality, neutrality, and independence. If confirmed, I will also support the Department's work with the international community to encourage unhindered humanitarian access, freedom of movement for aid workers of all genders, and the safety and security of humanitarian staff. If confirmed, I will engage regularly with U.N. humanitarian leadership in Geneva in support of these efforts, as well as with other donor countries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Re-establishing U.S. Leadership in U.N. Bodies

Question. China has secured leadership roles in a number of U.N. bodies over the last few years, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (elected in 2019), International Telecommunication Union (re-elected in 2018), International Civil Aviation Organization (re-appointed in 2019 and leaving office in August 2021), and U.N. Industrial Development Organization (re-appointed in 2017), at the time when the prior administration withdrew the United States from a number of U.N. bodies, dealing a double blow to our influence with the U.N. system. The Biden administration has taken steps to rejoin a number of bodies.

- What further steps does the administration plan on taking to re-establish U.S. leadership with the U.N. system and to ensure that either the United States or our allies regain leadership roles in important U.N. bodies?

Answer. The election and appointment of qualified and independent candidates to positions in the U.N. system are critical to ensuring that the U.N. operates effectively and in line with its foundational principles and values. Qualified U.S. citizens and nationals from like-minded countries bring strong technical, policy, and management skills that enhance the performance and outcomes within the U.N. system, which, in turn, bolster our efforts on U.N. reform and good governance.

The Bureau of International Organization Affairs has established a new office focused in part on managing, supporting, and coordinating elections and appointments for qualified U.S. and like-minded candidates for leadership roles in the U.N. system. That office works closely with posts such as Geneva to ensure the United States is well-positioned to identify and advocate on behalf of interested candidates for key positions across multiple U.N. organizations and agencies. If confirmed, I will prioritize engaging with senior U.N. leadership as well as our allies and partners to advocate for placement and election of qualified and independent applicants and candidates, including U.S. citizens, at the U.N. and in its specialized and technical agencies. If confirmed, I will also prioritize working closely across the inter-agency, with U.S. bilateral and multilateral missions, and with Congress to ensure that we dedicate robust diplomatic efforts to leadership election and appointment campaigns.

Question. What can the State Department do to counter China's growing influence within the U.N. system?

Answer. The United States is best able to respond to this challenge when we are engaged and leading at the U.N. and its specialized agencies and related organiza-

tions. If confirmed, I will use our re-engagement with the U.N. system to reassert U.S. leadership and work with our allies and partners to push back against the PRC's attempts to reshape international institutions, rules, standards, and values. I will seek to improve the U.N.'s effectiveness, transparency, and impartiality; support qualified and independent candidates for key positions; ensure that we advance our priorities on issues ranging from human rights to emerging technologies, including in standard-setting bodies; and take targeted actions to oppose harmful PRC efforts, such as its use of the U.N. and international organizations to promote the Belt and Road Initiative or its incorporation of PRC ideology and policy into U.N. documents. If confirmed, I will also work closely with like-minded partners to counter the PRC's efforts to restrict Taiwan's meaningful participation in U.N. bodies and its efforts to shrink space for civil society's meaningful participation in U.N. fora.

Question. The African bloc within the U.N. is a large bloc of countries that tends to vote together and can be decisive with respect to votes at the United Nations. China has done a lot economically and diplomatically to successfully court this bloc, for example convincing almost all African countries to abandon Taiwan in favor of China.

- What can the State Department do to work with this bloc to better explain U.S. positions and have it vote with the United States at the U.N.?

Answer. The United States shares many priorities with countries in Africa, yet too often in multilateral fora our votes do not align. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to improve outreach and partnerships with African and other G-77 countries on our shared multilateral priorities, both in Geneva and through our bilateral channels. As part of this effort, we will also make clear that the PRC's actions to coerce and bully countries to support its positions at the U.N. undermine the U.N.'s foundational principle of sovereign equality and work with those countries to defend our shared interests at the U.N.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, what specific reforms will you push for at the Human Rights Council? How will you fight anti-Israel bias at the U.N. Human Rights Council?

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 the Council's 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. If confirmed, I will prioritize working closely with U.S. friends and allies, as well as non-traditional partners, to address the Council's problematic anti-Israel bias and will engage regularly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to make clear U.S. opposition to problematic anti-Israel mandates.

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 and support countries with better records to run for seats. More broadly, if confirmed, I would work closely with U.S. friends and allies to push back on the People's Republic of China's efforts to erode global human rights norms in favor of its authoritarian aims and will work to expand space for civil society engagement in the Council's work, something the PRC has worked to restrict in recent years. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States prioritizes these specific reforms.

Question. Following the launching of thousands of rockets at Israel from Gaza this May, the Human Rights Council took the step of establishing a permanent commission of inquiry to investigate Israel, the only such permanent agenda item of the council. What are your thoughts on the commission? Should the U.S. cooperate with commission?

Answer. The United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council following the conflict in Gaza in May, 2021. The session exemplifies the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel. The establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and likeminded partners to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel

is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states. The United States does not intend to cooperate with the Commission, and if confirmed, I will make clear U.S. opposition to the Commission through regular engagements with the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and diplomatic counterparts.

Question. As you know, China continues to seek leadership posts and influence inside key standards-making bodies like the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Intellectual Property Organization, and International Organization for Standardization. What do you believe is required to effectively push back on Chinese efforts to codify CCP-friendly international standards?

Answer. The United States has consistently participated in the activities of key standard-setting bodies to ensure U.S. interests are represented, while standing as a bulwark against PRC interests. This is achieved by ensuring that organizations are transparent and accountable to membership, focused on mandates and core competencies, and led by independent, qualified candidates.

Strong leadership and engagement in international technology standards development activities are essential to the national security and economic security of the United States. If confirmed, I will prioritize electing qualified and independent candidates to lead important standard-setting bodies, including the election of American citizen Doreen Bogdan-Martin as Secretary-General of the ITU, and robust strategies to work with our allies and partners to strengthen the international standards development process in alignment with our shared values and principles. I will also work to ensure the U.S. private sector can appropriately engage in standard-setting processes and will strengthen relationships with leadership of the Geneva-based standard-setting bodies so that the U.S. can most effectively advance our interests.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has been subject to bipartisan criticism for endemic anti-Israel bias. It has in recent years taken a leading role in promoting economic measures against Israeli Jews and in territories where Israeli Jews live. The Human Rights Council has published a blacklist of companies doing business in the West Bank and East Jerusalem—including American companies. The move puts these companies at severe reputational and potentially even legal risks, pursuant to American statutes prohibiting participation in such boycott efforts.

- What specific steps do you intend to take to ensure that the Council retracts databases and other lists seeking to pressure companies into curtailing activities with Israel?

Answer. The United States opposed the creation of the database and release of the report, as mandated by the Human Rights Council in 2016, and continues to oppose any work to update it. The United States has not provided and has no intention to provide any information to OHCHR for the database. If confirmed, I will also encourage other countries not to provide any information for the database. The United States continues to engage with the High Commissioner in Geneva to make its views and opposition clear and to push for retraction of the database. If confirmed, I will continue this effort.

Question. How long do you assess it will take you to ensure that the Council retracts all such databases and other lists?

Answer. I cannot offer a specific timeline. However, I can assure you that, if I am confirmed, the United States, and I personally, will continue to engage regularly with the High Commissioner in Geneva to urge the retraction of this database and push to ensure that the database is not further updated.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What are your views on the future of the Minsk Group and how we can promote a better future in the region amid increased Azeri and Turkish aggression?

Answer. The United States takes its role as one of the three OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs—with France and Russia—very seriously. If confirmed, I will support the mandate of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to help Armenia and Azerbaijan negotiate a peaceful, comprehensive settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and will support efforts invigorate the Minsk Group Co-Chair process to find a lasting solution that brings peace and stability to the South Caucasus region. If confirmed, I will also look for opportunities for broader OSCE engagement in the South Caucasus region to promote peace, security, and stability.

Question. So how will you use the OSCE platform to draw attention to human rights abuses and the erosion of the rule of law in Turkey?

Answer. I share your concerns about democratic backsliding and the erosion of the rule of law in Turkey. If confirmed, I will speak frankly about democracy and human rights concerns with my Turkish counterparts. I will also raise these concerns in statements at the Permanent Council and other OSCE venues to ensure that all participating States are held accountable for their OSCE commitments.

Question. What would you do as ambassador to make sure that Turkey is unable to derail the OSCE's work on these important issues?

Answer. All participating States, including Turkey, freely adopted OSCE commitments on respect for human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. If confirmed, I will use OSCE platforms to hold Turkey and other states accountable for their failures to uphold these commitments. I share your concern that countries could seek to evade criticism of their records by obstructionist tactics, as is currently the case with Russia's blocking of procedural decisions regarding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. If confirmed, I will continue to take the firm U.S. position that such tactics are unacceptable and work with allies and partners to uphold the principle that the human rights record of all participating States is subject to review.

Question. Given the Kremlin intransigence, what steps will you take within the OSCE to ensure that the Kremlin is held accountable for abuses against its own people?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue spotlighting Russia's failures to uphold its freely made commitments on human rights, rule of law, and democracy. I will amplify the voices of embattled civil society activists, human rights defenders, and independent journalists. I will raise the cases of political prisoners and call out abuses. I agree the Kremlin has obstructed the work of the OSCE inside Russia for many years, including in the runup to this year's parliamentary elections. After obstructing independent media coverage and genuine opposition participation, and after imposing unjustified restrictions on OSCE observation, the OSCE rightly decided not to observe this year's elections. However, that does not mean Russia will evade the spotlight or international accountability. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Mission to the OSCE's efforts to call out the Kremlin's failures to abide by its OSCE commitments.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Nontransparent Behavior with Respect to Its War Games

Question. Russia's history and continued practice of under-reporting, mischaracterizing, or permanently repositioning forces under the rubric of exercises is dangerously destabilizing. Many of the confidence- and security-building measures contained in the OSCE's Vienna Document are designed to provide transparency regarding military activities, including military exercises in the field. If it chose to, Russia could demonstrate its commitment to international stability by ensuring it is transparent before, during, and after military exercises. This would give other OSCE participating States greater confidence that Russia will refrain from an unlawful threat or use of force. Unfortunately, Russia does not consistently fulfill the transparency measures it committed to in the Vienna Document. If confirmed, I will continue to call upon Russia to meet its international obligations and its commitments under the Vienna Document and will use the OSCE platform to call out its destabilizing military activities while keeping our allies and partners united.

- Is the Vienna document still relevant given how frequently Russia violates its spirit and intent? What reforms are most pressing to maintain OSCE as a relevant institution?

Answer. The Vienna Document remains a pillar of military transparency and confidence-building in Europe and Eurasia. If confirmed, I will work to build support for Vienna Document modernization so its provisions are better adapted to new military realities, including by working with allies and partners to push Russia to participate constructively in results-oriented negotiations. Russia's repeated failures over the years to fulfill certain of its Vienna Document commitments in good faith undermines other states' confidence in Russia's commitment to international stability. However, the United States and our allies are better off with these commitments in place, in part so we can hold Russia to account.

The OSCE's comprehensive security concept linking respect for human rights within states to cooperation and peace among states helps the United States advance its interests within the organization, and this concept remains highly relevant today. Useful reforms would include those mandating a timely adoption of the Unified Budget and steps to facilitate OSCE's core functions, including holding all three implementation/review meetings annually. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on the question of reforms and will steadfastly defend the continued independence of OSCE institutions and field missions, which do invaluable work to advance our interests.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with OSCE to counter the growing belligerence of Russia and its encroachment into Belarus?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by Russia's malign activities in Belarus, including its insertion of Russian propagandists into Belarusian state-controlled media outlets to replace Belarusian journalists and Belarusian technical personnel, who were either fired due to their participation in the pro-democracy movement or quit in peaceful protest. Other Russian "advisors" have also been deployed to Belarus to assist the regime with consolidating power.

The United States, together with 16 other participating States, invoked the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism in September 2020 to investigate human rights abuses in Belarus. The Moscow Mechanism is a unique OSCE tool that allows for an investigation to be launched without consensus and independently of the OSCE Chairmanship. The resulting OSCE Rapporteur's report on Belarus thoroughly documented ongoing human rights abuses and made specific recommendations, such as calling for an end to torture, the release of all political prisoners, the launch of an inclusive national dialogue, and new, free and fair elections. If confirmed, I will use all applicable OSCE platforms and tools to support the human rights and democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people and the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Belarus.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. Over the past year, the world has suffered the crippling impact of COVID-19, which has disproportionately affected our most vulnerable citizens and allowed some governments to exploit the pandemic to limit fundamental freedoms. Corruption threatens peace, prosperity, and human rights across the region, and the Kremlin remains intransigent in its overt violence against its neighbors as well as its covert attempts to undermine democratic institutions elsewhere.

- As Ambassador, what would be your top priorities for the U.S. Mission to the OSCE?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize respect for democracy and human rights and continue efforts to push back on Russian and PRC malign influence across the OSCE region, particularly Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and redouble U.S. engagement to resolve protracted conflicts in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh. I will focus on addressing conventional military concerns and updating the Vienna Document, as well as addressing "hybrid" threats such as election interference, energy coercion, disinformation, cyber operations, and transnational repression. I will prioritize establishing stronger anti-corruption measures, and work with allies and partners to strengthen the resilience of frontline democracies. Finally, I will use OSCE platforms and institutional tools to defend human rights and human dignity, promote democratic reforms, and push back against growing restrictions on civil society, media and internet freedom, judicial independence, and the rising tide of intolerance.

Question. How can the OSCE contribute to its mission of promoting human rights and democracy in Belarus and countries undergoing similar situations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available OSCE platforms and tools to shine a light on the appalling human rights situation in Belarus while affirming our support for democratic norms and institutions. While it is up to the people of Belarus to decide their political future, the OSCE must continue to hold the authorities in Belarus accountable for their actions. The successful invocation of the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism by the United States and 16 other countries in 2020 resulted in the issuance of a report documenting ongoing human rights abuses and offering policy recommendations, such as calling for an end to torture, the release of all political prisoners, the launch of an inclusive national dialogue, and new, free and fair elections. If confirmed, I will continue calling Belarus and other participating States to account when they violate their human rights obligations or disregard the OSCE commitments they freely pledged to uphold. Additionally, I will continue support for the OSCE's independent institutions, which conduct invaluable human rights programming, spotlight repressions against journalists and human rights defenders, and provide support to vulnerable populations.

Rise in Violence:

Question. Since 2015, I have served as the Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We've seen, in recent months, current events trigger latent bias in our communities. We go back to 9/11 where we saw the rise of hate against the Muslim community, which was translated into violence against Muslim Americans. We saw during COVID-19 latent bias against the Asian American community. Once again, as a result of recent violence in the Middle East, we see a rise of anti-Semitism here in the United States and around the world.

- The center's Early Warning Project provides an innovative risk assessment tool using methods to spotlight countries where mass atrocities have not begun, but where the risk of such violence is high. The warning signs are there. As Ambassador, how are you planning on addressing this issue with many OSCE participating states?

Answer. I share your alarm at the rise of anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance in the OSCE region that, if left unchecked, can lead to mass atrocities. Whole-of-government approaches, such as efforts to implement the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act and the Global Fragility Act, provide the Department, in collaboration with other agencies, opportunities to innovate, leverage and utilize valuable tools for early warning and early action regarding mass atrocities. Various nongovernmental organizations also provide useful metrics for assessing risk of mass atrocities. At the OSCE, the Conflict Prevention Center staffs a round-the-clock Situation Room to look for early warning signs and bring them to the attention of participating States.

If confirmed, I will condemn hate in all of its forms, and use the OSCE's diplomatic, educational, and programmatic tools to build international coalitions to act swiftly whenever and wherever there is a risk of violence or mass atrocities. In this regard, preventative diplomacy is critical. If confirmed, I will also continue U.S. support for the tolerance projects of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and encourage active engagement by the High Commissioner on National Minorities to address the triggers of inter-ethnic conflict and engage in conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Nord Stream 2

Question. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is opposed by OSCE countries. In 2019, the OSCE passed a resolution "expressing particular concern about the Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream pipeline projects and their potential to be used for the political or economic coercion of supply-dependent participating State."

Congress has of course mandated the use of sanctions to stop Nord Stream 2 from coming online, and on September 15 you testified "I think it's very important that the U.S. continues to be ready to use all of the authorities contained within PEESA and CAATSA which are the laws of the land when it comes to this." The statement is in tension with statements from other Biden administration officials, who have publicly said that the pipeline cannot be stopped, in part because it has been phys-

ically completed. European allies that believe the pipeline should be stopped have, in turn, emphasized that there are still several months to prevent its certification and activation.

- Please clarify your September 15 testimony by describing what authorities within PEESA and CAATSA should be used.

Answer. The Protecting European Energy Security Act (PEESA) and the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) both provide the administration with authorities to sanction foreign persons who engage in certain activity related to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. I understand the administration remains committed to implementing CAATSA and PEESA, as amended, and that work continues to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity.

Question. Please assess whether you believe the Nord Stream 2 pipeline can still be stopped from coming online.

Answer. It is my understanding that while the physical work required to construct the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is either finished or close to being finished, it could take several more months before German authorities are ready to certify the pipeline for use. If confirmed, I will continue to oppose the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and work to strengthen the energy security of our allies and partners.

If confirmed, I will use OSCE platforms and tools to push back against the Kremlin's coercive energy policies and advance a more secure and sustainable energy future for Ukraine and other frontline European countries. I would continue to support the OSCE's work to build the capacity of participating States to protect their energy networks, diversify their energy mixes, improve the investment climate in the energy sector, and reduce the environmental footprint of energy production, use, and transport.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. MICHAEL CARPENTER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. How can we apply more pressure in Belarus within the OSCE context? Can we do more to support the democratic movement led by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available OSCE platforms and tools to spotlight the appalling human rights situation in Belarus, urge the Lukashenka regime to engage in a facilitated dialogue with the democratic opposition and civil society, and support the Belarusian people's democratic aspirations. The OSCE must continue to hold Belarus' authorities accountable for their severe human rights abuses and allow for the voices of civil society and democratic leaders to be heard. The 2020 invocation of the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism by the United States and sixteen other countries resulted in a report documenting human rights abuses and making policy recommendations supported by the United States, such as an immediate end to violence and torture, unconditional release of all political prisoners, launch of an OSCE-facilitated national dialogue inclusive of civil society and the political opposition, and new, free and fair elections under international observation.

Question. I was able to visit Georgia earlier this summer and was initially encouraged by the progress undertaken by the April 19 agreements. However, recent events over the course of the summer indicate that there is still insufficient political will to advance the April 19 agreement.

- The next round of elections is scheduled for early October—what role will the OSCE take in observing these elections?

Answer. The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has deployed an election observation mission (EOM) for Georgia's October 2 local elections. The EOM will consist of 12 international experts, 30 long-term observers, and 350 short-term observers. Observers will monitor all aspects of the election, including implementation of electoral reforms, the campaign environment, media coverage, and election dispute resolution. Short-term observers will monitor the opening of polling stations, voting processes, the counting of ballots, and tabulation of results. The EOM will assess the elections for compliance with OSCE commitments and standards, and international obligations related to the holding of free and fair elections.

Question. What can be done to ensure that the elections are free and fair, and that if so, all parties accept the results to allow Georgia to move forward politically?

Answer. The Georgian Government, all political parties, all candidates, and election officials have an important role in upholding the highest standards of integrity before, during, and after Election Day. A robust OSCE election observation mission in Georgia will help establish a clear factual record of election processes and conduct, as will nonpartisan domestic election monitoring. The United States has provided substantial bilateral assistance over the years to promote professional and transparent election administration and nonpartisan domestic election monitoring. If confirmed, I will continue efforts in support of democratic reforms and encourage enhanced OSCE engagement in Georgia. Timely implementation of inclusive and transparent democratic reforms can reduce political polarization and help Georgia advance its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:20 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

Also Present: Senators Klobuchar, Casey, Toomey, Padilla, Feingold, Heinrich, and Lujan.

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 nominations for five very important positions. On the first panel, we will hear from Mr. Thomas Nides to be the ambassador to Israel, Mr. David Cohen to be the ambassador to Canada, and Dr. Cynthia Telles to be ambassador to Costa Rica.

We are also pleased to have a number of our colleagues here to introduce some of these nominees. I will turn to them in order.

Senator Klobuchar, I understand you will be introducing Mr. Nides.

STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Chairman, and to Ranking Member Risch as well. The work this committee does touches the lives of people all over the world and we thank you for that.

Right now in the wake of new leadership in Israel, it is a critically important moment in our alliance with our friend and ally, and we have with us today someone with the experience, credibility, and respect to serve as our ambassador to Israel and he just happens to have been born in Minnesota, as usual.

And I am so proud to introduce my good friend, Tom Nides. With Tom today is his son Max, who will testify to the fact that his dad is wise and patient all the time, right, Max? Okay, good.

And I want to tell you a little bit about Tom. He grew up in Duluth as the youngest of eight siblings. His father, Arnold, served as

the president of Temple Israel and of the Duluth Jewish Federation, and his mother, Shirley, was a teacher. His sister, Jane, told the Duluth News Tribune that their parents would be going crazy with joy if they were alive to see their son nominated to serve as ambassador to Israel.

I was amused the day that Tom was nominated to read the headline in the Duluth News, which said simply this: "Man who grew up in Duluth nominated Ambassador to Israel."

Tom was innovative from a young age. As a senior at Duluth East High School, he was tasked with finding a speaker for his high school graduation. Being the proud Minnesotan he was, he wanted Walter Mondale, who just happened to be Vice President of the United States.

He learned that the best time as a high schooler to catch the Vice President's Chief of Staff was at 5:30 in the morning. He reached out and Walter Mondale agreed to speak at his high school graduation.

A year later, Tom and I met as interns for the Vice President and I remember walking in and seeing him sitting at the desk as a 20-year-old, his legs sprawled up on the desk above him, sitting on the chair with a vice presidential pin on his lapel.

And I watched him answer the phone and say, "Tom Nides with the Vice President's office" in a tone that would convince anyone that he was no 20-year-old intern but he was, in fact, the chief of staff.

While I was assigned to do the furniture inventory and write down the serial number of every lamp and desk, Tom got to save the Lake Superior foghorn for the city of Duluth, and just like everything else, he got it done.

Since then, he continued to serve ably and, most importantly for our work here, optimistically in many leadership positions, including in the halls of Congress and in two presidential administrations.

He was a trusted adviser to Congressman Tony Coelho and to Speaker Tom Foley. He worked for Mickey Kantor in the office of the United States Trade Representative and he later served as Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources with Secretary Clinton under President Obama.

During that time, he distinguished himself as a key voice on Israel and an advocate for humanitarian support for our U.S. allies. For his outstanding service, he was awarded the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Award, our country's highest diplomatic honor.

His private sector and trade background as well as his strong background in Middle Eastern policy makes him the perfect choice to serve as our ambassador to Israel, one of our strongest and most enduring allies.

Members on both sides of the aisle understand that the deep friendship between our two countries is based on shared values and that Israel's interests in the Middle East are strongly aligned with our own. Support for Israel can never ever become a partisan issue.

Now more than ever, we need an ambassador dedicated to fostering lasting peace and stability. I am confident that as ambassador Tom will further the close alliance between our two nations

and our commitment to prosperity in the region for generations to come.

He will do a phenomenal job, Mr. Chair, and I strongly urge the committee to support his nomination. Thank you to the members of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Casey, Senator Toomey, I understand you will be introducing Mr. Cohen. I will ask Senator Casey to go first and then Senator Toomey.

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

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thanks very much. I am honored to be here with you and appreciate this opportunity as well as thanking the ranking member for this opportunity to say a few words about my friend, David L. Cohen, to serve as ambassador to Canada.

I am especially grateful to be joined by Senator Toomey. We do not always appear together on big issues. But today, we are united in our recommendation and our commendation of the work of David Cohen.

I have known David for more than a quarter of a century and I have seen him in all kinds of circumstances, most of them in connection with public service.

Many of you know that in addition to being a very successful lawyer and doing the work of a lawyer and an advocate, he served as chief of staff to the mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell.

To be chief of staff of a mayor of one of America's largest cities is about as difficult a job as anyone can imagine. But he did it well and he served the people of Philadelphia with distinction.

I think it also bears repeating that sometimes the most difficult jobs in public service also are the jobs that teach you a lot about what public service is. David understands the commitment you have got to make to be a public servant and I think he has demonstrated that over and over again.

In addition to his work for the city and his work as a lawyer, later, of course, he joined Comcast, and I tried to itemize or list all of the roles he played at Comcast and I will just give you just a partial list of the work that he did serving in major leadership positions at Comcast, whether it was legal work or government affairs, communications, administration, real estate, did a lot of work in diversity and inclusion to help lead a major corporation in the city of Philadelphia and, of course, charitable giving.

All of those roles he played. All of that work he did and more helped Comcast to grow and to be such an important corporate partner in Philadelphia for so many institutions in the city.

His community service, I think, is unparalleled, and whether it is at Penn Medicine, the work he did at the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the work he has done with organizations like the Urban League and on and on. We could list many more.

I do not think I have to remind members of this committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, about the importance of our relationship with Canada, our second largest trading partner, ever more so important in the context of the challenges we face today,

whether it is fighting COVID-19 or future viral security challenges, managing climate change, addressing the opioid crisis, trade issues, economic issues, on and on.

A lot of those issues, of course, involve many, many Pennsylvania businesses and businesses across the country that rely upon the stability and the strength of this relationship.

I would say this in conclusion, Mr. Chairman. This is my fifteenth year serving in the Senate and in those years I have seen David commit himself to excellence in every task that he was presented with.

I also got to know over those quarter century or more his wife, Rhonda, who, in her own way, has contributed so much to public service. I asked Rhonda just before this hearing—I said, Rhonda, is David ready? And she said, yes, and that is all I needed to know. He is ready to do this job in a critically important time in our nation's history.

The last thing I will say is this. There is a line in the Scriptures, "To whom much has been given, much is expected." The good Lord gave David a lot—an intellect, a strength of character, a commitment to helping people, and we have asked him to do a lot, and much is and has been expected of him and he has never failed to deliver. I have no doubt that will be the case when he serves as our ambassador to Canada.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Senator Toomey?

**STATEMENT OF HON. PAT TOOMEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Senator TOOMEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Thank you for allowing me to introduce briefly my friend, David Cohen, and express my enthusiastic support for his nomination to be our next U.S. Ambassador to Canada.

And thank you, David, for your willingness to serve. I was delighted to see your wife, Rhonda, is here with you and I appreciate the sacrifices required of individuals but also their families when they choose to go into public service and I am glad to see that you are up for this challenge.

There is a passage about David in Buzz Bissinger's excellent book, "A Prayer for the City." It is a book that chronicles the administration of Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell, which, as Senator Casey pointed out, it is an administration in which David Cohen served as chief of staff.

I think the passage is relevant for today's hearing so I am going to read it briefly. It is about David Cohen and it says, and I quote, "It wasn't just his prodigious capacity for work that made him so good at what he did. It was his patience as a negotiator, the way in which he determined the result he wanted, and then, as Macedon put it, exhibited a willingness to stay with something forever until he got there.

In the meantime, he never got frustrated. He never personalized or railed or sought vendettas. Once again, the normal human im-

pulse to get angry and become agitated that never even surfaced,” end quote.

Mr. Chairman, I think there is a word for this kind of quiet, thoughtful, persistent approach to getting things done. It is called diplomacy. David is a longtime resident of Pennsylvania, a very active member in the community, as Senator Casey pointed out.

I think it is important to point out that while serving as chief of staff to Mayor Ed Rendell through the '90s he played a central role in pulling the city out of really dire fiscal circumstances and placing it on a stable footing.

He led a prestigious U.S. law firm prior to joining Comcast Corporation in 2002. Senator Casey mentioned some of the many roles that David has played at Comcast.

I would just point out that in addition to helping to forge Comcast into a telecommunications powerhouse, David also helped to establish Comcast as a really exceptional corporate citizen for Philadelphia and Pennsylvania and our country including, among many other things, donating millions of dollars to myriad charitable causes across the country.

David's many career accomplishments are accompanied by an extensive record of service. As Senator Casey pointed out, he has long served on many, many boards and advisory panels supporting Philadelphia in particular in its academic, athletic, arts communities.

Just to name two, he was for over a decade the chairman of the Board of Trustees for the University of Pennsylvania, and currently he sits alongside Senator Casey and myself on the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission.

All the members of this committee understand full well how important Canada is as one of America's allies and neighbors. We rely on Canada as a major trade, energy, and security partner.

Frankly, Pennsylvania's proximity to Canada gives us a particularly strong tie to that country and our representation of Canada is all the more important for folks in the Commonwealth.

The fact is President Biden made an outstanding choice in choosing David for this post. David Cohen's very strong business background, his deep understanding of government at all levels, and his passion for service prepared him well for this role.

Mr. Chairman, I enthusiastically support his nomination and encourage my colleagues to do likewise. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And last but not least, our distinguished colleague from California, who is going to introduce Dr. Telles.

Senator Padilla?

**STATEMENT OF HON. ALEX PADILLA,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee.

It is my honor to introduce Dr. Cynthia Telles this morning from the great state of California, and President Biden's nominee to serve as ambassador to Costa Rica.

As a clinical professor in the UCLA School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and a widely published researcher, Dr. Telles

is widely recognized for her work in health care and especially in improving the lives of those with mental illness.

For more than three decades, Dr. Telles has directed UCLA's Spanish-speaking psychosocial clinic, where she has helped train a generation of clinicians to provide culturally-competent mental health services for Latino communities.

In addition to her work in health care, Dr. Telles brings life experience from the region and from serving on a number of nonprofit organizations and government commissions.

As a longtime member of the board of directors of the Pacific Council on International Policy, she has worked closely with industry and governmental actors to promote global engagement in Los Angeles, throughout California, and beyond.

She has served as a commissioner in the city of Los Angeles, America's second largest city, for almost 20 years, as well as having served on the board of the California Community Foundation and for nearly a decade serving on the board of the California Endowment, California's largest health foundation.

Dr. Telles also continues a family legacy of public service, including deep ties to Costa Rica. Her father, Raymond Telles, was the first Latino to serve as a U.S. ambassador, appointed by President Kennedy in 1961. Dr. Telles grew up determined to fight for the world's inequities from a young age.

During her father's ambassadorship, she lived in Costa Rica, where she found her calling for both public service and public health. Dr. Telles is a uniquely well-qualified person to represent the United States and Costa Rica, an important regional partner.

She brings a wealth of experience, dedication, and compassion to her role representing the United States and Costa Rica.

I strongly support her nomination, and I urge for her swift confirmation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Padilla.

With that background, maybe we should have Dr. Telles work with us here in Washington to solve a few things.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Thank you to all the senators who made presentations.

Let me turn now, first, to a little bit of committee business before I get to the nominees. I want to appreciate the ranking member's willingness to move forward with nine nominees that the committee was scheduled to consider today.

We postponed the hearing this afternoon out of a deference to one of our members, but that has been rescheduled for next week.

I am also glad that you agreed to a few of the nominees that I proposed for hearings next week and that you indicated, albeit with many caveats, that you may be ready to notice more. I, certainly, hope that materializes.

I remain deeply concerned, however, by the delays and obstacles facing the bulk of nominees when it comes to securing your approval for their hearings.

It is inexplicably taking an average of six weeks, almost 40 days, from the time a nominee's file is complete to the time that the minority is willing to move forward, and that is just for a hearing.

This is almost four weeks slower than it took during a similar period in 2009.

I ask how that is possible. As you know, we have a massive backlog at the State Department, USAID, and other nominations pending before the committee. We have almost reached 80 and the number continues to grow.

The nominations pending include ambassadorships to China, Japan, and countries throughout Latin America, Africa, and Europe, places where competition with China and Russia is real, where we need ambassadors in place to project U.S. power, to assist our citizens, and to promote our companies.

I would just ask Senator Risch, I appreciate the work we have done so far. I need your full cooperation and participation to tackle this backlog.

I would just note that when faced with similar numbers in 2009, the majority and the minority worked together to move 57 nominees in just one month.

There is no reason we cannot do that if we work together. To date, I have noticed only nominees who the ranking member has agreed to. In fact, I have bent over backwards to restore the tradition of comity that was abandoned in the last Congress.

But the slow pace and many obstacles to moving nominees is unacceptable. It is dangerous. We are less safe when our national security agencies are so short staffed.

We have to fix this problem. We owe it to the Senate and we owe it to all Americans, and I look forward to working with you to try to achieve that.

Let me turn to our nominees. Welcome, and thank you and your families for your willingness to serve the country in this capacity. I will briefly address each of the positions that you have been nominated for.

Mr. Nides, welcome back to the committee. I am pleased to see such a qualified and capable nominee for one of our most vital allies. Your extensive experience in management, including as the Deputy Secretary of State, will surely serve you well in navigating the particulars of our embassy in Jerusalem.

As Israel settles into its new government, it is critical that we have an experienced diplomat in place to help pursue many of our shared U.S. and Israeli interests across national security, technology, cultural, and religious exchanges.

And while some may try to exploit any small fissures or differences in policy opinions between our two countries, this committee, the Senate, and the Congress as a whole have repeatedly confirmed our unwavering support for Israel's security, its right to defend itself in the face of neighbors who continue to threaten to wipe it off the map.

Finally, to all our friends who may or may not be watching in Israel and here, let me wish you all a Hag Sukkot Sameah, and I look forward to hearing from Mr. Nides.

I am also pleased that we are reviewing the nomination of our next ambassador to Canada. Our alliance with our northern neighbors, one of the most important partnerships that we have united by shared security interests and strengthened by expansive economic ties, our nations are linked by a common commitment to

democratic principles and to tackling the most pressing challenges on the global stage.

It is with the deepest respect that we also remember that our Canadian brothers and sisters fought alongside our men and women for decades, most recently in Afghanistan.

Yet, during the last administration this most essential alliance was too often marked by tensions and tariffs, marred by insults aimed at Canadian leaders, and neglected by an absentee U.S. ambassador.

It is imperative that we rebuild our relationship with Canada, deepen our collaboration to address the challenges posed by China and Russia, and work together to address the threats posed by climate change.

Mr. Cohen, I have no doubt you are the right person to tackle these challenges and, upon confirmation, will be a strong and effective ambassador.

I am also pleased that we are considering the nomination of our next ambassador to Costa Rica. As it celebrates its bicentennial, Costa Rica stands out for its consistency on the global stage and leadership on environmental stewardship.

Costa Rica is also an example of democratic resiliency in Central America at a time when the region is plagued by weak rule of law and leaders who have embraced authoritarian tactics.

It is also unique that we are considering a candidate whose father served as ambassador to Costa Rica under President Kennedy.

I am pleased that Dr. Telles, if confirmed, will carry forward a family commitment to strengthening our partnership and advancing U.S. interests in Costa Rica. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

Let me now turn to the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch, for his opening remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your comments regarding nominations. They are always difficult, and as I have said publicly and privately to you, having been a governor I know how important nominations are and it is impossible to govern if you do not have your team in place.

I do want to review, however, the record on the numbers. First of all, I am going to compare the 116th Congress to the 117th Congress.

In the 116th Congress, the average Senate Foreign Relations Committee nominations processing time with you as the ranking member was 94 days.

On the average, Senate Foreign Relations Committee nomination processing time in the 117th Congress so far with me as the ranking member it has been 44 days, 50 days less. The average processing time, obviously and clearly, is 50 days less, and the numbers do not lie.

On some specifics, take for instance, the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, Labor. Under the Trump nominee, Robert Destro, was 276 days. The Biden nominee, Sarah Margon, was 76 days.

The U.S. U.N. representative, Andrew Bremberg was 245 days as the Trump nominee, and under this administration, the Biden nominee, Bathsheba Crocker, was 56 days.

The Assistant Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights at Justice—excuse me, Assistant Secretary—Civilian Secretary of Security, Democracy and Human Rights, Marshall Billingslea, was 378 days. Uzra Zeya was 34 days.

U.S. for Arms Control under President Trump, Marshall Billingslea, was 244 days. Bonnie Jenkins under this administration was 34 days.

Ambassador to Mexico, Chris Landau, was 57 days under Trump. Ken Salazar under this administration for ambassador to Mexico was 17 days.

The number of days from file complete to business meeting for U.S. management—the department Secretary of Management, Brian Bulatao, was 319 days. The Biden nominee, Brian McKeon, was 18 days.

The Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs, Clarke Cooper, under Trump, nominee was 260 days, whereas Jessica Lewis was 49 days as the Biden nominee.

The Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, David Schenker, the Trump nominee, was almost one year, 358 days. Barbara Leaf was 68 days.

Other key positions held by Democrats during the Trump administration, the legal advisor to the Department of State, CJ Mahoney, was 187 days from file complete to hearing. Sarah Cleveland, the file has not been complete.

The ambassador for Pakistan, Bill Todd, the Trump nominee, was 180 days from file complete to hearing. Of course, there has been no nominee.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent that this matrix be entered into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

Nomination Processing Time

(116th Congress vs. 117th Congress)

(As of September 22, 2021)

- Average SFRC nomination processing time in the 116th Congress (with Sen. Menendez as Ranking Member): **94 days**¹
- Average SFRC nomination processing time in the 117th Congress so far (with Sen. Risch as Ranking Member): **44 days**
- Average processing in 117th Congress = 50 days faster than 116th Congress

¹(conservative estimate based on staff research)

Number of Days from File Complete to Hearing Date

	Trump Nominee	Biden Nominee
A/S Democracy, Human Rights, Labor (DRL)	Robert Destro 276 days	Sarah Margon 76 days
U.S. U.N. Representative	Andrew Bremberg 245 days	Bathsheba Crocker 56 days
U/S for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J)	Marshall Billingslea 378 days (NOT CONFIRMED)	Uzra Zeya 34 days
U/S for Arms Control (T)	Marshall Billingslea 244 days (NOT CONFIRMED)	Bonnie Jenkins 34 days
Ambassador to Mexico	Chris Landau 57 days	Ken Salazar 17 days

Number of Days from File Complete to Hearing Date

	Trump Nominee	Biden Nominee
U/S Management/Deputy Secretary for Management	Brian Bulatao 319 days	Brian McKeon 18 days
A/S for Political Military Affairs (PM)	Clarke Cooper 260 days	Jessica Lewis 49 days
A/S for Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)	David Schenker 358 days	Barbara Leaf 68 days from hearing date (Business Meeting expected in September)

Number of Days from File Complete to Hearing Date

	Trump Nominee	Biden Nominee
Legal Adviser to the Department of State (L)	CJ Mahoney 187 days from file complete to hearing (NOT CONFIRMED)	Sarah Cleveland (FILE INCOMPLETE)
Ambassador to Pakistan	Bill Todd 180 days file complete to hearing (NOT CONFIRMED)	NONE

Senator RISCH. I commit to you to continue to work as best I can, again, realizing that there is always stress on these. We take our vetting responsibilities seriously just as you did when the President was another party.

I respect that. I appreciate it, and we are going to continue to do the best we can to vet these people and as quickly as we possibly can.

Moving to the panel that we have before us today, I want to thank the nominees and, of course, their families for the sacrifice that they will share.

On the nomination for ambassador to Israel, Israel is America's most vital ally in a very turbulent region. It faces serious threats and it is in the national security interest of the United States to ensure Israel is adequately equipped to meet these challenges.

I am deeply disappointed that the House of Representatives have attempted to pull the Iron Dome funding from the Continuing Resolution. I expect the Senate will remedy that issue very quickly.

Since the Biden administration took office, we have seen no movement to expand or strengthen the Abraham Accords. I think most everyone that moves in the area of foreign relations agrees that the Abraham Accords were tremendous steps forward in the relationship we have and others have in the Middle East.

Many of us have concerns that the administration has instead doubled down on the failed Palestinian policies of the past. I am also disappointed the administration continues to provide assistance to the Palestinians without securing any concessions on the egregious "pay to slay" program.

Instead of normalizing this appalling practice through deeper relationships with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the administration should pursue changes in Palestinian policies that glorify and promote violence and terrorism.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these important issues.

On the nomination for the ambassador to Canada, first of all, I appreciated the opportunity to meet personally with the nominee and we discussed the importance of a couple of issues that are important to me and important to America.

One is the Columbia River Treaty. The other is the opening of the Canadian border, and I was pleased to hear his thoughts on that and appeared to be on board as far as both issues are concerned.

The Columbia River Treaty remains an important issue to the entire Northwest delegation. I expect that you will prioritize these negotiations, should you be confirmed, as we discussed.

As for the U.S.-Canadian border, I am disappointed in the administration's decision on Monday to extend restrictions on non-essential travel from Canada to the United States at land ports of entry.

These restrictions are causing significant economic and emotional distress to communities such as those in north Idaho that depend on well-regulated cross-border traffic. The administration should reconsider this decision and reopen our land border with Canada as soon as possible.

Finally, the nomination of ambassador to Costa Rica. Costa Rica is an outpost of democratic governance in Central America and a valuable trade, security, and diplomatic partner.

As many as 50,000 Americans call Costa Rica home, in large part due to its political and economic stability. Nevertheless, Costa Rica's democratic model has come under acute pressure due to instability generated by the Ortega regime in Nicaragua and the COVID-19 epidemic.

Costa Rica has also sought deeper relations with China, which comes with its own set of challenges. I hope to hear how you plan to manage those U.S. relations with this strategic partner in Central America.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Just very briefly, I must say that, of course, one has to compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges in terms of dates.

The reality is, is that for the first nine months of the Trump administration it took an average of just 22 days—22 days—to get a nominee scheduled for a hearing, despite many serious and well-documented vetting issues.

It is currently taking an average of 36 days, over three weeks longer than that period of time, for the minority to clear nominees with completed files for hearings. That is a challenge, and bottom line is we have nearly 80 people.

The final thing I will say is that, unfortunately, the previous administration did not vet nominees so looking at numbers was extremely meaningless.

We had nominees that had unprecedented vetting issues, lying to this committee, lying to the IRS, indictments, racism, #MeToo issues that all came out as a result of the vetting. That is why it took time.

I do not want to belabor it. But I do want to work with the ranking member because, as I have heard him say and he said again today, that as a governor he understands the importance of having people in place in the executive branch to execute. I agree with him in this context as well, and hopefully, we can get to a point where we are promoting the number of nominees for the process.

We still have the floor issues that have been vexing us, which is maybe beyond this committee's pay grade but, nonetheless, is a critical issue where Republican members exclusively are holding up nominees on the floor to the detriment of the national security and interests of the United States.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I hope we do not mix the issue of what is happening on the floor versus what is happening in the committee. Like you, I am likewise frustrated with what is happening on the floor and, certainly, this is an issue that should be tackled by the senior members of leadership of both of our teams and get this removed so we can move forward on that.

I am not going to debate the quality of the appointments. Obviously, that would take many, many more days than what we have here. I will just say that I do commit that I am going to continue to work with you to move as rapidly as we can.

I have no doubt that we will wind up with similar frustrations but we will work through them as best we can.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We ask each of you to summarize your testimony in about five minutes or so. Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection.

And we will start with Mr. Nides to make his presentation.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. THOMAS R. NIDES OF MINNESOTA,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

Mr. NIDES. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. It is a privilege to appear today. It is an honor to be asked to serve as the ambassador to the State of Israel.

I want to thank President Biden, Secretary Blinken for the confidence in me, and I am grateful to share this day with my family.

I would like to thank Senator Klobuchar for her kind words of introductions. As the Senator mentioned, she and I have been friends for over 40 years having served as interns together for Vice President Walter Mondale. I am so, so grateful for her friendship.

As Senator Klobuchar mentioned, I grew up in Duluth, Minnesota, the youngest of seven children. My parents were leaders in a vibrant but small Jewish community. My dad was the president of our temple, our chairman of our local UJA. My mom was a leader of both Hadassah and Sisterhood, who grew up believing being Jewish was more than a religion but a way of life.

Most importantly, my parents have pressed upon my siblings and me the importance, as they say in Hebrew, tzedakah, or charity, giving to your community and caring about others.

During my first trip to Israel, I worked on a kibbutz where I discovered the importance of this very young and vulnerable nation. As Jews everywhere are celebrating the holiday of Sukkot, there is no greater honor than to be asked to strengthen the ties between the United States and the State of Israel.

My many trips to Israel, both in the Government and the private sector, have strengthened my commitment to sustain Israel as a democratic and Jewish state.

The U.S.-Israel relationship has long been based on both common values and strategic interests to remain united in our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security.

Should I have the honor of being confirmed, let me just spend a moment on a few of the priorities that will guide me.

First, the United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security supported by a 10-year/\$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding. Israel is one of our closest security partners in countering the broad spectrum of threats.

Chief among them is the critical threat that Iran poses. President Biden has made clear his commitment to ensure that Iran will never develop a nuclear weapon. Upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests, ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner.

Second, United States remains committed to advancing the depth and breadth of our bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship.

Israel's startup nation economy is welcoming for U.S. businesses, with U.S. companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign investment research and development centers in Israel. And, as importantly, President Biden has announced he will work with Israel in hopes of them joining the Visa Waiver Program.

Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century, and the United States views close cooperation with Israel on foreign investment as critical to our security and intelligence partnership.

Third, the United States values working with fellow democracies to oppose international institutional biases towards Israel, and I look forward to working with Israel to protect the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, creating an atmosphere all voices can be heard.

Equally, we must continue to oppose all efforts to isolate and delegitimize Israel. If confirmed, while respecting the rights of all Americans for free speech, I will continue the tireless work of this administration to firmly reject the BDS movement and boycott laws which unfairly single out Israel.

Fourth, the Abraham Accords. Yes, the Abraham Accords are critical to the region's stability and prosperity. I will personally support every effort to expand cooperation among Israel and the countries of the Arab and Muslim world, and I hope to strengthen the Abraham Accords and identify opportunities to expand Israel's relationship in additional countries in the Arab and Muslim world.

While we support the normalization between Israel and other countries, it is not a substitute for Israel-Palestinian peace, and we seek to harness existing and future agreements and make tangible improvement for the Palestinian people with a view of preserving the vision of a negotiated two-state solution.

I am committed to doing so my part to rebuild the partnership between the Americans and the Palestinian people.

The priorities listed above are only some of the key issues that face any diplomat serving in Israel. Frank and fruitful dialogues only strengthen our partnership and deepen the bonds between Americans and Israelis.

Before I close, I would like to say something, that if I am fortunate to get confirmed, this will be my second time working at the State Department with some of the most talented and dedicated individuals I have ever had the honor to be with.

I would be remiss in not thanking every one of them for their service. I am humbled and grateful to serve this country and to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israeli partnership.

And thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Senator.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Nides follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS R. NIDES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today.

It is an honor to be asked to serve as Ambassador to the State of Israel. I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. I am grateful to share this day with my family.

I would like to thank Senator Klobuchar for her kind words of introduction. As the Senator mentioned, she and I have been friends for over 40 years, having served as interns together for Vice President Walter Mondale. I am grateful for her friendship.

As Senator Klobuchar mentioned, I grew up in Duluth, Minnesota the youngest of seven children. My parents were leaders in a vibrant but small Jewish community. We grew up believing being Jewish was more than a religion, but a way of life. Most importantly, my parents impressed upon my siblings and me the importance of giving back to our community and caring about others.

There is no greater honor than to be asked to strengthen the ties between the United States and the State of Israel. My many trips to Israel, both in government and the private sector, have strengthened my commitment to sustain Israel as a democratic and Jewish state at peace with its neighbors.

The U.S.-Israeli relationship has long been based on both common values and strategic interests. We remain united in our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security. Should I have the honor of being confirmed, some of the priorities that will guide my efforts include:

First, the United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security, supported by our 10-year, \$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding. Israel is one of our closest security partners in countering a broad spectrum of threats ranging from climate change to cyber-attacks to nuclear proliferation. Chief among these is the critical threat that Iran poses.

President Biden has made clear his commitment to ensure that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon. Upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests and ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner.

Second, the United States remains committed to advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship. Israel's start-up economy is safe and welcoming for U.S. businesses, with U.S. companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centers in Israel and President Biden announced we will work with Israel in hopes of them joining the Visa Waiver Program. Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century, and the United States views close cooperation with Israel on foreign investment risk management as a down payment on our security and intelligence partnership.

Third, the United States values working with a fellow democracy to oppose international institutional bias and promote human rights at home and abroad. I look forward to working with Israel to protect the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, creating an atmosphere where all voices can be heard and highlighting efforts to advance the rights of members of vulnerable communities. Equally, we must continue to oppose all efforts to isolate and delegitimize Israel internationally. If confirmed, while respecting the rights of all Americans to free speech, I will continue the tireless work of this administration to firmly reject the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and boycott laws which unfairly single out Israel.

Fourth, the Abraham Accords are critical to regional stability and prosperity. I will personally support every effort to expand cooperation among Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world, and I hope to strengthen the Abraham Accords and identify opportunities to expand Israel's relations with additional countries in the Arab and Muslim world.

While we work to support normalization between Israel and other countries, it is not a substitute for Israeli-Palestinian peace, and we seek to harness existing and future agreements to make tangible improvements for the Palestinian people with a view to preserving the vision of a negotiated two-state solution. I am committed to doing my part to rebuild the partnership between the American and Palestinian peoples.

The priorities listed above are only some of the key issues that face any diplomat serving in Israel. Frank and fruitful dialogues only strengthen our partnership and deepen the bonds between Americans and Israelis.

Before closing, I would like to thank the very talented, dedicated cadre of public servants who represent the United States faithfully both here in Washington and abroad. It goes without saying that, if I am confirmed, the safety and security of

all Americans, and not just those in the Embassy, but all those in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza, is my top priority.

I am humbled and grateful to serve this country and to work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israeli partnership. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Cohen?

STATEMENT OF DAVID L. COHEN OF PENNSYLVANIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA

Mr. COHEN. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch—

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Cohen, if you could put your microphone on.

Mr. COHEN [continuing]. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am proud and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Canada.

I want to thank the President for his nomination, Senators Casey and Toomey for their kind introductions, and this committee for its courtesy.

I also would like to acknowledge my wife, Rhonda, who has joined us here today. She has supported me—maybe it would be more accurate to say that she has put up with me—through 44 years of marriage. I deeply appreciate her remarkable partnership and commitment to my career.

Canada is one of our most important allies and a partner for our economic prosperity and our national security.

If confirmed, I pledge to devote my full efforts to strengthening our unique bilateral partnership. As President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau stated this year in their roadmap for a renewed U.S.-Canada partnership, and I quote, "It is in the shared interest of the United States and Canada to revitalize and expand our historic alliance and steadfast friendship to overcome the daunting challenges of today and realize the full potential of the relationship into the future," unquote.

In navigating the confirmation process, including meetings with members of this committee, I have heard many recommendations for expanding and improving the already strong relationship between Canada and the United States.

Based on these discussions, if confirmed, some of my key priorities would be, first, preserving and growing the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, including as detailed in the USMCA.

At nearly \$1.7 billion a day, Canada is our largest trading partner and the top export market for more than 30 of our states.

Second, easing border restrictions while protecting public health in both countries. As Canada and the United States share the world's longest land border with 120 ports of entry and a prepandemic daily rate of 400,000 people, crossing over a safe and vibrant border is important for bilateral relations, trade, tourism, and the personal and family relationships that form the bedrock of our cultures.

I understand that the impact of today's restrictions on the many communities along the border, but I also appreciate the health sensitivities and concerns that have led to the current regulations.

Third, Canada and the United States cooperatively manage multiple watersheds through complex arrangements, several of which would benefit from modernization.

A modernized Columbia River Treaty regime, for example, could enhance hydropower and flood risk management in both countries. I know that many members share this high priority.

Fourth, continue to respect and fortify the trusted and valuable alliance with Canada on multiple defense relationships, including NATO and NORAD.

We also must honor our commitments to make the necessary investments to meet those needs and, of course, our policy toward China is a key priority today.

Finally, continue to advance common priorities of our countries on the global stage on issues such as combating climate change, anti-corruption, and building more diverse and inclusive societies, including for women and girls.

My varied professional career has been rewarding and, ultimately, enhanced by leadership roles in multiple nonprofit organizations. One important theme running through my career has been the opportunities I have had to serve.

I am also proud of my success in tackling big complicated issues and in bringing people together to solve problems. I am excited by the possibility of extending my passion for service and applying my collaborative and solutions-based approach in the role of ambassador to Canada.

If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the members of this committee as I represent the President, the Secretary of State, and this country in Canada.

It would be the ultimate honor to work alongside the 1,200 members of the United States mission in Canada and with the Canadian Government to advance our shared priorities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Cohen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID L. COHEN

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am proud and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Canada. I want to thank the President for his nomination and Senators Casey and Toomey—two extraordinary public servants who I have had the privilege of working closely with over many years—for their kind introductions of me, and I thank this committee for its courtesy.

I also would like to acknowledge my wife, Rhonda Cohen, who has joined us here today. She has supported me—maybe it would be more accurate to say that she has put up with me—through 44 years of marriage. I can say with absolute certainty that I simply would not be here today were it not for her remarkable partnership and commitment to my career.

Canada is one of our most important and committed allies and a partner for our economic prosperity and our national security. But I understand the significant challenges that lie ahead for both of our countries. If confirmed, I pledge to devote my full efforts to strengthening our unique bilateral partnership, to enable both countries to take advantage of our shared economic and political interests.

As President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau stated in their Roadmap for a Renewed U.S. Canada Partnership in February of this year, "It is in the shared in-

terest of the United States and Canada to revitalize and expand our historic alliance and steadfast friendship to overcome the daunting challenges of today and realize the full potential of the relationship into the future.”

In navigating the nomination and confirmation process, including meetings with members of this committee, I have heard many recommendations for expanding and improving the already strong relationship between Canada and the United States.

Based on these discussions, if confirmed, some key priorities for me are:

- Preserving and growing the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, including as detailed in the USMCA. At nearly \$1.7 billion a day, Canada is our largest trading partner and the top export market for more than 30 of our states.
- Easing border restrictions while protecting public health in both countries. As Canada and the United States share the world’s longest land border, extending 5,525 miles, with 120 ports of entry, and a pre-pandemic daily rate of 400,000 people crossing over, a safe and vibrant border is important for bilateral relations, trade, tourism, and the personal and family relationships that form the bedrock of our cultures. I understand the impact of today’s restrictions on the many communities along the border, but also appreciate the health sensitivities and concerns that have led to the current regulations.
- Canada and the United States cooperatively manage multiple watersheds through complex arrangements, several of which would benefit from modernization. A modernized Columbia River Treaty regime, for example, could enhance hydropower, flood risk management, and ecosystems in the United States and Canada. I know that many Members share this high priority.
- Continue to respect and fortify the trusted and valuable alliance with Canada on multiple defense and foreign affairs relationships, including NATO and NORAD. We also must honor our commitments to make the necessary investments to meet current and future challenges to our collective security and preserve our ability to successfully promote peace and human rights globally.
- Continue to advance common priorities of Canada and the United States on the global stage on issues such as combating climate change, anti-corruption, energy independence, and building more diverse and inclusive societies, including for women and girls around the world.

My varied professional career has included the practice of law, government service, and a senior executive business role. That career has been rewarding, enriching, and ultimately enhanced by leadership roles in multiple nonprofit organizations. For me, one important theme running through my career has been the opportunities I have had to serve. I am proud of my success in tackling big, complicated issues, and in bringing people together to solve problems.

I am excited by the possibility of extending my passion for service and applying my collaborative and solutions-based approach in the role of United States Ambassador to Canada. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the members of this committee as I represent the President, the Secretary of State, and this country in Canada. It would be the ultimate honor to work alongside the 1,200 members of the U.S. Mission in Canada for our Government and with the Canadian Government to advance our shared priorities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Telles?

**STATEMENT OF DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES OF CALIFORNIA,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA**

Ms. TELLES. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Biden’s nominee to be the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica.

I am grateful and humbled by the trust placed in me and, if confirmed, I really look forward to working with all of you to advance our nation’s interests in the region.

With your indulgence, I would like to introduce my husband, Joe Waz, and my son, Raymond Jimenez, who are here with me today. Their unequivocal love and support mean the world to me.

Also, I would like to thank my beloved parents, Raymond and Delfina Telles, who are with us in spirit. My father taught me by example that public service is a noble cause to which he dedicated his entire career, having served as the first Hispanic elected mayor of a major U.S. city in 1957 and also having served as the very first Hispanic U.S. ambassador when President Kennedy appointed him to serve in Costa Rica in 1961.

If confirmed, it would be my life's greatest honor to follow in his footsteps.

I spent several years of my youth in Costa Rica, which came to have a special place in my heart. I became very familiar with its people, its culture, and its challenges. I also was able to witness firsthand the formation of the Alliance for Progress with its great dreams of shared prosperity and democracy.

My father was able to organize a summit for President Kennedy and all the Central American presidents at the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica. I am committed to using that experience to deepen the enduring bonds between Costa Rica and the United States and, thereby, to further our mutual interests.

The United States and Costa Rica have shared an exceptional partnership across decades, one that is based not only on mutual interests but on shared values of democracy, of good governance, of human rights. This strong partnership is critical now more than ever.

We face an unprecedented convergence of challenges in Central America: increased drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations, economic downturn exacerbated by the pandemic, disruption to the region due to climate change, uptick in irregular migration, and also foreign influences that threaten to undermine democracy and our priorities in the region.

If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rica to promote our shared interests throughout the region. Costa Rica has been a strong ally in migration management and a regional leader in welcoming vulnerable migrants and providing international protection for refugees and asylum seekers.

If confirmed, I will, certainly, work to strengthen its asylum protection and temporary worker programs, and to expand its capacity in general to deal with migration, including border protection.

Very importantly, I will work with Costa Rica to address root causes of migration in the region.

The U.S. and Costa Rica collaborate closely to combat transnational crime organizations. Costa Rica is actually crucial to this shared mission, given its strategic location which positions it at the largest transshipment hub from South America to the U.S. for narcotics bound to our country.

The good news is that in 2020 Costa Rica interdicted a record 71 metric tons of narcotics, mostly cocaine, demonstrating not only its commitment and capacity but also, very importantly, the huge challenges it faces in the region.

If confirmed, I commit to strongly support Costa Rica's counter narcotics efforts in every way possible.

For decades, Costa Rica has been a champion of democracy and recently demonstrating this by calling out that Ortega-Murillo regime in Nicaragua and the Venezuelan Government to return to peaceful democracy, to hold free and fair elections, to release political prisoners, to hold people accountable for corruption.

Certainly, I will gladly support Costa Rica's efforts to promulgate our shared values in the region.

Although Costa Rica has enjoyed a relatively stable economy across time, there are recent troubling signs evidenced by high unemployment, by a large public debt, and by stress in the public health system due to COVID-19 and increased migration from Nicaragua.

In addition to the human toll that these pose, these vulnerabilities can be exploited by our adversaries and competitors. If confirmed, I commit to strengthening economic partnership with Costa Rica and to promote mutual prosperity. Importantly, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the embassy team in San Jose where my highest priorities will be the protection of U.S. citizens and our interests. I will look forward also to seeking consultation from this committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer your questions.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Telles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica. I am grateful and humbled by the trust placed in me.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to advance our nation's interests.

I would like to introduce my husband, Joe Waz, and my son, Raymond Jimenez. Their invaluable support and love mean the world to me.

I would like to thank to my beloved parents, Raymond and Delfina Telles, who are with us in spirit. My father taught me by example that public service is a noble cause to which he dedicated his entire career. He served as the first Hispanic elected mayor of a major American city in 1957 and, subsequently, as the first Hispanic United States Ambassador when President Kennedy appointed him to serve in Costa Rica in 1961. If confirmed, I will be deeply honored to follow in his footsteps.

I spent several years of my youth in Costa Rica, which came to have a special place in my heart. I became very familiar with its people, its culture, and its challenges. I am committed to using that experience to enhance America's enduring bonds with Costa Rica and, thereby, to further our mutual interests.

The United States and Costa Rica have enjoyed an exceptional partnership across decades—one based, not only on mutual interests, but on shared values of democracy, good governance and human rights. This strong partnership is critical—now more than ever. We face an unprecedented convergence of challenges in Central America: increasing drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations; disruption from climate change; economic downturn exacerbated by the pandemic; a related uptick in irregular migration; and foreign influence that threatens to undermine democracy and our priorities in the region.

In addressing these challenges, Costa Rica has been, not only a reliable partner, but an effective role model. If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rican people to promote our shared interests throughout the region.

Costa Rica has been a strong ally in migration management through participation in our Comprehensive Regional Solutions Framework. It has been a regional leader in welcoming vulnerable migrants and guest workers and providing international protection for refugees and asylum seekers, including more than 80,000 Nicaraguans and 30,000 Venezuelans in recent years. Through the U.S. funded Protection Transfer Agreement, Costa Rica hosts individuals with urgent protection needs from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, while they undergo refugee processing

for resettlement. If confirmed, I will work with the Government to help strengthen its asylum system, support temporary worker programs, expand its efforts to deal with migration and protection issues and, very importantly, to address the root causes of migration.

The United States and Costa Rica collaborate closely to combat transnational criminal organizations that move illicit drugs to the U.S. and engage in human trafficking. Costa Rica is critical to this shared mission, given its strategic location, which positions it as the largest transshipment hub for South American cocaine bound for the U.S. In 2020, Costa Rica interdicted a record 71 metric tons of narcotics, demonstrating, not only its capabilities, but also the enormous challenges it faces. If confirmed, I commit to strongly support Costa Rica's counter-narcotics efforts.

For decades, Costa Rica has been a strong champion of democracy. Recently, its Government demonstrated a commitment to pressure Nicaragua's Ortega-Murillo regime to hold fair and free elections and to release political prisoners. Costa Rica has repeatedly called for a peaceful return to democracy in Venezuela and accountability for corruption.

In addressing the climate crisis, the United States has no stronger ally in this hemisphere than the Costa Ricans with their longstanding commitment to protecting the environment, conserving biodiversity, and reducing carbon emissions, in fact, outlining a pathway toward net zero emissions by 2050. If confirmed, I look forward to partnering with them to advance these shared goals.

Although Costa Rica has enjoyed a relatively stable economy, there are recent signs of strain evidenced by high unemployment, untenable public debt, and stress on the public health system due to COVID-19 and increased migration from Nicaragua. In addition to the human toll, these vulnerabilities can be exploited by our competitors and adversaries. If confirmed, I commit to strengthening our economic relationship with Costa Rica to promote mutual prosperity. In the near term, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, which has greatly impacted the country, now in its fourth major surge. U.S. support to date has included a donation of half a million Pfizer vaccines.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading our Embassy team in San Jose and to working closely with you.

My highest priority will be to protect U.S. citizens and to champion our interests in cooperation with our strong partners in Costa Rica.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'm happy to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Before we start a round of five-minute questions with members, there are a series of questions we ask each nominee on behalf of the full committee and they, really, require a simple yes or no answer.

I would like to ask each question and get a verbal response from each of the nominees. These are 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. I would ask each of you to provide just 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?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you. All of the nominees have responded yes verbally.

I will recognize myself for a series of questions.

Mr. Nides, this is one of the most important relationships we have. It is long-standing, enduring, and incredibly bound by common values that we share with the people of Israel.

I think these are self-evident but I just want to make sure. You are committed to Israel's right to self-defense, are you not?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, I am.

The CHAIRMAN. Under U.S. law, there is a question of Israel's qualitative military edge. You are committed to continuing to pursue that under the law, right?

Mr. NIDES. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And do you support replenishment of the Iron Dome missile defense system—

Mr. NIDES. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Which has saved countless Israeli and Palestinian lives as well?

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And you spoke to the Abraham Accords, which we all cherish that other countries have finally come together in recognizing Israel and we hope that that can be pursued even more significantly.

Those are all key elements and you have covered many other things in your opening statement.

Let me turn to Mr. Cohen. Since Canadian authorities detained the CFO of Huawei in December of 2019, China's Government has engaged in numerous forms of retaliation, including the imposition of tariffs and cutting imports of Canadian products.

However, the most egregious case is the PRC's arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens, Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, as well as the seemingly political conviction of Mr. Kovrig last month. These tactics by China require the international community to respond with a united purpose. I have spoken about this quite a bit.

What steps will you take to deepen coordination with our Canadian allies and ensure that our two countries formulate a joint response to the challenges posed by China's coercive diplomacy?

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I think the good news is that we start from a proposition, as you observed in your opening comments, where Canada and the United States share a commitment to democratic values and I think they share an abhorrence of much of the behavior of the People's Republic of China.

I think the United States has joined Canada in the condemnation of the treatment of the two Michaels. I think Canada almost seems to prefer working in multilateral ways in its foreign affairs, which sometimes may make it appear that they are less outspoken than you might otherwise think.

In the case of the two Michaels and arbitrary detention, they have been very outspoken and the United States has been very

supportive. I think we are all waiting for Canada to release its framework for its overall China policy, and I think as ambassador, if I am confirmed, it is an appropriate role to be engaged in discussions and make sure that Canada's policies reflect its words in terms of the treatment of China, and that we do improve the collaboration and coordination between our two countries in taking on the existential threat that is China politically, economically, diplomatically, et cetera.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The Congress, as a whole, which is a rarity these days, but in a bipartisan way put out legislation, including legislation from this committee that became part of the overarching legislation on China, recognizing China as our most significant geostrategic challenge in the world. Our allies are going to be incredibly important to this.

You and I had an opportunity to speak yesterday. I appreciate you coming by the office.

I hope also upon your confirmation you can work with our Canadian partners, who we have a great deal of respect for. We honor the service and the sacrifices that they have made alongside of us in Afghanistan and other places as a NATO ally.

But I would hope that they would be more forthcoming on democracy and human rights issues in the hemisphere. They are a key hemispheric partner. They sit in the OAS with us.

And yet, I get disappointed at times when, for example, the Canadians do not join us, for example, on human rights and democracy in Cuba. It is pretty amazing to me.

I understand Canadians have economic interests in Cuba, but those should not overcome the human rights and democracy issue. It is something I hope you will work on upon your confirmation.

Dr. Telles, you mentioned Costa Rica and some of the challenges that it has now in COVID and some of the economic impacts on it. How do you think we can work together? What would be some of your top priorities to work with Costa Rica to help it meet these present challenges so it can continue to be what it has been on both refugees, democracy, a stalwart in the hemisphere?

Ms. TELLES. Chairman, thank you for your question. Very timely and relevant at this point.

And, certainly, as you mentioned, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the economic circumstance in Costa Rica as it has throughout the region and also globally.

One of the things that I would hope to do is to assist the Government in addressing the issues right now which are currently plaguing it, including high unemployment, also issues related to increasing public debt and also the strain that COVID-19 has placed on its health system.

And I would also suggest in dealing with these shorter-term issues that may require some financial assistance that we look to supporting Costa Rica and it's kind of a long-term economic resilience. And that would, certainly, mean to kind of strengthening our economic partnership with Costa Rica through trade and investment.

I would, certainly, reach out very proactively to American businesses to consider investing in Costa Rica, which has a very favorable business climate.

Additionally, I think that in terms of the longer-term resilience issues it will be important for Costa Rica to continue down the path it has begun already through its accession to the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation, which has, certainly, suggested certain reforms—economic and governmental reforms—which they are embarking on.

I believe that we also need to get the assistance of multinational organizations as well as international financial institutions to assist with long-term recovery.

In terms of your question about refugees, as you know, as I mentioned, Costa Rica has been an incredible partner, a regional leader, in terms of providing protection for refugees and asylum seekers.

And just very recently it, actually, has provided a home as it welcomed refugees from Nicaragua, in the last three years probably about 100,000 and from Venezuela close to 40,000 in the last—it just varies in terms.

I believe—and even though they are very willing and welcoming, it has, certainly, strained to some extent its public health system and its infrastructure.

I think that we need to look at some additional humanitarian assistance to Costa Rica and also to figure out how we can expand its capacity to receive migrants by supporting its temporary worker programs, its asylum protection programs also.

Again, I look forward, if confirmed, to working with the Government of Costa Rica to address these issues.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me let start with Mr. Nides. First of all, thank you for your enthusiastic condemnation of the despicable and anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement. I really appreciate your enthusiasm for that position, which I share and many others share.

We have another member on the next panel who, I think, has less enthusiasm for that. But we are going to test that when we get there.

I also want to acknowledge your enthusiastic support for the Abraham Accords. That is the most enthusiasm I have heard from anyone from this administration regarding the Abraham Accords, even though almost everyone agrees that this was one of the most significant steps that has happened in the Middle East in decades.

I appreciate that and I also appreciate your personal commitments to expand the Abraham Accords where possible. That is a game changer in that region. Certainly, the more relations that the countries have with each other in the region is good for them and it is good for the world. Thank you for that.

The Palestinian issue that I am most concerned with is the “pay for slay” program, which I assume you are familiar with, and I would ask your thoughts on that, please.

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you very much, and I share your concern about this abhorrent behavior as it relates to the “pay for slay.” Obviously, legislation was passed the Taylor Force Act, which, we are quite focused on, and if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, I have every intention of working with the Palestinians to try to get progress on this.

But I do not think there is anyone in this administration that would disagree with you about what has happened there, and we need to work to get it resolved.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. I was one of the primary sponsors on Taylor Force. I had hoped that it had been more successful than it has been.

But if it is followed closely, it certainly makes inroads in that and I, along with others, are criticized sometimes because we are tough on the Palestinians and particularly when you are talking about money flowing to them because of the corruption and the way that the terrorists have a way of siphoning money from our money that is going there to help people in the country.

I think this is something that really deserves our continued attention and I am, certainly, going to be tough and I think everybody is going to be tough on this “pay for slay” program, and I hope you will enthusiastically join us as we continue that battle. Thank you.

Turning to Mr. Cohen, thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me on the issues with Canada. I, certainly, wish we had the same relationship with all countries.

Like the Chairman, I am not completely satisfied with their view on everything. But that is not unusual. There is virtually no country that we are in complete concurrence with.

Two of the real important issues for me are the Columbia River Treaty. It is important to all of us on a bipartisan basis who serve from the Pacific Northwest.

Senator Cantwell and I have been the two leading people on the negotiations that are going on. She is a very good partner in that regard. We are in complete agreement on where we need to go with this.

We talked about the heavy lift that it is and I know you are ready for that challenge, and we expect to continue that as it is going and we look forward to your help in that regard.

On the second issue, and that is the opening of the northern border, we share—my state shares a border with Canada and we are very painfully and personally aware of the cost of this closing.

I appreciate your commitment to work on getting that open as quickly as we can.

For Ms. Telles, the Costa Ricans switched their diplomatic relations from Taiwan to the PRC in 2007, and ever since then we have seen the slow creep of Chinese influence in that country.

Could I have your thoughts on that?

Ms. TELLES. Absolutely. Thank you for your question, Ranking Member Risch.

It is something of great concern, quite frankly. China has sought for some years now to expand its sphere of influence, politically and economically, and it would love nothing better than to have a beachhead in Costa Rica.

And in recent years, in the last few years or so, these efforts have become much more aggressive. Whether it is through promises of investment and trade or public diplomacy, they built them some time ago, as you know, a stadium and a police academy, but there are more recent offers of a similar nature.

Additionally, they attempted vaccine diplomacy. It did not work at this point, and they are now very interested, very aggressively, actually, pushing, trying to further infiltrate the Costa Rican telecommunications system through the sale at very good terms of their equipment for cellular phones.

I would say that I think the biggest, I think, or the most important strategy here would be, really, to strengthen our economic relationship with Costa Rica in terms of trade and foreign direct investment, and as I mentioned, I really want to urge the American companies to really invest in Costa Rica.

That, I think, will be probably one of the biggest leverages that we will have over time. Right now, we are their top trading partner and the largest contributor to foreign direct investment. I would want to preserve that and expand that.

But also, very importantly, I think it would be important, certainly, to urge the Costa Ricans to be mindful of our shared values of democracy and human rights, and also to encourage them when entering into contracts and list agreements to prioritize trusted partners and entities that will not compromise their long-term security.

But I am confident that in working with Costa Rica—it has been a great partner over many years—that we can achieve these goals.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I appreciate that clear-eyed view. Your reference to the relatively small amount of money that China spends in these countries gets them tremendous leverage at times, whether it is here, whether it is in the Small Pacific nations. We have seen that over and over again.

I appreciate your attention to that and we will all be watching it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand Senator Cardin is with us virtually.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me start by thanking all of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country. We thank you. We thank your families.

These are critically important positions for the United States and we thank you for being willing to step up in this responsibility.

Mr. Nides, let me start with you. Thank you for the opportunity that we had to chat. I know your record over many, many years and I know your strong support for the importance of the U.S.-Israel relations.

We have already covered the issue about Israel's right to defend itself. We have already covered the partnership with the United States under a Memorandum of Understanding and the replenishment of the Iron Dome funds, and we have covered also the dangerous efforts that are made to isolate Israel through the BDS movement.

I want to talk in a positive note. We recognize that the need for peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis, that is in the in-

terest of both Palestinians, Israelis, and the United States and the region for security.

There have been many opportunities in the past where we came close but we were not able to complete the negotiations. It seems to me that we have two things at this moment that give signs of encouragement. We have already talked about one, the Abraham Accords, with countries normalizing their relations with Israel, and, as you point out, additional countries that are candidates for the Abraham Accords.

And we also have a broad coalition government in Israel right now that gives us maybe the political opportunity within Israel to be more aggressive on peace. We recognize the challenges among the Palestinians and their leadership.

But could you just share with us your thoughts as to whether this might be the right time to pursue peace between the Palestinians and Israelis?

Mr. NIDES. Senator Cardin, thank you for your question.

I think as President Biden said, I think, yesterday at the U.N. there is a view that a two-state solution, clearly, is a goal to try to attempt to achieve. I do not think any one of us believe that that is achievable in the next couple of weeks.

But I do believe that we need, as a government, to continue to create the pathway to achieve that and I think we are doing that through a variety of ways. One, talking about the importance of a two-state solution. Number two, adding to the assistance to the Palestinian people.

I think there is \$400 million of assistance for the Palestinian people through a variety of programs to send a strong message to the Palestinian people and to encourage both the Palestinians and the Israelis not to take unilateral action that will make the path towards a two-state solution impossible.

I, obviously, believe that Prime Minister Bennett's visit here was a successful one. I think the relationship between the prime minister and the foreign minister with the Biden administration is strong.

I hope that relationship will continue to grow as we and, hopefully, when I have the opportunity potentially to be confirmed I will reach out to the Palestinian people to continue to send the message that we not only care, we believe in the importance of the same freedom and security and prosperity that the Israelis want to achieve.

Senator, I am, generally, an optimist. You would not take these jobs if you were not. I am also a realist. But I hope we are beginning the process to create the environment for that to happen.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Cohen, let me just ask quickly a question in regards to U.S.-Canadian relations. We know it is our closest ally from the point of view of regional. A great relationship between our two countries.

But I think we have to recognize that there is damage that has been done. The Canadian Globe and Mail reported on July 22nd that, and I quote, "The political discord in the United States remains dangerously deep."

And although Canada-U.S. relations are improving now that Donald Trump is no longer President, it will be a long time before things return to normal, if they ever do.

Now, I do not want to rehash what happened over the past four years. But I do want to just emphasize the fact, and we talk to Canadians all the time, there has been damage done in our relationship.

What is your strategy in order to strengthen the ties as far as the feelings among the people in Canada and the United States towards each other?

Mr. COHEN. Senator, I agree with the premise of your question quite strongly, and I think that it plays to one of my strengths over the course of my career.

I am going to start with the simplest thing. I am going to show up. I am going to be there. I am going to reach out.

One of the outcomes of the election on Monday is there are going to be a number of new cabinet ministers and I want to make sure that I try to create a relationship and a communication channel with the Government and make it clear that I am there to listen. I am there to, obviously, represent the United States interests, that I am there to be communicative and two ways communicative, to communicate our desires and our positions, for example, on issues like China, as the Chairman raised.

But I am also there to listen to Canadian concerns and to bring them back and to make sure that I create a reality that the United States cares about Canada as a strong ally, cares about what they think, and wants to be a true partner in trade and diplomacy, in defense, in energy and climate change, in all of the issues that we share values on and that we work closely together.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The next available member is Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, and thank you to all three of our nominees today. Thank you for your willingness to continue to support our nation and to serve overseas and for your families, who are with you today.

It is my honor to work with you and to question you today, and I intend to support your confirmation before the Senate of the United States and to welcome and express my appreciation, Max, to you—Rhonda, it is great to see you again—to Joe and to Raymond.

All of us are able to sustain our careers in service because of the support of our families. Thank you for that.

If I might, Mr. Nides, I join many others in saying the Abraham Accords enjoy bipartisan support. I look forward to partnering with you and figuring out how we can more fully implement them.

As the Chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, I am committed to working with you on ensuring Israel's security and the continued strengthening of that long, deep, and important partnership.

I want to ask you about a specific program that was funded, the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act. It has \$250

million over five years to support venture capital investment in the West Bank and people-to-people programs.

Are you familiar with this? How do you think it might contribute to the very difficult work of developing an environment for partnership and for peace?

Mr. NIDES. Thank you very much, Senator, for the question.

Yes, I am quite knowledgeable about this and I congratulate the Congress for doing this program in a bipartisan way with your leadership and many of the Republicans who signed on for this legislation.

I happen to have gone out to see former Congresswoman Lowey in Westchester a few weeks ago to talk to her specifically about the program. The program, as you know, is a \$250 million program over a five-year period of time that marries both the DFC and USAID to do exactly what needs to be done, which is not only people-to-people growth but, more importantly, trying to use these monies to improve both the Palestinian and Israeli relationships.

Congresswoman Lowey, someone who I have known for a long time, it was an honor for her, clearly, but shows the importance of her commitment to the U.S.-Israel-Palestinian two-state solution idea and for us to focus on that.

I am quite familiar with it. I have already had some preliminary discussions with folks as I got briefed up on it. But I think it has got an enormous amount of potential and I look forward to working with you as we implement programs if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Tom.

Mr. Cohen, it is great to see you before us and to be with you again, and I think you will serve as an excellent ambassador to address some of the issues Senator Cardin just raised.

Senator Udall and I actually were part of a bipartisan delegation that went to Latvia a number of years ago where we visited with a Canadian battalion that was helping lead NATO security presence in that Baltic country. Just one of many reminders of the ways in which Canada is not just a critical trade partner, not just a critical values partner, but is a real security partner.

How will you work with Canada to advance our shared security goals through NATO, through NORAD, through their vital work in peacekeeping and other partnerships that are essential to our security?

Mr. COHEN. Again, I think I will have the advantage of starting with the foundation of a long-term friendship and partnership.

There isn't any resistance to the importance of Canada and the United States working together on defense arrangements, including the ones that you have identified.

But as the Chairman pointed out in one of his questions, there is always room for improvement. Let me put it that way. When I look at the side of our relationships about benefit sharing and about making sure that we are all investing appropriately in these defense partnerships, in NORAD, Canada has not appropriated the sum of money that is necessary to fund the modernization and improvement of NORAD that we have agreed to conceptually.

And although the percentage of the Canadian defense budget is creeping upwards, it is only at about 1½ percent and it is projected to drop to as low as 1 percent over the next decade or so.

I think that is an opportunity for dialogue. It is an opportunity for conversation. It is an opportunity to say if we really believe in the importance of NATO, if we really believe in the importance of NORAD, we have to invest appropriately to make sure that we can deliver on the defense benefits to both of our countries and to the free world.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And if I might, Dr. Telles, just a question to follow up on your previous exchange about foreign direct investment.

I was very encouraged to see Intel's announcement in July that they will invest \$600 million in a long-idled semiconductor microchip plant in Costa Rica.

How can partners like Costa Rica help partner with us to support the near shoring of critical technologies as we look to develop supply chains that are more robust and independent?

Ms. TELLES. That is an excellent question, Senator, and I do think that that Costa Rica could play a very important role in partnering with us in this respect.

As you know, they have a relatively well-educated well-trained workforce. They also offer a very positive business environment, open economy, relatively low levels of corruption and such.

And so given that they have already—as you know, one of their main exports is medical equipment, but aside from that they have a capacity to engage in broader production, and I do believe that we could certainly encourage this particular partnership even further.

Senator COONS. Thank you, and I look forward to working with you to support and strengthen the ability of the Costa Rican people to both welcome refugees and to be a wonderful development and security partner with the United States.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I understand that Senator Young is with us virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, Chairman. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Nides, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has made it clear that his government opposes the Biden administration's efforts to revive the Iran deal, and they would ensure Israel has the ability to go it alone in securing itself from Iranian terror.

I do not necessarily doubt your commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship, especially having visited with you, sir. But this administration seems intent on pursuing certain policies that, I believe, will only undermine it.

Mr. Nides, how can an administration that claims to be unequivocal about Israel's security continue to press for revival of a deal with Iran that Israel's own government opposes due to the security risks that it presents?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you for the question, as you and I discussed in your office.

I will make two points. One is, as you know, the President has been quite clear that he is attempting to use diplomacy to resolve the Iran nuclear situation. He has also made it clear, as Secretary

Blinken has, that he will not stand by to allow the Iranians to obtain a nuclear weapon.

Obviously, I am not a party, since I have not been confirmed, to the level of negotiations, but those are the binding facts of this relationship and the position of this administration.

Senator YOUNG. If you believe the JCPOA, sir, does enhance Israel's security—let us just take that as a premise because you would almost have to in order to reconcile the commitment to U.S.-Israel relationship and their intent on making sure that Israel can defend itself with this JCPOA negotiation.

Let us just assume the JCPOA enhances Israel's security. How do you square that with Israel's opposition to the agreement and the prime minister's commitment to do whatever is necessary to secure the people of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Again, Senator, I am not, obviously, currently involved in the discussions and negotiations, obviously, with Israel or the conversations going on in Vienna.

I will only say that I think the President has been quite clear both in his statements yesterday at the U.N. and the public statements that he and the Secretary of State have said, is obviously they want to, if possible, use diplomacy to resolve the situation.

And I think, as this process plays out, and if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, obviously, I will be more informed about the details of that. But that is, certainly, the policy of the administration and I do believe that there are ongoing communications between the Israeli Government and the American Government as it relates to whatever discussions are going on around the diplomatic channel and non-diplomatic channel through the conversations among the parties.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Nides.

Mr. Cohen, the United States and Canada are close trade partners, especially evident in the symbiotic relationship between my state of Indiana and the Canadians.

As a leader in the automotive industry, Indiana exports over \$7 billion in motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts to Canada. Canada is also Indiana's largest export destination, followed by Mexico, according to 2019 statistics.

It is safe to say that we rely on access to partners in Canada in order to export products all across the globe and keep our industries humming, and that access was solidified by the landmark USMCA agreement.

As ambassador, Mr. Cohen, how will you work to mitigate supply chain disruptions that business continuously faces as they emerge from the pandemic, and do you see value in diverting supply chains out of China and closer to U.S. soil?

Mr. COHEN. Good morning, Senator. Good to see you.

I think the problem you have put your finger on is something I alluded to in my opening statement, which is the pandemic has, clearly, been disruptive to supply chains and the limitations on travel have complicated things.

I think, in the automotive world, by the way, we are working through the processes of USMCA to try and deal with some of the automobile industry issues that were—frankly, were one of the reasons for USMCA being passed.

If I am confirmed, though, I think this is another case where my role as ambassador is to help encourage these types of discussions and, obviously, anytime we can divert supply chains to our hemisphere as opposed to China is an economic benefit to the hemisphere and to the United States.

And to the extent that we can accomplish that, I think that is good policy for the United States and for Canada.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you. I am out of time. I appreciate your desire to serve, all of you.

Senator SCHATZ. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Young.

Mr. NIDES, in my view, we have a moral obligation to help the Palestinians that are suffering, and I understand that there are those who do not share that view.

But could you talk about why U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians is not just morally right but good for us and for the Israelis and serves the long-term interests of a two-state solution?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you very much, and I wholeheartedly agree with that.

The moneys going to the Palestinians are going to the Palestinian people, and making life better for the Palestinian people has been a bipartisan issue. It has not just been a Democratic issue.

For many years, this committee and the appropriators have appropriated money for the Palestinian people from everything from water to education to health care.

I think it makes our national security interests because that is who we are as a country. I think it helps the Israelis by keeping things calm not only in the West Bank, which I think is important for the security, and I think it is important for us if we believe, ultimately, that the solution is a two-state solution it provides them an opportunity and a guide path for that.

I am in complete concurrence and I think it is important with all the caveats that we all understand and all the rules which are in place, but giving assistance to the Palestinian people—not to the Palestinian Authority, but to the Palestinian people—is in our national security best interests, and I think and I believe that also in Israel's national security interest as well.

Senator SCHATZ. Can you flesh out that last part for us? Can you talk about the work that the U.S. Government and the NGO community does to make sure that our assistance goes to support the needs of the Palestinian people and what guard rails we will have in place to ensure that the U.S. funding does not get diverted from a humanitarian mission?

Mr. NIDES. Sir, I think we are using our trusted partners. The auditing that goes on through USAID and our other development partners is focused on that.

We are very aware and very focused on the Taylor Force Act. Those monies will be to the Palestinian people. These are programs that help healthcare, education, water purification, a variety of programs, and I believe, if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed to speak for USAID, but I know they are very much focused on how those monies are being spent and all the guard rails that are put up in conjunction with the laws and regulations that are in place.

Senator SCHATZ. I will submit this question for the record because I want to get to Mr. Cohen.

But I do want to ask you about the potential for clean energy partnerships between the United States and Israel.

Mr. Cohen, the Canadian Government passed a law this summer ratifying its commitment to clean energy by the year 2050. It still has a lot of work to do. Everybody has a lot of work to do to flesh out its plan and put funding behind it.

But we do need this kind of ambition and commitment from our allies if we are going to combat the climate crisis. Can you talk about how we can make climate action more of a main part of our bilateral relationship with Canada?

Mr. COHEN. Good morning, Senator. Good to see you.

And I think the premise of your question provides some of the answer. When we deal with Canada, we are dealing with a friend that shares our values and that includes around climate issues.

You have the legislation. You also have Prime Minister Trudeau's federal carbon pricing, which was layered on top of that legislation and which was just upheld by the Canadian Supreme Court. You have got real action being taken by Canada.

I think the best ways to align is better coordination and continued communication. We have got two current examples of that. One is the roadmap that I referenced in my opening statement, which identifies climate and fighting climate change as one of the priorities of Canada and the United States working together. That is a statement from the highest levels of both governments, the president and the prime minister.

And the second thing I would point to is the recent convening that Climate Secretary Kerry had with Canada and promised a periodic high-level convening around climate change-related issues to keep the two countries aligned and to keep this issue front of mind.

I mean, I think that both are consistent with my sense that we need coordination, communication, at the highest levels of our governments.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much, and thanks to all of you for your willingness to serve.

Senator Barrasso?

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

Mr. Nides, congratulations on your nomination. I just had a chance to talk with Senator Klobuchar, who gave you such a nice introduction, and congratulations.

I want to talk about Iron Dome. The U.S.-Israel relationship has long been the cornerstone of America's strategy in the Middle East. Israel constantly faces terrorist attacks. We have seen it again recently, threats including the rocket attacks by Hamas in Gaza, attacks from Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon and Syria.

Iron Dome is the first line of defense for Israel. In May, Israel faced over 4,000 rockets and attacks by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hamas. The Iron Dome system intercepted more than 90 percent in terms of being effective in intercepting the rockets threatening civilians and critical infrastructure. It saved lives.

Yet, what we just saw is the House Democrats removed funding for the Iron Dome that had been included in their Continuing Resolution funding bill. This just happened within the last day.

Do you support funding to replenish the Iron Dome defense system?

Mr. NIDES. Absolutely.

Senator BARRASSO. And how important is continued U.S.-Israel cooperation on the Iron Dome and other cooperative defense programs?

Mr. NIDES. Very.

Senator BARRASSO. In terms of Jerusalem, is Jerusalem the capital of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Do you believe it should be the permanent place of the U.S. Embassy in Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. In 2019, the United States formally recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Do you view the Golan Heights as part of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. We support the current position vis-a-vis the threats that we have in Syria with Assad and it is a strategically very important strategic position for the Israelis.

Senator BARRASSO. In 2018, Congress passed into law the Taylor Force Act. It prohibits U.S. economic assistance that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority as long as the Palestinian Authority continues to pay financial rewards for terrorism.

I know Senator Risch talked about the importance of this issue a little earlier in this hearing. Does the Palestinian Authority continue to subsidize and pay financial reward to terrorists?

Mr. NIDES. I believe they have not stopped these payments.

Senator BARRASSO. If confirmed, are you fully committed to stopping the terror incentive payments by the Palestinian Authority?

Mr. NIDES. If I am confirmed, absolutely will work to achieve that goal.

Senator BARRASSO. There is a new Palestinian Authority law that, effectively, nationalized all what were once independent civil society groups. These groups need to now submit plans and budgets to the Palestinian Authority to review their conformity with the, quote, "work plan of the relevant ministry."

The law also gives the Palestinian Authority power to dissolve any organization and then seize or transfer its assets to a similar Palestinian association or institution.

You look at that, the way that they are going to do this, looking at this and saying would you support the United States providing taxpayer resources to these organizations if they can be seized by the resources can be seized by the Palestinian Authority, which the United States is legally prohibited from funding directly?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, I am not totally aware of exactly the program you are speaking of but, clearly, the Taylor Force Act is the law of the land and, obviously, we will abide by any laws, obviously, on the books.

On that particular one, I am not particularly aware of that piece of—or that Palestinian legislation or whatever law that may be in place. But I will, certainly, look into it.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate your willingness to look into it. Israel continues to face direct threats from Iran and its terrorist proxies. The administration's budget request includes \$3.8 billion in U.S. security assistance to Israel.

President Biden has clearly stated, "I am not going to place conditions for the security assistance given the serious threats that Israel is facing, and this would be, I think, irresponsible."

Do you oppose placing conditions on U.S. security assistance to Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. And how would reducing or conditioning security assistance to Israel hurt Israel's ability to defend itself from threats?

Mr. NIDES. The reality is the administration does not support conditionality on the assistance and, as you know, we are at a \$38 billion tenure MOU, and the position of the administration is we do not support conditionality.

Senator BARRASSO. Last week marked the one-year anniversary of the Abraham Accords, the historic diplomatic U.S.-brokered agreements between Israel and several of the Arab neighbors.

The Trump administration helped negotiate several historic developments between Israel, its regional Arab neighbors—the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. They joined Egypt and Jordan in establishing relationships diplomatically with Israel.

These agreements have created a path to peace through recognition and engagement rather than isolation and boycotts of Israel.

Israel's foreign minister recently said the Abraham Accords club is open to new members as well. Secretary Blinken pledged the administration will continue to build on the successful efforts of the last administration to keep normalization marching forward.

As the ambassador, what role would you play in fostering peace with Israel in the Arab world?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, as I said in my opening statement, I am quite focused on the Abraham Accords. I think they are good for Israel. If my North Star is a democratic Jewish state, I think this makes it stronger.

Obviously, my hope is that as we operationalize the current Abraham Accords countries and then expand it, it will also benefit the Palestinians as well. I think, obviously, it is something that is good for Israel. It is, certainly, good for the United States' national security interests, and we would love to, at the time, make sure it is also good for the Palestinians as well.

But I will work closely with the implementation, work to strive to get the new additional countries into the Abraham Accords, and I look forward to working with you on that.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SCHATZ. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations to the witnesses. What a great panel.

I am fortunate to have two friends on this panel, Tom Nides and David Cohen, and Dr. Telles, while we do not know each other enough for me to call you a friend, your husband, Joe, is a friend.

I am an admirer of yours, but a friend of your husband. What a good panel. I am really excited to be with you.

I have two questions. Sometimes I ask questions to make a point, but these are questions because they are things I am puzzled about. One is for you, Mr. Nides, and one is for you, Dr. Telles.

Mr. Nides, your opening testimony talks about long-time U.S. policy dating back to President Truman supporting two-state, a peaceful Israel, peaceful Palestine living side by side, and that has always been my thought about the best outcome there.

But I will say, I have been to Israel and Palestine now probably more than any other country in the world—I do not consider myself an expert but I have been a lot—I look for evidence that Israeli or Palestinian leadership want a two-state solution and I am not sure I see it.

I do not necessarily see it in the current government of Israel that they really want a two-state solution. And when I am talking to Palestinian leadership, they sort of suggest that they want it but I do not see a capacity to carry it out.

And when I talk to just everyday people, I often hear two-state, one-state, that is for politicians. On the Palestinian side, what I often hear is, we just want equal rights to water and to voting—equal rights.

I detect a troubling lack of interest in the two-state solution in Israel and Palestine, and it makes me wonder whether the U.S. can have a policy for a nation that it does not necessarily have for itself.

My question to you is what evidence is there right now that Israeli or Palestinian leadership want a two-state solution?

Mr. NIDES. Sir, it is a great question, obviously. We can only control what we can control and, in our view—this is the United States' position and this administration's position—is to set the table, keeping the parties not doing unilateral action that makes that impossible to achieve and we do that by a variety of things: assistance to the Palestinians, clear support to Israel for their own defense, the MOU, providing opportunities on the Abraham Accords, making sure that we articulate to the Palestinians that we care about their freedom and their prosperity and their security.

We, as the United States, can only set the table, potentially giving us the opportunity to achieve it at some point, as the President has articulated.

I cannot, obviously, speak for the Israelis or, obviously, the Palestinians. But, hopefully, if I am confirmed, I can speak for the United States and we will at least not to exasperate and divide but encourage the parties coming together.

Senator KAINE. I think that is about as good an answer as anyone could give, because I am just not sure there is a lot of evidence out there right now.

We should do what we can to, hopefully, create opportunities for progress. But it really troubles me, and we are in the midst of a painful analysis right now of the last chapter of U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan, and one of the questions we are having to ask ourselves is did we want something, a set of things, for Afghanistan that the Afghan leaders did not want for themselves,

and we have to be humble in asking that question and getting to the bottom of it.

Dr. Telles, here is my question for you. I lived in Honduras for a while, and when I lived in Honduras in 1980 and '81, Costa Rica was sort of a real island of stability and a very tough Honduras was a military dictatorship. There was a Contra war going on against the Government of Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador in the midst of brutal civil wars.

Why has not Costa Rica's success had a little positive infection throughout the Americas? It has always puzzled me that they have been able, and thank God, they have been able to be—they have got challenges, too—but an island of stability.

But that was 40 years ago that I was in Central America. Honduras is not a military dictatorship now but it is equally troubled, maybe more violent and killing of journalists and activists.

What is it about Costa Rica that enables it to be successful? Why has not that model been attractive to its neighbors?

Ms. TELLES. Thank you for your question, Senator, and also I appreciate your interest in Central America, knowing that you lived there for a bit and were involved in humanitarian efforts.

It is a very good question. It is a fact that Costa Rica has really enjoyed a stable democracy and a relatively prosperous economy over the years, and it could be a part of its roots go back to 1949 when, after almost a year of civil strife a constitution was adopted that really emphasized democracy but also, importantly, I think, took certain actions to invest in the people of Costa Rica.

They eliminated their army and they put most of their resources into public health and into education, and I think that that went a long way, I think, towards helping to create a middle class, helping to stabilize its long-term interests.

Why has that not been exported successfully to other countries? That is a very good question. If you look at some of the history of Central America, some instability has been related to military actions which have engaged in coups and also repression of the people. And so that is just one simple answer.

But I do hope that Costa Rica can increasingly through its leadership in the Central American region and its recent presidency, actually, of the Central American Integration System will continue to promulgate our shared values of democracy and human rights, which are very necessary right now in Central America.

Senator KAINE. I am well over my time, but I really appreciate both of you for offering good insights into two very tough questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Senator SCHATZ. Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to each of you, I want to congratulate you on your nominations. It is a tremendous honor to be nominated to represent your nation in this way and I wish you the best as you move through the hearings process.

I would like to start with an area that is of particular strategic concern, although all of your countries are terribly important—the countries that you are hoping to represent the United States to—but that is Israel.

And Mr. Nides, I wanted to reach out to you. Earlier this year on a 97 to 3 vote, an amendment that I co-authored with Senator Jim Inhofe was passed to ensure that Jerusalem continues to be recognized by the United States as the capital of Israel.

That is pursuant to the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 codified U.S. policy, first, ensuring that Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel and that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city.

Mr. Nides, as nominee to be our ambassador to Israel, do you support the Jerusalem Act of 1995 and, in particular, do you agree that Jerusalem should continue to be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel by the United States, that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city, and that the United States should maintain its embassy to Israel in Jerusalem?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you for your question, and the answer is yes. The capital of Israel is Jerusalem. The embassy is in Jerusalem. If I am confirmed, I will be living in Jerusalem. Obviously, that is something that I will be looking forward to.

Obviously, at a certain point, if there is a negotiation between the Palestinians and the Israelis as it relates to a final status, long from now, that will be up to the parties. But from the United States' perspective, Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.

Senator HAGERTY. With respect to the Palestinian negotiations, I would like to probe further on that.

Mr. NIDES. Please.

Senator HAGERTY. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett recently visited here, met with our president.

President Biden told him, told Prime Minister Bennett that he intends to open a U.S. consulate for Palestine in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Bennett's response was not positive to that. In fact, he indicated publicly his opposition to President Biden's proposal.

Foreign Minister Lapid called Biden's proposal a bad idea. Indeed, the U.S. embassy currently has a Palestinian affairs unit at Agron. I visited that facility in June of this year.

If the U.S. Government were to open and maintain an embassy, a consulate, a legation, some type of function like that, some type of diplomatic facility in Jerusalem besides the one that exists inside the U.S. embassy to the State of Israel, do you think that that course of action is consistent with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995?

Do you think that that supports the philosophy of that law that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of the State of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, yes, I do. I, fundamentally, believe that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. The embassy will be in Jerusalem. As you know, the issue around the consulate, that consulate has existed in one form or another for almost 130 years in one form or another.

Obviously, the opening of the consulate if it occurs—and as you know, the President has indicated, as well as the Secretary, that we would like to open the consulate—it will have no impact upon the capital of Israel being Jerusalem.

This is something, obviously, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed I will be, obviously, addressing but, obviously, taking my direction from the President and the Secretary of State.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate the position you are in. I just hope that we take into account the position of our ally, Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East, and their concerns, I think, are very relevant and pertinent to this discussion.

I would like to turn to another point, very quickly, and that is yesterday the House decided to remove funding to resupply and replenish the Iron Dome rocket defense system.

I was very disappointed to see it. I am also happy that Leader McConnell and Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman Shelby are proposing a Continuing Resolution that will include a billion dollars to replenish the Iron Dome.

In fact, earlier this year, I introduced the Emergency Resupply for the Iron Dome Act of 2021 to immediately resupply the Iron Dome. I did that along with our colleagues, Senator Cruz and Rubio, here.

I also visited Israel with Senator Cruz immediately after the 11-day war. I saw the benefit of having a technology like that that saved both Israeli and Palestinian lives.

And I want to ask you if you agree that that defensive capability that we provided through the Iron Dome is actually a benefit to our relationship with Israel and to their position there?

Mr. NIDES. Absolutely. Senator, I will make just one quick point.

Number one, the President has been very clear that he supports the replenishment of the Iron Dome.

Number two, obviously, it is in our national security interest to support a very, very important ally in the region, and this is a defensive mechanism. It is to stop rockets from raining in on Israel.

We are supportive of the replenishment and it is in our national security interest, and it is our desire and hope that those funds will be provided to replenish the Iron Dome.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. I am very pleased to hear that position. Thanks very much.

Senator SCHATZ. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a few quick comments and then a couple of questions.

Senator Van Hollen and I just returned from a trip to Israel to meet with the new Government. Incredibly impressive, this coalition that has come together, an unlikely one.

The United States is at our best when we are a helpful and active broker for peace, when we are a friend of Israel but when we are also acting to try to bring the Palestinians to the negotiating table. We abdicated that responsibility for the last four years.

And as you mentioned, Mr. Nides, there was a consulate in Jerusalem for 150 years. This was a effective nonissue prior to the closure of that consulate during the Trump administration.

It is an easy thing to do to just go back to the status quo of a century-plus. But it is important to the Palestinians because they see it as a way for this administration to signal that we care about the plight of Palestinians just like we care about the security of Israel.

Similarly, I support Iron Dome funding. I think we should telegraph right now that we are going to continue to be a full partner with Israel in making sure that they can defend themselves.

But I also think we need to send a message that we are going to restart our partnership with the Palestinians to try to address their legitimate humanitarian needs. This committee has at times not been helpful in allowing the administration to get money to the Palestinian Authority. There are desperate reconstruction needs in Gaza right now.

And so my suggestion is that we should move ahead with Iron Dome funding, but we should partner it with some significant humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people. I think that is just the right thing to do.

Mr. Nides, I wanted to ask you a specific question about the Palestinian elections that have been postponed now. I think it is really important for there to be elections in the PA, in particular, because we need a shot at new leadership. We need the ability of some new voices to be able to break through.

They were postponed, and the reason given was that there was not a commitment by the Israeli Government to allow for elections to happen inside Jerusalem.

I do not know if that is the real reason or not, but I, certainly, know it would be a lot better if the Israelis made that commitment. And while we were there, the prime minister and the PA made a commitment that if the Israelis allowed for elections to go forward amongst Palestinians in Jerusalem, they would schedule them within six months.

How important do you think it is that these elections take place and what role can you, as an ambassador, play in trying to make sure that they occur?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, first of all, thank you for your question and your statement, and I wholeheartedly agree with you.

As I said to Senator Kaine a few minutes ago, we, as Americans, need to set the table for the potential of a two-state solution through assistance and through strong support for Israel and the MOU so we can actually walk and chew gum at the same time as it relates to doing both at the same time.

As it relates to the elections, I agree with you elections would be good for the Palestinians. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will work with the Israeli Government to assure that that issue is not an obstacle to achieve elections.

And as you and I both know, we are not sure how much of that was the reason. But I would, certainly, work to make sure that is taken off the table as an issue or an obstacle for elections in the— with the Palestinians.

Senator MURPHY. Yeah, I think that is the right approach. Let us eliminate all of the excuses to not go forward with this election.

I understand the danger of this election. Hamas is, obviously, now in the wake of the latest conflict more politically potent in the West Bank than ever before. But that in and of itself is not a reason to try to give a new generation of leaders the chance to step up.

Mr. Cohen, just very quickly, sanctions coordination between the United States and Canada. We are best when we do things together. We worked together, for instance, on sanctions on Belarus.

What is your analysis of the willingness of the Canadian Government to be able to continue to work with us on sanctions? How important do you think that will be in your new role?

It seems like an area where we can do more, where we can communicate earlier. We are stronger when the United States and Canada speak together on issues of pro-democracy and pro-human rights sanctions policy.

Mr. COHEN. Senator, good to see you. Good afternoon.

I think your question is absolutely correct and whenever Canada and the United States can work together we are more powerful. We speak with a greater voice.

The issue of sanctions coordination and sanctions policy is an issue that this committee has dealt with and there is legislation now for a sanctions coordinator position within the State Department, and I think the work was started on creating that. The plug was pulled during the Trump administration.

It is my understanding that work is being done to identify a candidate to be nominated for that position, which would report to the Secretary of State, and I think that is an important tool to improve the coordination of sanctions, which will improve the effectiveness of sanctions and will be another example of Canada and the United States being able to work together to advance our mutual goals.

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

The CHAIRMAN. [Presiding.] Thank you.

I understand Senator Van Hollen is with us virtually.

Senator Van Hollen: Yes. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, thank you.

To all of our nominees, congratulations on your nominations.

Mr. Cohen, great to see a fellow Swarthmore alum nominated to be our ambassador to Canada. I do have some serious concerns with the current disconnect in our policy with respect to Canada and travel to the United States.

If you are vaccinated as a Canadian you can fly to the United States but cannot cross the border by car, and this is despite the fact that Canada has a higher vaccination rate than the United States.

If I have time at the end of my question, I may circle back with you on that issue.

Mr. Nides, congratulations on your nomination. Great to see you. I agree with the points that you made in your opening statement.

I recently traveled to Israel and the West Bank with Senator Murphy and two of our colleagues, and you have heard some of the report just now from Senator Murphy. We had positive visits in both stops. We very much and warmly welcomed many of the new steps being taken by the Government in Israel.

We discussed the importance of our relationship, including the continuation of the MOU, which you reference in your opening remarks. And I fully support replenishment of the Iron Dome, which helped save lives in the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas.

You say in your statement that we need to work to preserve the vision of a two-state solution. I agree with you. As you know, the President agrees with you.

If you could just say in your own words why you think that that is important for the future, both for Israel and for the Palestinians, and what you will do as ambassador to preserve that option, as you say, in your statement.

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you for the question.

If my North Star is a democratic Jewish state, I believe to preserve that—to preserve that, having a two-state solution preserves that. I think it creates the environment for the Palestinians to live with the same freedom and security and prosperity that the Israelis have.

I believe that us providing the assistance for the Palestinian people is critically important. It is not just the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do for our own security.

I think providing security assistance is the right thing to do for not only Israel and the Palestinians but for the Americans as well.

Israel is our most, if not one of the most, important allies that we have in the region and in the world and keeping that safe is relatively and exceptionally important for their security and for our national security.

I just think if you fundamentally believe, as I do, that a two-state solution provides that security for the long haul, I think it is the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do, and if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, I will work towards that goal.

Senator Van Hollen: And what specific measures would you take as ambassador to preserve that option? Because as you know, the door is rapidly closing through changes on the ground with respect to a two-state solution. What measures do you think need to be taken to keep that option open?

Mr. NIDES. If I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, the most important thing is for neither parties, the Israelis or the Palestinians, to take unilateral action that prevents that from happening.

And so if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, I will work with the parties to avoid that, and we all know those issues that create the environment that allows for conflicts to occur.

I think the goal of the ambassador is to articulate the vision of the President and the Secretary of State, but to try to keep the parties not creating an atmosphere that we cannot move forward on a vision of a two-state solution.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you.

We also, as Senator Murphy said, met with Prime Minister Shtayyeh in the West Bank, who said and acknowledged the importance of opening up the Palestinian Authority to elections.

As you probably saw, they just announced municipal elections this December. But there is the issue of the Legislative Assembly elections. I am pleased to hear your response to Senator Murphy with respect to working with our Israeli partners to make sure that Palestinians in East Jerusalem can vote and make sure that that is not an excuse for not going forward with the legislative elections.

Finally, as you know, the President has said that he wants to reverse the decision by the Trump administration that shut down our consulate in Jerusalem.

Do you support reopening that consulate as the President has committed to do and what do you think the timetable for that will be?

Mr. NIDES. I, certainly, support that, as the President has indicated and the Secretary of State has announced.

Until I am confirmed I am not privy to the conversations that are happening between the State Department or the administration with the Israelis. But, obviously, that is something that, once I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, will work on and be able to report back to you on a timing.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot see the clock. Has my time run out?

The CHAIRMAN. It ran down a while ago.

[Laughter.]

Senator Van Hollen: All right. Thank you all very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

This particular part of the hearing is now over. This record is going to remain open to the close of business tomorrow for questions to the record.

I would urge the nominees if they get a question to respond to it expeditiously and fully so that we can consider your nominations for a business meeting.

And with the thanks of the committee, we will now move to our second panel.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let me introduce our second panel as they get themselves adjusted to their positions.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. We have two nominations on the second panel: our former colleague Senator Tom Udall to be an ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, and Ms. Sarah Margon to be the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. I would ask our other nominees to please take your conversations outside of the chamber so we can move on.

I know that Senators Heinrich and Lujan have expressed their interest in introducing Senator Udall but they have not yet arrived. We will wait for them in the moment.

I also understand that our former colleague and member of this committee, Senator Feingold, is going to introduce Ms. Margon virtually today.

Is Senator Feingold with us?

Senator Feingold, welcome back to the committee even if it is virtually. We will recognize you to give an introduction of Ms. Margon.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RUSSELL FEINGOLD,
FORMER U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Risch and members of the committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today to introduce Sarah Margon, a nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which is known as DRL.

I worked closely with DRL during my tenure at the State Department when I was the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region of Africa. I would argue the DRL's work has never been more im-

portant than it is right now, with democracy going head to head with the growing threats of kleptocracy and authoritarianism around the globe.

Right now, democracy is losing some ground in several countries with devastating consequences for human rights, the rule of law, independent judiciaries, and other democratic principles.

President Biden has stressed repeatedly that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy, and I could not agree more. Democracy and human rights go hand in hand, and DRL is at the forefront of implementing President Biden's commitment to human rights and to crafting and implementing policy aimed at strengthening and preserving the democratic values and principles that we so staunchly believe in and cherish.

Sarah is an exceptional candidate to lead DRL at this time and to help inform and guide human rights and democracy-focused U.S. foreign policy. It is a true honor for me to introduce her.

She came to work for me many years ago when I was a member of this committee. At the time, she was coming not just from Oxfam America but she came into the office almost literally right from a trip she had taken to Eastern Chad.

I mention this because it is indicative of Sarah's lifetime commitment to an approach to addressing conflict and crises across the globe. Her policy perspectives are continuously informed and driven by her experiences traveling to these countries and working directly with affected communities and through that and her experience and commitment would help develop meaningful legislation and policy change as it has throughout her career and will in her new role as Assistant Secretary of State, if she is confirmed.

I will just highlight a couple of things that make her unique. She has a strong commitment to bipartisan foreign policy. I saw this firsthand when she worked in my office and worked closely with senators on both sides of the aisle to advance meaningful foreign policy.

This included working with Senator Isakson on many democracy issues, Senators Inhofe and Brownback to pass legislation to help protect civilians in northern Uganda, and Senators McCain and Graham on issues relating to Egypt's growing repression and election concerns in 2010, of course, just before the Tahrir Square protests in 2011.

She takes the time to listen to all sides and stakeholders, including those whom she disagrees with, so she can ensure that she is fully informed. She regularly made time to speak to my constituents in Wisconsin and hear their concerns about everything from Indonesia and East Timor and Sri Lanka. She believed they had important contributions to make to our policy work.

If she is confirmed, I know that Sarah will be committed to engaging the American public beyond the Beltway on America's role in the world, and she will never lose sight that her principal job is to serve the American public.

Sarah believes fiercely in the important role of Congress when it comes to foreign policy. I will state this is particularly important to me and one of the reasons that I hired Sarah.

She firmly believes that Congress must play an active and assertive role in foreign policy, both in terms of helping to build and

support an agenda that represents all of America and in terms of oversight of the executive.

She understands the experience and tools to make good policy. Her rich experience makes her an expert on the full toolkit deployed by our State Department, from punitive measures like economic sanctions to incentivizing and relationship building.

She understands that meaningful and impactful policy cannot be made in a vacuum, and I saw her demonstrate this as we traveled all the way from Eastern Congo to Djibouti and even Peshawar, Pakistan, where we were working on these issues.

Sarah is driven by a deep belief and a commitment to ensuring that the United States is a force for good in the world. This translates to a fierce commitment to diplomacy and the necessary work to build and maintain positive constructive relationships across borders.

I want to close by underscoring Sarah's values, which drive her work every day. She brings sincere integrity to her work. She is solution oriented, which is exactly what we need at this time when democracy is on the back foot around the world and when basic fundamental liberties are under attack.

I think it would be a little hard to find someone who is more genuinely devoted to advancing human rights and democracy, and doing so in an informed, transparent, and collaborative manner than Sarah.

If confirmed, she will be an open honest broker for improving human rights and democracy around the world. I recommend Sarah Margon as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and I thank you so much for the pleasure of testifying before you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Feingold. It is good to see you, and we appreciate your glowing recommendation of Ms. Margon.

We have now been joined by two of our colleagues, Senator Heinrich and Senator Lujan, who will join in introducing Senator Udall. Senator Heinrich?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARTIN HEINRICH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator HEINRICH. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and all the distinguished members of this committee, it is really my honor today, my distinct honor, to introduce President Biden's nominee to serve as the next U.S. ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, and, obviously, our former colleague, Senator Tom Udall.

As a long-serving member of this committee, I know Tom is no stranger to any of you. But I wanted to make sure to echo what I am sure anyone who has worked with Tom Udall over the years would say about his incredible character and the deep commitment that he has to public service.

Tom has devoted his entire life to my state, to serving the people of New Mexico and to serving this great nation, first, as our state's attorney general, then for 10 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, followed by two terms in this body, in the United States Senate.

And during the time that the both of us served here together in the Senate, Tom Udall proved to be a constant friend and close mentor to me. He also set a true example of what it means to be a public servant.

Over his two terms in the Senate, Tom showed all of us how to act with decency and integrity, how to stay true to your principles but also how to find common ground, and these are all qualities that I am very confident will serve him well in this new diplomatic role representing our nation's interests abroad.

With all of his experience on climate issues and his work with indigenous communities, he is uniquely qualified to build upon our nation's cooperation and shared interests with our allies in New Zealand and Samoa, and I can truly think of no one better suited to represent our country and face international challenges than Tom Udall.

On behalf of Julie and myself, I want to congratulate both Tom and his wife, Jill, on this new opportunity to continue their lifelong service to our country, and I sincerely hope that each and every one of you on this committee will join me in supporting this incredibly qualified nominee.

Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Senator Lujan?

**STATEMENT OF HON. BEN RAY LUJAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator LUJAN. Thank you, Chairman. It is an honor to be here this morning before the committee alongside Senators Udall and Heinrich.

Senator Udall has spent his career, his life, serving fellow New Mexicans and our brothers and sisters across America. Both he and Jill Udall have made a tremendous difference in the lives of so many.

As our state attorney general, U.S. Representative, and United States Senator, Tom was deeply and continues to be committed to fighting for everyone to get a fair shake.

You know Tom and Tom knows you. Yesterday at the United Nations, President Biden pledged a new era of relentless American diplomacy, and today's consideration of Senator Udall to serve as U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa is proof of the President's commitment to restore American leadership around the globe.

New Mexicans know Tom as a true statesman and as a leader, as a friend, and as a mentor who takes the climate crisis seriously. He cares about others, he leads by example, and treats people with respect and dignity.

This ambassadorship matters. New Zealand and Samoa are leading on many important issues and are important partners in the fight against the climate crisis.

As ambassador, I am confident that Senator Udall will make New Mexico and our country proud. He will bring the same energy and commitment and, hopefully, a few bolo ties to the world stage.

[Laughter.]

Senator LUJAN. This is an exciting day for Tom and Jill, and for countless New Mexicans back home. Tom is a highly-qualified nominee and it is my honor to stand with him and Jill today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Lujan, for the glowing recommendation of our colleague. We appreciate it. We know you have other issues to attend to. Do not hesitate to leave when you think it is appropriate.

And I will just note as well that Congressman Malinowski from my home state of New Jersey is here with us. He had the former position that Ms. Margon is been nominated for as the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. We welcome him to the committee.

And since you are here, Congressman, we need to talk about the CASE Act and updating it so that we can actually get some information in real time these days. I look forward to working with you on that.

Let me briefly speak to these two nominees.

Senator Udall, welcome back to the committee. You now know what it feels to be on the other side of this questioning. But we know you are going to do great. Congratulations on your nomination, to Jill as well.

I am glad that President Biden selected you for this important post. I am confident that, upon confirmation, you will represent the United States well in New Zealand and in the Independent State of Samoa.

As you know, New Zealand is one of our closest partners, a partnership that is critical in this new era of strategic competition. Now more than ever, the United States has to pursue intense diplomatic outreach in order to support our common goals for addressing climate change, expanding economic and trade opportunities, and building security partnerships.

Climate change is one of the most pressing national security challenges of our time and it poses a significant threat to Pacific Island nations. Overall, I believe we need to reinvigorate our diplomatic presence and outreach to New Zealand and Samoa, and I am confident that you will be very well up to that task.

We look forward to hearing your goals for how we can deepen one of the closest diplomatic relationships we have even further.

Ms. Margon, congratulations on your nomination to DRL. You have extensive experience working to advance human rights and democratic values as well as support a bipartisan group of national security leaders, human rights, and civil society organizations, including prominent Jewish organizations who believe in the importance of the U.S.-Israel partnership and the importance of a two-state solution for ensuring Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state.

But I also know there have been questions about some of the nuances here and I will trust you will be able to answer those questions.

The need for strong effective leadership at the helm of DRL has never been more necessary. In every region of the world today authoritarian governments are seizing more and more power, disman-

ting core democratic institutions, and closing in on journalists and civil society.

Today, Beijing, Moscow, and their kleptocratic partners are driving global authoritarian expansion. They do this through increasingly sophisticated digital authoritarian surveillance and control tools that we put out a very significant report from this committee, and through old-fashioned arrests of peaceful protests and shutting down independent media.

To that end, we witnessed this summer the Cuban regime unleash a brutal wave of repression in response to unprecedented protests by the Cuban people. While the Trump administration took a wrecking ball to our reputation, the Biden administration is doing vital work to reassert the U.S. role in championing democracy and human rights around the globe.

That effort, however, was badly damaged this summer by the flawed withdrawal from Afghanistan and the unfolding human rights catastrophe.

From Burma to Ethiopia, the amount of human rights concerns around the world is vast. We understand that, at times, the United States faces hard choices where foreign policy and national security interests do not align neatly with the values we strive to reflect as a nation.

Upon occasion that is unavoidable. But we also know that the organizational structure at the State Department has allowed a culture to flourish in which human rights concerns gets less traction because the powerful regional bureaus frequently sideline DRL.

I look forward to hearing from you about how, if confirmed, you will work to recenter our foreign policy around the core American values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law that advance our U.S. national interests and the cause of freedom and human dignity that rightly belong to people everywhere.

And I will just close by saying today we had a breakfast meeting with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, and in that conversation one of the things that he said that I thought was so poignant for our other colleagues to hear was how important it was for the United States to raise the principles of democracy and human rights, and what it means to the rest of the world to do so.

This is an incredibly important position.

I know that the ranking member has as well opening remarks as it relates to these nominees, and when he returns I will recognize him. As such, he is voting right now. But in the interests of expediting this process, let me turn to Senator Udall first for his opening statement.

I ask you both to try to summarize your statements in about five minutes. Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection.

And with that, Senator Udall, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF FORMER SENATOR HON. TOM UDALL OF NEW MEXICO, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO NEW ZEALAND AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION TO THE STATE OF SAMOA

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, and I want to thank so much Senator Heinrich and Senator Lujan for coming and introducing me.

Ranking Member Risch and members of the committee, it is an honor and pleasure to meet with all of you again. As a former member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I have great respect for the important work you are doing to consider the diplomatic nominations before you.

Today, I have exchanged my seat on the dais to sit as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the Independent State of Samoa.

After a career of public service in the state of New Mexico, including two terms as New Mexico Attorney General, five terms as United States Representative, and two terms as United States Senator, I am grateful for the trust of the President and Secretary Blinken that they have placed in me to represent the United States overseas.

The advice and consent role of the United States Senate, Mr. Chairman, as you know well, is one of the most important roles granted to Congress by the Constitution, and I am honored by this committee's consideration of my nomination.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to take a moment to introduce my wife, Jill Cooper. She has been my partner and chief adviser during my 30 years of public service. She is an accomplished lawyer in her own right and a strong advocate for the arts, having served as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

And while they are not here with me today in these chambers, I would like to recognize my daughter, Amanda, and my son-in-law, Judge Jim Noel.

In January, I marked the conclusion of serving New Mexico in the United States Senate. New Mexico is a mountainous and rural state strong in its multiculturalism, including a vibrant indigenous culture.

New Mexico is also rich in natural resources and growing tech and space and cinematic sectors, complete with a vital national security sector. In all these respects, New Mexico is very much like New Zealand.

Both are aiming for the stars. Both continue to invest in new space sectors advancing science, human progress, and cinematic storytelling set in their unique geographies.

While there are numerous positive comparisons, it is no secret that New Zealand and Samoa, like New Mexico, face enormous threats from climate change.

As a senator, I made protection of the environment a priority, from championing the 30 By 30 proposal to conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030, to passing the landmark bipartisan Frank Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act.

The president has made it clear that climate consideration shall be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security.

As ambassador, I look forward to working with New Zealand, a country that shares my passion for the protection of our natural environment.

I also look forward to maintaining the strong political, military, and intelligence relationship we share with New Zealand from World War Two when tens of thousands of Americans were stationed in New Zealand, through the post-war Five Eyes intelligence alliance formed by the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and from support for our forces in Afghanistan in 2001 as well as other peacekeeping missions to formalize our strengthening defense cooperation in the 2012 Washington Declaration.

Just last week, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern affirmed that recent developments in the Indo-Pacific do not change the security intelligence ties of New Zealand to the Five Eyes alliance.

Members of this committee have been clear that the United States cannot challenge all the threats in the region alone. We need allies like New Zealand and we need to help them thrive despite these regional challenges. We should not allow outside influences to drive a wedge in that relationship.

As ambassador, I will work to protect and grow mutual goodwill between our nations. Countering and competing with the People's Republic of China requires strong partnerships with countries throughout the region. Beijing continues to pressure countries that stand up to its human rights violations, to threaten freedom of navigation, and to violate international rules and norms.

Like you say, I would just ask that the rest of my statement be put in the record and it will be a real honor, if confirmed, to go off as an ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the courtesies. And Ranking Member Risch, I mentioned you. It is wonderful to see you here in person. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Senator Udall follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL

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We should not allow outside influences to drive a wedge in that relationship. As Ambassador, I will work to protect and grow the mutual goodwill between our nations.

Countering and competing with the People's Republic of China (PRC) requires strong partnerships with countries throughout the region. Beijing continues to pressure countries that stand up to its human rights violations, to threaten freedom of navigation, and to violate international rules and norms.

To ensure stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region as a whole, it is important to note that our relations do not begin and end with security. As an island nation, New Zealand is not unique in its dependence on international trade.

It is also one of many countries that has felt the pressure of Beijing's attempts to coerce through punitive trade decisions.

The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners. And I know from experience that during Senate visits overseas many of us looked for ways to increase trade ties between many nations and our respective states. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our trade relations continue to grow and that you or the companies you represent are welcome in New Zealand.

As Pacific nations with advanced economies, the United States and New Zealand have both an opportunity and responsibility to support the island nations in the Pacific. All of them are increasingly threatened by the immediate threat of COVID-19, but also the growing influence of the PRC, and the threats from climate change. The Independent State of Samoa, a small island country rich in Polynesian culture is not immune to these challenges. We need to continue to reinforce Samoa's independence with our Peace Corps and Fulbright initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it was one of my great honors to serve on this committee and to serve the nation and the people of New Mexico. After a career in public service, I am honored by the President's nomination to represent the United States in New Zealand and Samoa.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am happy to answer any of your questions during this hearing or for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

As I announced, I would recognize the ranking member at this time.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak briefly on both nominees and then, of course, questions.

First of all, it will come probably as no surprise to many that the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the nominee is going to be a very difficult and a heavy lift for me to support.

The nominee has made some deeply troubling public statements related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including on the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement—BDS movement—against Israel, and funding to the biased organizations in Gaza, which I am going to ask some questions on.

The nominee also told my staff, surprisingly, that she feels both the current and prior administrations—both the current Biden administration and the Trump administration’s—airstrikes against Iranian proxy targets were illegal.

This view is against those of the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and legal advice spanning both administrations. If this is the kind of advice that she is going to give to the Secretary, it is going to be very difficult to support her.

Further, the nominee publicly congratulated a private company for participating in the BDS movement against Israel and urged other companies to do likewise. She also tweeted in support of a July 20 New York Times op-ed entitled, “I no longer believe in a Jewish state.” We will talk about that when we get to questions.

On the nomination for the ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, it is good to see you, Senator Udall, and your lovely wife. I talked to Senator Brown this morning and he feels that you have won the lottery and have been sentenced to paradise. He is high on this.

If confirmed, you would be charged with stewardship of our relationships with these two nations where we have seen malign influence from the People’s Republic of China and where there is room for our partnerships to grow. I look forward to hearing your priorities on these issues.

China recently submitted information to New Zealand to join the comprehensive progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

Yet, we have seen the PRC use its economic might to coerce and bully its neighbors in the region. I am, therefore, skeptical of PRC’s ability to be a good trade partner.

This development also reminds us of the importance of a strong U.S. economic and trade agenda in the Indo-Pacific region, a key element of the Strategic Competition Act passed by the Senate earlier this year. I will be interested in hearing your thoughts on that.

Again, good to see you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, I will turn to Ms. Margon now.

**STATEMENT OF SARAH MARGON OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED
TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEMOCRACY,
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

Ms. MARGON. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee.

I am honored to be here today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the trust they have placed in me.

It is an honor to have Senator Feingold introduce me. Working for him was a master class in principled integrity. As a result of his leadership, I saw how standing up for what is right can be central to effective policymaking and that reaching across the aisle usually makes for better and stronger policy.

Indeed, America in the world should represent all Americans. I come from a long line of New Yorkers, many of whom rarely left the state but all of whom believed in the promise of a better life through hard work and a little bit of luck.

It is that gritty mindset that enabled my grandfathers, Albert Simon, born Abraham Simonofsky, and Solomon Mogiliwsky, changed to Margon, to flourish. One owned a pharmacy In Queens. The other became a dentist in Brooklyn.

That same grit could be found in their wives as well. Gertrude Simon labored at her family's light and lampshade business in Brooklyn's Pitkin Avenue and raised two girls, while Florence Margon became a secretary, carrying her family through the Depression and, in later years, raising my father, all at the same time.

I am deeply grateful for the support of my parents, Arthur and Marilyn Margon, my brother, Andrew Margon, and sister-in-law, Zoe Stopak-Behr, my husband, Sam Chaltain, who is here, whose big dreams and generosity are all the cushion one could need, and my two sons, who are also here, 8-year-old Izzy and 12-year-old Leo, both of whom give me hope for the curiosity, decency, and empathy of future generations.

I am also indebted to the women of national security and their guidance, wisdom, and community.

Today's chaotic and complicated world requires us to be more firmly tethered to core democratic principles. Rising repression and autocracy require us to be bold in adhering to these values, which, as the President has said, are inseparable from our national interests and are the foundation of our diplomatic strength.

The global assault on basic freedoms also requires us to be intentional about who we support and why we fight for rights and dignity. This means considering not just policy choices but also how we engage in countries where those in power are using state institutions, the media, elections, corrupt individuals and entities, and even the pandemic to centralize power undemocratically and to repress their people.

If confirmed, I will apply these insights to focus on three priorities.

First, I will ensure DRL carries forward an agenda that affirms the United States as a leader and a partner in the struggle for democracy, pluralism, and rights.

Our priority must be protecting these foundational values and making sure governments like China, Russia, and Cuba do not succeed in their efforts to undermine international human rights norms and the rules-based order.

I will pay special attention to China, whose pernicious attacks on dissent and the rule of law are both on the rise domestically and fast becoming a common export.

Second, I believe we must focus on countering technological and digital threats as a human rights issue. For example, as we have seen too often, the promotion of disinformation from Russia, to China, to Ethiopia can have life and death implications.

Without U.S. leadership and push back, malign actors will continue abusing technology to enable mass atrocities, undermine democracy and human rights, and harm U.S. interests.

Congress has been on the front lines of this fight and, if confirmed, I look forward to navigating the path together.

Third, I will focus on ensuring human rights as considered as part of U.S. arms sales and security assistance. Advancing democracy and protecting human rights are national security interests, as the President has made clear.

If confirmed, I will make sure DRL provides strong analysis to help ensure our decisions on these issues align with our democratic values and our commitments on human rights.

If confirmed, I look forward to a strong working partnership with Congress so that together we can promote and protect our shared American values and interests around the world.

I will endeavor to make good use of the bipartisan tools you have already developed, from the Global Magnitsky sanctions to the Uighur Human Rights Policy Act to the Corporate Transparency Act, and I will engage allies, the private sector, and civil society to help realize the Biden-Harris administration's goal of centering human rights within U.S. foreign policy.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Margon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SARAH MARGON

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this committee. I am honored to be here today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor—and deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the trust they've placed in me.

It's a special honor to have Senator Feingold introduce me. Working for him was a master class in principled integrity. As a result of his leadership, I saw how standing up for what's right can be central to effective policy making—and that reaching across the aisle usually makes for better and stronger policy. Indeed, America in the world should represent all Americans.

I come from a long line of New Yorkers, many of whom rarely left the state, but all of whom believed in the promise of a better life through hard work and a little bit of luck. It is that gritty mindset that enabled my grandfathers, Albert Simon—born Abraham Simonofsky—and Solomon Mogiliwsky—changed to Margon—to flourish. One owned a pharmacy in Queens. The other became a dentist in Brooklyn.

That same grit could be found in their wives as well. Gertrude Simon labored at her family's light and lampshade business on Brooklyn's Pitkin Avenue and raised two girls, while Florence Margon became a secretary, carrying her family through the Depression, and, in later years, raising my father—all at the same time.

I am deeply grateful for the support of my parents, Arthur and Marilyn Margon; my brother Andrew Margon, and sister-in-law Zoe Stopak-Behr; my husband Sam Chaltain, whose big dreams and generosity are all the cushion one could need; and my sons—8.5-year-old Izzy and 12-year-old Leo, both of whom give me hope for the curiosity, decency, and empathy of future generations. I am indebted to the women of national security and their wisdom, guidance and community.

Today's chaotic and complicated world requires us to be more firmly tethered to core democratic principles. Rising repression and autocracy require us to be bold in

adhering to these values, which as the President has said are inseparable from our national interests and are the foundation of our diplomatic strength. The global assault on basic freedoms also requires us to be intentional about who we support—and why we fight for rights and dignity. This means considering not just policy choices, but also how we engage in countries where those in power are using state institutions, the media, elections, corrupt individuals and entities, and even the pandemic to centralize power undemocratically and to repress their own people.

If confirmed, I will apply these insights to focus on three priorities.

First, I will ensure DRL carries forward an agenda that affirms the United States as a leader and a partner in the struggle for democracy, pluralism, and human rights. Our priority must be protecting these foundational values—and making sure governments such as China, Russia, and Cuba—do not succeed in their efforts to undermine international human rights norms and the rules-based order. I will pay special attention to China, whose pernicious attacks on dissent and the rule of law are both on the rise domestically and fast becoming a common export.

Second, I believe we must focus on countering technological and digital threats as a human rights issue. For example, as we have seen too often, the promotion of disinformation—from Russia to China to Ethiopia—can have life-and-death implications. Without U.S. leadership and pushback, malign actors will continue abusing technology to enable mass atrocities, undermine democracies and human rights, and harm U.S. interests. Congress has been on the frontlines of this fight, and if confirmed, I look forward to navigating the path together.

Third, I will focus on ensuring human rights is considered as part of U.S. arms sales and security assistance. Advancing democracy and protecting human rights are national security interests, as the President has made clear. If confirmed, I will make sure DRL provides strong analysis to help ensure our decisions on these issues align with our democratic values and our commitments to human rights.

If confirmed, I look forward to a strong working partnership with Congress, so that together we can promote and protect our shared American values and interests around the world. I will endeavor to make good use of the tools you have already developed, from Global Magnitsky sanctions to The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act to The Corporate Transparency Act. And I will engage allies, the private sector, and civil society to help realize the Biden-Harris administration's goal of centering human rights within U.S. foreign policy.

Thank you for the consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Before I turn to Senator Risch, I have some questions that are for the committee as a whole and they require a simple yes or no answer.

These questions speak to the importance that the committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from you. I would ask each of you to provide verbally 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?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep the committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just simply providing notification after the fact?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to questions for briefings and information requested by this committee and its designated staff?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Both witnesses said yes to all questions. The chair will reserve his time and I will turn to the ranking member for his questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Margon, were you here when Mr. Nides testified?

Ms. MARGON. I was in the anteroom, Senator. Yes.

Senator RISCH. Did you hear his testimony and questions?

Ms. MARGON. I did.

Senator RISCH. I assume you do not share his enthusiasm for the despicable anti-Semitic movement called BDS—Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I firmly oppose the BDS movement.

Senator RISCH. I am looking here at a tweet that you wrote on November 19th, 2018. It says, “Airbnb to remove listings in the Israeli settlements of occupied West Bank. Thanks, Airbnb, for showing some good leadership here. Other companies should follow suit.”

Did you write that?

Ms. MARGON. Yes, Senator.

Senator RISCH. And you do not consider that part of the BDS movement?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I firmly oppose the BDS movement. I do believe that the private sector has an important role to play in not pursuing discriminatory practices.

Senator RISCH. I do not understand that.

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I am not and have never been a supporter of the BDS movement. I oppose it.

Senator RISCH. How do you square that statement with the text that you put out November 19th, 2018?

Ms. MARGON. That tweet was in response to a Human Rights Watch report. And again, just to be very clear, I believe the private sector across the board has an important role to play in not promoting or pursuing discriminatory policies.

Senator RISCH. You support any company that would participate in the BDS movement?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I firmly oppose the BDS movement, and if I am confirmed to be Assistant Secretary of DRL, I will continue to do so just as the Biden administration does.

Senator RISCH. That does not square with what you said here on November. You can say it over and over and over again. It just does not make it true and it does not square with what you said in 2018. Have you changed your mind since 2018?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, that tweet was related to a very specific report.

Senator RISCH. It was in respect to a very specific action by Airbnb supporting the BDS movement.

Ms. MARGON. That was actually a report relating to their renting apartments, and as I have said and will continue—just like the Biden administration does, I am firmly opposed to the BDS movement.

Senator RISCH. With all due respect, ma'am, I do not believe it, not with what you put out here. Saying it over and over again just does not square with your actions.

Ms. MARGON. I am sorry, Senator, that you do not believe it. That is my firm belief, and if I am confirmed, going forward, I think you will see, as a member of the Biden administration, that that is the policy that I will implement.

Senator RISCH. When you met with my staff, you made the statement that you believed that the air strike against Soleimani was illegal. Do you still stand by that statement?

Ms. MARGON. That was from a tweet you are referring to?

Senator RISCH. No. That was in a meeting with my staff when you were preparing for this.

Ms. MARGON. That conversation, Senator, was in relation to a tweet that I had put out. I think that is probably a conversation best had with the Legal Adviser's Office at the State Department, for which I am not nominated.

Senator RISCH. Maybe, but you stated that you thought that that air strike was illegal. Is that true or not true?

Ms. MARGON. I did write that tweet at the time. But, again, I am looking at a position that is not for the Legal Adviser's Office.

Senator RISCH. I get that. What I am looking for is your view of these things. Obviously, the position you are in is not a legal position. But it, certainly, is very important in developing policy.

They also tell me that you said that the strikes that the past administration and even the current administration were illegal. Is that your position?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I think, to be fair, there are wide discussions over the legality of some of these strikes. I am not a lawyer right now. I have never been a lawyer. I did work for an organization that engaged on these questions.

But if I am confirmed, I would consult with the legal advisers at the State Department to come to a determination.

Senator RISCH. I get that, and everybody here has to consult with the lawyers. Nonetheless, our policy decisions are based by our personal beliefs in that regard, and I am really, really troubled by these.

Have they straightened you out? My staff tells me that your Sherpa almost fainted when you said that the strikes by the current administration were illegal. Have they straightened you out on that? Are you willing to go along with the administration's view?

Ms. MARGON. Of course, I am willing to go along. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have nominated me to do a job and I will uphold administration policy.

Senator RISCH. In July of 2020, you retweeted an article from the New York Times op-ed entitled, "I no longer believe in a Jewish state." You retweeted that with approval. Do you still subscribe to that?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, sometimes when we tweet or say things in the heat of the moment we do not necessarily think of the broader impact of them. When I retweeted that article, what I was really focused on was the importance of ensuring Israelis and Palestinians could have equal protection under the law, access to demo-

cratic processes, security, and prosperity. That was the thrust of my tweet and what I intended with that.

I firmly believe in a two-state solution so that Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace and security.

Senator RISCH. Thank you for your answers. I am not going to support your nomination, obviously. You have not persuaded me at all. In fact, I might have been persuaded if you would have owned up to these things and confessed there.

I am sorry I do not have any time for you, Senator Udall. But it is nice to see you. I know you will do a good job there and I will help you every way I can to get there.

Thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member Risch, and thanks to our nominees. Congratulations to both of you, particularly to Senator Udall and Jill.

I am such huge fans of both of you as wonderful public servants, and it is exciting that you have had a lot of wonderful chapters in the past, both in New Mexico government and in the United States Senate, and in the House. And this next chapter is one I know you will do every bit as well. I am so proud to support you.

Ms. Margon, I want to ask you a question about the part of the world that I care most about outside the United States and that is the Americas.

I have been really troubled. I lived in Honduras when it was a military dictatorship. It is no longer a military dictatorship but, arguably, it is worse, and that is painful. A country that has gone from a military dictatorship in 1981 to a, quote, "democracy" is rife with corruption, the murder of journalists, the murder of environmental activists.

The current president was reelected in a widely disputed election. The OAS said it was so marked by fraud that the election should be rerun. For some reason, the United States discarded the OAS opinion and supported the current government, and then what has happened this president has been implicated in a variety of drug trafficking cases currently being brought in courts in the United States.

The good news is there is elections this weekend in Honduras. He is term limited and cannot run again. But I could give you the same story in El Salvador where there is currently massive backsliding of a government the people had a lot of hope in but it is behaving more and more authoritarian every day.

In Guatemala, serious issues with corruption. In Nicaragua, brutal repression of political dissidents. Costa Rica is a bit of a bright spot. We heard from Dr. Telles earlier.

I think the United States does not pay enough attention in the Americas. Just because we are not paying attention does not mean China is not paying attention. They are. Russia is paying attention. Cuba is paying attention. Iran is paying attention.

And so I would hope this administration could really embrace a more robust and continuous engagement with the Americas and show other nations because we are all Americans—North, Central, or South Americans—show other nations that our concern is con-

tinuous and not just episodic, quickly to be forgotten as we turn our attention elsewhere.

But if we are going to have an Americas policy we are going to have to really grapple with issues of human rights and democracy.

Should you be confirmed, what might your thoughts be about, as you say, centering human rights and pro-democracy within some of the nations that are the nearest to us?

Ms. MARGON. Thank you, Senator, for that question, and thanks for your long-standing work and interest in this region. It has been really notable, and you have been a real leader along with other members on this committee.

I think the Biden administration has taken the right approach in looking at a root driver strategy and allocating \$4 billion dollars to the region. I think those two tranches are really important to start getting at what is at the foundation.

It is not going to be something that can change overnight. But you mentioned many of the issues that we need to be looking at—not just assistance and development, but also anti-corruption, looking to build an independent judiciary, helping to work so that the Security Forces are actually viable entities that can protect the people, looking at criminal networks.

There is very much a punitive approach and a carrot and stick incentivizing approach and I think they go hand in hand. I think even before my confirmation, if that happens, there is good ground-work for which DRL will be able to work on.

I see DRL's role—and if I am confirmed, I will hope to amplify this—is to bring the analysis of the human rights organizations and civil society into the policymaking, to work with the regional bureau closely, but also to work with other agencies and, of course, with this body to make sure that there is a consistent steadfast approach, that the finances are sufficient and, frankly, that we bring in some of the other regional actors.

I spoke yesterday with the Chairman a little bit about Latin America and the importance of engaging broadly on democratic decline and governance deficits, and I think this is the perfect opportunity for DRL to really center its work not just on election by election, as you say, but actually building and supporting with other partners the context in which those elections occur.

I have never been to Central America myself and I would really like to travel there as one of my first trips. I think that would send a very important message, not just about our commitment as a bureau but our commitment as the United States.

Senator KAINE. I thank you for that answer. There are two opportunities coming up that are really important, the Summit for Democracy that President Biden has indicated he wants to hold likely next year, and also the U.S. chairmanship of the Summit for the Americas, which we have not chaired in 25 years, and these are opportunities where these issues of democracy and human rights should be front and center. I appreciate your answers.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO?

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

Congratulations to both of you. Senator Udall, great to see you again. Jill, nice to see you. As you know, when you gave your final speech on the floor, I made a number of comments about our service together and working in a bipartisan way, and congratulations on this nomination. I think you will be magnificent ambassador. Thank you, Senator.

Ms. Margon, on April 27th of this year, the Human Rights Watch published a report accusing Israel of being an apartheid state. Do you believe Israel is an apartheid state?

Ms. MARGON. No, Senator, I do not.

Senator BARRASSO. Do you believe Israel commits war crimes when it acts to defend itself from rocket and other terror attacks from Gaza?

Ms. MARGON. No, Senator. I strongly support Israel's right to defend itself and to protect its people.

Senator BARRASSO. The Biden administration has announced its intention to rejoin the United Nations Human Rights Council. Do you believe the Human Rights Council has a bias against Israel?

Ms. MARGON. That pesky Item 7, Senator, on the agenda at the Human Rights Council needs to be addressed. If I am confirmed, one of the things I would like to do if the U.S. rejoins the Human Rights Council is work with the International Organizations Bureau, the ambassador to Geneva, and this committee to help reform the Human Rights Council so it is more effective, so it does not have a disproportionate bias against Israel, including that agenda item.

I have seen in the past that when the U.S. is a member of that Council that there are less anti-Israel resolutions and there is a decrease in anti-Israel attacks. That would be one of my priorities.

Senator BARRASSO. When I think about the Human Rights Council and the membership, do you know how many members of them are serious human rights abusers?

Ms. MARGON. There are a number of them that are very problematic, Senator. I do not know the exact number.

Senator BARRASSO. Russia?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. China?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Pakistan?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Cuba? I could go on.

It is to point out to me as I look at this, it says—do you know of any of these that have actually had a resolution passed condemning their own actions while on the Council?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, your concern is well placed and I think this would be part of the reform agenda. I will also say that the Human Rights Council has put out some extraordinary reports in the past that this body, I think, has found very useful.

I would draw your attention specifically to the Commission of Inquiry on North Korea. I think it was published in 2014. That was an extraordinary documentation of the horrific abuses in DPRK.

And my goal would be not only to help reform the membership, which I understand is a priority also of the Biden administration, but also to work with the Council so that it has stronger, better

membership, and they can produce more reports like that DPRK report.

Senator BARRASSO. Because it does seem to me that a number of these keep themselves on the Council specifically so they can avoid accountability.

In terms of the blacklist the Human Rights Council has come up with, the Human Rights Council has published a blacklist of companies doing business in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Many of them are American companies. It is viewed by many as laying the groundwork for sanctions against these companies.

If confirmed, will you work to encourage the Council to retract this database and discourage our allies from associating with this in any way?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Okay. And what can the U.S. do to limit the continuation of this dangerous exercise by this group?

Ms. MARGON. This is part of why I think U.S. membership on the Human Rights Council is so important. It gives us a seat at the table. It allows us to help influence decisions, it allows us to engage, and it allows us to ensure there is not a strong anti-Israel bias, but that the Human Rights Council is looking broadly and globally at human rights abuses.

Senator BARRASSO. On January 4th of 2020, you tweeted this, "The Iranian Government is replete with nasty characters. Soleimani himself was horrifically brutal. But normalizing selectively engagement to conduct an illegal action that not only normalizes assassinations but also escalates dramatically has taken us to a whole new scary level."

Do you believe that the U.S. attack on General Soleimani was illegal?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, this is a tweet. I think if I were going forward, looking at this from my position should I be confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would need to review all of the evidence and the intelligence to make that assessment and consult with the Legal Adviser's Office.

Senator BARRASSO. What is your view of the Biden administration's botched drone attack that killed 10 civilians outside of Afghanistan in the last couple of weeks?

Ms. MARGON. Thank you for that question. I was really pleased to see the Pentagon and its press—excuse me, at its press conference admit to the attack, to talk about what had been happening, to talk about the investigation that was going to be underway.

I think this is a very important step that the Pentagon has taken, and I understand that there is going to be an investigation, and from there we will see where it goes.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Ms. Margon, let me just get some things clear for the record. Did you ever advocate on behalf of the BDS movement?

Ms. MARGON. No, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. And regarding the allegation that has been flown around there characterizing Israel's actions as apartheid and attributed to you, to clarify, that refers to a report released by

Human Rights Watch long after you departed the organization. Is that the case?

Ms. MARGON. That is correct. It was nearly two years later.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. When we look at the question of human rights, especially when one is not in an administration, one has the ability to look at it from the vantage—from the perspective uniquely about what is it that we seek to uphold in terms of the fundamental Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Is that not fair to say?

Ms. MARGON. That would be fair to say, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And the organization that you once worked with, Human Rights Watch, which has been quoted by many members of Congress when they find it appropriate and of value to do so, looked at the world in terms of human rights violations in that context. Would that be fair to say?

Ms. MARGON. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. The question is about participating at the United Nations Human Rights Council. The reality is when we are not there, then we cede to the world's worst actors the ability to take on allies like the State of Israel.

Is that a fair statement?

Ms. MARGON. I would say yes, that is.

The CHAIRMAN. While we do not like, and I, certainly, do not like—I find it appalling that Cuba can be on the Human Rights Council, but in the absence of the United States being there, I cannot push back on them and others, at the end of the day.

And so I think that one has to think about the perspective. Joining the Human Rights Council is not an acceptance of its actions. It is in defiance of its actions. Is that the way you would take the view if you were the assistant secretary?

Ms. MARGON. Yes, I think I would.

I would also say, Senator that it provides an exceptional opportunity for the United States to lead and to partner in pushing back against a number of those very abusive countries.

I would also say that the Biden administration has said it not only wants to rejoin but reform the Council, and there are plenty of opportunities to further that effort.

The CHAIRMAN. Israel remains our only democratic ally in the Middle East, and our bilateral relationship is rooted on shared democratic values. As in the United States or any country with a democratic process, we may not always agree with every policy that every government pursues.

International organizations, however, routinely unfairly target Israel for alleged human rights abuses while in the same breath actively ignoring the gravely serious human rights abuses of the leaders of some of its neighbors.

Would you commit to pushing back on unfair bias against Israel from international human rights organizations?

Ms. MARGON. Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And then, finally, because the world is—as much as Israel is incredibly important, the world that you will be encountering—there are so many different parts of the world so I could spend a lot of time talking to you about arms sales, which I will

in the near future, about China and Belarus and Russia and many other places, about Turkey under Erdogan.

Even though they are a NATO ally, there are more journalists and lawyers in Turkish jails than in any other part of the world. That is saying something, considering some of the nasty parts of the world. Ethiopia and what is happening there in terms of human rights violations.

I look forward to having a more in-depth discussion with you. But I do want to just talk about one—something I broached with you when you came to visit me and I appreciated our visit, and it is about Cuba.

You noted that, quote, “Cuba offers more opportunities than dead ends when it comes to human rights, including by easing relations with other countries and encouraging them to pressure Cuba to, quote, “tolerate more dissent.”

I am of the view that dissent should not be tolerated but embraced as a fundamental human right. Would you agree with that?

Ms. MARGON. I think that is a much better word, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. And these statements were made before the July 11th protests in Cuba this year, which—where the regime unleashed a brutal wave of repression in response to average people, mostly led by Afro-Cubans in terms of protests.

If you are confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for DRL, what are some of the specific steps you would take to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba?

Ms. MARGON. The protests in July, I think, reminded us very clearly, not just us here in the U.S. but globally, that what the Cubans need and are looking for—the Cuban people—are basic services and basic rights, and they go hand in hand.

And so there really is an opportunity for the United States, working closely with partners in the region and more globally, to support civil society more extensively, to ensure they have access and are able to be amplified on larger platforms to share their experiences with such a brutal and horrific government.

Because it is those experiences, it is those stories, and it is their fight for those basic rights that we need to be supporting. There are questions about what we can support internet wise. There are questions about what we can support media wise.

And I think the review that is underway, Senator, if I am confirmed, is something that I will want to be actively participating in. But even if that review is done before I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you to figure out the best ways in which we can support civil society, amplify those voices, and make sure that there is an increase in support globally for the movement.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you.

Senator Udall, you and I had a very good and in-depth conversation yesterday about economic opportunities, about how AUKUS is going to affect us with New Zealand on security, bilateral relationship, about New Zealand vis-a-vis China.

And so we had such a good in-depth conversation I do not feel compelled to explore it again here with you today. But I do not want you to think you are not the object of my affection.

[Laughter.]

Senator UDALL. Thank you. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. With knowing everything that you and I spoke about, and I am very pleased with the answers you gave me, I will reserve at this time.

Seeing no other member before the committee, the record for this hearing will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, Thursday, September 23rd. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than then.

I urge the nominees to answer those questions fully and expeditiously so that you can be considered for a business meeting.

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

[Whereupon, at 1:18 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes. There is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me. The administration is actively examining a range of hypotheses but has made no determination about the cause of the AHIs or whether they can be attributed to a foreign actor. I understand that AHIs have been a top priority for Secretary Blinken, who set clear goals for the Health Incident Response Task Force to strengthen the Department's communication with our workforce, provide care for affected employees and family members, and better protect against these events in the future as we continue to work closely with the inter-agency to find the cause of these AHIs.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I will do everything possible to ensure that employees who report a possible AHI receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and the incident is reported through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed there is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

State Oversight

Question. Currently, there are three public diplomacy outposts serving primarily a Palestinian audience, America Houses in East Jerusalem and Ramallah as well as an American Corner in Hebron.

- Do you support keeping these facilities outside of the U.S. embassy compound?

Answer. While I am not in a position to speak to the specific facilities of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, if confirmed I am committed to ensuring that the U.S. Embassy in Israel's capital, Jerusalem, enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including public diplomacy engagement with local communities.

Question. What value do public diplomacy sites focused on the Palestinian audience provide to U.S. foreign policy?

Answer. I believe public diplomacy programs are valuable to U.S. national interests, as they allow the U.S. Government to communicate with local communities on our Government's strategic objectives. I understand that these are critical tools in our engagements with Palestinian communities as they encourage common values, such as the promotion of human rights, economic growth, freedom of speech, and upholding the rule of law.

Question. Do you support completing the renovation of the America House in Ramallah?

Answer. While I am not in a position to speak to the specific facilities of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, if confirmed I am committed to ensuring that our diplomatic presence enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with local communities.

Question. Mission Israel has been under enormous stress over the past five years with the move of the embassy to Jerusalem, changes to the Palestinian Affairs Unit, and COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Israel?

Answer. Mission Israel is full of dedicated personnel committed to their jobs and carrying out U.S. foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I look forward to building a collaborative and inclusive work environment, and placing a priority on morale.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across all of Mission Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to build a collaborative and inclusive work environment. I am committed to placing a priority on embassy morale.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to underscore my commitment to an inclusive and representative working environment in support of U.S. national interests and strengthening the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Management Is A Key Responsibility for Chiefs of Mission

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. My management style is one that focuses on promoting a collaborative, inclusive, and representative environment that is focused on promoting U.S. national interests.

Question. How do you believe this management style will translate to an embassy setting, where processes and resources aren't as readily available as they may be at Main State?

Answer. This style of management has served me well throughout my career and will translate well to an embassy setting. If confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with the Embassy Jerusalem team to support an inclusive and collaborative environment that promotes U.S. national interests.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on the new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. I believe that it is important for us all, as representatives of the United States of America, to work towards serving our country to the best of our ability. If confirmed, I intend to fully integrate myself with the embassy team and look forward to supporting an inclusive and collaborative environment. We can't succeed any other way.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No, this type of behavior is never acceptable.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with the deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The deputy chief of mission is a key part of the embassy community and if confirmed, I look forward to building a collaborative, inclusive, and constructive partnership with him or her.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to the deputy chief of mission being involved in all facets of embassy leadership and working in partnership with him or her to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- Given your previous tenure as the Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, how do you assess the Department's current risk balance?

Answer. Advancement of U.S. foreign policy objectives inherently involves diverse types of risk, and it is the Department's policy that employees and leaders engage in risk management for the decisions and activities within the scope of their duties. All Department employees are expected to identify, evaluate, and mitigate any substantial risks to their objectives or to the enterprise in which they are engaged. Department leaders, including Chiefs of Mission, require the best possible assessment of risk, identification of mitigation measures, and evaluations of any remaining residual risk before making decisions. Department leaders ensure risk management is a continuous process that is adjusted as conditions change, and incorporated into planning and decision-making in a systematic, appropriate, timely and transparent manner by taking into account uncertainty and the impact on our capabilities to protect people, property, information and other assets.

Question. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. The mission of a U.S. diplomat is to promote peace, support prosperity, and protect American citizens while advancing the interests of the United States abroad. U.S. diplomats are dedicated to public service and, even in dire situations, are committed to accomplishing their mission and advancing U.S. objectives.

Question. How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. I believe that it is important for U.S. diplomats to have access to, and engage with, a wide range of local populations if the security environment permits. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that Embassy Jerusalem's diplomatic presence enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaders.

Question. Do you agree that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, should remain undivided, and should be the permanent place of the U.S. embassy to Israel?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve. The administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work diligently to see a new U.S. embassy constructed in Jerusalem?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working diligently to see a new U.S. embassy constructed in Jerusalem.

Question. The administration has made clear its desire to open a consulate in Jerusalem for the Palestinians. It is my understanding that Israel would have to agree with the opening of a U.S. diplomatic facility in Jerusalem or anywhere else in Israel. Is that the case?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I understand that this is part of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. While I cannot attest to all requirements necessary for opening a diplomatic facility, if confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with local communities and government leaders.

Question. The Israeli Government has come out against a Palestinian consulate in Jerusalem. FM Yair Lapid said that the proposed reopening by the U.S. Government of its Jerusalem consulate would be a "bad idea" and would send the "wrong message" not only to the region and to the Palestinians, but to other countries as well, who might view this as a green light to establish their own embassies in what they perceive to be a Palestinian part of Jerusalem. In addition, such a move might destabilize the "interesting, yet delicate" coalition government. Will you pressure

Israelis to reverse their opinion? Will you establish a consulate over Israeli objections?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I understand that this is part of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. The United States has not recognized a "State of Palestine." Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem would not affect that policy or walk back or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

While I am not privy to internal U.S. Government conversations with the Government of Israel, if confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Another legal obstacle to a Palestinian consulate is the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, passed overwhelmingly by the U.S. House and Senate, which recognized united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and states that "Jerusalem should remain an undivided city." Does the Jerusalem Embassy Act prevent the United States from reopening a consulate for the Palestinians? What location for a Palestinian consulate would the 1995 law allow?

Answer. I understand that Secretary Pompeo determined and reported to Congress in 2019 that the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem had officially opened, consistent with the requirements of the Jerusalem Embassy Act. I also understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not affect that policy or walk back or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

If confirmed, I will always work to ensure that all our policies are consistent with U.S. interests and applicable U.S. law.

Question. If President Biden decided against (or Congress prohibited in law) the opening of a separate Consulate General to serve the Palestinian Authority, would you be prepared to carry out your duties as Ambassador to Israel with oversight of consular affairs in Palestinian-controlled territories?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy to Israel, which the U.S. Government has been clear will remain in Jerusalem, provides consular services to U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, as well as communities residing in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. The President and Secretary Blinken have reaffirmed the administration's intent as well to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem, to support renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including providing necessary consular services, and engaging with local communities.

Question. The Biden administration is reportedly conducting a review with the goal to open a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office in the United States, despite the legal prohibitions under the 1987 Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and the 2019 Promoting Security and Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act (PSJVTA). Is the opening of a PLO office in the United States permissible under U.S. law? Can you commit to using your position as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, if confirmed, to advocating against any move to re-open the PLO office in the U.S., in contravention of U.S. law?

Answer. I understand that the issue of the Palestinian presence in Washington is a complicated one, with a number of legal implications. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that any possible reopening of a PLO office in Washington is consistent with U.S. interests in advancing peace and applicable U.S. law.

Question. In 2019, the Trump administration officially recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. In your view, what is the strategic benefit of Israel's sovereignty of the Golan Heights? Under what conditions would Israeli sovereignty not apply?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, I understand the administration gives great weight to Israel's security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly 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. My understanding is that this administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Foreign Assistance

Question. There are promising reports about the effectiveness of the BriLife vaccine for COVID-19, which the American-Israeli company NRx Pharmaceuticals has

brought to trial. If approved, this new vaccine could prove to be a game-changer in expanding access to safe and reliable COVID-19 vaccines across the developing world, while also providing a suitable alternative to less reliable vaccines from China.

- If confirmed, will you commit to working with Israel to make its World Health Organization (WHO) and Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved COVID-19 vaccines available to low- and lower-middle income countries, including as in-kind contributions to COVAX, as appropriate?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I commit to working with Israel to make doses of its COVID-19 vaccines, authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Federal Drug Administration (FDA), available to low- and lower-middle income countries, including as in-kind contributions distributed through COVAX.

Question. Institutions in Israel annually request, and routinely secure, funding through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA program). Notably, ASHA is not a development program. Instead, it provides funds for infrastructure and equipment for overseas schools, libraries, and hospitals “to highlight American ideas and practices, to provide concrete illustrations of the generosity of the American people, to further U.S. Government public diplomacy, and to catalyze collaborations between U.S. citizens and citizens of other countries”.

- Do you agree that the purpose of U.S. foreign assistance is to end the need for its existence?

Answer. U.S. foreign assistance serves important U.S. national security interests, including supporting our enduring partnership with Israel and priorities such as helping our allies and partners maintain stability and prosperity.

Question. Noting that Israel is a High Income Country that already shares U.S. values, should institutions in Israel continue to be eligible for assistance through the ASHA program?

Answer. While Israel is indeed a high-income country, I continue to value the importance of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad, and if confirmed, I commit to working to deepen the already existing partnerships in Israel.

Question. If so, why? If not, how do you intend to graduate Israeli institutions from dependence upon ASHA funding for basic infrastructure and equipment?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which administers the ASHA program, on this matter. ASHA programs serve as an important link between American institutions and our partners overseas.

Question. Under what conditions, if any, would you support conditioning United States assistance to the West Bank and Gaza?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring U.S. assistance is well-calibrated to advance U.S. foreign policy interests. I understand that U.S. assistance provides critical relief to those in great need, fosters economic development, and supports Israeli-Palestinian understanding, security coordination, and stability. It also aligns with the values and interests of the United States and our allies and partners.

Question. Would you support conditioning assistance upon measurable progress in rolling-back the Palestinian Authority’s support for the heinous “pay for slay” program? If confirmed, would you make this a priority?

Answer. The Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. This administration and I are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments in a manner that addresses longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work done thus far through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform of this heinous practice.

Question. What forms of U.S. foreign assistance, if any, should be continued in the West Bank and Gaza, notwithstanding the PA’s continued support for the “pay for slay” program?

Answer. I understand the administration is committed to providing assistance in a manner that is consistent with U.S. law. U.S. foreign assistance for the West Bank and Gaza serves important U.S. interests, including providing critical relief to those in great need, fostering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination. Economic and humanitarian assistance programs improve the lives of millions of Palestinians by providing immediate relief and advanc-

ing development across sectors such as health, infrastructure, economic growth, and civil society, while security sector programs support Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation to enhance the stability of the West Bank.

Question. How would you define “humanitarian assistance” in the West Bank and Gaza? Please be specific.

Answer. U.S. humanitarian assistance for the West Bank and Gaza includes support to U.N. agencies, including UNRWA, other international organizations like the World Food Programme, and non-governmental organizations with the aim of providing immediate relief to the most vulnerable populations, including through support to needy households with food, clean water, and healthcare. Addressing immediate humanitarian needs, in combination with efforts to strengthen the Palestinian economy, civil society, and targeted infrastructure, helps eliminate a core source of social tension in the West Bank and Gaza and advances freedom, security, and prosperity for the Palestinian and Israeli people alike.

Question. How would you define “non-humanitarian assistance” in the West Bank and Gaza? Please be specific.

Answer. U.S. foreign assistance for the West Bank and Gaza serves important U.S. interests, including providing critical support to those in great need, fostering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination through economic, development, and security sector assistance. Economic and development programs for the West Bank and Gaza support critical issues that further progress toward peace such as our support for the development of the Palestinian economy, civil society, and other institutions to improve the lives of Palestinians and ensure the viability of a future Palestinian state. Assistance also supports youth engagement and employment activities, so that at-risk youth have access to positive forms of empowerment and are not lured by extremist groups. Further, U.S. assistance programs help small- and medium-sized enterprises to access financial and technical assistance to resume operations, build connections with traditional and new markets, and increase profitability. U.S.-funded security sector programs support Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation to enhance the stability of the West Bank, and advance efforts to uphold the rule of law and the protection of human rights and are a priority for both the United States and the Government of Israel.

Question. The Taylor Force Act prohibits assistance that “directly benefits” the Palestinian Authority. What is your interpretation of “directly benefit”?

Answer. I understand that, consistent with a report transmitted to Congress by the Department of State on May 3, 2018, the U.S. Government takes a number of criteria into account in assessing whether assistance “directly benefits” the PA in this context, such as the intended primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance; whether the Palestinian Authority is the direct recipient of the assistance; whether the assistance involves the payment of Palestinian Authority creditors; the extent of ownership or control the Palestinian Authority exerts over an entity or individual that is the primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance; and whether the assistance or services provided directly replace assistance or services provided by the Palestinian Authority.

Question. Despite compliance with the Taylor Force Act, opponents of continued assistance to the Palestinians argue that all money is fungible and that ESF to the Palestinian people relieves the Palestinian Authority of a burden and thus frees up additional funding for the pay to slay and martyr’s program. Do you believe this to be true? Please provide a detailed response to this argument.

Answer. The administration provides assistance in a manner consistent with U.S. law and through experienced, vetted, and trusted independent partners, who distribute directly to people in need. Further, I understand the administration goes to great lengths to provide assistance based on need and to advance important U.S. interests.

Question. The Nita Lowey Partnerships for Peace Act (PPA) authorized \$250 million annually for five years to support peacebuilding initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians, including through a “People-to-People Partnership for Peace Fund” at the U.S. Agency for International Development and a “Joint Investment for Peace Initiative” at the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

- If confirmed, how would you measure progress of these initiatives?

Answer. I fully support the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA). This legislation and the programs it would support are critical to strengthening civil society peacebuilding projects that build economic cooperation and people-to-people engagement between the Israeli and Palestinian people. If con-

firmed, I am committed to ensuring MEPPA is a vital tool of advancing U.S. foreign policy and supporting Israeli and Palestinian communities and cooperation. If confirmed, I plan to work with my colleagues at the DFC, USAID, and the Department of State to develop tools to measure the progress of this initiative.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that all partners and activities undertaken pursuant to the PPA—including at the sub-award level—are fully vetted and transparently reported to Congress?

Answer. I understand the administration will provide assistance in the West Bank and Gaza through experienced and trusted independent partners, who distribute directly to people in need. The Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have a robust vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. In addition, development and humanitarian partners in the West Bank and Gaza have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching those for whom we intend it to benefit. U.S. assistance is also closely coordinated with Israeli authorities.

Question. If confirmed, how will you leverage co-investment in PPA activities by Israelis and Palestinians, in addition to generating support by other donors?

Answer. I believe the PPA and the programs it would support are critical to strengthening civil society peacebuilding projects that build economic cooperation and people-to-people engagement between the Israeli and Palestinian people. I appreciate your and Congress' broad support for MEPPA and, if confirmed, I am committed to ensuring MEPPA is a vital tool of advancing U.S. foreign policy and supporting Israeli and Palestinian communities and generating support with other donors.

Question. Do you agree that all investments through a Joint Investment for Peace Initiative at the DFC must have a nexus to development, as envisioned by the BUILD Act which created the DFC?

Answer. Yes, I agree that all investments through a Joint Investment for Peace Initiative at the DFC must have a nexus to development.

Question. The Palestinian Authority recently passed a decree to “nationalize” NGOs working in the West Bank and Gaza, ostensibly giving the PA access to their funding. What concerns does this raise for continued assistance to the West Bank and Gaza? What safeguards are in place to prevent the PA from syphoning funding from “nationalized” NGOs?

Answer. I understand the administration is encouraging the Palestinian Authority to ensure that civil society organizations are free and empowered to engage fully in their activities, which support democratic, social, and economic development and are vital to a free and democratic Palestinian society and a viable future Palestinian state. I also understand the Department is closely following the conversation Palestinian civil society is having with the Palestinian Authority regarding this law and have engaged the Palestinian Authority on this issue. If confirmed, I plan to continue to monitor these efforts to ensure that U.S. assistance and civil society activities are not adversely affected and remain consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Despite the cancellation of elections for Palestinian leadership, there are concerns that Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization, will play a greater role in the Palestinian political environment. Should Hamas play a broader role in Palestinian politics and hand Fatah a defeat at the polls, how you do reconcile Palestinian policy and counterterrorism policy? What are the implications for continued assistance to the Palestinian people and expenditures on Palestinian Security Forces?

Answer. U.S. assistance for the Palestinians is provided consistent with U.S. law. I understand the Department routinely assesses its foreign assistance programming and would do so as necessary following Palestinian elections or any other significant change related to the Palestinian Authority.

Security Cooperation

Question. The U.S. Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act, which was enacted into law in 2020, mandates not less than \$ 1.3 billion in security assistance to Israel. What is your position with respect to conditioning security assistance to Israel?

Answer. I do not believe that conditioning security assistance to Israel furthers U.S. interests. The President has been clear that the administration does not support placing conditions on military aid to Israel.

Question. Do you support fulfilling U.S. funding commitments outlined in the current 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

Answer. I fully support the 10-year, \$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to opposing any efforts to impose new restrictions on security assistance to Israel, which is an important show of the United States' commitment to the security of our allies?

Answer. The President has been clear that he does not support placing conditions on military aid to Israel. If confirmed, I commit to opposing any efforts to impose new restrictions on security assistance to Israel, consistent with the President's policy.

Question. In light of recent violence between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip, do you support emergency funding for the Iron Dome?

Answer. Yes, I support emergency funding for the Iron Dome.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to working to expand U.S.-Israel cooperation on the Iron Dome and other similar defense programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working to expand U.S.-Israel cooperation on the Iron Dome and other similar defense programs, consistent with the President's policy.

Question. The 11 day war demonstrated that Israel's Iron Dome struggled to meet the demands of a one-front war with Hamas. A two-front war with both Hamas and Hezbollah would present a much more significant threat. Is Israel's current number of Iron Dome batteries, radars and munitions sufficient to meet the threat of a two-front war? What are the associated capability gaps you will address as the Ambassador to Israel?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. On May 20, President Biden assured Prime Minister Netanyahu of his "full support to replenish Israel's Iron Dome system to ensure [Israel's] defense and security in the future."

I understand the administration is prepared to support President Biden's commitment to ensure Israel's right to defend itself from indiscriminate rocket attacks by assisting Israel in replenishing its Iron Dome Air Defense Missile System. If confirmed, I will work with Departments of State and Defense colleagues to see what can be done to assist Israel in replenishing its Iron Dome systems.

Question. Israeli vessels have been subject to an increasing number of Iranian attacks, which threaten freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and beyond. As a result, Israel has increased its deployments in the Red Sea region. How can the U.S. better support Israeli efforts to protect freedom of navigation?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy, which is the best way the United States can support Israeli efforts to protect freedom of navigation.

Question. One of Israel's top cyber security firms, NSO Group, is responsible for developing advanced cyber hacking technology, including Pegasus. NSO insists the software is used exclusively for the purposes of combatting terrorism and monitoring serious crime, underscoring the fact that the Israeli Government is responsible for vetting the company's sales. However, in recent years, numerous countries have been accused of using the software to spy civil society activists, journalists, and political dissidents among others.

- Do you feel the appropriate oversight checks are in place to prevent Pegasus, and other cyber surveillance software like it, from being used to commit human rights abuses?

Answer. The U.S. Government has undertaken a number of steps over the last year to avoid tools or products from U.S.-based cyber-surveillance companies being used abroad to undermine human rights. I understand that in October 2020, the Department of State released the first-of-its-kind "human rights due diligence" guidance to help businesses conduct a human rights impact assessment on relevant products or services and the Department of Commerce issued a Final Rule that revised the licensing policy for crime-control items in connection with human rights concerns, as well as expanded its consideration of human rights beyond crime con-

trolled items. If confirmed, I will work with our bilateral partners to promote respect for and protect human rights.

Question. To what extent do you feel NSO's licensing of the Pegasus spyware is done in a manner that complies with U.S. values and upholds U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The United States condemns the harassment or extrajudicial surveillance of journalists, human rights activists, or other perceived regime critics. Just as states have the duty to protect human rights, businesses have a responsibility, too. Thus, they should work to avoid their products or services being used to abuse human rights. President Biden has affirmed that "American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism." This commitment includes working to help U.S. companies avoid fueling authoritarian practices, stemming the use of new technological tools for repression, and giving citizens tools to improve their digital security. If confirmed, I will uphold this commitment and work with our bilateral partners to promote respect for and protect human rights.

Question. The U.S.-Israel Security Assistance Cooperation Act passed in the FY21 NDAA allows the United States to waive statutory caps on the annual transfer of precision-guided munitions to Israel under section 514(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2321h(b)) under emergency circumstances. Would you consider a one front war with Hamas an emergency circumstance? A two front war with Hamas and Hezbollah? How do we balance U.S. PGM requirements and Israel's requirements?

Answer. The President has made clear that the United States supports Israel's legitimate right to defend itself and I understand the administration is prepared to support President Biden's commitment to ensure this. While any escalation that risks war is not in our interests, I cannot speak to hypothetical questions.

United Nations

Question. In 2012, you sent a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee arguing against efforts to distinguish between Palestinian displaced by the conflict that led to the creation of Israel in 1948 and their descendants, who the U.N. currently classifies as refugees. This distinction would reduce the number of UNRWA registered refugees from 5 million to 30,000.

- Do you still maintain that efforts to limit those who can claim UNRWA refugee status would undermine U.S. interests in advancing discussions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority?

Answer. Yes. My understanding is that the status of Palestinian refugees remains a highly sensitive issue among Palestinians and their supporters, including U.S. regional allies such as Jordan.

Question. Who, in your view, should classify as an UNRWA refugee?

Answer. My understanding is that the United States recognizes UNRWA's definition of Palestinian refugees for the purposes of UNRWA's operations. UNRWA's definition of "Palestine refugees" is: "[P]ersons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of June 1, 1946 to May 15, 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." Descendants of eligible male "Palestine refugees" are eligible for registration with UNRWA for the purpose of accessing services. I understand this approach to including descendants is similar to that used by UNHCR in other protracted refugee situations, such as Afghanistan and Somalia.

Question. Why does UNRWA require 10,000 more staff to advocate its regional mission than UNHCR to advance its global mission?

Answer. UNRWA's mandate is set by the U.N. General Assembly and is to provide essential services directly to Palestinian refugees in the five regions it covers. Unlike UNHCR, which delivers most services to refugees through sub-partners, UNRWA employees include schoolteachers and health care workers who provide the services directly to beneficiaries.

Question. Do you believe UNRWA should be absorbed by UNHCR, given UNHCR's efficiency and infrastructure?

Answer. UNRWA's mandate is set by the U.N. General Assembly and is to provide essential services directly to Palestinian refugees in the five regions it covers. Unlike UNHCR, which works to deliver most services to refugees through sub-partners, UNRWA employees include schoolteachers and health care workers who provide services directly to beneficiaries. UNHCR's mandate focuses on seeking durable solutions (such as resettlement, repatriation, and local integration) for refugees,

which cannot be adequately applied in the Palestinian context as these matters are final status issues to be negotiated directly between Israel and the Palestinians.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the appropriate Congressional committees prior to any consultations related to new U.S. contributions to UNRWA?

Answer. The President and the Secretary have been clear that the administration is committed to working with Congress. I understand the Department has regularly engaged with Congressional committees since resuming humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting the continuation of this approach.

Question. How do you plan to work with UNRWA to advance reform, particularly as relates to anti-Semitic educational content of text books?

Answer. I condemn incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in any form. U.N. agencies, including UNRWA, do not develop their own curriculum, but use the curriculum of host governments. When concepts contrary to U.N. principles are identified in host governments' education materials, UNRWA provides instructions and supplementary materials for its staff to address the issue. If confirmed, I will emphasize the importance of following humanitarian principles, including neutrality, in discussions with UNRWA.

Question. In 1997, the Palestinian Authority signed an agreement to allow the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to establish a Liaison officer in Ramallah, and subsequently upgraded relations admitting the PA as a full member state in 2011. In response, both the U.S. and Israel withdrew their member status.

- The Biden administration is requesting a waiver to allow the U.S. to re-join the body. In your view, should the United States be a member of UNESCO?

Answer. The President has stated he believes firmly that more can be accomplished by working within U.N. organizations than outside. However, I cannot speak to the administration's review of U.S. policy on UNESCO.

Question. Section 410, Title IV of the FY94–95 Foreign Relations Authorization Act (P.L. 103-236) prohibits the U.S. from making any voluntary or assessed contribution to the U.N. or any affiliated organization which grants full membership to an entity which lacks “the internationally attributes of statehood” like the Palestinian Authority. If confirmed, can you commit to ensuring no U.S. funds are used to make a contribution to UNESCO or any other U.N. body that grants the PA full membership status?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all our policies, including with respect to U.N. contributions, are consistent with U.S. interests and applicable U.S. law.

Question. How, in your view, should the United States address concerns around the body's politicization and alleged anti-democratic leanings? What specific reforms should UNESCO pursue before the United States rejoins the body?

Answer. I understand the administration has been reviewing various aspects of its multilateral engagement. UNESCO leadership has made progress in helping member states avoid politicized debate on Middle East questions and should continue its efforts to counter any anti-Israel bias in UNESCO decisions and resolutions. UNESCO should continue to build on its efforts to promote transparency and accountability in its personnel and financial management practices.

Question. Recently, the Palestinian Authority threatened action to circumvent ascension protocols and seek a change in their status at the U.N.

- Do you believe this action promotes the Middle East peace process and serves the needs of the Palestinian people?

Answer. As a matter of principle, there are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside of direct negotiations between the parties. This includes counterproductive unilateral steps to gain membership as a state in U.N. specialized agencies and other international organizations.

Question. In your view, what consequences should the Palestinians face if they continue to attempt to gain membership in U.N. agencies?

Answer. While I cannot speak to hypotheticals, if confirmed, I will underscore to the Palestinians that unproductive, unilateral steps are not a shortcut to Palestinian statehood.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to working to prevent the Palestinian Authorities' pursuit of full membership in U.N. entities?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will underscore to the Palestinian leadership that unproductive, unilateral steps are not a shortcut to Palestinian statehood.

Question. In 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) citing "chronic anti-Israel bias." Since, the Biden administration has re-engaged with the body, claiming U.S. absence did nothing to address its disproportionate focus on Israel. Do you share the Trump administration's assessment regarding the UNHRC's reported anti-Israel bias? What steps should the U.S. take to improve the UNHRC's impartiality?

Answer. If confirmed, consistent with administration policy, I will oppose 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. 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.

Question. What are your views on the U.N. Human Rights Council's decision to open a commission of inquiry the wake of the 11 day Israel-Gaza conflict in May?

Answer. I understand that the United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council following the escalation in Gaza in May. It exemplifies the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel. I believe the establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians, and ensure that terrorist organizations, including Hamas, do not exploit the situation, including by indiscriminate firing of rockets, to further their own destructive aims. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and likeminded partners to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states.

Question. Do you support U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334?

Answer. If confirmed, I will oppose, as I understand the administration does already, 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. Equally, I will firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek. I will also continue and sustain diplomatic engagement on the issue of settlements.

Question. In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor opened an investigation into possible war crimes allegedly committed in the West Bank and Gaza. Do you believe that the ICC should be investigating a case involving alleged Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories? If yes, please explain.

Answer. The United States shares the goals of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in promoting accountability for the worst crimes known to humanity. Further, the United States has always taken the position that the ICC's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the U.N. Security Council. I understand the administration continues to disagree strongly with the ICC's actions relating to the Palestinian situation.

Question. Do you believe that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate or bring to trial Israeli service members, officials, or other Israeli citizens? If yes, please explain.

Answer. The United States has always taken the position that the ICC's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the U.N. Security Council.

Question. Do you believe the ICC's reputation has been diminished by recent attempts to prosecute United States and Israeli nationals? If no, please explain.

Answer. The United States has always taken the position that the ICC's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the U.N. Security Council.

Abraham Accords

Question. What is your opinion on the Abraham Accords? What, if anything, has hampered additional normalization agreements?

Answer. I welcome and strongly support the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. While identifying new opportunities and negotiating agreements takes time, if confirmed I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to learning from Israel's new partners in the region to better understand how we can work together to advance new normalization agreements and strengthen existing ones.

Question. How do you plan to operationalizing and expanding the existing Abraham Accords to ensure all parties reap tangible economic and security benefits?

Answer. The Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world have already made an important contribution to regional security and economic development, yet even more is possible. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and neighboring Arab countries that have normalized relations with Israel to identify and capitalize on the many new opportunities that these agreements have unlocked.

Question. Please provide you assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and Sudan.

Answer. While the Israel-Sudan normalization agreement is yet to be finalized, I understand the two governments have made significant progress towards improving their relations since announcing their intention to normalize their relations on October 23, 2020. On January 6, 2020, Sudan signed the Abraham Accords declaration of principles in a ceremony in Khartoum. On April 19, 2021, Sudan officially repealed its 1958 law boycotting Israel. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Israel to support the full implementation of the normalization agreement.

Question. Please provide you assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and Morocco.

Answer. Since announcing their intention to normalize their relations on December 10, 2020, I understand Israel and Morocco have made significant progress in deepening their relations. On January 16, Israel reopened its Liaison Office in Morocco and Israel's Chargé d'Affaires to Morocco, Dr. David Govrin, arrived in Rabat four days later. On February 9, Moroccan envoy Abderrahim Beyyoudh arrived in Tel Aviv to reopen Morocco's liaison office. In August 2021, the countries agreed to open embassies in the future. This diplomatic progress has been matched by similar progress in improving economic and social ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Israel to ensure the strength of the Israeli-Moroccan partnership continues to grow.

Question. Please provide you assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Which sectors do you feel should be targeted moving forward as we continue to build upon the historic normalization agreement between Israel and UAE?

Answer. Since normalizing relations, I understand Israel and the UAE have enjoyed robust cooperation across a range of areas. Israel opened its embassy in the UAE on January 25, 2021 and officially inaugurated it on June 29 during Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid's visit to Abu Dhabi, the first official visit by an Israeli foreign minister since the announcement of the Abraham Accords. On February 26, the UAE's first ambassador to the State of Israel, Mohammad Mahmoud Al Khajah, was sworn in and he arrived in Israel on March 1. On March 12, the UAE announced it was setting up a \$10 billion investment fund aimed at "strategic sectors" in Israel. On May 31, Israel and the UAE announced an agreement on a tax treaty. If confirmed I look forward to identifying new ways to deepen Israel-Emirati cooperation, including increasing trade and investment, building new vehicles to support academic and people-to-people exchanges, and expanding security cooperation.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and Bahrain?

Answer. Since normalizing relations, I understand Israel and Bahrain have signed over a dozen Memoranda of Understanding covering cooperative initiatives in sectors ranging from healthcare to education. On March 30, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain issued a Royal Decree appointing Ambassador Khalid Yusuf Al-

Jalahma as head of Bahrain's diplomatic mission to Israel, the first Bahraini envoy to the country. On September 3, Eitan Na'eh was nominated as Israel's first ambassador to Bahrain, the same day that Bahrain's Khalid Yusuf Al-Jalahma presented his credentials to Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Israel to nurture and grow this important new partnership.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to leverage the existing normalization agreements between Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbors, as well as Morocco and Sudan, to advocate for other countries to reach similar agreements with Israel?

Answer. I welcome and strongly support the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. If confirmed, I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to learning from Israel's new partners in the region to better understand how we can work together to advance new normalization agreements and strengthen existing ones.

Question. In your view, what tangible benefits does normalizing relations with Israel offer to Muslim Majority countries in the Middle East and beyond?

Answer. The Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world have made an important contribution to regional security and economic development and support U.S. national security interests. The Abraham Accords have empowered our partners in the region to work together on their shared security interests, created new channels for peaceful dialogue and exchange, and fostered a broader culture of tolerance across the region. They are also an engine of economic growth, having spurred new trade and investment deals that previously would have been impossible. Over time, these new economic initiatives will create opportunities for the young and marginalized communities across the region. As more countries in the Middle East and beyond normalize their relations with Israel, more opportunities for cooperation and economic development will emerge.

Question. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, you will have the opportunity to interact with both the UAE and Bahraini Ambassadors to Israel—in addition to potentially hosting delegations or meeting with diplomats from other countries normalizing or considering normalization with Israel. Will you commit to meeting regularly with your Abraham Accords counterparts?

Answer. I believe it is important to foster and promote the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements by identifying ways to strengthen and expand them. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, I look forward to meeting regularly with my counterparts from Abraham Accords countries to capitalize on these opportunities.

Question. Some argue that the Trump administration's exit from the nuclear deal and maximum pressure against Iran coupled with its clear pro-Israel policies set the conditions for normalization under the Abraham Accords. Please provide your perspectives on this argument.

Answer. The Abraham Accords have empowered our partners in the region to work together on their shared security interests, created new channels for peaceful dialogue and exchange, and fostered a broader culture of tolerance across the region. They are also an engine of economic growth, having spurred new trade and investment deals that previously would have been impossible. I believe these shared interests, including an interest in working together preserve stability in the region in the face of malign actors, were the core drivers behind the Abraham Accords and will continue to drive new normalization agreements in the future.

Question. Some have argued that the Abraham Accords may set the conditions for a new multilateral security construct in the Middle East focused on the shared threat from Iran, countering violent extremist organizations, and transnational organized crime. What are your thoughts on the potential for new security constructs stemming from the Accords and what shape might these take? What do you see as your role as the Ambassador to Israel in driving these new constructs?

Answer. I am committed to helping Israel build partnerships that further integrate Israel into the region. Any sustainable regional economic and security dialogue will need to include Israel, and normalization efforts have opened that door. If confirmed, I will work with Israel to identify ways to advance a structured re-

gional dialogue that explores ways to reduce tensions, create pathways to de-escalation, and manage mistrust.

Egypt/Jordan

Question. Please provide your assessment of the Egyptian-Israeli relations? What are some of the key frictions points in your view? What steps should the United States take to resolve these issues?

Answer. Peace between Egypt and Israel has lasted for more than 40 years and both countries have extensive areas of cooperation, including security, intelligence sharing, economic and energy. I understand the Biden-Harris administration is eager to explore ways to support development of a warmer peace between Egypt and Israel, including through greater people-to-people and civil society ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my Egyptian counterpart and Israeli officials to strengthen all parts of this partnership.

Question. In your view, what role does the Multilateral Forces Observer Mission (MFO) play in maintaining regional stability? Should the U.S. maintain existing levels of support?

Answer. The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) remains essential to both the treaty relationship between Israel and Egypt and the enduring peace and security within the region. The MFO continues to work as an intermediary between the treaty parties, enabling open and frequent communication between them to maintain strong mutual trust and cooperation. The MFO promotes confidence in the treaty, maintains dialogue between the parties, and assists them during a period when both face security challenges. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. support for the MFO and its critical mission.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the Jordanian-Israeli relations? What are some of the key friction points in your view? What steps should the United States take to resolve these issues?

Answer. Israel's relationship with Jordan is both vital and complex. Over the 30 years since they signed a peace agreement, they have forged strategic ties and developed cross-border business ties that employ thousands of Jordanians, signed valuable contracts exporting Israeli natural gas to Jordan, and have collaborated on the allocation of scarce water resources. While domestic considerations tied to Jordan's large Palestinian population have made it difficult for Jordan to fully embrace and grow its relationship with Israel, both appreciate the need for deeper ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my Jordanian and Israeli counterparts as I work towards strengthening all parts of this partnership. I will also work to improve coordination between the two countries at the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount.

Question. Since 1967, Jordan's custodial role over Temple Mount has helped maintain peace at one of the region's most contentious and divisive religious sites. For decades, religious worship at Temple Mount has been restricted to Muslims but in recent weeks the Israeli Government has authorized a growing number of Jewish worshippers to practice there.

- To what extent do you feel this shift if policy threatens to trigger further instability in East Jerusalem?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the U.S. recognition of the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and to handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. What specific steps would you propose the U.S. takes to address concerns over worship at Temple Mount? What role should Jordan play in these discussions?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration made clear that it recognizes the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, and it continues to respect the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty, which recognizes the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem.

While I am not privy to diplomatic discussions between the U.S. Government and its foreign counterparts, I understand that the U.S. Government hopes to partner with its counterparts to express the importance of maintaining calm and keeping flashpoints like the situation in Jerusalem-be it in the Old City, on the Temple Mount, or elsewhere-from igniting the situation.

If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the U.S. recognition of the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and to handling all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Lebanon

Question. To what extent do you feel UNIFIL's current mandate is sufficient to oversee safety and security along the so-called Blue Line? Are there specific reforms to the mandate you feel the U.S. should pursue to help address Israel's ongoing security concerns?

Answer. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) plays a critical role in ensuring security and stability along the Blue Line, limiting Hizballah's operations in southern Lebanon, and preventing escalation between Lebanon and Israel. I was glad to see that the United States worked with France and other partners to amend the mandate to allow UNIFIL to provide food, fuel, and medicine to the Lebanese Armed Forces, a key partner that provides an important counterweight to Hizballah's argument that it is the legitimate defender of Lebanon. Despite the success that UNIFIL has had in implementing its mandate to date, Hizballah continues to impede UNIFIL's access to key points along the Blue Line and openly flouts the arms embargo established under UNSCR 1701. If confirmed, I will work with UNIFIL and international partners to strengthen the mandate and enable UNIFIL to fully implement all aspects of that mandate.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to advance efforts to resume U.S.-mediated maritime talks between Israel and Lebanon? How do you feel the change in administration in both Israel and Lebanon impacts the likelihood of negotiations making tangible progress towards a viable resolution?

Answer. The maritime boundary is a decision for both Israel and Lebanon to make. The administration remains committed to working with the parties toward an agreement benefiting both countries.

Question. Hezbollah threatens Israel with precision-guided munitions often stored in densely packed urban areas. Should the United States sanction Hezbollah under the Sanctioning the Use of Defenseless Shields Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-348)? Why or why not? How do you address the PGM threat to Israel?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel is ironclad and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States uses all the tools at our disposal to confront security threats to Israel, including from Hizballah. The U.S. Government remains committed to imposing sanctions on Hizballah and its financial supporters and enablers, and the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control's designations on September 17, 2021 of members of a major financing network of Hizballah demonstrate this administration's commitment to continuing to target Hizballah's financial networks around the world. If confirmed, I also commit to consult with Congress about the range of U.S. efforts to counter Hizballah and support Israel's right to self-defense.

The West Bank and the Palestinian Authority

Question. In 2016, John Kerry argued there would be no "separate peace" between Israel and Arabs without first solving the issue of Palestinian statehood.

- What are your views on Palestinian statehood and its ties to additional normalization agreements?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state solution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. Doesn't re-inserting Palestinian statehood back into the peace process hinder prospects of further normalizations with Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to engaging with Israel's new partners in the region to find ways to improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike to help create the conditions for a durable two-state solution.

Question. What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and support for terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to restore calm in the West Bank and Gaza and keep flash point issues from flaring into violence. There are issues of good governance and accountability that affect the standing of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of the Palestinian public, and that lie within the PA's hands to advance; there are at the same time steps that the Israeli Government can consider for enhancing the role of the PA in delivering services and economic opportunities. It is incumbent upon both sides to adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, positive steps for providing the Palestinian people—whether in Gaza or the West Bank—greater economic opportunities while restoring the conditions that will make possible eventual direct negotiations toward a two-state solution.

Question. In your view, how do Israeli-Arab normalization agreements affect the prospects for Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state solution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. In 2012, you claimed “final status issues can and must only be resolved between Israelis and Palestinians in direct negotiations.” Do you still feel this is the case? If so, how would you support efforts to facilitate direct talks between the Israeli and Palestinians?

Answer. I believe that final status issues can and must only be resolved between Israelis and Palestinians in direct negotiations. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. What do you view as the proper role for the U.S. to play in assisting the parties' efforts to reach an agreement?

Answer. I believe the United States is in a position to help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians, which is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for both people.

Question. Do you agree that the only way to reach a lasting two-state resolution to this conflict is through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians rather than one imposed by outside actors?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution achieved through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for both people.

Question. What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to restore calm in the West Bank and Gaza, and keep flash point issues from flaring into violence. There are issues of good governance and accountability that affect the standing of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of the Palestinian public, and that lie within the PA's hands to advance; there are at the same time steps that the Israeli Government can consider for enhancing the role of the PA in delivering services and economic opportunities. It is incumbent upon both sides to adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, positive steps for providing the Palestinian people—whether in Gaza or the West Bank—greater economic opportunities while restoring the conditions that will make possible eventual direct negotiations toward a two-state solution.

Question. In August 2021, Israel rolled out several measures designed to strengthen the Palestinian Authority, including the extension of a \$150 million dollar loan

to the occupied West Bank. How can the U.S. work with the Israeli Government to ensure none of these funds are used to support the abhorrent pay for slay program?

Answer. Both the United States and Israel are likeminded in their opposition towards this abhorrent practice. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Israeli Government to ensure funds are not misused to support this heinous practice.

Question. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) continue to incentivize and celebrate the use of violence against Israel through the egregious “pay to slay” program. In 2019 alone, the Palestinians spent \$151 million dollars to support imprisoned terrorists and their families. In addition, to these prisoner payments, the PA and PLO maintain a “martyrs’ fund” to help support the families of terrorist killed while carrying out violent acts against the Israeli state. There is concern the Biden administration’s decision to re-establish relations with the Palestinians in a manner that failed to extract concessions with respect to their pay to slay program was a missed opportunity. How has the Biden administration’s outreach set conditions for any reforms on pay to slay?

Answer. While I am not in a position to comment on private diplomatic discussions, this administration and I, are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments in a manner that addresses longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform of this heinous practice.

Question. Despite opening the aperture of ESF and INCLE to the Palestinians, the State Department has achieved no progress on the pay-to-slay policy. Please provide your roadmap for addressing this egregious practice.

Answer. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. This administration and I are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments in a manner that addresses longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform of this heinous practice.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to making efforts to address the Palestinian Authority’s pay for slay program a priority?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, pursuing reform of this heinous practice is a priority for me.

Question. What is your position on the viability of a two-State solution? Is it your sense that the tenure between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian authority has changed under the new administration led by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. The administration has been clear that Israelis and Palestinians alike equally deserve to live in freedom, security, and prosperity. As such, the United States is strongly encouraging both the Palestinians and the Israelis to avoid unilateral actions including settlement activity, annexation, and demolitions, as well as incitement to violence and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. If confirmed, I am committed to taking an affirmative and practical approach that encourages constructive, positive steps to keep the possibility of a negotiated two-state solution alive.

Question. Please provide your views on the relative benefits and risks of ESF and INCLE expenditures targeted towards the Palestinian people and security forces.

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances our national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and hold those who violate human rights accountable. I believe that we must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent cooperation. Institutional reforms supported by U.S. security sector assistance are critical in building the capabilities necessary to maintain stability in the West Bank and improve the Palestinian Authority security forces. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that our security sector assistance further supports efforts to uphold the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Gaza Strip and Hamas

Question. In your view, does Hamas' targeting of civilian infrastructure in Israel constitute war crimes?

Answer. Hamas's heinous rocket attacks on Israel in May only reinforced the Biden administration's ironclad resolve on Israel's security. I unequivocally condemn all rocket fire into Israel by terrorist groups Hamas and PIJ, and human rights abuses being committed in Gaza where Hamas, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, exercises de facto authority. The U.S. Government supports Israel's inherent right of self-defense, including against rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups. If confirmed, I will be committed to stabilizing Gaza to prevent further conflict and loss of civilian life.

Question. Hamas fighters reportedly position military tunnels and deploy rocket launches in close proximity to civilian infrastructure, like hospitals, schools, and mosques to limit the likelihood of an Israeli counterstrike. Is Hamas responsible for using Palestinian civilians as human shields to protect its military assets from Israeli counter strikes?

Answer. I unequivocally condemn all rocket fire into Israel by terrorist groups Hamas and PIJ, and human rights abuses being committed in Gaza where Hamas, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, exercises de facto authority. The President has made clear that the U.S. Government supports Israel's inherent right of self-defense, including against rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups. If confirmed, I will be committed to stabilizing Gaza to prevent further conflict and loss of civilian life.

Question. The Sanctioning the Use of Defenseless Shields Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-348) mandates sanctions on any member of Hezbollah or Hamas who "knowingly orders, controls, or otherwise directs the use of civilians protected as such by the law of war to shield military objectives from attack." Under the law, the President is required to submit to Congress a list of, and impose financial sanctions on, each foreign person involved in the use of human shields by Hamas or Hezbollah "on or after the date of enactment." Despite widespread reporting on Hamas's use of human shields, as of September 21, 2021, no action has been pursued under this act. If confirmed, can you commit to advocating for the imposition of sanctions under The Sanctioning the Use of Defenseless Shields Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-348)? Please provide your assessment of Qatar's role with respect to Gaza. To what extent do you see it as a stabilizing influence?

Answer. The President has made clear that the United States supports Israel's inherent right of self-defense, including against rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups, and unequivocally condemns Hamas's human rights abuses in Gaza. If confirmed, I will support efforts by across the Government to use the tools at our disposal, including sanctions authorities, in countering terrorist actors like Hamas. We must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. We can do this by working with partners, such as Qatar, through meeting humanitarian needs, including increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, and increasing levels of electricity and freedom of movement, while facilitating political and physical reintegration in the West Bank. Qatar has played a stabilizing role in Gaza, and I believe their strong partnership with the Government of Israel will continue to help stabilize the situation.

Question. What is your position on Qatari assistance to the Gaza Strip? Can you commit to working with the U.N. and the Government of Israel to ensure it IS delivered in a manner that's consistent with Israeli and U.S. national security interests?

Answer. I understand the United States is committed to working with the international donor community to support the Palestinian people. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the United Nations and Government of Israel to ensure assistance to Gaza is delivered a manner that is consistent with U.S. and Israeli national security interests.

Question. To what extent is assistance to Gaza subject to diversion by Hamas?

Answer. I understand the U.S. Government provides assistance in a manner consistent with U.S. law and does not direct assistance to Hamas. The Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have a robust vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. In addition, our development and humanitarian partners in the West Bank and Gaza have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance reaches its intended recipients.

Question. Please provide your assessment of Egypt's role in Gaza and its relationship with Hamas.

Answer. I believe that Egypt plays an important stabilizing role in Gaza, exhibited by Egypt's critical efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities during the conflict in May.

Question. In August 2021, Egypt reportedly closed its main border point with the Gaza Strip, Rafah crossing, over "differences" between Cairo and Hamas with respect to the latest Egypt brokered ceasefire. Specifically, officials have cited concerns over the lack of progress in indirect talks with Israel following the 11 day war in May and efforts to reconcile the militant Palestinian factions that dominate Gaza Strip. Do you share these concerns?

Answer. We must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. We can do this through meeting humanitarian needs, including increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services and increasing levels of electricity and freedom of movement, while facilitating political and physical reintegration in the West Bank. An effective humanitarian response requires adequate access to Gaza to allow reputable, vetted organizations to meet emergency needs; continued and regular opening of border crossings; fast-track processing of humanitarian convoys; and the unimpeded movement of relief and recovery supplies, including critical goods required to meet the needs of Palestinian families.

Question. What is your position on the blockade over Gaza that Egypt and Israel imposed following Hamas's ascension to power in 2007? In your view, should this blockade be lifted? If so, on what basis?

Answer. I believe we must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. We can do this through meeting humanitarian needs, including increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services and increasing levels of electricity and freedom of movement, while facilitating political and physical reintegration with the West Bank. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the international community and Government of Israel to support these humanitarian efforts.

Question. Given Hamas' continued control over Gaza, what are some of the obstacles to post-conflict recovery?

Answer. Hamas 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. I understand U.S. engagement in the West Bank and Gaza and with the Palestinians is consistent with U.S. law. Given Hamas's role, many partners have similar restrictions on operating in Gaza.

Question. Do you agree that there are significant challenges to assisting with long-term reconstruction in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip? In your view, what impact would reconstruction efforts have on Hamas' credibility and legitimacy?

Answer. Yes, I agree there are significant challenges to assisting with long-term reconstruction in Gaza and I understand U.S. engagement in the West Bank and Gaza and with the Palestinians is consistent with U.S. law. I also understand relief and recovery efforts are done in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel, and international donors in a manner that does not permit Hamas to restock its arsenal or achieve any legitimacy.

Question. Please address concerns that long-term reconstruction projects in Gaza would merely serve to bolster Hamas' rule much to the detriment of the Palestinian people?

Answer. We must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. I believe relief and recovery efforts should be done in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel, and international donors in a manner that does not permit Hamas to restock its arsenal.

Iran and Its Proxies

Question. Please provide an assessment of the threat Iran poses to the security of Israel, including a detailed assessment of the extent of support it provides to its proxies, like Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) which pose similar dangers to Israeli sovereignty and the safety of its citizens.

Answer. Israel believes Iran is the greatest threat to its security. As Secretary Blinken and other senior U.S. officials have said, the United States 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. An Iran with a nuclear weapon is likely to act even more provocatively when it

comes to these issues. The administration has fundamental problems with Iran's actions across a series of issues, including its support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, its support to armed militant groups, and its destabilizing actions in the region. Our partners in the region share a similar concern.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the threat Hezbollah poses to Israeli security.

Answer. Israel's top national security priorities are forestalling Iran's nuclear ambitions, preventing the proliferation of advanced weaponry across the region, and ending support to terrorist organizations, particularly Hizballah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. The President and the Secretary have been clear that this administration has fundamental problems with Iran's behavior throughout the region, including acts committed by Iranian-backed militia groups. If confirmed, I commit to working with my Israeli counterparts to strengthen all facets of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Iran

Question. In your view, should the United States make addressing Iran's support to its proxies like Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) a priority? If so, how should efforts to limit Iran's regional aggression fit into the Biden administration's efforts to pursue a mutual U.S.-Iranian return to the 2015 Iran Nuclear Agreement, otherwise known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA.)

Answer. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other Iranian-backed terrorist and militant groups pose a serious threat to the security of Israel and to that of the Middle East. The United States is fully committed to working with Israel and our other partners in the region to deter and defend against these threats, using the full spectrum of tools available. Regarding Iran's nuclear program, the administration's goal is first to return to mutual compliance with the JCPOA, and then to build on that to address other areas of concern, including Iran's ballistic missile development and proliferation, and support for terrorism. I support using a variety of policy tools to strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address other issues of concern.

Question. Israel faces constant threats from terrorist organizations including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and various Iran backed militia groups in Syria. If confirmed, how do you plan to work with the Government of Israel to address the threat Iran and its proxies pose to Israel's security?

Answer. The President has made clear that the United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. The President and the Secretary have also been clear that this administration has fundamental problems with Iran's behavior throughout the region, including acts committed by Iran backed militia groups. If confirmed, I commit to working with my Israeli counterparts to strengthen all parts of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Question. Do you support Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks?

Answer. Yes. The United States has a long-standing, unshakable commitment to Israel's security.

Question. What role should the U.S. play in safeguarding Israeli sovereignty and security?

Answer. The United States should maintain its unwavering commitment to Israel's security and work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Question. Since taking office, President Biden has made facilitating a U.S. return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) a priority for his administration, and, in February, appointed Rob Malley as Special Envoy for Iran to oversee such efforts. Since, Special Envoy Malley has engaged in several rounds of indirect talks in Vienna, Austria aimed at facilitating a mutual U.S.-Iran return to JCPOA.

- After the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal was signed, the Israeli Government, as with our Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partners, made clear, both publicly and privately, their discontent over the lack of consultations prior to the U.S. entry into the agreement. If confirmed, can you commit to ensuring the U.S. consults Israel prior to any U.S. re-entry into the JCPOA?

Answer. Yes. I understand that the Department, and in particular Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley, has been in close contact with our Israeli partners and will continue consulting closely with them throughout this process. I also understand

that former U.S. ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro has also recently joined the State Department and remains in close consultation with Israel over Iran.

Question. In your view, how extensive should these consultations be? To what extent should the U.S. be responsive to Israeli concerns over Iranian proxy activity in the context of talks with Iran?

Answer. I understand that the Department, and in particular Special Envoy Malley and senior advisor Ambassador Dan Shapiro, have been in close contact with, and updated, our Israeli counterparts extensively throughout the negotiations. If confirmed, I will continue to consult deeply and continuously with our Israeli partners on all dimensions of Iran policy.

Question. Further, many have characterized Special Envoy Malley's consultations as "one-way" and not responsive to their concerns. Do you commit to extensive consultations with Israel prior to making concessions to Iran?

Answer. I understand that the Department, and in particular Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley, and senior advisor Ambassador Dan Shapiro have been in close contact with partners in Israel and among the Gulf Arab states, and will continue consulting closely with these key partners as this process proceeds. Every one of us shares a common interest: seeing to it that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. Can you commit to seeking Israel's concurrence before the U.S. and Iran finalize any arrangement or agreement related to Iran's nuclear program?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to consult deeply and continuously with our Israeli partners on the nuclear negotiations and on preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Question. If confirmed, how will you manage disagreements with Israel over Iran policy?

Answer. I believe the Biden-Harris administration has conducted itself with a great deal of transparency, knowing that the United States and Israel share a common interest: seeing to it that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. I believe diplomacy, in coordination with our allies and regional partners, is the best path to achieve that goal.

Question. How do you address criticisms that the Biden administration's decision to re-engage with Iran merely served to isolate Israel and our Gulf partners?

Answer. The Biden—Harris administration has made clear that the United States has an ironclad commitment to Israel's security. Alongside that commitment, the administration is focused on de-escalating tensions, putting out the fires of conflict in Yemen, Libya, and Syria, and enhancing stability throughout the Middle East. The Department has updated Israeli and Gulf counterparts regularly before and after negotiation rounds, and is regularly engaged in discussions on its work to constrain and contain Iran's destabilizing regional activities. In fact, the administration's sustained diplomatic engagement with allies and partners has ensured a more united, better coordinated, and more consistent approach in countering the Iranian threat and advancing our shared goals in the region.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to working with the Special Envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, to ensure Israeli concerns are addressed in the context of talks aimed at facilitating a U.S.-Iran re-entry into JCPOA? How would you do so?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Special Envoy Malley and other colleagues in the administration to continue to consult deeply and continuously with our Israeli allies on the nuclear negotiations and on preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Question. The Biden administration has indicated that it will address Iran's ballistic missile program and regional terrorism in follow-on agreements. Should the United States and Iran rejoin the JCPOA, what leverage does the United States possess to encourage follow on agreements? Iran's leadership has refused to address regional terrorism. How likely is Iran to engage in discussions on its ballistic missile program and support for regional terrorism?

Answer. As the President has said, the goal is first to return to mutual compliance with the JCPOA, and then to build on that to address other areas of concern, including Iran's ballistic missile development, proliferation, and support for terrorism using a variety of policy tools to strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address other issues of concern. The administration will consult closely with our allies and partners in the region on ways to address this moving forward.

Question. Should the Iranian regime refuse to rejoin the JCPOA, what is “Plan B” to address Iran’s nuclear program, ballistic missile program, and support to terror proxies?

Answer. The administration has made clear that it believes that diplomacy is the best path forward on the nuclear challenge at this time. In the event Iran refuses to return to mutual compliance with the JCPOA, the administration is prepared to leverage all applicable authorities, including sanctions against Iran, as well as the support of allies and partners around the world, to prevent Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon and to defend U.S. vital interests.

Question. Do you support Israel’s freedom to take unilateral military action against Iran’s nuclear program, its terror proxies, and ballistic missile program? Under what conditions would you constrain Israel’s freedom of action?

Answer. The President has made clear that the U.S. commitment to Israel’s security is ironclad. I support Israel’s freedom of action to counter Iran’s destabilizing activities and the United States will not take any action that jeopardizes Israel’s security.

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement

Question. Please provide your assessment of the boycott, divest, sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

Answer. This administration and I firmly reject the BDS movement, which unfairly singles out Israel. While the administration will fully and always respect the right to freedom of expression, the United States will be a strong partner in fighting efforts to delegitimize Israel. We will continue to support Israel’s further integration into the international community.???

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to prioritizing efforts to fight boycott, divest, and sanctions (BDS) Israel globally? If so, how would you use your position to do so?

Answer. If confirmed, while respecting the rights of all Americans to free speech, I will continue the tireless work of this administration to firmly reject the BDS movement and boycott laws that unfairly single out Israel and I will continue to support Israel’s further integration into the international community.???

Question. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has publicly stated that he will not annex West Bank territory, nor permit it to be incorporated into a Palestinian state, though he does intend to pursue additional construction in the settlements. Do you believe Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal? If so, on what grounds?

Answer. 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 they seek. I firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I will continue to oppose any unilateral action that undermines the prospects for genuine progress and peace, whether that is settlement activity, home demolitions, annexation of territory, incitement to violence, or compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. I am not in a position to speak to the administration’s legal views. If confirmed, I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution, as the best way to ensure Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek.

China

Question. In recent years, commercial ties between Israel and China have grown significantly, as reflected in the Israeli decision to award numerous infrastructure projects to Chinese building conglomerates.

- Please provide your assessment of bilateral relations between Israel and China.

Answer. Strategic competition with the People’s Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century. As Israel is a world leader in developing innovative technology with military, civilian, and dual-use applications, I understand the administration remains deeply concerned by PRC attempts to extend influence and acquire dual-use technology through acquisition and investment in Israel.

Question. Specifically, what, if any, concerns do you have about Israeli cooperation with China and the impact on core U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The administration remains deeply concerned by attempts by the People’s Republic of China to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use tech-

nology through acquisitions and investment in Israel. The administration welcomes efforts by all countries to enhance investment in quality infrastructure development. I believe that such an investment must be within the confines of strong regulatory structures that ensure all companies investing in Israel do so in a responsible manner, consistent with international practices, that benefits the people of Israel, and does not undermine Israeli national security.

Question. In your view, to what extent should Israeli-Chinese relations shape and inform Israel's relationship with the U.S.?

Answer. Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century. While the administration remains deeply concerned with attempts by the People's Republic of China to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use technology through acquisitions and investment in Israel, the United States views close cooperation with Israel as important to our security and intelligence partnership.

Question. In 2019, in response to U.S. concerns over growing Chinese investment, Israel announced the establishment of an advisory committee, led by the Finance Ministry, to oversee and evaluate foreign investments in Israel. Right now, that committee is an inadequate mechanism and lacks a broad enough scope to protect high technology firms. Only foreign investments in the Israeli financial, communications, infrastructure, transportation, and energy sectors are subject to regulatory approval. Israel is a world-leader in high technology industries. Without a mechanism empowered to review in high technology firms, Israel will lack the ability to ensure controlling and non-controlling investments in these companies do not disadvantage Israel's national security. If confirmed, can you pledge to work with the Government of Israel to improve oversight of foreign commercial investment in Israel, particularly as relates to dual use technology and infrastructure?

Answer. While Israel's establishment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, especially its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. From your perspective, what specific reforms should the U.S. seek from Israel to help improve its existing foreign investments oversight regime?

Answer. While Israel's establishment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, especially its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. Can you commit to working with the Government of Israel to ensure its investment oversight regime covers high tech industries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. The United States has growing concerns with China's economic relationship with Israel. Given the relative weakness on Israel's committee on foreign investment and issues highlighted by the China's involvement in Haifa port, how do you effectively decouple China from Israel?

Answer. The United States views close cooperation with Israel on a variety of national security topics including foreign investment risk management as important to our security and intelligence partnership. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Russia

Question. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is scheduled to travel to Moscow for a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the coming weeks. This will form the basis for joint Israeli-Russian cooperation on a number of issues, including

Iran's role in Syria which remains a top priority concern. Please provide your perspective on the Israeli Russian relationship.

Answer. Russia views its military intervention in Syria as helping to solidify a dominant influence in the Middle East and is responsible for enabling numerous atrocities on the ground. While we routinely condemn Russia's brutal military intervention in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime, we recognize Russia has influence on the ground and that Israel wishes to test that influence with regards to curbing Iran's presence in Syria. The U.S. Government has found narrow areas in which to engage with Russia in Syria, for example to extend cross-border humanitarian access into Syria through Security Council Resolution 2585, and we will continue to explore additional avenues for discussion if they are to the benefit the Syrian people and stability in the region.

Question. How does the U.S.'s failure to mitigate the threat Iran and its proxies pose to Israeli security impact Israel's relationship with Russia? In your view, does it make Israel more reliant on Russia given the former's active ties with destabilizing actors like Iran and its proxy, Hezbollah?

Answer. Israel's security posture is independent of Russia's presence due to Iran's destabilizing tactics through Hizballah and other proxies allowing it to focus on subversive activities by those responsible.

VISA Waiver Program

Question. President Biden in his recent meeting with Prime Minister Bennett committed to advance a process to see Israel join the visa waiver program. If confirmed, can you commit to making it a priority to advance the President's commitment?

Answer. The administration is fully supportive of Israel joining the Visa Waiver Program once it meets all the requirements for participation in the program. If confirmed, it is a priority for me to advance the President's commitment.

Question. If confirmed, will you work to ensure an efficient visa process that allows eligible Israelis to travel to the United States?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work to ensure an efficient visa process that allows eligible Israelis to travel to the United States.

Question. Will you work with the Israelis to help bring down the refusal rate for Israelis applying for visas?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel toward meeting all requirements for participation in the Visa Waiver Program.

Non-Defense Cooperation

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to expand trade and deepen the economic cooperation with Israel?

Answer. Advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship, remains a top priority for me. Israel is a world leader in innovation, research and development, and its start-up economy is safe and welcoming for U.S. businesses, with American companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centers in Israel. If confirmed, I will build on these robust relationships to expand trade and deepen economic cooperation with Israel.

Question. If confirmed, what areas of the U.S.-Israel relationship will be priorities for you?

Answer. The U.S.-Israeli relationship has long been based on both common values and strategic interests. We remain united in our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security. Should I have the honor of being confirmed, maintaining the U.S. Government's ironclad commitment to Israel's security, advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship, working with a fellow democracy to oppose international institutional bias and promote human rights at home and abroad, and supporting the Abraham Accords and exploring new opportunities to advance normalization efforts are some of my top priorities.

Question. What areas of the relationship do you think can be strengthened?

Answer. Upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests and ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israeli partners to address critical threats from Iran and Iranian-backed militias and will work to strengthen Israel's foreign investment

advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In July, the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) announced a permanent, three person commission to investigate alleged Israeli war crimes during the conflict in Gaza earlier this year. Recent reporting indicates that all three members—Navi Pillay, Miloon Kothai, and Chris Sidoti—hold anti-Israel views. I'm concerned that the composition of this commission makes it all too likely that this is just another anti-Israel attack by a commission that should be focusing on the ongoing genocide of Uyghurs and Muslims in China, or on Cuba's human rights violations of peaceful protesters, or at least a dozen other countries.

- If confirmed, what steps would you take to cooperate with the Israeli Government to counter this blatant anti-Israel sentiment at the U.N.?

Answer. The United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council following the escalation in Gaza in May. It exemplifies the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel. The establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians, and ensure that terrorist organizations, including Hamas, do not exploit the situation, including by indiscriminate firing of rockets, to advance their own destructive aims. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and likeminded partners to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states.

Question. In May of this year, Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists launched more than 4,000 rockets that targeted Israeli civilians. As you know, shortly after this, the Biden administration announced that it would re-open the consulate general in Jerusalem. U.S. law is clear that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. Re-opening this consulate sends the wrong message.

- Do you support re-opening the consulate in Eastern Jerusalem?

Answer. In May, Secretary Blinken publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I understand that this is a component of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaders.

Question. In your opinion, how does re-opening the Consulate comply with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995?

Answer. I understand that the Jerusalem Embassy Act restricted certain funding for the Department of State until the Secretary determined and reported to Congress that the U.S. Embassy to Israel had officially opened in Jerusalem. During the Trump administration, Secretary Pompeo determined and reported to Congress in 2019 that the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem had officially opened, consistent with the requirements of the Jerusalem Embassy Act. I understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem as called for by the Act. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem would not affect that policy or walk back or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

If confirmed, I will always work to ensure that all our policies are consistent with U.S. interests and applicable U.S. law.

Answer. Are you aware of other cases where the U.S. operates both a consulate and an embassy in the same city?

Answer. I cannot speak to the global U.S. diplomatic presence, however I understand that the Department uses a variety of diplomatic and consular platforms to best serve U.S. interests around the world and maintained a Consulate General and

Embassy in Jerusalem simultaneously from May 2018 to March 2019. The Biden-Harris administration has made clear that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and the U.S. Embassy will remain in Jerusalem. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Do you believe, as is the policy of the United States, that we must assist the Government of Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side-by-side in pace and security and to encourage Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state solution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. As the President's nominee, do you agree that our diplomatic presence in Jerusalem through our Embassy is sufficient to meet the consular needs of Palestinians?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy to Israel, which the United States Government has been clear will remain in Jerusalem, provides consular services to U.S. citizens and permanent residents, as well as local communities residing in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. The President and Secretary Blinken have reaffirmed the administration's intent as well to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem, to support renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaderships.

Question. While the opportunities for partnership are significant, there are also those who worry about China's growing relationship with Israel and needed proper guardrails in place when seeking to work on technology together. If confirmed, how would you seek to deepen the U.S.-Israel partnerships in emerging tech while seeking to deter the Israelis from taking steps closer to China?

Answer. The administration remains deeply concerned by attempts by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use technology through acquisitions and investment in Israel. The administration welcomes efforts by all countries to enhance investment in quality infrastructure development. I believe that such an investment must be within the confines of strong regulatory structures that ensure all companies investing in Israel do so in a responsible manner, consistent with international practices, that benefits the people of Israel, and does not undermine Israeli national security. While Israel's establishment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, given the voluntary nature of its coverage and its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to minimize exposure to national security risks, including the acquisitions of critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. What untapped opportunities exist for mutual exchanges to deepen our bilateral research and innovation relationship?

Answer. Advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship remains a top priority for me. Israel is a world leader in innovation, research and development and Israel's start up economy is safe and welcoming for U.S. businesses, with U.S. companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centers in Israel. Three U.S.-Israel bi-national foundations have provided over \$1.2 billion for joint science and technology projects and both sides signed a new Science

and Technology Cooperation Agreement that entered into force in December 2020. If confirmed, I plan to build on these already robust relationships to promote further cooperation in bilateral research and innovation, including working with Israel to strengthen foreign investment risk management which is a key investment in the innovation relationship between the United States and Israel.

In addition, collaboration made possible because of the Abraham Accords and in the Eastern Mediterranean, including with the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) and 3+1 mechanism, presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. These efforts can help promote Israel's regional integration and greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity throughout the region. If confirmed, I look forward to expanding these efforts.

Question. A developing story from September 21 is that progressive Democrats in the House of Representatives have stripped funding for Iron Dome—Israel's primary tool for defending civilians from Hamas' terrorist rocket attacks—out from the upcoming funding bill. If confirmed, would you commit to advocating for the Congress to provide Israel with all the tools necessary to defend itself?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including Israel's ability to maintain its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. The President was clear when President Bennett visited Washington at the end of August that the administration fully supports replenishing Israel's Iron Dome System.

This administration is committed to ensuring Israel's right to defend itself from indiscriminate rocket attacks by assisting Israel in replenishing its Iron Dome Air Defense Missile System. If confirmed, I will work with relevant State and DoD colleagues to see what can be done in this regard.

Question. In carrying out the Memorandum of Understanding on U.S. Foreign Defense Aid to Israel, the funding for which Congress authorized last year, what are the most pressing threats that Congress must consider when we set aside annual funding for security assistance to Israel?

Answer. The commitment to Israel's security is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, supported by the 10-year, \$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding with Israel. This commitment includes \$3.3 billion in annual Foreign Military Financing. As I shared in my opening statement, Israel is one of our closest security partners in countering a broad spectrum of threats ranging from climate change to cyber-attacks to nuclear proliferation. Chief among these is the critical threat that Iran and Iranian-backed militias pose. While President Biden has made clear his commitment to ensure that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon, upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests and ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner.

The best way we can do this is by continuing robust levels of bilateral U.S. security assistance including through the Foreign Military Financing program, which will help to maintain Israel's Qualitative Military Edge; and acknowledge strong bilateral ties; and enable cutting-edge cooperation on missile defense. U.S. funding also supports Israel's continued defense modernization and provides for the acquisition of U.S.-origin defense equipment ranging from ammunition to advanced weapons systems and training.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Congressional Determinations and Policies

Question. In 1987, Congress passed The Anti-Terrorism Act, in which Congress determined that "the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization and a threat to the interests of the United States, its allies, and to international law" (22 USC §5201). In 2012, Congress passed The United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, which established that it is "the policy of the United States. To assist the Government of Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side-by-side in peace and security, and to encourage Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state" (22 USC §8602). In 2014, Congress passed The United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, which reaffirmed that it is "the policy of the United States. to support the Government of Israel in its ongoing efforts to reach a negotiated political settlement with the Palestinian people that results

in two states living side-by-side in peace and security” (22 USC § 8602 Statutory Notes).

- Do you agree with Congress’s determination that “the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization and a threat to the interests of the United States, its allies, and to international law?”

Answer. My understanding is that subsequent to the 1987 passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act, in 1993, in connection with the Oslo Accords, the PLO renounced terrorism and recognized Israel’s right to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people for purposes of negotiations for permanent status and peace. Subsequently, across administrations, Congress and the executive branch have worked together to press the PLO to continue to comply with those commitments, and to support its engagement with Israel, and with the United States in support of negotiations and its commitments including those disavowing terrorism.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our engagement with the Palestinians advances Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, understanding, peace, security coordination, and stability. To that end, I will work with the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel, and international community to consider ways in which we can strengthen the position of the Palestinian Authority and to recommend that all sides adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, positive steps-like condemning incitement to violence and terrorism- to keep the possibility of a negotiated two-state solution alive.

Question. Do you commit to “assist” and “support” the Government of Israel in its negotiations with the Palestinians?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as to help create the conditions for direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. Do you believe that the United States should be neutral between the Governments of Israel and the Palestinians?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance existing coordination between Israelis and Palestinians to help create the conditions for direct negotiations between the two parties.

Sovereignty

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. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly 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. I understand the administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the administration has not altered U.S. policy on this important issue. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will 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 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. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly 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. The administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Abraham Accords

Question. In your testimony you indicated that you are supportive of the Abraham Accords. In early 2021 the State Department distributed internal guidance through emails about how to refer to the normalization between Israel and other countries. In the emails, staffers were instructed that the State Dept. would no longer refer to the normalization as the "Abraham Accords," and the use of "normalization agreements" instead was indicated, according to a June 4 report by the *Washington Free Beacon*.

- Please transmit copies of those emails. *The Washington Free Beacon* reviewed at least two of them.

Answer. While I understand your interest, as a nominee I am not in a position to act on behalf of the State Department with regard to its records. I take my responsibilities with respect to Congressional oversight seriously and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to respond to your concerns.

Question. Please transmit any other internal guidance issued by State Department staffers—including emails, memos, cables, notes, decision memos, briefing papers, instructions, etc.—regarding the use of the phrase "Abraham Accords," from December 2020 through September 2021.

Answer. While I understand your interest, as a nominee I am not in a position to act on behalf of the State Department with regard to its records. I take my responsibilities with respect to Congressional oversight seriously and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to respond to your concerns.

Question. Can you commit to ensuring that any guidelines or policies prohibiting using the phrase "Abraham Accords" are revised and reversed?

Answer. My understanding is that the Biden-Harris administration refers to the agreements known as the Abraham Accords as such. I certainly do. If confirmed, I will continue to use that moniker.

Palestinian Consulate

Question. The Biden administration has indicated and recently reiterated its intention to open a Palestinian-facing consulate in Israel's capital Jerusalem.

- Please describe your assessment of whether the Israeli Government supports such a plan?

Answer. Secretary Blinken publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General. I understand that this is part of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. I am not in a position to comment further on diplomatic discussions related to this process. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out the full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaders. My understanding is that reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change our recognition of Je-

Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and the U.S. Embassy to Israel will remain in Jerusalem.

Question. Do you believe that opening a Palestinian-facing consulate in Jerusalem in the absence of affirmative permission from the Israeli Government would constitute an erosion of their sovereignty over Jerusalem? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out the full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leadership. The U.S. Government has been clear that our Embassy will remain in Jerusalem. The administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. My understanding is that reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Question. Do you believe that the opening of a Palestinian-facing consulate in Jerusalem would prejudice final status negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians? If not, why not?

Answer. This 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. The administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Energy

Question. In January 2019, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, and the Palestinian Authority established the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) headquartered in Cairo. The EMGF, an intergovernmental energy forum, knits together Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf countries, including through an Israeli-Cypriot-Greek pipeline. The forum members agree to work to formulate a common policy for the regional energy market.

- Do you support the efforts and objectives of the EMGF?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. The Forum can help promote greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity throughout the region. If confirmed, I would build on the work between colleagues in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs, Energy Resources, and European Affairs to coordinate our engagement and am eager to learn more about the EMGF's announcement earlier this year that it plans to work with specialists to discuss and promote gas decarbonization. I would also take steps to align our other regional embassies to support this effort in the field so that we can advance cooperation, energy security and U.S. national interests.

Question. Do you support the United States continued involvement within the EMFG?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. If confirmed, I hope to continue U.S. involvement with the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum.

Question. Do you support efforts by Israel and other regional partners to develop a sustainable natural gas infrastructure including through bilateral negotiations?

Answer. I support the development of sustainable, secure, energy sources by Israel and other regional partners, including through bilateral negotiations. Natural gas discoveries have helped redefine relationships and increase energy security in the Eastern Mediterranean, and our partners building up capacity in renewable energy sources will further transform the energy landscape in this region.

Question. Can you evaluate the impacts of the EMFG on advancing peace and cooperation between Israel and regional partners?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. The Forum promotes greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity and supports Israel's greater integration in the region.

Question. Can you evaluate the impact that completing the EastMed pipeline would have on providing Europe with an alternative to Russian supplied gas?

Answer. If completed, the EastMed Pipeline project could increase regional energy security in the Eastern Mediterranean, diversify Europe's energy supply, and aid in ensuring a more stable energy transition.

Question. Do you support the continued development of the EastMed Pipeline?

Answer. As I understand it, there are a number of regional energy projects in the Eastern Mediterranean under consideration, including the EastMed Pipeline. If confirmed, I would advocate for regional energy and electrical interconnections that have the potential to increase our partners' and allies' energy security, diversify energy supplies, and aid in ensuring more stable and sustainable energy transitions.

Question. What impact do you think this energy forum has on regional dynamics, including those related to diplomatic, economic, and security?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners and promotes greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity in the region, which would help advance stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. After the United States implemented the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45)—including by formally recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel on December 6, 2017, and by relocating and opening the U.S. Embassy to Israel in Israel's capital city of Jerusalem on May 14, 2018—it also closed the U.S. Consulate General for the Palestinians and merged this Consulate General's functions into Embassy Jerusalem under the U.S. Ambassador to Israel's Chief of Mission authority. Do you agree that opening/reopening a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem—in particular, after the fact of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital on December 6, 2017—would constitute a diminution of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital?

Answer. During the Trump administration, Secretary Pompeo determined and reported to Congress in 2019 that the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem had officially opened, consistent with the requirements of the Jerusalem Embassy Act. I understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem as called for by the Act. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not affect that policy or walk back or change U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Question. Do you also agree that opening/reopening a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem—in particular, after the fact of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital on December 6, 2017—would constitute a diminution of Israeli sovereignty? Please begin your answer with a yes or no.

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. I understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. The Government of Israel—under then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and now under Prime Minister Naftali Bennett—has consistently opposed the opening/reopening of a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem after the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital on December 6, 2017, and relocated the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem on May 14, 2018. Do you agree that the United States should not open/reopen a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem if the Government of Israel continues to oppose it? Please begin your response with a yes or no.

Answer. The administration has also been clear, as am I, that our Embassy to Israel will remain in Jerusalem. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leadership. In May, Secretary Blinken stated “the United States will be moving forward with the process to reopen our consulate in Jerusalem. That’s an important way for our country to engage with and provide support for the Palestinian people.” I understand that this is part of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership.

Question. Since the change in presidential administrations, some U.S. Government officials at times have publicly resisted using the term “Abraham Accords” and instead insisted on only using the term “normalization agreements.” If confirmed, do you commit that you will refer to the historic agreements that normalized Israel’s relations with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco by their name—the “Abraham Accords?”

Answer. My understanding is that the Biden-Harris administration refers to the agreements known as the Abraham Accords as such. I certainly do. If confirmed, I will continue to use that moniker.

Question. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, you will have the opportunity to interact with both the UAE and Bahraini Ambassadors to Israel—in addition to potentially hosting delegations or meeting with diplomats from other countries normalizing or considering normalization with Israel. Will you commit to meet regularly with your Abraham Accords counterparts? What other steps will you take to continue Arab-Israeli normalization from your position?

Answer. As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have said, the administration welcomes and strongly supports the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. I understand the Department is leading the U.S. Government’s efforts, working with interagency partners, to deepen existing agreements and urge other countries to normalize relations with Israel.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with diplomatic colleagues in Israel, including those from countries that have recently established ties with Israel. I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to engaging with Israel’s new partners in the region to find ways to improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike to help create the conditions for a durable two-state solution.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Canada & China:

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to deepen coordination with our Canadian allies and ensure that our two countries formulate a joint response to the challenges posed by China’s coercive diplomacy? What would success look like to you two years from now?

Answer. Consistent with the longstanding, strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, I have observed that the United States and Canada have undertaken significant efforts in recent years to coordinate our engagement with the People’s Republic of China (“PRC”). If confirmed, I would maintain regular contact with Canadian leadership to build on this progress and explore new avenues in our response to this significant challenge. Success in two years would see us having engaged in continued dialogue with Canada to identify and act on opportunities to develop a joint approach to the PRC that reflects our shared values and effectively pushes back on the PRC’s problematic activities.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes, I agree that these incidents are serious and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit that any such reported incident would be treated seriously and reported quickly through appropriate channels, and that affected individuals would receive prompt access to medical care.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit that I would meet with medical staff and RSO at post to discuss any past incidents to ensure protocols are being followed.

Canada and Refugees

Question. Canadians are among our most reliable partners on refugee resettlement, implementing innovative government and privately sponsored resettlement programs that enable the world's most vulnerable to find safety quickly. The Canadian Government has committed to accept 20,000 refugees from Afghanistan, adding to the tens of thousands they accepted from Syria, and the upwards of one million they've accepted since 1980. As conflicts become increasingly protracted and global challenges abound, the numbers of people in need of international protection will grow exponentially. Our partnership with Canada in anticipating and responding to new displacement-related needs will be critical.

- If confirmed, how would you seek to leverage Canada's experiences and deepen our collaboration with our Canadian partners on migration and protection issues?

Answer. As one of our closest allies, we have worked with Canada hand-in-hand on many issues, including migration and refugees. If confirmed, I would maintain the robust work our countries have done in conjunction with President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau's Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership on addressing the global migration crisis. Our countries share a commitment to providing safe haven to refugees, including through refugee resettlement. These commitments have been spotlighted recently with Afghan refugees. I applaud Canada's commitment to receive 20,000 Afghan refugees, 5,000 of whom are to be referred by the United States.

Additionally, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with our Canadian partners as they chair the MIRPS (Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework) Support Platform under the theme of "protection and empowerment of women and girls on the move" to draw attention and support solutions to forced displacement in Mexico and Central America.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Canada-China Relations

Question. What is your assessment of the current state of Canada-China relations?

Answer. Canada-China relations reached their lowest point in 50 years following both the PRC's arbitrary detention of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in December 2018 and PRC bans on some Canadian agricultural exports in response to Canada's arrest of Meng Wanzhou on a U.S. extradition request in December 2018. Canada's relations with the PRC remain strained.

Question. Please explain how you would recommend the United States work to address the worst aspects of China's economic, political, and security influence in the Western Hemisphere and the world at large.

Answer. If confirmed, taking advantage of the historically strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, I would continue to explore ways to work with Canada to more closely align our approaches to Beijing, including to address the challenges the PRC presents to our collective interest and to the international rules-based order in our hemisphere and around the world. I would work to coordinate our policies pursuant to the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, including when dealing with the PRC's coercive and unfair economic practices, national security challenges, and human rights abuses, while cooperating on areas where it is in our interest, such as on the climate crisis.

Question. Please explain how you plan to communicate with the Canadian people about the challenges posed by the People's Republic of China to international norms.

Answer. The Canadian people appear to have a clear understanding of the challenges posed by the PRC, from its arbitrary detention of Canadian citizens to its use of economic coercion in trade to its intimidation of ethnic Chinese, Uyghur, and Tibetan communities in Canada. If confirmed, I plan to have significant interactions with Canadians and I would have frank conversations with Canadians about how the United States and Canada could work even more closely, bilaterally and multilaterally, to face the challenges the PRC poses to international norms.

Question. Please explain how the United States and Canada could enhance cooperation to counter Chinese disinformation, influence operations, academic espionage, and propaganda efforts.

Answer. These PRC efforts impact the United States, Canada, and many of our like-minded allies and partners. If confirmed, building on the historically strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, I would work to increase cooperation with Canada and other likeminded countries to counter these PRC campaigns through joint actions, exchange of best practices, and multilateral initiatives.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritize collaborative initiatives to implement the January 9, 2020 U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals Development Collaboration?

Answer. As part of the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau agreed to strengthen the U.S.-Canada Critical Minerals Action Plan to target a net-zero industrial transformation, batteries for zero-emissions vehicles, and renewable energy storage. If confirmed, I would look to the Roadmap to guide my priorities as Ambassador, including efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Canada Critical Minerals Action Plan, as well as related efforts to build the necessary supply chains to make the United States and Canada global leaders in all aspects of battery development and production.

Question. Canada is the only member of the Five Eyes that has not formally barred or restricted use of equipment from Huawei in its telecommunication networks. Please explain what impact the presence of untrustworthy technologies, such as those from Huawei would have to our bilateral cooperation with Canada.

Answer. The United States understands the promise of 5G wireless networks, and governments and telecom operators need to prioritize security when building their 5G infrastructure. United States technical experts assess that the risk of allowing untrustworthy suppliers' equipment anywhere in 5G networks cannot be sufficiently mitigated; the United States is, therefore, removing untrustworthy equipment from its own government and private sector communications networks. Other governments, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand have come to the same conclusion. If confirmed, I would help carry out the U.S. Government commitment to ensure that U.S. telecommunications networks do not use equipment from untrusted vendors.

Question. If confirmed, how would you communicate concerns about the use of untrustworthy technologies, such as Huawei's in Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I would convey the need for governments and telecom operators to prioritize security when building 5G infrastructure. Through conversations with the Canadian Government, public, and business community, I would stress that allowing untrusted telecommunications suppliers to participate in or control any part of a 5G network creates unacceptable risks to national security, the integrity of critical infrastructure, privacy, and human rights.

Question. Please describe the impact on privacy, censorship, and human rights from the inclusion of communication networks and supply chains with equipment and services from companies with close ties to or susceptible to pressure from governments or security services without reliable legal checks on governmental powers.

Answer. Countries and citizens need to be able to trust that 5G equipment and software will not introduce risks that threaten national security, privacy, or human rights. Trust cannot exist where information and communications technology and services vendors are subject to control by authoritarian governments, like the PRC, which lacks an independent judiciary or democratic checks and balances to protect companies and consumers and has a long track record of using access to data to surveil, harass, and otherwise crack down on its dissidents and to enabling other authoritarian governments to do the same. Like-minded countries, companies, and civil society groups can and must work together to address these threats.

U.S.-Canada Border Closures

Question. In August, Canada lifted its travel restrictions on Americans that are vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test result. On September 20, the Biden administration extended restrictions on land travel from Canada for at least another month, while lifting air travel restrictions for travelers from around the world who have been vaccinated or tested negative for COVID-19.

Answer. Acknowledged, and noted as context for the question that follows.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the reasons behind the different approaches to U.S. restrictions on land travel versus air travel from Canada.

Answer. I understand the difficult impacts on United States border communities and their residents of COVID-based travel restrictions. I also understand the health-based justifications for those restrictions. I also understand that decisions regarding travel restrictions are made with advice from public health and medical experts, who consult regularly with their Canadian counterparts. These decisions are made to decrease the spread of COVID-19, especially emergent variants. If confirmed, I would coordinate closely with the White House, relevant U.S. agencies, and Congress on our policies to protect our borders and citizens, and to facilitate cross-border traffic and commercial activities to the extent possible.

Question. In your opinion, does the divergent approach to air and land travel with Canada constitutes sound policy?

Answer. I believe that decisions regarding the health, safety, and welfare of the United States and its citizens are best left to our public health and medical experts.

Question. What is your understanding of the economic and emotional hardship northern border closures are placing on American border communities?

Answer. I empathize with those who face challenges as a result of the ongoing border restrictions. I understand that some U.S. citizens, their families, and businesses do not fall under the essential travel exemptions and may have experienced social and economic challenges. I want to emphasize that I share the desire of many fellow Americans to resume normal cross-border travel as soon as possible, once public health and medical professionals deem it safe to do so.

Question. Do you agree that the Biden administration should pursue a more consistent approach to air and land travel from Canada?

Answer. I believe we should resume normal cross-border travel as soon as U.S. public health professionals conclude it is safe to do so. I trust their recommendations and know that decisions regarding travel are made with our safety in mind. If confirmed, I would prioritize the safety and security of U.S. citizens in all aspects of my duties.

Arctic

Question. Please explain how the United States and Canada can revitalize cooperation on continental defense and in the Arctic, including the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) to effectively defend the Northern Hemisphere against the range of threats by peer competitors.

Answer. As a close and strategically located ally, Canada plays an indispensable role in promoting our common defense, especially in the Arctic. If confirmed, I would underscore in interactions with Canadian officials the strategic importance of NORAD to our mutual continental defense and emphasize the urgent need to bolster our aerospace defense through modernization efforts - efforts which Canada has embraced. Regarding Canada's Future Fighter Capabilities Project, I would continue U.S. efforts to advocate for a U.S. solution that would provide Canada with world-class defense technology at the best value while also supporting continued interoperability in our collective defense of Northern America.

Question. Please explain your views on the growing Chinese and Russian presence in the Arctic region.

Answer. Both Russia and the PRC have increased their activities in the Arctic in recent years, the latter going so far as to declare itself a "near Arctic state" and publicizing its objective of extending its Belt and Road Initiative into the Arctic. While investment in the Arctic is expected as climate change makes the region more accessible, such investment must be transparent, adhere to existing international law and practice, and support the needs of the peoples of the region. Neither Russia nor the PRC has been transparent about its operations in the Arctic, and both are eager to advance their interests. At the same time, Russia has indicated willingness to engage in discussions on our concerns, agreeing at the June Presidential Summit

in Geneva to further discuss the Northern Sea Route and improved coordination between our respective Coast Guards. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen our ability to deter attempts by Russia and the PRC to constrain the United States and our allies, including in the Arctic.

Question. If confirmed, how would you communicate the need to heighten deterrence capabilities in the Arctic?

Answer. The Arctic is a strategic space in which U.S. and Canadian capabilities may be put to the test and in which our need to communicate credible deterrence is critical. This is another space where joint communication and action by the United States and Canada will send a more powerful signal. If confirmed, I would consult closely with the Department of Defense and others among the interagency to ensure we are conveying the full spectrum of our concerns, with supporting information, to our Canadian allies.

U.S.-Canada Border Security

Question. Last year, the CBP seizures of illicit narcotics along the Canadian border were up 1,000 percent. CBP seized nearly 40,000 pounds of marijuana across 16 ports of entry worth between \$100 million and \$120 million. There are concerns about increases in illicit trafficking of drugs through the border between the U.S. and Canada. How should the U.S. and Canada work together to better address these threats to prevent transnational criminal activity?

Answer. The U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Opioids was launched in Washington on January 31, 2020. On February 23, 2021, President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau recommitted to the U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Opioids as part of the larger Roadmap for a U.S.-Canada Renewed Partnership jointly issued by both leaders.

If confirmed, I would build on close bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States and the good progress our countries have made on the joint action plan to combat opioids, and I would work closely with our Canadian counterparts to address the issue of the flow of illicit drugs over the border.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges, project subgroups focused on law enforcement, border security, and health meet regularly. The Working Group meets quarterly, and the Steering Committee meets bi-annually. I applaud the great work our respective countries have made to address this important issue, and I would support this action plan at every appropriate opportunity.

NATO

Question. Canada plans to increase its defense spending by 73 percent over ten years to reach C\$32.7 billion (\$25.2b) in 2026-2027. If implemented, Canada's total defense spending as a percentage of GDP would reach 1.4 percent in 2024-2025, which would fall well short of NATO's recommended 2 percent of GDP level. How do you see your role as Ambassador, if confirmed, to encourage Canada to adhere to its 2 percent commitment at NATO?

Answer. If confirmed, I would engage Canada's leadership to clarify the intent behind our security priorities, the underlying concerns that drive those priorities, and our position regarding equitable and sufficient contributions to NATO.

Question. Do you agree with Canada's counterargument that the countries' contributions to the alliance should be measured more by capabilities and the troops they provide over their defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP? How would you react to this if confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. If confirmed, I would express appreciation for Canada's notable contributions to security in the hemisphere and globally (including through NATO), I would note how both our countries' interests have been undermined by the actions of third parties, and I would underscore that a robust and concerted response to these threats and challenges is required. Such a response must necessarily include funding as well as capabilities and troops.

Question. In what ways can the U.S. and Canada work better together in NATO engagements?

Answer. Our defense cooperation with Canada is one of the most comprehensive security relationships globally and comprises both bilateral and multilateral arrangements. If confirmed, I would ensure U.S. security interests concerning NATO are conveyed and advanced as part of the U.S. Mission's bilateral engagement plan. Additionally, I would engage Canada's leadership to clarify the intent behind U.S. security decisions, and I would regularly solicit Canada's input for how best to further strengthen the NATO alliance.

USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement)

Question. What's your assessment of Canada's implementation of USMCA? What challenges do you foresee in USMCA implementation and how would you use your role as Ambassador to encourage Canada to rectify these issues?

Answer. Canada continues to work toward meeting its obligations under the USMCA, though challenges remain. If confirmed, I will work to further Canada's compliance with USMCA issues impacting dairy quotas, automotive trade, and digital services, among other topics. We will put the interests of American workers and businesses at the forefront of our foreign policy.

Trade Disputes

Question. The United States has longstanding disputes with Canada over softwood lumber imports. U.S. industry contends that Canada unfairly subsidizes its lumber by providing cheap access to public land. Softwood lumber is now in its fifth iteration of litigation. If confirmed as Ambassador, how would you work to ensure U.S. industry interests are represented?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the United States interagency and industry to ensure fair treatment for U.S. softwood lumber producers. Because this remains an active litigation matter, I am unable to comment further.

Energy

Question. The Biden administration cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline's border crossing presidential permit in January 2021, which would have moved up to 830,000 barrels of crude daily. Canadian Government officials have expressed disappointment with President Biden's decision. Do you agree with President Biden's decision to revoke the permit?

Answer. Canada remains the top energy partner of the United States. I understand we have a robust trading relationship and shared energy infrastructure. Tackling the existential threat of the climate crisis requires, as the President's Executive Order of January 20 stated, action on a scale and at a speed commensurate with the need to avoid setting the world on a dangerous and potentially catastrophic climate trajectory. The world must be put on a sustainable climate pathway to protect Americans and the domestic economy from harmful climate impacts, and to create well-paying jobs as part of the climate solution. If confirmed, I would support President Biden's efforts to restore American leadership in the fight against climate change and to help position our nation to be the global leader in clean energy and jobs, while continuing to respect the strong energy partnership between Canada and the United States.

Question. What negative implications does the cancelation of the Keystone XL pipeline have on the bilateral U.S.-Canada energy relationship? What about the broader bilateral relationship?

Answer. President Biden spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his first call to a foreign leader as President of the United States only two days after the cancelation of the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline. While President Biden acknowledged Prime Minister Trudeau's disappointment regarding the decision to rescind the permit, he reaffirmed his commitment to maintain an active bilateral dialogue and to further deepen cooperation with Canada. During the call, both leaders highlighted the strategic importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship and the desire to reinvigorate bilateral cooperation on an ambitious and wide-ranging agenda, including combating the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening economic ties, defense, and global leadership to address the pressing challenge of climate change. The continuing strength of our relationship was further demonstrated with the issuance of the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership in February.

Question. Do you think this decision has casted doubt among Canadians of the U.S. as a long-term reliable energy partner?

Answer. No. Following President Biden's decision to rescind the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed the President's decisions to rejoin the Paris Agreement and to place a temporary moratorium on all oil and natural gas leasing activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, noting, "I look forward to working with President Biden to reduce pollution, combat climate change, fight COVID-19, create middle class jobs, and build back better by supporting a sustainable economic recovery for everyone." The United States and Canada are working together to increase the scale and speed of action to address the climate crisis and support the transition to a net-zero clean energy future. If confirmed, I would support these goals in the course of my duties.

Question. If confirmed, where does North American energy security would fall on your list of priorities as U.S. Ambassador to Canada?

Answer. Energy security is an important priority. President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau recognized the important energy security benefits of our bilateral energy relationship and its highly integrated infrastructure as part of the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership. President Biden's Build Back Better agenda also highlights the importance of creating clean energy jobs as part of our economic recovery. If confirmed, I would focus on President Biden's priorities for the bilateral relationship as highlighted in the Roadmap, including the importance of energy security in the bilateral energy relationship.

Question. If confirmed, how would you work to promote American and North American energy security?

Answer. President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau have pledged to work together to build on the countries' strong energy security partnership, including in the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S. Canada Partnership and to strengthen action towards a net-zero clean energy future. If confirmed, I would work to support this vision by communicating often and openly with Canadian counterparts on their energy plans, by identifying areas for deeper collaboration between our respective governments, and by looking for investment opportunities for U.S. companies.

Foreign Assistance

Question. In what areas do you see the greatest opportunity for U.S.-Canadian cooperation in foreign assistance?

Answer. A top priority of the United States and Canada is to end the COVID-19 pandemic and support global health security by working together to support global affordable access to and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, including through the COVAX Facility. The United States and Canada cooperate closely in multilateral groups to raise global climate ambition, including through increased pledges of climate-related assistance to developing countries. Consistent with our shared values, the United States and Canada promote diversity and inclusion in our foreign assistance, particularly in support of gender equality through equal rights for women and girls.

Question. Canada is considered to be a "strong supporter" of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and even hosted the Fund's fifth replenishment conference in 2016. Still, Canada has provided roughly \$2.5 in contributions to the Fund since 2002, while the United States has provided over \$17.6 billion. Similarly, Canada is considered to be an "anchor" donor to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, as well as to the Gavi-led COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative (COVAX). Canada has provided \$842 million in contributions for Gavi since 2002 and \$545 million for COVAX, while the United States has provided over \$4.4 billion and \$3.5 billion, respectively. If confirmed, how will you encourage Canada to take on a larger proportion of contributions for the Global Fund, Gavi, and COVAX? Do you consider this a priority?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to prioritize the issues highlighted in the bilateral Roadmap, of which fighting COVID-19 is first and foremost. Efforts to support global health security remain a top priority for both the United States and Canada, as demonstrated by Prime Minister Trudeau's participation at the Global COVID-19 Summit, hosted by President Biden on September 22, 2021. Both the United States and Canada have agreed to strengthen existing pandemic preparedness platforms and arrangements and to work to improve international institutions, including the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization.

Question. How will you encourage the Canadian Government to help finance international pandemic preparedness and response more broadly? What levers does the United States have? Are you willing to use them?

Answer. Through the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, Canada has committed to strengthening international pandemic preparedness as a top priority. If confirmed, I would work closely with Canadian counterparts to drive progress on our shared priorities, including efforts to support increased global health security.

Venezuela

Question. Canada has taken a series of multilateral and bilateral actions in support of the Venezuelan people and to weaken the illegitimate Maduro regime.

- If confirmed, in what ways would you encourage Canada to take heightened action against the corrupt and illegitimate Maduro regime?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage Canada to continue to coordinate with the United States and other international partners to maintain and increase pressure on the Maduro regime, as appropriate. I would do this by seeking avenues to further isolate Maduro internationally, call attention to the regime's human rights abuses, and through the application of additional targeted sanctions, if warranted.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to encourage the Canadian Government to maintain support for the Guaido-led democratic forces as legitimate representative of Venezuela at the Organization of American States?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage the Canadian Government to maintain support for the Guaido-led democratic forces as the legitimate representatives of Venezuela at the Organization of American States.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to encourage the Canadian Government to maintain sanctions on the Maduro regime until there is a credible transition to democratic order in Venezuela?

Answer. Canada has implemented significant sanctions against the regime to date. If confirmed, I would seek continued support from Canada to maintain coordinated pressure against Maduro -including through sanctions- until there is a credible process underway to restore democracy, rule of law, and human rights in Venezuela.

Nicaragua

Question. Canada has issued sanctions related to Nicaragua in response to the gross and systematic human rights violations that have been committed by the Ortega regime against Nicaraguan people. In what ways would you encourage Canada to put further pressure on the Ortega regime?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage Canada to remain linked up with international efforts to further pressure the Ortega regime. I would also encourage Canada to continue to take a leadership role in the Organization of American States, where it has been instrumental in crafting previous joint statements denouncing the Ortega-Murillo regime.

STATE DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Mission Canada

Question. Mission Canada has been under enormous stress over the past few years with management issues and COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Canada?

Answer. Based on the experience of this nomination process, I understand our mission in Canada to be staffed by hard-working civil servants, foreign service officers and specialists, uniformed military personnel, and locally employed staff. Respecting the limitations of my role as a nominee, I have not had any personal contact with Mission Canada. If confirmed, one of my first priorities would be to assess the morale of these dedicated staff members at the embassy and at our constituent posts.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across all of Mission Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consult at the start of my tenure with key managers at U.S. Embassy Ottawa and at all our constituent posts to determine where the strengths and weaknesses of the mission are in terms of morale. I would make the maintenance of strong morale a priority in my role as Ambassador.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consult closely with the Canada country desk, with others at State and across the interagency, and with Congress on priorities for our relationship with Canada. In Canada, I would consult with embassy and constituent post staff to solicit a full range of inputs and opinions, and I would encourage all to speak frankly. I would refer to the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership to inform my vision for Mission Canada, and I would build on priorities and lines of effort in Mission Canada's current Integrated Country Strategy.

Management

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I would describe my management style as collaborative and respectful. I consider myself to be an accessible and communicative leader. I believe in communicating expectations clearly and in providing constructive feedback as required.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

Answer. As noted above, I understand our mission in Canada to be staffed by dedicated civil servants, foreign service officers and specialists, uniformed military personnel, and locally employed staff. I have the utmost respect for their work and for what they do every day on behalf of the American people. If confirmed, this respect would be the foundation for my management of the complex operations of Mission Canada. I have had the experience of working with similarly well motivated career (civil service) employees when I served as Chief of Staff in the Philadelphia City government. In order to accomplish the Mission's goals, I would prioritize securing appropriate resources for the Mission, commensurate with the importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. I agree with this approach. No leader can be successful if he or she lacks understanding of the organization's operations or workplace culture. If confirmed, I would commit to understand the Mission's operations and culture across the full spectrum of employees in Ottawa and at the constituent posts. As a manager and leader, I believe strongly in meeting and interacting with a wide swath of the employees in the Embassy and in being accessible and communicative.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No. Respect for subordinates is an essential leadership trait.

Question. How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) plays a key role in ensuring that the Mission's priorities are pursued properly and that the Mission's functions are carried out smoothly. The DCM is also a wealth of institutional knowledge about the bilateral relationship and the workings of the State Department and the inter-agency. If confirmed, I would seek to complement the DCM's experience with my leadership of the Mission.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek the advice of the DCM on how best to engage with Canada to pursue U.S. interests, how to solicit required resources so that the Mission may fully pursue these interests, and how best to support Mission staff in the completion of their duties.

Local Interaction

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. Diplomats are most successful when they are able to allot ample time and are sufficiently resourced to engage directly and regularly with host country and host government contacts. If confirmed, I would support and prioritize my own engagement and staff engagement with their contacts to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Canada's current public health advice.

Question. How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I would assess if the Mission had adequate resources to pursue U.S. interests and accomplish its goals, including the ability of our diplomats to access a sufficiently representative cross section of the local population. If these resources were lacking, I would work with my DCM and others to determine how best to fulfill our needs.

Public Diplomacy

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Canada? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face?

Answer. The bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States is strong and productive, with deep, historic ties. Although Canadians see the bilateral relationship as vitally important, public opinion polling in 2021 showed Canadians perceived the state of relations between Canada and the United States with mixed feelings. To address this challenge, Mission Canada works to reinforce our shared values and goals, including our commitment to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, building back our economies in environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive ways, accelerating climate ambitions, advancing diversity and inclusion, bolstering security and defense, and building global alliances. Continuing to pursue these objectives, and to communicate our commitment and work on these issues would be a top priority if I am confirmed.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. The U.S. Mission in Canada conducts public diplomacy activities through its eight posts across Canada. Main State, through bureaus like Global Public Affairs, Western Hemisphere Affairs, and the Global Engagement Center, provides overall policy guidance and general messaging. Each post tailors messaging to its audience based on daily interactions with the Canadian public.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Canada's Participation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Question. As Ambassador to Canada, how would you lead the U.S. Embassy to work with the newly-elected Canadian members of the Parliamentary Assembly to become active in the OSCE PA?

Answer. Our shared democratic heritage, including the regular election of legislative bodies to represent our populations, is a foundational aspect of the bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States. If confirmed, one of my top priorities would be to build strong connections with members of Canada's Parliament, in particular those newly elected on September 20. Canada participated in its 29th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) on June 30 to July 6. If confirmed, I would encourage further inter-parliamentary dialogue through vigorous engagement with parliamentarians. I would also encourage active Canadian participation in OSCE PA meetings, committees, and election observation activities to advance our shared goals of promoting security, prosperity, and democracy in the OSCE region.

Question. I also authored a law directing the State Department to seek to build out a parliamentary assembly in the OAS. How would you propose that Canada help to support this initiative?

Answer. The United States and Canada both have a long history of supporting parliamentary exchanges. The Canadian Section of ParlAmericas is one of the 35 members of ParlAmericas, an institution that promotes Parliamentary Diplomacy in the Inter-American System. The international Secretariat of ParlAmericas is incorporated in Canada and remains the only interparliamentary forum to have its headquarters located in Ottawa.

If confirmed, I would cite past successes and promote the value of parliamentary exchanges, and I would encourage counterparts and legislators in Canada to continue to support a parliamentary assembly in the OAS comprising elected legislators.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The Trudeau Government has stated it supports upgrading its equipment to strengthen NORAD, including purchasing more than 80 fighter aircraft. Yet the procurement process has been delayed for more than a decade, raising questions about Canada's political commitment to NORAD. What message would you communicate to the Government of Canada regarding NORAD and our shared aerospace defense?

Answer. If confirmed, I would build on our robust relationship and our frank engagement with Canada to underscore the strategic importance of the role NORAD

plays in our continental defense, and the urgency with which Canada should bolster its contribution to our shared aerospace defense. In my engagement with Canada, I would further highlight the indispensable role we need Canada to play in promoting our common defense due to its position as a close ally and a strategically located neighbor. Regarding Canada's Future Fighter Capabilities Project, I would continue U.S. efforts to advocate for a U.S. solution to offer world-class defense technology at the best value in support of continued interoperability in defense of Northern America.

Question. How do you view our defense cooperation with Canada? Given our recent diplomatic tension with France and other allies over questions of defense cooperation, what steps will you take if confirmed to reassure Canada about our enduring commitment?

Answer. Our defense cooperation with Canada is one of the most comprehensive security relationships in the world and comprises both bilateral and multilateral arrangements. If confirmed, I would ensure U.S. security interests are fully represented in the U.S. Mission's engagement. Additionally, I would engage Canada's leadership to clarify the intent behind our security decisions, and I would regularly solicit Canada's input for how best to strengthen our alliance even further.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Economic Stability

Question. Costa Rica's remarkable economic growth over the past quarter of a century has been made possible through the strength of its democratic institutions, its openness to foreign investment, and steadfast adherence to environmental and humanitarian principles. Although Costa Rica still has one of the lowest poverty rates in the region, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the country's tourism-dependent economy.

- Given these setbacks, if confirmed as our ambassador in Costa Rica what would be your top priorities over the next year to help the country recover from the pandemic and build resiliency against future potential economic shocks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our economic partnership, which supports prosperity in both Costa Rica and the United States. In the short term, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created a significant retraction of the economy, as it has in the region. Additionally, with respect to economic resiliency, I will strongly support efforts to expand bilateral trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). I will encourage Costa Rica to follow through on commitments for governmental and economic reforms, which will lead to a more sustainable path toward prosperity. I will also urge Costa Rica to leverage its recent accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to align itself even more closely with standards that will help it attract investment from U.S. firms and create quality employment. Lastly, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to ensure that post-pandemic growth is inclusive, creating opportunities in tourism and other key sectors for all its citizens.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Absolutely. There is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me. The interagency community is actively examining a range of hypotheses but has not yet made a determination about the cause of the AHIs or whether they can be attributed to a foreign actor. AHIs have been a top priority for Secretary Blinken, who set clear goals for the Health Incident Response Task Force to strengthen the Department's communication with its workforce, provide care for affected employees and family members, and better protect against these events in the future.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes. I will do everything possible to ensure that employees, who report a possible AHI, receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and that the incident is reported through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes. Again, if confirmed, there is nothing I will take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working at U.S. Embassy San Jose.

Migration

Question. Costa Rica has a long tradition of welcoming asylum seekers. As of the end of 2020, Costa Rica hosted nearly 122,000 people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Already in 2021, nearly 23,000 people have applied for asylum in the country, mainly citizens fleeing oppression in Nicaragua.

- Dr. Telles, in your view, how important is it for the United States to support Costa Rica's humanitarian efforts and what will you do as our ambassador to further these efforts?

Answer. Costa Rica is a regional leader in providing access to international protection for refugees and asylum seekers and welcoming vulnerable migrants and guest workers from Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, and elsewhere. We anticipate Costa Rica will continue to support Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers, which are likely to increase as a function of upcoming elections. If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rica to further our cooperation on migration and to assess the need to increase capacity to welcome refugees and asylum seekers.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Please describe the evolving Chinese presence in Costa Rica since President Solis switched diplomatic relations from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China in 2007.

Answer. Costa Rica was the first Central American country to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2007. The countries signed a free trade agreement in 2011 and a bilateral investment treaty in 2016, but the economic relationship remains very limited. Foreign direct investment (FDI) from the PRC in Costa Rica is small, topping \$10 million only once in the last decade and never exceeding one percent of total FDI inflows. Large PRC-backed infrastructure projects have been marred by delays or outright cancellations. Nonetheless, there are efforts to increase public diplomacy and to expand the PRC's economic presence in specific areas, including telecommunications.

Question. Please describe any efforts by the PRC to build relations with legislators and local government officials in Costa Rica.

Answer. My understanding is that the PRC has actively built relations with legislators and local government officials in Costa Rica to build support for PRC-backed infrastructure projects, which have been marred by delays or outright cancellations. The PRC has also attempted to make inroads with local officials through offers of monitoring and communications technology for municipalities.

Question. Please describe what would be your approach to countering Chinese influence in Costa Rica, if confirmed.

Answer. If confirmed, I will vigorously promote the United States as Costa Rica's steadfast partner, emphasizing our common democratic values and strong track record of success. I will communicate to the Costa Rican Government the security risks to Costa Rica's telecommunications infrastructure of allowing PRC-backed vendors to participate in or control its networks. I will also call attention to the poor-quality and costly infrastructure projects financed by the PRC and promote high-standard and transparent investment by the United States and our partners. I would also continue to support ongoing Embassy efforts to build strong relations and security programs with local governments, which have already served as effective

tive counterpoints to the PRC's efforts to increase its influence in Costa Rican municipalities.

Question. Do you agree that the presence of Huawei in Costa Rica is concerning, especially as Costa Rica transitions to 5G?

Answer. The presence of equipment from untrustworthy vendors, such as Huawei, in any country's telecommunications networks is concerning. Allowing high-risk suppliers like Huawei to participate in or control any part of a 5G network, or nationwide broadband networks, creates risks to national security, critical infrastructure, and privacy. If confirmed, I will lead Embassy San Jose's ongoing efforts to engage with Costa Rica on the risks posed by PRC-backed 5G network providers and to encourage the use of only trustworthy vendors in the information and communications technology ecosystem.

Question. Costa Rica participates in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) undertaking upgrades and widening works for its primary national route (Route 32), costing US\$465 million. Please describe U.S. concerns with the Belt and Road Initiative, including in Costa Rica.

Answer. The United States remains concerned about infrastructure projects built under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including its efforts in Costa Rica. In many countries, the PRC uses investment under the BRI and diplomatic engagement to create dependency on PRC resources. In Costa Rica, efforts include the PRC's donation of a \$100 million national soccer stadium (2011) and subsequent donation of \$11 million to modernize the stadium (2018), as well as a multimillion-dollar contribution towards the construction of a police academy. Other large public investments in Costa Rica have not been successful. The financing and construction of the Route 32 highway expansion has been marred by delays, poor planning, and poor budgeting. If confirmed, I will work to maintain the United States' position as Costa Rica's economic partner of choice and trusted ally by emphasizing our geographic proximity, common democratic values, and strong track record of success.

According to the U.N. Refugee Agency, more than 108,000 Nicaraguans have fled the repression of the Ortega-Murillo regime in Nicaragua since 2018, mainly to the United States and Costa Rica. Nearly 23,000 Nicaraguans have sought asylum in Costa Rica in 2021 alone.

Question. Do you agree that the Ortega/Murillo regime in Nicaragua has become a source of significant instability in Central America, and for Costa Rica specifically?

Answer. Yes. The Ortega-Murillo Government's repression has contributed to instability in Central America and a dramatic increase in Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers. The Ortega-Murillo regime has taken actions that undermine respect for human rights and exacerbate fear and insecurity, thus, fueling surges in migration. Costa Rica is a regional leader in providing protection to asylum seekers, refugees, and vulnerable migrants, including a great number of Nicaraguans. If confirmed, I will work with Costa Rica and our international organization partners to increase their capacity to process asylum seekers and refugees and to provide protection to vulnerable Nicaraguans.

Question. The Ortega-Murillo regime of Nicaragua continues to receive international financing by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), despite the instability it generates in Central America.

Answer. I understand that the amount of CABEI financing that benefits the Ortega-Murillo Government is disproportionate, particularly given the many challenges we are addressing in Central America. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to encourage Costa Rica to oppose any funding from CABEI that would go toward sustaining the Nicaraguan Government while it represses its people and undermines democracy and human rights.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work with Costa Rica to ensure that any loan or assistance provided by CABEI to Nicaragua is administered through entities with full technical, administrative, and financial independence from the Ortega-Murillo regime?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to encourage CABEI members to halt financing that directly benefits the Ortega-Murillo Government. If confirmed, I will encourage CABEI members, particularly Costa Rica, to explore ways to structure projects and work through non-governmental organizations and implementers, in order to ensure that financing more directly benefits the Nicaraguan people rather than the repressive Ortega-Murillo Government.

In March 2020, the U.S. indicted Nicolas Maduro and 14 current and former Venezuelan officials for allegedly partnering with the FARC to use cocaine as a weapon to “flood” the United States.

Question. Do the actions by the Maduro regime related to transnational criminal activities undermine U.S. counternarcotic and law enforcement cooperation with Costa Rica?

Answer. We are concerned about the Maduro regime’s transnational criminal activities and their impacts across the region. Costa Rica has become a major transshipment hub for South American cocaine headed to the United States, and it is used by transnational criminal organizations for trafficking both narcotics and people through Central America and Mexico. Therefore, sustaining support of Costa Rica’s security forces with training, equipment, and infrastructure will be key to ensuring their continued success in combating transnational crime. If confirmed, I will continue the strong U.S. support to bolster Costa Rica’s capacity to be our partner in these efforts.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the nexus between transnational criminal organizations and human smuggling/trafficking across Central America and Mexico.

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations fund their activities by engaging in drug trafficking, human smuggling, and human trafficking through Central America and Mexico. Irregular migrants pay smugglers to guide them through Central America to the United States and then later fall prey to human traffickers, who force them into committing crimes, such as transporting drugs to the United States. Irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuses by transnational criminal organizations that engage in human trafficking crimes, such as commercial sex, forced labor, forced criminality, and forced recruitment. Irregular migrants who embark on a journey to the United States unwittingly put themselves at greater risk of financial hardship and human trafficking abuses.

Question. What financial benefits would you estimate drug trafficking groups are reaping from the increased flows of illegal migrants transiting through Costa Rica towards our Southwest border?

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are reaping significant profit from smuggling migrants northward through Central America. Costa Rican and Panamanian authorities, assisted by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security investigative unit, are pursuing a cross-border human smuggling ring. Costa Rican media outlets widely reported smugglers are charging migrants from \$11,000 to \$22,000 per person.

In 2020, Guatemala and Honduras declared Hizballah a foreign terrorist organization.

Question. In your opinion, would it be in the interest of the United States for Costa Rica to make a similar determination?

Answer. Yes, it would be in the U.S. interest for Costa Rica to make a similar determination.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to seek Costa Rica’s designation of Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to seeking Costa Rica’s designation of Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization.

Question. Costa Rica is a reliable partner in the fight against illicit narcotics. Please explain how an increase in coca cultivation in South America impacts the ability of the Costa Rican Government to effectively reduce the flow of illicit narcotics through its territory and into the United States.

Answer. Certainly, increased coca cultivation in South America impacts Costa Rica’s efforts to reduce the flow of narcotics bound for the United States. Costa Rica is the number one transshipment point for Colombian cocaine moving towards the United States. Nonetheless, it is a strong partner in the fight against drug trafficking as exemplified by its interdiction of a record 71 tons of narcotics in 2020. Increased coca cultivation leads to a higher volume of cocaine flowing through Costa Rica. The Embassy works closely with multiple partners in Costa Rica, including their Coast Guard, Border Police, Air Surveillance Service, and national police to increase interdictions and to build law enforcement capacity. In order to ensure that Costa Rica continues to be successful in combating transnational crime, it is critical for the United States to maintain its support of Costa Rica’s security forces with

training, equipment, and infrastructure. If confirmed, I will continue the strong U.S. support to bolster Costa Rica's capacity to be our partner in these efforts.

There is currently a case of a minor American Citizen who was abducted by her mother to Costa Rica. Costa Rica, a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, is in direct violation of their agreements under the Convention and has not returned the child to her parent here in the U.S.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to engage on this matter with Costa Rican authorities?

Answer. I understand the Embassy maintains regular contact with PANI (Costa Rican child protective services, the central authority for Hague Abduction Convention cases) and often communicates with the parents, in addition to conducting welfare checks on the child when possible. If confirmed, I will ensure that compliance with the Hague Convention agreements continues to be a top priority for the U.S. Embassy.

Question. How will you work to ensure Costa Rica becomes compliant with the obligations under the Convention?

Answer. Costa Rica was cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the Department's 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports on International Child Abduction due to judicial delays and decisions that were noncompliant with the Hague Abduction Convention. To address these concerns, the Department of State's Consular Affairs Bureau engages with Costa Rican authorities and international partners. As part of these efforts, the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs helped organize a series of judicial seminars focused on the Convention hosted by the Costa Ricans in November 2020 and February 2021. If confirmed, I will be committed to supporting these and other efforts of the U.S. Embassy to help ensure that Costa Rica complies with its obligations under the Convention.

Question. According to the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons report, Costa Rica was again placed on Tier 2, indicating they do not meet the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking but are making significant efforts to do so.

If confirmed, how will you engage with the host government on this issue to provide additional support to victims, increase prosecutions, and continue prevention efforts?

Answer. The Costa Rican Government demonstrated increasing efforts overall to combat human trafficking compared to the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity. The Costa Rican Government's anti-trafficking efforts included employing new investigative techniques in trafficking cases, identifying more victims, and converting planned training and interagency coordination to virtual delivery amidst the pandemic. However, authorities decreased funding for anti-trafficking efforts and closed a trafficking-specific emergency shelter. If confirmed, I will encourage the Costa Rican Government to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts and to continue providing support for ongoing projects that improve prosecution efforts, protective services, and prevention campaigns.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, how would you engage with Nicaraguan activists and refugees in Costa Rica fleeing the persecution of Daniel Ortega's regime?

Answer. I am deeply concerned about the Nicaraguan refugees fleeing the Ortega-Murillo Government's repression. If confirmed, I will support Costa Rica as it continues to serve as a safe haven for those Nicaraguans. I also commit to engage with those courageous individuals who are advocating for democracy and human rights in their home country.

Question. What steps is the administration taking to support Costa Rica in its efforts to welcome and care for the Nicaraguan refugees streaming into the country?

Answer. Costa Rica is a regional leader in providing protection to asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants and has a tradition of welcoming vulnerable migrants from Nicaragua. This summer, Costa Rica has seen a rise of Nicaraguan asylum seekers and migrants in the wake of political violence in Nicaragua. If confirmed, I will work with Costa Rica to continue to increase their capacity to process asylum seekers and provide protection. Costa Rica is concerned that it does not have the resources to continue to care for Nicaraguan asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with our international organization partners on the ground and the Costa Rican Government to build capacity and provide protection.

Question. The Trump administration's donation of three former Coast Guard cutters to Costa Rica in 2018 gave the country its first blue water interdiction capability. Since then, seizures of illegal drugs has dramatically increased in the country. I applaud this creative use of former Coast Guard cutters to support our allies in defense of U.S. national security interests. Looking forward, what are the current gaps in Costa Rica's capability to disrupt the flow of illegal drugs from South America through the country? What is the Biden administration doing to address these gaps in cooperation with the Government of Costa Rica?

Answer. Costa Rica remains a strong partner in the fight against drug trafficking, interdicting a record 71 tons of narcotics in 2020. The Embassy works closely with multiple partners in Costa Rica, including their Coast Guard, Border Police, Air Surveillance Service, and national police, on increasing interdictions and building law enforcement capacity. Costa Rica has become a major transit point for South American cocaine heading to the United States. Continuing to support Costa Rica's security forces with training, equipment, and infrastructure will help ensure it can effectively combat transnational crime. If confirmed, I will assess the U.S. support needed to bolster Costa Rica's capacity to be our strong partner in these efforts.

Question. How has U.S. security assistance and cooperation been utilized by Costa Rica? If confirmed, what steps would you take to oversee and strengthen our cooperation?

Answer. The U.S. Government works with Costa Rica closely on a number of shared security concerns, including narcotics trafficking. U.S. security assistance to Costa Rica focuses on four areas: counternarcotics; curbing transnational threats and crime; improving citizen security and law enforcement capacity; and strengthening rule of law. If confirmed, I will continue the strong U.S. support for bilateral security cooperation with Costa Rica and assess the need for enhancing this partnership.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TOM UDALL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question. What steps should the United States take to work more closely with New Zealand on economic and trade matters?

Answer. Robust economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific is a key part of the Biden-Harris administration's effort to Build Back Better. The United States will continue working with New Zealand and other partners in the Indo-Pacific region to address specific economic issues such as infrastructure, the digital economy, and energy.

Question. How do you anticipate this agreement will affect the U.S.-New Zealand bilateral relationship?

Answer. AUKUS will increase peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, which will have a positive impact on the bilateral relationship with New Zealand. PM Ardern has said that she welcomes "the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region and reiterate our collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability and the preservation of the international rules based system."

Question. In what ways can we bolster our security partnership with New Zealand and work towards stability in the South Pacific?

Answer. Our military-to-military relationship has reached new heights since the signing of the Wellington and Washington declarations in 2010 and 2012, respectively. Combined naval patrols and exercises have become routine, the New Zealand Army holds one of the Deputy Commander positions with the 25th Infantry Division, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force has been instrumental in providing critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support in the Pacific.

The United States and New Zealand defense forces continue to explore additional ways to cooperate beyond our current work in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and peacekeeping support operations.

Question. What is your assessment of how New Zealand's thinking on China has evolved in recent years? And what should the United States be doing to influence New Zealand's approach towards confronting and competing with China?

Answer. New Zealand is increasingly concerned about growing PRC influence in the Pacific, an indelible part of its own identity and backyard. Mission New Zealand in turn has deepened government, parliamentary, and academic engagement with the United States. Mission New Zealand's Public Affairs section has collaborated with speakers and exchanges to promote our shared understanding on issues related to the PRC.

Question. Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed. There is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me. There is an extensive, ongoing interagency investigation into the cause of these incidents and how we can best protect our people.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will do everything possible to ensure that employees who report a possible AHI receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and the incident is reported through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed. Again, there is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me.

Question. If confirmed, what opportunities and priorities will you pursue to grow U.S.-New Zealand climate cooperation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to continue strong U.S.-New Zealand climate cooperation, for instance on the Global Methane Pledge and USDA's AIM4C. The United States is committed to working with New Zealand to raise global ambition on climate change.

Question. What are the U.S.-New Zealand shared security interests in building resilience and climate change adaptation capacities in Oceania—especially the countries facing existential crises due to climate change?

Answer. Climate change is considered an existential crisis by many Pacific Island countries. The United States and New Zealand share similar concerns about the security of Pacific Islands that may be forced to take on financial debt from other countries, such as the PRC, to fund adaptation programs like climate-resilient infrastructure.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TOM UDALL BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What are the key interests underpinning U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region, and what should our objectives and goals be in the region?

Answer. Strong diplomatic, military, and economic relationships with like-minded allies and partners can help ensure a safe, prosperous United States. To that end, I support a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region where democracies can thrive, with strong institutions, responsible actors, and close security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

Question. The 2018 National Defense Strategy states that “great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security.” Do you agree with the Defense Department's assessment?

Answer. Counterterrorism remains a deep concern to the United States and our partners, as recent acts of terrorism in New Zealand have demonstrated. As Secretary Blinken has said, China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system. I support that statement and, if confirmed, will work closely with our New Zealand partners to advance U.S. interests and support a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Question. Do you agree that the objectives and policies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the greatest foreign policy challenge facing the United States today? If not, why not? What do you think instead is our greatest foreign policy challenge?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system. However, the United States can still cooperate with China on issues of mutual interest. If confirmed, I will work with New Zealand under the premise that the U.S. relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be.

Question. If confirmed, what will your top 3-5 policy priorities be as U.S. Ambassador?

Answer. I look forward to working with our partners to advance U.S. and common interests in a variety of issues. My top three priorities would be strengthening our Pacific and Antarctic cooperation, advancing security ties, and expanding economic cooperation and commercial opportunities. The United States would like to be the Pacific's "partner of choice."

Question. How would you characterize the current U.S.-New Zealand relationship? What are our main challenges? Where do we have opportunities for growth?

Answer. The United States and New Zealand have a very close relationship, with strong political, economic, intelligence sharing, security, and people-to-people ties. We cooperate on a range of international issues from upholding the rules-based international order and defending against threats to shared democratic values. We also work together to counter foreign influence and debt diplomacy in the region. Our space and cyber cooperation are vibrant and growing. Challenge areas include COVID-19 recovery, climate change, and ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our Pacific and Antarctic cooperation, advance U.S.-New Zealand security ties, and expand economic and commercial opportunities.

Question. What role do you see New Zealand playing in the Indo-Pacific region in light of the growing challenges from China?

Answer. China is New Zealand's most important goods trading partner and second most important overall trading partner after Australia. Recent New Zealand Governments have made tough public statements about the PRC's influence in the Pacific and its human rights record and sharpened the country's stance on the South China Sea. If confirmed, I would continue to work with New Zealand as a likeminded democratic partner. In addition to diplomatic responses in the South China Sea, New Zealand has funded repairs to identified substandard projects completed by Chinese construction companies in the Cook Islands.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our security relationship with New Zealand in the short-term?

Answer. New Zealand officials have previously stressed the importance of their Government's commitment to increased intelligence and defense interoperability, prevention of the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, and stoppage of terrorist financing. If confirmed, I would continue to expand these efforts and work with the New Zealand defense forces to explore additional ways to cooperate beyond our current work in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and peace-keeping support operations.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our security relationship with New Zealand in the medium- to long-term?

Answer. U.S. defense engagement with New Zealand is strong but limited by the small size of the New Zealand Defense Force. However, New Zealand has recently taken steps to increase interoperability with the United States by purchasing P-8s and C-130Js and conducting combined patrols in the South China Sea with the United States and other Five Eye partner nations. If confirmed, I would continue to encourage New Zealand to work with the United States as the security partner of choice, including by enhancing our cooperation in the fields of space and cybersecurity.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our economic relationship with New Zealand in the short-term? What about the longer-term?

Answer. Partnerships in innovation, like the technology sector, film industry, and the space sector, are helping to drive trade and investment in both New Zealand and the United States. New Zealand has a small but developed economy that is highly trade dependent, so New Zealand's trade dependency on the PRC has a distorting effect on its foreign policy. If confirmed, I will explore whether regulatory reforms or a digital services/trade agreement could provide interim steps that signal U.S. support to New Zealand on trade.

Question. How would you characterize the current U.S.-Samoa relationship?

Answer. The United States and Samoa enjoy strong bilateral relations based on shared values and mutual trust. Cultural and historical linkages, including shared connections to the U.S. territory of American Samoa, translate into strong people to people ties. The United States and Samoa also share close economic ties on multiple levels and cooperate on security and policing matters.

Question. What are our main challenges?

Answer. China is seeking to grow its influence among the Pacific Islands, including Samoa. Samoa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Additionally, unreported, unregulated and illegal fishing threatens the livelihoods of Samoan fisherman. If confirmed, I look forward to discussing how to best address these challenges with the Government of Samoa.

Question. Where do we have opportunities for growth?

Answer. Our engagement with Samoa is vital for a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region where democracies can thrive, with strong institutions, responsible actors, and close security, economic, and people-to-people ties that benefit the U.S. economy and our people. The PRC is engaged in Samoa, as it is throughout the Pacific, and the United States needs to be present to maintain and expand its influence. If confirmed, I look forward to establishing strong ties with the new Government of Samoa and identifying what more we can do together as Pacific nations.

Question. What role does Samoa and the Pacific Islands play in broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Samoa is an active member of regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Polynesian Leaders Group. Samoa regularly sides with the United States on key votes in international fora. Samoa is particularly vulnerable to climate change, and I understand the Government will be a willing partner on U.S. or global initiatives to mitigate the ongoing effects of climate change or expand the use of new climate-friendly technologies. If confirmed, I will reassure Samoa that the Pacific region remains an enduring foreign policy priority for the United States.

Question. In your assessment, what are the implications for U.S. interests of more pronounced presence and influence by China in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. The PRC's goals for the Indo-Pacific include reducing U.S. influence and that of like-minded partners, growing its own influence, and reducing Taiwan's international space.

Question. What forms of influence are we seeing from China that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests in the Pacific Islands region?

Answer. The Pacific Island Countries are susceptible to questionable loans and infrastructure projects that can threaten their sovereignty and the stability and security of the region. China has made significant inroads in Samoa over the last decade by providing extensive development assistance, primarily in the form of large infrastructure projects, including the airport, the national hospital, and government buildings. In September 2019, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati established diplomatic ties with Beijing, leaving Taiwan with just four diplomatic partners in the region (Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu). Some Pacific Islands Countries no longer accept PRC loans, but grants remain on the table, and there is high demand from the region for development and infrastructure assistance.

Question. How can the U.S. better collaborate with Indo-Pacific countries, including New Zealand and Samoa, to deal with the negative effects of China's economic coercion and malign political influence?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with New Zealand and Samoa where our mutual interests are being undermined by PRC actions. Like the United States, New Zealand has areas of cooperation and areas of disagreement with China. I welcome New Zealand's public comments on regional security and the South China Sea, including that all countries, big and small, need to follow the rules of international conduct. I also welcome New Zealand's public comments regarding human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

Question. Do you support pursuing a robust trade agenda in the Indo-Pacific region?

Answer. Robust economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific is a key part of the Biden-Harris administration's effort to Build Back Better. If confirmed, I would support an Indo-Pacific trade agenda focused on supporting American working families,

defending our values, and protecting the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. As President Biden has said, the United States is focused on making investments in U.S. workers and U.S. competitiveness before he signs new trade agreements, including in the Indo-Pacific.

Question. What are your views on the United States joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership agreed to by 11 other nations in 2019?

Answer. As White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, “The President has been clear that he would not rejoin the TPP as it was initially put forward.” Much has changed in the world since the original TPP was signed in 2016. The administration is reviewing the CPTPP to evaluate its consistency with the Build Back Better agenda. If confirmed, I would work with the White House, other agencies, and Congress to negotiate and develop trade policies that advance the interests of all Americans, support American innovation, and enhance our competitiveness.

Question. What areas can the U.S. expand its trade and investment footprint in the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I would look for ways to work with New Zealand to build the capacity of countries in the Pacific to participate in comprehensive, high standard bilateral or multilateral trade agreements that remove barriers and unfair practices. I would also explore securing, diversifying, and strengthening resilient U.S. supply chains to ensure we are prepared not only to defeat COVID-19, but to reduce the likelihood that future crises or global challenges can impede our supply chains and economic growth.

Question. Do you support exploring opportunities for expanding digital trade in the region specifically? Why or why not?

Answer. Barriers to digital trade threaten the ability of all firms—including small businesses—to benefit from the advantages of the digital economy. Our test for trade policies—including in the area of digital trade—is whether they deliver for the American worker and the middle class. If confirmed, I would apply that metric to any new trade deal. For further questions, I refer you to USTR.

Question. On September 17th, Chinese Commerce Minister submitted China’s application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) to New Zealand’s trade minister. What should the future of the trade structure in the Indo-Pacific look like?

Answer. I understand that China has submitted a formal request to join CPTPP. The United States is not a party to the CPTPP; therefore, it defers to CPTPP parties regarding views on China’s potential accession. That said, if confirmed, I would engage with New Zealand and other partners who are members of the CPTPP to remind them that China’s non-market trade practices and use of economic coercion against other countries should factor into CPTPP parties’ evaluation of China as a potential candidate for accession. For further questions, I refer you to USTR.

Question. The U.S. has been engaged with the Pacific Islands on multiple energy projects. What would your priorities be with respect to cooperation on energy, should you be confirmed?

Answer. New Zealand is an important partner for assisting the Indo-Pacific region with its clean energy transition. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our energy cooperation with New Zealand to increase energy security, expand access to energy, and accelerate the region’s decarbonization. One project I would like to continue pursuing with New Zealand and other like-minded partners is the Papua New Guinea Electrification Partnership (PEP), which will help 70 percent of Papua New Guinea’s population have reliable access to energy by 2030.

Question. Should the Development Finance Corporation be restricted from financing energy projects in Samoa and other qualifying Pacific Island nations if those projects are related to oil, natural gas, or other fossil fuels?

Answer. The Development Finance Corporation and other U.S. development financing tools will be important to accelerating the Pacific’s transition to clean energy economies. Assisting the Pacific in its deployment of renewable energy can best advance the region’s energy security, energy access, and decarbonization goals in most instances.

Question. Does New Zealand’s nuclear free policy present challenges to the U.S.-New Zealand security relationship?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work with New Zealand to advance our security relationship. Despite its history, New Zealand invited the U.S. Navy to send a ship to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Royal New Zealand Navy in

2016. New Zealand has again invited the Navy to make a port visit in New Zealand as soon as is practical with COVID-19.

Question. How can we mitigate the negative effects of these challenges?

Answer. U.S.-New Zealand relations have warmed significantly over the past decade, which has resulted in several Royal New Zealand Navy ship visits to U.S. military ports. The bilateral relationship has grown significantly over the past few years and is stronger than it has been in decades. If confirmed, I will work to further strengthen our partnership.

Question. Do you commit to messaging these negative effects to New Zealand?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the frequent, candid, and constructive conversations on issues across the board and at the highest levels of government.

Question. Do you agree that extended deterrence is fundamental to our alliance network in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. I believe the United States should remain 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. If confirmed, I will uphold the policy that 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.

Question. China has a history of breaking its promises, and its words on climate change often do not match its actions. Will you commit to the following: not to advise or support entrance into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change;

Answer. I believe the United States must judge Beijing by its actions, not its words. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to impose costs on China when it violates international norms and agreements. If confirmed, I will also work with New Zealand and other partners to press Beijing to raise its climate ambition significantly during this critical decade.

Question. not to recommend any the following policies to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC:

- Decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China;
- Making changes in our defense relationships with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region;
- Delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation;
- Deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices;
- Terminating sanctions against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List;
- Dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang?

Answer. Prime Minister Ardern's Government has spoken out about human rights abuses by China, condemned malicious cyber activity by Chinese state-sponsored actors, and reaffirmed its support for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the face of expansive Chinese claims in the South China Sea. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government, businesses, and people of New Zealand to promote our shared interests on issues related to China. If confirmed, I will engage with New Zealand and other partners on climate change, while continuing to protect our national security interests and working to maintain a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific.

Question. What is your view on the challenges presented by greater presence of Huawei Marine in constructing undersea cables?

Answer. If confirmed, I would urge our partners to consider the potential risks to national and economic security, critical infrastructure, and privacy of selecting untrusted vendors to build and maintain undersea cable systems. Undersea cables are vital lines of communication, but there are national security risks associated with network equipment that can be manipulated, disrupted, or controlled by authoritarian regimes, like the People's Republic of China, which have no regard for human rights or privacy, or where the equipment is susceptible to potential uneth-

ical, unlawful, and otherwise inappropriate behavior, including intellectual property theft.

Question. Do you commit to prioritizing this issue should it come up for either of the two countries where you are credentialed, should you be confirmed? How would you use diplomacy and other tools to address this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I would urge our partners to consider the potential risks to national and economic security, critical infrastructure, and privacy of selecting untrusted vendors to build and maintain undersea cables or choosing to land and interconnect with such cable systems.

Question. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission New Zealand?

Answer. I understand Mission New Zealand is, unsurprisingly, a very sought after posting with high morale. As an outsider, I do not yet know specifics, but I know that Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa, like much of the world, have faced quarantine requirements, occasional lock-downs, and travel disruptions due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across Mission New Zealand?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the teams at Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa to understand and address any issues affecting morale.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission New Zealand?

Answer. If confirmed, I will start by listening to those already in Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa. I will also clearly communicate my priorities and those of the Biden-Harris administration.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I believe in being an inclusive manager and encouraging everyone to perform to the best of their abilities.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

Answer. As a collaborative and inclusive manager, if confirmed, I hope to listen closely and to seek ideas and opinions widely throughout Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa. Many of the best ideas come from those closest to the issues.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. New Chiefs of Mission must integrate themselves into the mission community and culture. A lot can be learned from career State Department Personnel.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. I don't believe in berating mission employees in public or private. If confirmed, I would work to supply constructive criticism without belittling, if and when required. When State Department performance reviews are required, I would conduct these with the goal of recognizing strong performance and improving weaker performance.

Question. How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. As an inclusive manager, if confirmed, I will work to empower my deputy chief of mission (DCM) to do his or her best work by being trusted and having my full confidence.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will rely on my DCM's career-knowledge of Department policies and procedures to ensure the smooth functioning of Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa.

Question. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. My experience overseas has taught me that State Department employees are out in the community and trying hard to learn about the country they are serving in.

Question. How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the public affairs teams in Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa to ensure we are reaching all of the local populations to the best of our ability.

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in New Zealand? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face?

Answer. I understand there is a vibrant and active public diplomacy environment in New Zealand. If confirmed, I would work to expand and strengthen the relationship between the people and Government of the United States and the citizens of New Zealand and Samoa. Some of the successful programs Mission New Zealand has done include cultural and sports programming, academic grants, educational exchanges, and international visitor programs. I hope to continue science and technology-related public diplomacy programs which focus on encouraging youth, particularly women, to explore STEM fields, including space industries. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for public diplomacy programming, although many initiatives have continued by shifting online or by changing logistics.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the team at Mission New Zealand to understand and protect the Mission's crucial role in formulating public diplomacy programs and responses. The staff of Americans, New Zealanders, and Samoans based at the Embassy in Wellington, the Consulate General in Auckland, and the Embassy in Apia, Samoa, all provide expertise and local insight. If confirmed, I will draw on that local expertise to ensure our public diplomacy messages are appropriate for the local audience.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TOM UDALL BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. How do you assess New Zealand's relationship with China?

Answer. New Zealand is increasingly concerned about growing PRC influence in the Pacific and has made clear that it will follow an independent foreign policy that supports the rules-based international order in the face of challenges to democracy, human rights, governance, free markets, and the global common good. New Zealand's trade relationship with China has not stopped its Government from speaking out on matters of security and human rights.

Question. What are the implications for U.S. security and defense cooperation from a growing relationship between New Zealand and China?

Answer. The United States and New Zealand are both committed to the security, stability and prosperity of our shared neighborhood, as well as strengthening democracy and democratic resilience across the Pacific region. We continue to draw on New Zealand's depth of knowledge and unique perspective on the South Pacific and look forward to greater partnership in the North Pacific.

Both the United States and New Zealand have a clear national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. New Zealand's relationship with China, like ours, can be expected to have aspects of competition and cooperation.

Question. If confirmed, what would be your message to the Government of New Zealand regarding strategic competition with China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with New Zealand where our mutual interests are being undermined by PRC actions, while recognizing areas where cooperation with China is still possible. I welcome New Zealand's public comments on regional security and the South China Sea, including that all countries, big and small, need to follow the rules of international conduct. I also welcome New Zea-

land's public comments regarding human rights in the PRC including in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Cuba

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, what are some of the specific steps you would take to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government continues its steadfast support and engagement with Cuban human rights defenders, activists, and other civil society members to bolster their important work; promote human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy; and facilitate the free flow of information to the Cuban people, including access to the internet. I will also support continued use of targeted sanctions and other punitive measures that respond to human rights violations. In addition, I will work closely with partners and allies—in the region and beyond—to develop a coordinated, comprehensive, and expanded approach to this support.

Question. What are the redlines, in your view, for the steps that the Díaz Canel regime must take before there should be any sort of normalization with Cuba?

Answer. Before any sort of normalization with Cuba takes place, there must be signs that the Díaz-Canel regime is adhering to long-established benchmarks for democratic governance, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms. This includes the release of political prisoners, the freedom of movement, speech, and expression, and an end to arbitrary detention.

Question. Will you commit to pushing back on unfair bias against Israel from international human rights organizations?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to pushing back against unfair and disproportionate bias against Israel across the international system.

Question. There have been extensive efforts by many countries including China, Saudi Arabia, Belarus and Russia, to engage in assassinations, abductions, and other forms of violence against nationals abroad, including human rights activists, dissidents, and members of diaspora communities. Freedom House recently documented 608 cases of direct, physical transnational repression since 2014, including assassinations, abductions, assaults, detentions, and unlawful deportations. How should the United States respond to and deter these activities?

Answer. Human rights abuses through transnational repression activities are disturbing and must be taken seriously, and I understand that the Biden administration is focusing additional attention and resources to combatting the growing scourge of transnational repression. If confirmed, this will be a top priority for me, especially given the potential implications transnational repression has here at home. I will endeavor to ensure that human rights activists, journalists, political dissidents, former insiders, and members of minority groups are able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms without fear of retribution, retaliation, punishment, or harm from the governments of their home state and that if they flee their home state they are adequately protected. To promote accountability for government officials who engage in transnational repression, I will ensure that combatting transnational repression remains a high priority for DRL, and will work closely with interagency partners, as well as congressional allies, to consider all available tools to deter perpetrators, including financial sanctions and visa restriction authorities such as the Khashoggi Ban, which the Department announced in February to promote accountability for governments that threaten and attack journalists and perceived dissidents overseas.

Question. In what ways should we work together with our partners and allies to combat this sort of authoritarian reach and protect threatened communities?

Answer. I take very seriously the growing threat of transnational repression, as I understand the Biden administration does. If confirmed, I will support and lead diplomatic engagement with like-minded partners to deter, counter, and hold accountable perpetrators of transnational repression. I support information-sharing between like-minded partners to identify and build evidence against those responsible for these attacks, to prevent transnational repression from occurring, and to

protect the individuals who are targeted. I will coordinate diplomacy, messaging, and action such as sanctions, with our partners and allies, to strengthen their impact and deterrent effect. Publicly denouncing individuals involved in transnational repression, as with other human rights abuses, can help deter them and others from committing subsequent attacks.

Question. Please describe the Department's efforts to address abuses and violations of the rights of people with disabilities.

Answer. I understand that the Department's disability rights programs promote the rule of law and good governance by strengthening the capacity of Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) to effectively promote implementation and enforcement of national and local disability rights laws. Currently, the Department's disability rights programming is in 46 countries including: 7 countries in Africa, 11 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, 4 countries in Europe and Eurasia, 8 countries in Near East Asia, 4 countries in South Central Asia, and 12 countries in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will be happy to consult on these programs.

Question. How much funding does the Department provide to foreign governments, foreign NGOs, and U.S. NGOs to promote and advance the rights of people with disabilities?

Answer. I understand that DRL has approximately \$15,500,000 in active programming dollars focused on disability rights programming in 46 countries.

Question. How does the DRL bureau engage with other parts of the Department and the broader interagency to prioritize support for people with disabilities in U.S. foreign policy, including in bilateral engagements?

Answer. I understand that DRL promotes the full inclusion of persons with disabilities by providing capacity building training, resources, and technical assistance to Department personnel and collaborating with regional and functional bureaus and the interagency to achieve policy objectives that promote inclusion and expand disability rights. Further, I understand that DRL works with federal agencies to support bilateral policy engagements on employment, inclusive education, accessibility, and independent living.

Question. Describe the Department's efforts to support human rights defenders, both in terms of support to their work and support to provide them with safety and protection when threatened. Please be specific. How does the Department currently define a human rights defender?

Answer. I understand the Department defines a human rights defender (HRD) as an individual, working alone or in groups, who non-violently advocates for the promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. I understand the Department supports HRDs through a variety of diplomatic tools, including by engaging with the U.N. and its special rapporteurs to address specific threats against human rights defenders; developing policies to reduce violence against human rights defenders; working across the interagency to strengthen policies and practices related to protecting human rights defenders; and conducting foreign assistance programs. More specifically, I understand DRL has developed programming to provide HRDs with flexible, short-term, emergency financial support that gives them the real-time assistance they need to increase their safety and continue their critical work. I understand short-term emergency grants include support for: medical expenses, legal representation, prison visits, trial monitoring, temporary relocation, security, equipment replacement, daily living necessities, and dependent support. Since the inception of impact reporting, I understand 97 percent of respondents stated that the assistance received has had a positive impact on their safety or reduced the threat they faced and 80 percent of respondents have been able to continue their human rights work in some way.

Question. Please describe the role played by the DRL bureau in the planning for the December Summit for Democracy.

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor serves as the subject matter experts within the Department. Given the scope of the Summit shared to date, I am confident that DRL has been involved in providing technical expertise in anti-corruption, human rights, countering authoritarianism, supporting marginalized populations, and engaging international organizations and civil society. DRL is also skilled in planning and hosting large events including the Community of Democracies Governing Council Ministerial in 2017. If confirmed, I will also engage in Summit planning and implementation.

Question. What influence does the DRL bureau have on the invitees to and the agenda of the Summit?

Answer. I understand that both established and emerging democracies will be invited to participate in the Summit. I have not seen the invitation list nor the agenda and am not involved in internal administration deliberations. Therefore, I cannot provide specifics about them, but believe DRL has played an important role in providing input and more generally that this is an important opportunity for the Biden administration to shore up not only its support for global democracy but its own commitments to democracy as well. If confirmed, I will engage on both the agenda and the proposed invitees.

Question. What criteria or process is being used to determine which countries which will receive invites, and which countries will not?

Answer. It is my understanding that since this is a Presidential Summit, the White House will make the final determination on which countries will receive an invitation. I understand the Summit will include both established and emerging democracies and presume geographic diversity and country context may have also been factors in the invitation list. In my view, the Summit would benefit from the diversity of perspectives and voices discussing both democratic achievements and challenges and hearing directly from organizations and individuals who work on democracy and understand how best to secure some of the core institutional components of a democracy in today's world.

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 Assistant Secretary?

Answer. I understand the administration is already working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the administration's foreign policy priorities, including its emphasis on putting human rights at the center of foreign policy. While I understand human rights and civilian harm concerns are one of several factors taken into account in the arms transfer process, together with the implications of such sales for U.S. and regional security, bilateral relations, and U.S. commercial interests, if confirmed I will make sure DRL is at the right decision-making tables to ensure human rights concerns are incorporated into the process early on and given adequate weight. In addition, I will coordinate closely with the Political-Military (P/M) and regional bureaus to ensure they are seeing the same information and analysis that we see. If confirmed, I will ensure that the arms sales process gives appropriate weight to any human rights and civilian harm concerns.

Question. Do you agree that the U.S. Government should refrain from exporting arms to fragile states or countries at risk of atrocities?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances our national security interests. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, frequent and ongoing cooperation, and carefully considered arms exports. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our arms export policies uphold and support U.S. laws on global fragility and atrocity prevention.

Question. Under Erdogan, Turkey is neither a reliable NATO ally nor a democracy. Turkey is among the top jailers of journalists and lawyers in the world, which is unacceptable for a NATO member. The Government of Turkey has slapped arbitrary restrictions on the Orthodox Church and Orthodox community, Turkey's Kurds, and other minority groups. We must be clear-eyed about Erdogan and the autocratic path he is taking, and we must stand with the Turkish people as they work to change that. What is the best way to support civil society and counter Erdogan's aggressive push for power?

Answer. I share your concerns about measures employed by the Government that negatively impact civil society and other voices critical of the Government in Turkey. I am deeply troubled by the pattern of punitive actions by Turkish officials targeting those whose views differ from those of the Government. Turkey has been an important NATO Ally for nearly 70 years and addressing democratic backsliding is critical to our alliance. If confirmed, I would call for the immediate release of Osman Kavala, who remains incarcerated on specious charges despite a European Court of Human Rights ruling calling for his immediate release, and will work to coordinate with U.S. allies, particularly in the EU, on this issue. I would also urge Department action to underscore for the Turkish Government the fundamental importance of the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association in democracies. I would

urge the Turkish Government to revise laws that restrict freedom of expression and other essential freedoms guaranteed by Turkey's constitution. I would also urge the Department and the embassy to regularly engage with Turkish civil society, hear their concerns, and amplify their voices.

Question. The situation in Tigray and across Ethiopia is bleak. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, released a statement, in which she deplored "multiple and severe reports of alleged gross violations of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law" committed by all parties to the conflict in Tigray. Violations included extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, rape, and racially-targeted killings. President Biden recently signed an executive order threatening sweeping new sanctions against all parties if serious negotiations do not start, attacks on civilians continue, and if humanitarian access remains blocked.

While this is a welcome step, what more can the United States do to ensure that gross human rights violations cease in Ethiopia and that all parties are held accountable for mass atrocities committed over these past eleven months?

Answer. It is imperative that the United States continue to use every available tool to urge all parties to end the conflict in northern Ethiopia and cease all gross violations of human rights. These tools include the newly-signed Executive Order; a visa restriction policy targeting those responsible for, or complicit in, undermining resolution of the crisis; foreign assistance restrictions; defense trade controls; multi-lateral development bank lending; and certain trade benefits.

The United States must continue to marshal its diplomatic resources to press for a negotiated ceasefire; full and unhindered humanitarian access; protection of civilians; the withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Ethiopia; a withdrawal of the Tigray People's Liberation Front and Amhara regional forces to their home regions prior to the military conflict; and a political settlement of the crisis. The United States also must continue to press our concerns with like-minded partners, regional governments, the African Union, eminent African voices, and the U.N. Security Council and engage independent actors—including Ethiopian civil society—in the process. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would work steadfastly to resolve the human rights crisis in Ethiopia through these and other means.

I also believe that U.S. efforts must remain focused on ensuring that all those who are responsible for atrocities, violations of international humanitarian law, and human rights abuses in Ethiopia are held accountable in transparent processes. To that end, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would make sure that DRL continues to support independent, international investigations of human rights violations and abuses and atrocities as part of a broader strategy to advance transitional justice efforts in Ethiopia.

Question. During the 2020 Armenia-Azerbaijan war, according to human rights organizations, the Azeri military deliberately targeted civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh with cluster munitions and committed extrajudicial executions, including decapitations, as well as beatings of prisoners of war. The State Department's 2020 Country Report on Human Rights for Azerbaijan documented these and other gross human rights violations by the Azeri military. How will you lead State Department efforts to hold Azerbaijan accountable? Why does the administration continue to provide an exemption waiver for Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, further incentivizing this conduct?

Answer. The 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights for Azerbaijan and Armenia both detail credible reports of unlawful killings involving summary executions of detained combatants and civilians, and civilian casualties during the 44 days of intensive fighting last fall. The Biden-Harris administration is deeply committed to fostering respect for human rights. I understand that the administration has been urging both sides to investigate any and all allegations of human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law and bring to justice those responsible, and, if confirmed, I would press for accountability for such abuses. I also understand that administration officials have been urging both sides to return all remaining detainees—an area of work I would also take up, if confirmed, should it remain unresolved.

U.S. assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan is provided consistent with Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and related provisions of U.S. law. Assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan that does not fall under a statutory exemption is contingent upon a presidential waiver certifying that such assistance is a) necessary to support U.S. efforts to counter international terrorism, or b) is necessary to support the operational readiness of U.S. Armed Forces or coalition partners to counter international terrorism, or c) is important to Azerbaijan's border security, and d) will not undermine or hamper ongoing efforts to negotiate a peace-

ful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia. The aforementioned waiver authority comes with reporting and consultation requirements to help ensure that Congress is fully informed with respect to assistance for the Government of Azerbaijan. Additionally, all units receiving U.S. security assistance continue to go through the Leahy vetting process. If confirmed, I would strongly support the Leahy vetting process, which DRL is responsible for managing.

Question. In the past year, the Lukashenka regime has detained thousands of protesters, torturing hundreds, jailed political opponents, banned and shut down media organizations, and persecuted its people both at home and abroad. The regime is weaponizing migrants by forcing them at gunpoint to cross illegally into Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania. How can the United States partner with countries like Lithuania and others on the front lines of democracy to support the democratic opposition in Belarus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen U.S. support for the pro-democracy movement in Belarus and promote accountability for the regime's abuses. As such, I will press for additional sanctions to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses, undermining democracy in Belarus, and for supporting the Lukashenka regime. Similarly, I hope to continue U.S. support for international mechanisms designed to document the regime's abuses, including the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) and U.N. fact-finding mission. If confirmed, I seek to increase U.S. support for Belarusian civil society, independent media, and exiles fleeing repression. Lastly, I hope to increase cooperation with likeminded countries in the context of the Summit for Democracy, including Lithuania, which has done remarkable work to provide a safe haven for the Belarusian opposition, civil society, journalists, and ordinary citizens fleeing the Lukashenka regime's repression. Lithuania continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to democratic values, and we look forward to collaborating with them and others to safeguard and advance democracy globally.

Question. Earlier this month, Russian occupation authorities in Crimea detained more than 50 Crimean Tatars, reportedly beating them and questioning them without lawyers present. Arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, and torture of Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians have been a recurring feature of Russian occupation, with many residents being persecuted on religious grounds. An estimated 30,000 Tatars have fled from the region. How can the State Department work with the international community to hold Russian authorities accountable for their crimes in occupied Crimea?

Answer. I am appalled by the egregious abuses Russia carries out in occupied Crimea and its targeting of Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians, and other religious and ethnic minorities for intimidation, harassment, and repression. Such abuses must cease immediately and perpetrators must be held to account. If confirmed, I will lead the U.S. Government in playing an active role in the newly launched Crimea Platform to increase the spotlight on Russia's occupation of Crimea, hold Russian occupation authorities to account for their human rights abuses on the peninsula, and implement policy that increases the costs to Russia for their continued occupation. Crimea is Ukraine. I would also focus on securing releases for political prisoners and documenting human rights abuses so that perpetrators can be held to account.

Question. Hungary, Poland, and other nominal democracies in Europe continue to backslide on democracy and human rights. These countries have undermined the independence of their judiciaries. In addition, Hungary has outlawed gender transition and gay adoption, and banned LGBTQ content from television and in schools. Poland has created 'LGBT-free' zones in almost 100 Polish regions, town and cities. How can the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor work with NATO partners like Hungary and Poland to meet not only their defense commitments to the alliance, but their commitments on values like individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law?

Answer. I share the concerns expressed by the Biden-Harris administration and members of Congress regarding the undermining of democratic institutions in Poland and Hungary. Being a member of NATO includes commitments to Transatlantic values, not only security. If confirmed, I would engage with governments, civil society, the private sector, and core European allies to support strengthening Poland and Hungary's democratic institutions and urge transparency and respect for the rule of law. I would work with partners in the European Union to encourage the EU and member states to amplify U.S. messages through complementary statements and action. Additionally, I would look for opportunities to use available tools,

including the Global Magnitsky sanctions passed by the Congress, when there is sufficient credible information that a particular politician has engaged in corruption or serious human rights abuses. I am troubled by the rise in anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and legislation in recent years in both countries. If confirmed, I would work with the Special Envoy to Advance the Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons to raise awareness of this challenge and determine the best way to respond to discriminatory laws and policies and intolerant rhetoric while engaging local communities and/or organizations and maintaining the safety and security of LGBTQI+ persons.

Question. The UK's Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis introduced a proposal in July that would create a statute of limitations on all crimes committed during the Troubles prior to April 1998. The proposal is not supported by a single political party in Northern Ireland, signaling cross-community opposition, and its incompatibility with the intent undergirding the Good Friday Agreement. 1,000 civil cases seeking justice and resolution for crimes during the Troubles are currently pending in the High Court in Belfast, indicating a continued desire to address legacy issues in the courts. What leverage can the United States exert on the United Kingdom to ensure that it protects the Good Friday Agreement, and respects the intertwined questions of legacy and reconciliation?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to protecting the gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement as the bedrock of peace, stability, and prosperity in Northern Ireland. Constructive engagement with all affected parties is critical, and I will continue to urge the parties to negotiate within existing mechanisms when differences arise. I will encourage a focus on solutions that promote peace and stability in Northern Ireland and help victims move forward.

Question. As of August, The Memorial Human Rights Center in Moscow recognized 329 Russian political prisoners that were imprisoned in connection with their right to freedom of religion. This list includes 87 Jehovah's Witnesses. Memorial identifies another 81 political prisoners for non-religious reasons, including those on the front lines of democracy in Russia like opposition leader Alexey Navalny and his supporters. How will you use your role as Assistant Secretary to pressure the Russian Government to release those unjustly imprisoned by the Putin regime?

Answer. I share your concern about the growing number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Russia, one of the many manifestations of the Kremlin's deepening repression. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to call for the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in public statements and in multilateral fora. I will work with likeminded governments and civil society organizations to raise awareness of their cases and demonstrate solidarity with their families, friends, and colleagues. I will also use all available tools to promote accountability for those officials responsible for their wrongful imprisonment and work with other allies to ensure they're doing the same.

Question. In September, on the eve of the Russian elections, the Russian Government accused Google and Apple of supporting extremism under the Russian extremism law for hosting apps critical to informing Russians of candidates associated with Alexei Navalny's democracy movement. How will you work to address the increasing media repression in Russia, where the internet seems to be the last outpost for freedom of expression? How will you engage U.S. tech companies on their policies and practices with regard to authoritarian regimes like Putin's?

Answer. I share your concern about the stark erosion of media freedom in Russia, including increasing restrictions on Internet Freedom. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to promote the courageous work of Russia's independent media, civil society organizations, and democratic elements of society, and call out and hold accountable the Russian Government for its repressive actions.

More broadly, concerns around the use of technology to undergird authoritarian tendencies are only accelerating. While the United States needs to continue promote connectivity to an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet where the rights that all persons have offline are also protected online, including freedom of expression, there is also much work to be done engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including other governments and tech companies, to advocate for implementation of human rights principles in the tech space. But additionally, if confirmed, I will work across the Department to help build a collective and strategic approach to combating digital authoritarianism that ensures public-private partnerships and any potential regulation are rooted in the promotion and protection of basic rights and the core principles of democratic governance.

Question. Locally-employed U.S. Embassy and Consulate staff remain in prison following the Government's purges in 2016. In June 2020, one translator employed

by the U.S. Consulate was sentenced to more than 8 years in prison. Will you prioritize getting these staff out once confirmed?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing prosecutions of U.S. locally employed staff in Turkey based on unsubstantiated charges related to their official duties. If confirmed, I would strongly support continued Department efforts to secure the immediate release of Metin Topuz from prison and press Turkey to terminate any judicial controls or prosecutions targeting Mete Canturk and Hamza Ulucay, including movement restrictions.

Question. In June 2021, the Turkish Constitutional Court agreed to hear a case seeking to ban the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the country's third largest political party and a strong proponent for ethnic Kurdish rights. The campaign follows years of replacing democratically-elected HDP mayors with so-called "trustees" appointed by the Government. The State Department reported in its 2020 Country Report on Human Rights for Turkey that "the Government suspended 81 percent of HDP mayors elected in the March 2019 municipal elections, suspending 16 mayors in 2020 alone." What do you intend to do about this democratic backslide in Turkey, especially ahead of potential snap elections? How will your bureau ensure ethnic minority rights and political representation are protected in Turkey?

Answer. I share your concerns about democratic backsliding, erosion of rule of law, and the repressive tactics employed by the Turkish Government. If confirmed, I would urge Department action to make clear to the Turkish Government the importance of political pluralism. Banning the country's second largest opposition party would unduly subvert the will of Turkish voters, further undermine democracy in Turkey, and deny potentially millions of Turkish citizens their elected representation. If confirmed, I would urge the Government to abandon efforts to dissolve the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and impose political bans on hundreds of HDP members. I would also call upon the Turkish authorities to investigate and hold accountable perpetrators of violence against HDP members. I would also support efforts to ensure all parties in Turkey are able to campaign freely and on a level playing field. I would also seek to work closely with like-minded governments and consider engaging private sector companies that might also have an interest in advancing rule of law issues to the benefit of all Turkish citizens.

Question. How is State measuring Bangladesh's progress on labor rights in the aftermath of the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster? Is the administration considering restoration of Dhaka's access to the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)? Under what circumstances or conditions would it do so?

Answer. I understand that since the horrific building collapse at Rana Plaza in 2013, the United States Government has worked with partners across the international community, major industries, and Bangladeshi authorities to advocate for and enable improvements in factory safety, which included the establishment of new agreements by major international brands to enforce safety standards across factories. While these changes are encouraging, much more needs to be done to institutionalize safety standards across Bangladesh's major industries, as evidenced by the tragic fire at a juice factory in July 2021. The Department of State works closely with the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the Department of Labor to monitor Bangladesh's progress to meet internationally recognized labor rights, especially workplace safety, freedom of association, and collective bargaining. I commit, if confirmed, to upholding the USTR's position that if Congress reauthorizes GSP, restoring Bangladesh's GSP benefits must be contingent upon strengthening labor rights and workplace safety, as well as improving the overall business and civil society operational environment.

Question. Extrajudicial killings by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) have reportedly spiked since the Government of Bangladesh began its 'war on drugs' in the months ahead of the December 2018 elections. Do you support imposing sanctions on senior commanders of Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which has reportedly conducted more than 400 extrajudicial killings since 2015?

Answer. I share the Biden-Harris administration's deep concern regarding reports of extrajudicial killings in Bangladesh and urge the Government to thoroughly and transparently investigate and hold perpetrators accountable. I believe the United States Government must continue to press the Bangladeshi Government to uphold its commitments to human rights and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will seek to utilize available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or with the Department of the Treasury to consider the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals.

Question. There have been nearly 600 forced disappearances of activists, opposition members, and government critics since Prime Minister Hasina took office in 2009, as documented in Human Rights Watch's August 2021 report. How will you address this issue?

Answer. I understand the Department of State has repeatedly emphasized its concern over reports of enforced disappearances and have urged the Government to hold perpetrators accountable. If confirmed, I will maintain this approach in bilateral meetings, multilateral exchanges, and coordinate with like-minded partners to stop these abusive practices and protect human rights in Bangladesh. If confirmed, I will explore the use of available tools to promote accountability and deter further violations and abuses.

Question. Rights groups have detailed increased abuse of Tamil political prisoners—including beatings, burnings, suffocations, sexual assaults—since Gotabaya Rajapaksa became president in 2019. What consequences should there be to hold those responsible accountable?

Answer. Such allegations of abuse and gross violations of human rights are disturbing and must be taken seriously. If confirmed, I will work to promote the protection of human rights for all in Sri Lanka, including, but not limited to, members of ethnic and religious minority groups, women and girls, LGBTQI+ persons, and persons with disabilities. For reconciliation to take place, members of the Tamil and other ethnic communities can no longer suffer from systematic discrimination and targeted treatment such as monitoring, harassment, and abuse by security forces. If confirmed, I will utilize all available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or with the Department of the Treasury to consider the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals. I will also advocate that Sri Lanka amend its Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)—legislation that denies due process and is used disproportionately to crack down on members of Tamil and Muslim minority communities. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's commitment to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation measures in support of all people in Sri Lanka.

Question. In January 2021, Michelle Bachelet pushed for targeted sanctions on Sri Lankan military commanders implicated in war crimes committed during the civil war, including the current army chief and in March, the Human Rights Council passed resolution 46/1 promoting accountability in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, recently policies and actions indicate that the Government's commitment rule of law, judicial processes, and democracy are weak. How will you work to hold accountable those who perpetrated atrocities during the war and since, including current Sri Lankan officials and, if possible, forestall further deterioration in Sri Lankan democracy?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the backsliding of democratic governance and human rights in Sri Lanka, especially pertaining to justice for victims, civil society, rule of law, human rights defenders, and religious freedom. The United States' cosponsorship of Human Rights Council resolution 46/1 is a testament to our Government's commitment to promoting democratic values, human rights for all, and accountability measures. If confirmed, I will utilize all available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or with the Department of the Treasury to consider the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals. I will also urge my Sri Lankan counterparts, at the highest levels, to follow through on recommendations of the United Nations and Sri Lanka's robust civil society to make progress on justice, accountability, and reconciliation objectives. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's commitment to promote democratic values, respect for human rights, justice, and accountability measures in support of the people of Sri Lanka.

Question. The five countries of Central Asia—despite progress in some—regularly confine human rights defenders, political opposition figures, outspoken minority members, and others to lengthy detention without trial or following conviction for trumped-up charges. What will you do to ensure that our diplomacy with these countries continues to advocate for these unlawfully detained prisoners?

Answer. Countries are stronger when they enshrine and respect the rights to peaceful protest and freedom of expression. Despite advancement in some Central Asian countries, many challenges remain on these issues, including meaningful democratic reform. If confirmed, I will urge these issues be a priority for our diplomacy in Central Asia. I will stress the long-term benefit in strengthening protection of human rights. I am particularly concerned about the criminalization of non-vio-

lent political speech and the detention of political prisoners, but also concerned by an uptick in restrictions on freedom of expression and politically motivated detentions in the run up to upcoming elections in the region. If confirmed, I will directly engage on specific cases, broader systematic concerns regarding political prisoners, and the need to protect dissenting voices.

Question. Democratic progress in Central Asia is always uncertain. Some countries may be trending in the right direction now, but we know that this could change. What can the U.S. do to shore up human rights in the region amidst our competing priorities with regard to China, Russia, and Afghanistan?

Answer. Thirty years after their independence, some Central Asian countries have made considerable progress in human rights reforms; however, significant challenges in the region remain. Addressing these shortcomings by promoting democracy and human rights in Central Asia is central to our regional efforts to reassert core values and advance respect for human rights, especially for women, girls, and minority groups, as a cornerstone of our foreign policy. If confirmed, I will support and reinforce ongoing reforms while pressing governments to take necessary steps to create genuinely pluralistic political systems that uphold human rights for all, including women, members of religious and ethnic minority groups, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, and opposition members. I will press governments to secure fundamental freedoms and expand space for civil society—including organizations that work on resource transparency and accountability—by amending problematic laws, easing excessive and burdensome administrative requirements, and enhancing trust between the Government and independent civil society. U.S. support is vital for democratic progress to continue in Central Asia.

Question. Minority groups in Pakistan are under duress. Members of the Ahmadi Muslim community are frequently accused of, prosecuted for, and murdered on the basis of their identity or the belief that they have committed blasphemy or apostasy. Furthermore, the Pakistani Government has successfully pressured U.S. based technology companies to remove web-based content and apps provided by the Ahmadi community to its members. How will you lead State Department efforts to the State Department to address the dire human rights situation there for millions of minorities? What tactics will you employ to ensure that the internet in Pakistan remains free of malicious government control for these same persons?

Answer. I am very concerned about Pakistan's continued enforcement of blasphemy laws, which are inconsistent with international human rights law. Several dozen people are currently serving life imprisonment or are on death row for blasphemy.

I am also deeply concerned by the targeted killings of individuals accused of blasphemy and members of Pakistan's Ahmadiyya Muslim community, spurred in part by discriminatory anti-Ahmadi laws. A recent example of such violence was the assassination of Tahir Naseem, an Ahmadi and U.S. citizen who was murdered by a violent extremist in open court while on trial in Peshawar for blasphemy in July 2020.

If confirmed, I will advocate for the human rights of all individuals irrespective of their religion or beliefs. I will advocate for everyone to have the opportunity to live freely from harassment or threat of violence and to practice the religion of their choice. I will work with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and the Office of International Religious Freedom to engage technology companies, to highlight the human rights costs of enabling these abuses by governments, and to help empower civil society groups, including religious actors, advocating against the use and abuse of blasphemy laws. If confirmed, I will join my colleagues across the U.S. Government actively supporting freedom of expression online and offline and working to remove obstacles facing members of minority groups around the world.

Question. I have concerns about the persecution of minorities in India, the re-categorization of Muslim citizens as stateless persons under the Citizenship Amendment Act. What will you do to ensure that Indian democracy and its diverse population remain a centerpiece of our diplomacy with India?

Answer. I share your concerns and believe strongly in the importance of Indian democracy serving as a model for the region. If confirmed, I would advocate the United States Government continue to place human rights and democratic principles at the heart of our diplomacy with India, including an open, inclusive civil society, and respect for human rights, including the freedoms of religion or belief, expression, peaceful assembly, and association. If confirmed, I will urge Indian officials to protect and respect the right to practice one's religion or belief, the right

to peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression for all, on and offline, in keeping with India's constitution and democratic values.

Question. After a decade of work to establish a civilian-led democratic government, the Tatmadaw tragically overthrew Burma's Government. The same leaders now running the country are guilty of genocide against the Rohingya and of a sustained campaign of violence against Burma's ethnic minorities. While I welcome Secretary Blinken's decision to review the atrocities and make a determination on genocide, such determination is long overdue.

How can the United States work to promote accountability for the military's gross abuses and atrocities? When will the administration announce whether the Tatmadaw and/or the Burmese regime committed genocide against the Rohingya people?

Answer. I am appalled by the atrocities that the Burmese military continues to commit against the people of Burma, which underscores the urgency of promoting accountability for perpetrators of atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses. I understand that the administration is taking action, alongside our allies and partners, to promote justice for victims and accountability for those responsible, including by supporting the U.N. Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, providing assistance to Burmese civil society actors seeking justice, and implementing sanctions on those responsible for these horrific abuses. The Secretary has committed to reviewing whether the atrocities committed against Rohingya constitute specific atrocity crimes. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary in reaching a decision and to making sure our commitments on accountability are implemented with both the spirit and the letter of the law.

Question. After a decade of work to establish a civilian-led democratic government, the Tatmadaw tragically overthrew Burma's Government. The same leaders now running the country are guilty of genocide against the Rohingya and of a sustained campaign of violence against Burma's ethnic minorities. While I welcome Secretary Blinken's decision to review the atrocities and make a determination on genocide, such determination is long overdue.

How can the United States continue to support democracy and human rights in Burma and halt the horrific reversal of progress there?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing our longstanding support for democracy and promotion of respect for human rights in Burma, which is vital in the face of the military coup d'état and continued deterioration of civilian security and human rights across the country. I would continue to support Burma's pro-democracy movement and provide humanitarian assistance on the basis of need, including to ethnic and religious minority communities as appropriate, and to regularly meet with members of Burma's civil society. Ensuring their voices are heard as part of the roadmap for Burma's democracy is an essential part of its legitimacy and so if confirmed I would urge that the U.S. remain steadfast in our support for the people of Burma. Additionally, I would encourage strong diplomatic engagement and cooperation with our likeminded and regional partners, including in international organizations, to deny the military regime international credibility and press the regime to reverse course. If confirmed, I will support continued efforts to pursue targeted sanctions and other actions to deny the military financial resources and promote accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What would you do to bolster and reiterate the U.S. Government's commitment to protect and advocate for those on the frontlines, including civil society organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to bolster protections for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people—including women, youth, and members of historically marginalized groups—so that they may shape the laws, policies, and political processes that affect their lives. To do so, I will support the utilization of a wide array of tools to achieve this goal, including bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; accountability tools; and foreign assistance to civil society, including rapid response programs to support journalists, activists, and human rights defenders under threat for their work. I will also make sure to seek out the views of civil society groups and activists, meet them when I travel, help ensure they are

able to participate in multilateral fora, and take all steps to ensure their concerns are central to our consideration on larger U.S. policy decisions.

Question. How would you direct the State Department to enhance the protections globally governing freedom of expression and press?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to work with other parts of the Department, executive branch agencies, and Congress to bolster efforts to promote the ability of people everywhere to exercise their right to freedom of expression—online and offline—free from harassment, intimidation, and violence. This includes through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; accountability tools; multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Media Freedom Coalition, the Freedom Online Coalition, and the President's upcoming Summit for Democracy; and foreign assistance to civil society, including rapid response programs to support activists, human rights defenders, and journalists under threat.

Question. How will you prioritize a “whole-of-government” approach to human rights policy and its application in regional and functional diplomatic relationships?

Answer. The diplomatic work of the United States encompasses all the work of all applicable federal agencies and tools. If confirmed I will consult broadly with federal agencies and within the Department to ensure that U.S. policy on human rights and fundamental freedoms is a significant component of decision-making. If confirmed, my job will be to use resources and information to ensure policy making adequately reflects core human rights and democracy standards. It means ensuring DRL is at the table, participating actively in interagency debates and decision making. It also means making sure DRL is viewed across the foreign service as career enhancing and a net positive in career development so there is interest, engagement, and an understanding of why our work matters. This cross-Bureau and inter-agency work is a high priority and essential to effective diplomacy.

Question. There is serious concern about the state of press freedom around the world. If confirmed, what actions will you take to curb suppression of press freedom and support independent journalists around the world?

Answer. I share the concern that press freedom is threatened globally. If confirmed, I will direct the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to work with other parts of the Department, executive branch agencies, and Congress to promote the ability of journalists everywhere to do their work—online and offline—free from harassment, intimidation, and violence. This includes through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; accountability tools; multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Media Freedom Coalition, the Freedom Online Coalition, and the President's upcoming Summit for Democracy; and foreign assistance to civil society, including rapid response programs to support journalists under threat and training and capacity building programs to bolster the safety of independent journalists globally. If confirmed I'll also look at new ways to partner in support of press freedom and to do so with allies around the globe—whether other governments, philanthropic groups, or the private sector.

Question. Everyone should be able to practice their faith however they choose, including in places like China, India, and Uzbekistan. How does international religious freedom factor into your priorities?

Answer. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have made clear that the United States prioritizes respect for human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, as a key foreign policy objective. Human rights are universal—no matter where someone is born, what they believe, how they identify, or whom they love, they are entitled to the enjoyment of these rights. Human rights are also co-equal, inter-related, and interdependent. All people should be able to organize their lives in accordance with their conscience, free from violence, abuse, and discrimination. If confirmed, I intend to work alongside the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and with our embassies and consulates around the world, to deploy the full range of diplomatic tools—both positive and punitive—to encourage governments to respect their international obligations and commitments to protect freedom of religion or belief.

Question. What do you believe is the U.S. Government role in advocating on behalf of religious minorities?

Answer. I believe the U.S. Government must be committed to advancing religious freedom internationally, including the protection of members of religious minority groups, across the globe. As a part of those efforts, we must demonstrate solidarity with those struggling to secure their rights and provide foreign assistance to build

the capacity of local organizations to effectively advocate for themselves. We must assist victims of abuses through direct advocacy with foreign governments and other forms of emergency assistance, including working to free individuals imprisoned for their beliefs. It is also imperative that we engage in bilateral diplomacy to encourage governments to bring their laws and policies into alignment with their obligations and commitments to promote respect religious freedom, including ensuring protection for members of religious minority groups. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Office of International Religious Freedom and its appointed Ambassador at Large on these issues.

Question. Would you describe the U.N. Human Rights Council as a deeply flawed body? Why or why not?

Answer. The U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) does have flaws, including in particular the Council's problematic membership and its disproportionate focus on Israel. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring with colleagues the HRC can be as effective and balanced as possible. When the United States has a seat at the table, it has been able to advocate on Israel's behalf, resulting in changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel, a clear benchmark for U.S. leadership, and has stood up to more problematic members with notable records of abuse. When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, it has been able to engage with our allies and 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.

Question. Can you please explain in detail how the Biden administration plans to reform the U.N. Human Rights Council?

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 the Council's problematic membership. When the U.S. has had a seat at the table, it has been able to advocate on Israel's behalf, and has seen changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel, one benchmark I will use for our leadership. I have not been part of these conversations, but I understand it is a priority for the administration—and certainly one for me, if confirmed. As part of that effort, I will prioritize working closely with U.S. friends, allies, and long-time HRC experts in civil society to address the Council's problematic membership record and its anti-Israel bias. I will engage regularly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on a wide range of issues and also make clear U.S. opposition to problematic anti-Israel mandates.

When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, it has 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 and support countries with better records to run for seats.

Question. Do you believe that human rights should be a permanent agenda item for the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. Human rights are woven into the agenda items for the U.N. Security Council in its work to maintain international peace and security. Peace and security are intrinsically linked to respect for and support of human rights. The U.N. Human Rights Council, to which the United States is running for an elected seat, is the premier U.N. body focused on human rights issues. I look forward to utilizing that platform to advance human rights, if confirmed.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. Yes. That said, human rights are woven into the agenda items for the U.N. Security Council in its work to maintain international peace and security. Peace and security are completely linked to respect for human rights. The U.N. Human Rights Council, to which the United States secured an elected seat, is the premier U.N. body focused on human rights issues. If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing that as well as other multilateral platforms to advance human rights.

Question. Do you support U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334?

Answer. I am committed to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians and to supporting dignity, equal protection under the law, and fundamental freedoms for all. For as long as Israel has been a member of the United Nations, Israel has been treated differently from other nations at the United Nations. Such unequal treatment not only unfairly singles out Israel, it undermines the legitimacy of the United Nations itself.

If confirmed, I will 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. I will also continue to oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states.

I understand the United States will block any resolution that we believe may undermine Israel's security or seek to impose a resolution to the conflict.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will oppose, as I understand the administration does already, 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. Equally, I will firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek. I will also continue and sustain diplomatic engagement on the issue of settlements.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a bipartisan manner, including by providing timely, accurate, and complete information on all relevant strategies, initiatives, programs, and assistance under the purview of DRL?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a bipartisan manner, and in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Foreign Assistance

Question. If confirmed, under what conditions, if any, would you support conditioning U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. Conditions that prohibit certain assistance to foreign security forces that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights, such as the Leahy Laws, support the U.S. foreign policy objective of promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. U.S. national security is strengthened when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote, and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and do not unduly restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State's continued rigorous implementation of the Leahy Laws and similar conditions. Foreign assistance is an important part of how the U.S. engages globally—a way for us to engage local communities and support their goals for a more pluralistic society. I believe the principle of “do no harm” is an important one for all donors to embrace. If confirmed, I would work closely with colleagues at USAID to consider whether restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance related to DRL equities are prudent.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I believe effective implementation of existing U.S. law provides helpful starting points to identify the conditions under which I would support appropriate conditioning or limitations on applicable U.S. assistance. For example, Section 502(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act precludes assistance to governments that engage in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. Similarly, the Leahy laws prohibit the provision of applicable U.S. assistance to foreign security force units that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights. U.S. national security is strengthened when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote, and protect human rights, and hold those responsible for human rights violations accountable. In addition, if confirmed, I would carefully examine, on a case-by-case basis, other human rights factors that may impact decisions about foreign assistance, such as whether another government is engaged in acts that could constitute atrocities or gender-based violence.

Question. Would you support conditioning assistance to the West Bank and Gaza upon the achievement of measurable progress in ending the Palestinian Authority's support for human rights atrocities through the heinous “pay for slay” program?

Answer. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments to address longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I will commit to closely tracking requirements under the Taylor Force Act and other similar legislation and ensuring that U.S. assistance is consistent with it. By providing critical humanitarian relief, fos-

tering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, we will help millions of vulnerable Palestinians and promote a stable environment that benefits both Israelis and Palestinians in a manner that is consistent with our values, with U.S. foreign policy priorities, and with U.S. law.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments to address longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing an end to this heinous practice.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with regional and functional bureaus, including the Bureau for Political-Military Affairs (PM) to ensure statutory restrictions on the provision of certain forms of U.S. foreign assistance to foreign security forces that commit human rights abuses are upheld on the one hand, while balancing U.S. national security interests and regional security imperatives on the other?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security interests. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. Human rights is one of a number of national security interests that need to be considered as part of U.S. foreign assistance, but ensuring human rights is part of that conversation requires doubling down on both information-sharing and relationship-building. I understand DRL colleagues are engaged in building relationships with the various regional and functional bureaus; if I am confirmed, I will not only support such efforts but undertake them myself. If confirmed, I will work to support to the fullest extent partner governments’ accountability mechanisms essential to the resumption of assistance to elements of foreign security forces critical to U.S. national security and regional security.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with regional and functional bureaus to ensure that statutory restrictions on assistance to foreign governments that engage in corruption and/or fail to uphold budget transparency requirements are upheld on the one hand, while balancing U.S. national interests and on the other?

Answer. U.S. national interests are served through a wide array of tools and approaches, including bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy, and foreign assistance. In countries that do not meet statutory restrictions on assistance to foreign governments, including those relating to corruption, I understand the Department elevates other forms of engagement, and can at times provide assistance to civil society organizations capable of advancing U.S. interests. Congress has passed important bipartisan legislation that enables U.S. Government efforts to better fight corruption and President Biden’s Memorandum on the Fight Against Corruption as a Core United States National Security Interest will further enable the executive to assess corruption concerns by modernizing and resourcing our ability to elevate and effectively address this problem. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely and collaboratively with regional and functional bureaus and across the interagency to strategically leverage all foreign policy tools possible in each country context.

Question. If confirmed, how will you measure the impact of DRL grants for building the capacity of civil society organizations, particularly in non-permissive environments? What is—or should be—the criteria for “graduating” civil society organizations from reliance upon U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. I understand that DRL is a leader in the Department of State for their monitoring and evaluation of programs and grants. I understand DRL measures outcomes and impact, including on capacity building, through a set of custom indicators and routine evaluation. If confirmed, I will continue to support this practice and closely examine what criteria and metrics are in place for measuring success over all programmatic goals, including capacity building for civil society organizations (CSOs), including in non-permissive environments. My understanding is that DRL does not provide core funding for CSOs, but instead provides technical assistance (which can be geared towards CSO sustainability) or assistance to conduct particular activities within a time-limited grant (usually 2-3 years in length). Furthermore, my understanding is that it is not a question of “graduating” from U.S. foreign assistance as the grants, by nature, are time-limited and end.

Question. If confirmed, how will you de-conflict DRL's grant-making with the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development—which has a far more significant budget and deep roots with civil society across all development sectors—to guard against duplication and waste?

Answer. DRL adds unique value to U.S. democracy, governance, and human rights programming. DRL's close connection with activists and human rights defenders on the ground, especially in repressive environments, and programmatic flexibility allow it to address emerging opportunities and challenges. If confirmed, I pledge to ensure these programs are closely coordinated with the U.S. Agency for International Development. My understanding is that USAID and other relevant interagency representatives regularly participate in DRL's grant-making process, to include serving on panels and reviewing program proposals. I hope to continue and deepen this collaboration if confirmed.

Question. In your view, should the U.S. Agency for International Development be directly engaging in democracy promotion, or would democracy promotion be best left to the Department of State and its diplomatic corps?

Answer. I believe that the U.S. Agency for International Development should engage in democracy support, especially in the context of development and strengthening government institutions in permissive environments. Supporting and advancing democracy in all environments is vitally important and has important links to development and aid efforts. support , If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues both at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to use all tools at our collective disposal to promote democracy.

Question. In your view, what is the difference between human rights defenders and climate activists?

Answer. I understand the United States defines human rights defenders as individuals, working alone or in groups, who non-violently, and consistent with the law, advocate for the promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights defenders can be of any ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious denomination, disability status, or age. They can come from any part of the world, from any social class or background, and work on a wide range of issues. A climate activist is someone who actively campaigns to have issues of climate change recognized and addressed. In some countries, individuals who exercise their human rights to peacefully express views on land, climate, or environmental issues face abuses from corrupt actors and/or politically motivated repression or reprisal. In such cases, I believe the Department should continue to protect the universal human right of these individuals to express and advocate for their views non-violently.

Question. Do you agree with the Biden administration's recent efforts to prioritize U.S. foreign assistance specifically set aside for human rights defenders for climate activists, effectively placing them above other categories of activists that may be subject to security action?

Answer. The Department works to ensure foreign assistance funds are programmed consistent with applicable directives, including those related to human rights defenders. Members of civil society should be heard and not silenced when exercising their rights to freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly as they seek to participate in the governance of their country. U.S. diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance programs seek to protect and support civil society members and human rights defenders threatened and attacked for exercising their human rights, including those advocating on environmental issues. I also understand the Department has long included environmental activists as beneficiaries of support through a variety of foreign assistance programs. Activists exercising their human rights when seeking to protect the environment, including addressing climate change, are experiencing increasing repression and violence, including killings. I understand U.S. foreign assistance is provided to help address these threats. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the committee on these and other U.S. foreign assistance matters.

Security Partnerships

Question. How do you define a values-based security partnership?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, protect the human rights of their citizens and civilians they protect, hold human rights vio-

lators accountable, and do not unduly restrict the fundamental freedoms of their people. Partnerships should also allow partners to speak openly and honestly about all issues—ones where there is agreement and ones where there is disagreement. Waiting until a U.S. law is violated doesn't help the U.S. and doesn't help the partner be at its best and more effective. If confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure core DRL equities are part of all security cooperation discussions, with an eye towards enhancing behavior and strengthening the partnership. I believe that we must continue to create and maintain strong values-based security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I define a values-based security partnership as one that promotes democracy, human rights, and accountability in partner security forces. This means supporting leaders and institutional safeguards in foreign security forces that seek to advance those values but also placing importance on transparency, both between governments and with the American public. It means having regular, respectful, and frank conversations with our foreign security partners through embassy personnel as well as in bilateral security meetings with more senior officials. Rights-respecting, accountable security forces enjoy more support from their public, are better allies, and are more effective in promoting security in their own countries. It also means looking for opportunities to help with remediation so security forces can get back on track—or at least understand that doing so is a viable option. This ultimately improves U.S. security as well. If confirmed, I will work to build and maintain such values-based security partnerships.

Question. Do you believe that the U.S. should only pursue security partnerships with liberal democracies? Why or why not?

Answer. No. I believe that supporting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security and that most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, protect the human rights of their citizens and civilians, hold human rights violators accountable, and do not unduly restrict the fundamental freedoms of their people. While these are not the only security partnerships that exist, it is important to centralize core democratic tenets within these efforts. In some cases, if the partner in question isn't a democracy, security assistance can be a valuable incentive to generate reform. If confirmed, I will work to realize President Biden's vision of a foreign policy, including with regards to security partnerships, that are centered around human rights and democratic values, which can certainly but not exclusively find expression in partnerships with other democracies.

Question. How do you think a country's human rights environment will be affected if China replaces the U.S. as security partner of choice?

Answer. The PRC's active campaign to reshape the rules-based order, and corrupt practices are often conducted under the guise of diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation and can threaten both the human rights situation in countries with which China partners, as well as the partner country's very sovereignty. America's commitment to democracy and human rights in our foreign policy is a competitive advantage, including with our security partners, and one we have seen demanded by local populations from Hong Kong to Belarus. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that American values continue to remain a centerpiece of U.S. security cooperation.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I believe the PRC's active campaign to reshape the rules-based order and other problematic practices are often conducted under the guise of diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation and threaten to degrade the human rights situation in countries with which China partners if China replaces the U.S. as a country's security partner of choice. America's commitment to promoting democracy and respect for human rights in our foreign policy is a competitive advantage, including with our security partners and has created important opportunities for strengthening bilateral relations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that American values continue to remain a centerpiece of U.S. security cooperation.

Question. Do you support imposing a new requirement for Leahy-like vetting for all U.S. arms sales? Why or why not?

Answer. I understand the Biden-Harris administration is already working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the administration's foreign policy priorities, including its emphasis on putting human rights at the center of foreign policy; if confirmed, I will support and uphold that policy. In the meantime, I understand the Department—consistent with the Arms Export Control Act and other applicable laws—determines on a case-by-case basis whether arms transfers support U.S. interests, including human rights.

If there is interest from Congress to move a new Leahy-like vetting for all U.S. arms sales, I would engage meaningfully in the discussion and consult closely with others in the Department—as well as outside experts. When appropriate, that review should include consultations with the U.S. Congress and input from DoD and other interagency partners—a process I intend to take very seriously, if confirmed.

Question. Should the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor have a veto over arms sales?

Answer. No single bureau has or should have a veto over foreign arms sales; I understand human rights concerns are one of several factors taken into account in the arms sales process, together with the implications of such sales for U.S. and regional security, bilateral relations, and U.S. commercial interests. If confirmed, I will ensure that the arms sales process gives appropriate weight to human rights concerns raised by any bureau, and I will fully support the role of human rights considerations in arms transfer decisions, in line with the requirement for such considerations in statute and with President Biden's commitment to putting human rights at the center of foreign policy. I understand the Biden administration is already working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the administration's foreign policy priorities, including its emphasis on putting human rights at the center of foreign policy.

Question. There are efforts in Congress to condition security assistance given to Israel. Yes or no, do you believe in conditioning Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of assistance that the U.S. gives Israel? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed I will fully support the administration's commitment not to condition U.S. assistance to Israel. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. I understand that the Leahy laws prohibit Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of U.S. assistance to foreign security forces that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights, where no accountability is taking place. If confirmed, I will fully support the letter and spirit of the Leahy Laws and their rigorous implementation by DRL, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will fully support the administration's commitment not to condition U.S. assistance to Israel. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. I understand that the Leahy laws prohibit Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of U.S. assistance to foreign security forces that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights, where no accountability is taking place. If confirmed, I will fully support the letter and spirit of the Leahy Laws and their rigorous implementation by DRL, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense.

Question. Can the nominee clarify whether she thinks Israel is such a place where no accountability is taking place, as referenced in her answer?

Answer. I do not believe that Israel is a place where no accountability is taking place.

Question. The United States provides significant funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross. However, ICRC is now advocating for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty that threatens the ability of the U.S. to defend itself and its allies, among other issues. Do you believe this advocacy is outside the ICRC's mandate? Should U.S. taxpayers fund it?

Answer. I am aware the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been addressing nuclear weapons since 1945 as part of its mission. I also understand that the PRM bureau at the State Department is authorized to provide funds to the ICRC to respond to emergencies, protect and assist civilians in situations of armed conflict, wounded members of armed forces, prisoners of war, and other vulnerable populations, and promote international humanitarian law. I understand that the United States does not support the TPNW and, if confirmed, I will commit to work with my State Department and interagency colleagues on tangible, verifiable measures to reduce strategic risk and enable progress on nuclear disarmament.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I am aware that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been addressing nuclear weapons since 1945 as part of its mission. The ICRC has an important role that includes promoting respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), helping to disseminate and teach it, and working with States in fulfilling their obligations under IHL, especially those of

states parties to the Geneva Conventions. The United States does not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, nor does the U.S. Government provide funds to support the ICRC's advocacy activities related to it. If confirmed, I commit to defending the ability of the United States to defend itself and our allies and will work with my State Department and interagency colleagues on tangible, verifiable measures to reduce strategic risk and enable progress on nuclear disarmament.

Question. Since 2015, parties to the conflict in Yemen have carried out gross human rights violations with impunity. This includes the Iran-backed Houthis, who, both the U.N. and the Department of State, have implicated in abuses ranging from arbitrary arrest, forced disappearance, to gender-based violence and even torture.

- Please provide your assessment of the Houthi Movement's adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law.

Answer. The Houthis have committed egregious human rights abuses in Yemen; the United Nations Panel of Experts noted they may have also committed war crimes. The 2020 State Department Human Rights Report on Yemen notes many of these allegations, including arbitrary deprivation of life, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, torture, and the recruitment and use in hostilities of children. All parties to Yemen's armed conflict, including the Houthis, are responsible for compliance with international human law. Efforts to hold the Houthis responsible for grave crimes are just as important as those to hold government officials accountable. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push all parties to the conflict to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to using your position to bringing greater awareness to the human rights violations being actively perpetrated by the Houthis in Yemen, which poses a grave and long-term threat to regional stability?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push all parties to the conflict to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions. The United States continues to work with our international partners to apply pressure on the Houthis, including via domestic and U.N. sanctions, and, if confirmed, I would support that work. I would also work closely with the U.N. Human Rights Council to continue highlighting the importance of accountability for human rights abuses committed in Yemen.

Question. To what extent do you feel the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure by the Houthis both in Yemen and in Saudi Arabia constitutes war crimes?

Answer. The Houthis continue to impact Saudi civilians and infrastructure with missiles and unmanned aircraft systems launched from Yemen. I understand that the Department of State shares concerns over these actions and has continued to urge all parties to this conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to mitigate the risk of harm to civilians.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. The Houthis continue to mount egregious attacks against Saudi civilians and infrastructure with missiles and unmanned aircraft systems launched from Yemen. While I am not in a position to make a legal assessment of whether individual attacks constitute war crimes, credible NGOs such as Human Rights Watch have alleged that some of these attacks constituted war crimes. Houthi attacks on Marib have killed civilians, including small children, and have put over one million internally displaced Yemenis at grave risk, and Houthi attacks on Saudi civilian infrastructure have killed and wounded civilians. I understand that the Department of State shares concerns over these actions and has continued to urge all parties to this conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to mitigate the risk of harm to civilians.

Question. How would the role of the Houthis in a future Government of Yemen impact this administration's ability to carry out its priorities with respect to human rights, religious freedom, and democracy promotion in Yemen?

Answer. President Biden has committed to elevating the importance of human rights in our foreign policy. The Houthis have a record of egregious human rights abuses. Respect for human rights, accountability for human rights abuses and violations, and progress on the political track are all mutually reinforcing. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push all parties to the conflict to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions.

Question. In a 2020 report, the U.N. panel of experts noted that their investigations “confirmed rampant levels of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, many of which may amount to war crimes.” What role should DRL play in international efforts to pursue accountability and justice for crimes committed in Yemen?

Answer. The United States continues to work with our international partners to promote accountability in Yemen, including via domestic and U.N. sanctions, public and private diplomatic engagement, and support for documentation of human rights violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict. If confirmed, I would support that work and also engage local civil society organizations on what types of justice would be most meaningful.

Question. How does institutional capacity building at the local level fit into the overall peace process in Yemen?

Answer. Years of war have degraded governmental and non-governmental institutions throughout Yemen, and rebuilding key social, political, and economic institutions will be critical to reaching and maintaining a durable peace agreement. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking, the United Nations, the Government of Yemen, civil society leaders, including women and youth, and key regional and international partners to build on the unprecedented international consensus on the need to end the war.

Question. How can local government structures be better used to advance efforts to find a political settlement to the conflict?

Answer. Only a comprehensive peace agreement between Yemenis can begin to reverse the humanitarian crisis and bring sustainable relief. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking, the United Nations, the Government of Yemen, and key regional and international partners to build on the international consensus on the need to end the war and to engage civil society leaders, including women and youth at the local and national level. An inclusive political dialogue involving civil society is essential to ensuring all Yemenis are heard and represented in efforts to end the war.

Question. Since anti-government protests broke out in October 2019, dozens of protestors have been killed by Iran backed militia groups in Iraq. These groups operate largely with impunity having successfully evaded the Government of Iraq’s efforts to hold them to account for their crimes. What role should DRL play in ensuring the protests movement’s voices are heard and their concerns addressed?

Answer. The Government of Iraq has an obligation to respect and protect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Peaceful demonstrators seeking democratic reforms should never be met with threats and violence. If confirmed, I will prioritize promoting accountability for the ongoing violence against protesters, journalists, and activists in Iraq. I also will ensure DRL continues to work with other U.S. Government stakeholders and likeminded countries to pursue justice, accountability, and democratic reforms through increased diplomatic pressure on the Government of Iraq to investigate and hold accountable individuals responsible for violence against the media, protesters, voters, civil society activists and minority populations, as well as to continue to communicate the U.S. Government’s strong support for the rights and dignity of all persons.

Question. After months of stalled government formation efforts following the August 4, 2020 Beirut Port Blast, Lebanon’s political elite finally reached an agreement to form a cabinet on September 20, 2021. If confirmed, please outline your list of priorities with respect to Lebanon.

Answer. If confirmed, I would support efforts to urge the newly formed Lebanese Government to take action to address the dire economic situation facing those living in Lebanon and to address the legitimate demands of the Lebanese people, including concrete political and economic reforms which would combat corruption and protect the rights of Lebanese civil society, as well as accountability for the port blast. I would also support efforts to work to ensure Lebanon’s parliamentary elections are held on-time and conducted in a free and fair manner.

Question. How do you plan to work with Lebanon’s newly formed cabinet and civil society to support efforts to pursue accountability for the Beirut Port Blast?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support efforts to push for the newly formed Lebanese Government to work closely with Lebanese civil society to ensure accountability for the Beirut Port Blast. I believe the Lebanese justice system must work without any political interference, and civil society plays an important role in promoting transparency.

Question. Please provide your assessment of Russia's role in the Middle East and North Africa region with respect to human rights and democratic ideals.

Answer. Russia's actions in the Middle East and North Africa largely serve to undermine the international order, including human rights and democracy, through its enabling of regimes committing human rights violations. Among the greatest concerns is Russia's military campaign in Syria in support of the Assad regime, which has led to massive destruction, the detainment and abuse of countless individuals, the displacement of millions, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands. If confirmed, I will push back on Russia's efforts to shield the Assad regime from accountability, including in multilateral fora.

Question. Is it your view that closer partnership with Russia positively, or negatively, impacts U.S. interests in the region?

Answer. In general, Russia's interests in the region are mostly geopolitical but there is an element of commercial interest as well—which means there are multiple angles for the U.S. to consider engaging. If confirmed, I would support cooperation with Russia in the Middle East and North Africa region on issues where our interests align, such as on constraining Iran's nuclear ambitions. In Syria, the United States has always been open to dialogue with Russia as long as it contributes to the protection of civilians, enables steps toward a political resolution to the conflict, and promotes Syria's adherence to its international obligations. Where Russia acts to thwart U.S. objectives in the region, however, I believe the United States should respond with firm resolve. Calling out and holding Russia accountable for its malign actions is an important response tool.

Question. According to the U.N., widespread human rights violations have been committed over the course of the conflict in Libya. What role should DRL play in efforts to pursue accountability for the victims?

Answer. The United States shares the aspirations of the Libyan people: a sovereign, stable, unified, and secure Libya, free from foreign interference. Libyans should be able to feel that their rights will be respected. Ensuring accountability for human rights abuses is critical to the national reconciliation process.

If confirmed, I will explore all tools available to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses in Libya, including sanctions and support for multilateral mechanisms like the U.N. International Fact-Finding Mission on Libya. I will continue ongoing diplomatic engagement with the Libyan Government and civil society, and will support civil society in their efforts to document human rights violations and abuses as part of broader accountability mechanisms.

Question. What is the best recourse to pursue action against the alleged perpetrators of such crimes?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with Libyan civil society and build on international best practices and the expertise of my colleagues in the Department to determine the most effective way to promote accountability in support of a sovereign, stable, secure, and unified Libya that protects the human rights of all individuals in the country.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the exceptional measures taken by President Kais Saied in July through which he suspended parliament, lifted MP's immunity, and dismissed the prime minister.

Answer. I share the Tunisian people's goal of a democratic government that is responsive to the country's needs, as it battles economic and health crises. I am concerned that President Saied's transitional measures are continuing without a clear end in sight. If confirmed, I would echo calls from the Tunisian public for the president to articulate a plan with a clear timeline for an inclusive reform process that includes civil society and diverse political voices and ensure that Tunisians' human rights are respected and protected.

Question. To what extent do you feel President Saied's recent actions threaten the state of Tunisian democracy?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration continues to urge President Saied to swiftly end exceptional measures, appoint a prime minister to form a capable government that can respond to Tunisians' legitimate economic and political demands, and launch an inclusive reform process that incorporates civil society and diverse political perspectives. If confirmed, I would support and advance administration policy on these fronts, echo calls from the Tunisian public for the president to articulate a plan with a clear timeline for an inclusive reform process that includes civil

society and diverse political voices and ensure that Tunisians' human rights are respected and protected.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to work with Tunisia to preserve hard won democratic gains?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has called on the Tunisian Government to continue its public commitment to respect Tunisians' fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. If confirmed, I would continue to make clear the United States' unwavering support for Tunisian democracy and work closely with a range of Tunisian interlocutors, including Tunisian civil society, to strengthen Tunisia's democracy, and ensure that Tunisians' human rights are respected and protected. I would also work closely with multilateral organizations and the international financial institutions to ensure Tunisia's democracy has wide support and adequate resources to succeed.

Question. In 2016, the Obama administration signed a 10-year security assistance Memorandum of Understanding with Israel in which the U.S. pledged military assistance in the form of Foreign Military Financing and missile defense funding. Do you support providing Israel with defensive capabilities that include Iron Dome munitions?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. On May 20, President Biden assured Prime Minister Netanyahu of his "full support to replenish Israel's Iron Dome system to ensure [Israel's] defense and security in the future." If confirmed, I will support transfers of defensive capabilities to Israel consistent with U.S. law and the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding.

Question. In May, President Biden confirmed his administration's support for Israel and said, "Until the region says unequivocally they acknowledge the right of Israel to exist as an independent Jewish state, there will be no peace." If confirmed, will you support transfers of offensive capabilities to Israel so they can properly defend themselves?

Answer. The United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. If confirmed, I will support transfers of offensive capabilities to Israel consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Should the International Criminal Court investigate U.S. or Israeli personnel? Why or why not?

Answer. No. I support the administration's efforts to firmly oppose investigations by the International Criminal Court of U.S. or Israeli personnel. The United States and Israel are not parties to the ICC and have not consented to the Court's jurisdiction. I understand the U.S. Government has expressed serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise its jurisdiction over Israeli personnel. The Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state and therefore, are not qualified to obtain membership as a state in, participate as a state in, or delegate jurisdiction to the ICC.

I understand the United States Government remains deeply committed to ensuring justice and accountability for international atrocity crimes. I recognize the role that international tribunals such as the ICC can play within their respective mandates in the pursuit of those important objectives and believe 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 can exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution.

Question. What are your views on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which includes companies with whom the Department of State does business?

Answer. I firmly oppose the BDS movement. While the United States will protect the constitutional rights of our citizens to free speech, the Biden-Harris administration has been clear that it resolutely opposes the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement because it unfairly and inappropriately singles out Israel.

Question. Under what conditions would you advocate for the United States—and the Department of State, in particular—to join the boycott movement?

Answer. Like the Biden-Harris administration, I firmly oppose the BDS movement.

Question. Do you believe that Israeli settlements in West Bank and Gaza are illegal?

Answer. I believe it is critical for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, including annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, incitement to violence, and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. 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 they seek. I firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I believe it is critical for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, including annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, incitement to violence, and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. I am not in a position to speak to the administration's legal views. If confirmed, I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution, as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek.

Question. The Egyptian Government has a less-than-stellar record on human rights, including recent arbitrary detentions of human rights activists, impunity for security services, deplorable detention conditions, suppression of fundamental freedoms, and more. It is important that the United States seek to bolster human rights and civil society in Egypt. What tools will you use to address these human rights abuses and end impunity for those committing them?

Answer. It's clear that the United States has multiple priorities when it comes to policy toward Egypt, but I think it's important to recognize that the Secretary of State's recent decision neither to certify improvements in Egypt's human rights record nor to waive the Foreign Military Financing human rights conditions presents an opportunity for the administration to double down on its efforts to address Egypt's grave human rights crisis. If confirmed, I will consider all tools available to address human rights violations in Egypt and to end impunity for those violations, including through public and private diplomatic engagement, engagement with partners and at multilateral forums, and more punitive measures to address specific abuses, including restrictions on security assistance as appropriate. I also will support engagement with Egyptian civil society groups, including human rights defenders and work closely with the NEA bureau and Embassy Cairo to ensure those civil society voices are heard. Ultimately, the Egyptian people will be the most effective advocates for human rights and government accountability in Egypt, so if confirmed I will prioritize identifying how to best push back on Egyptian restrictions on civic space and how to secure adequate space for independent civil society groups working to address these issues in Egypt.

Question. If confirmed, what would you change about current programming in Syria?

Answer. I understand that since before the 2011 uprisings, DRL programs have been actively supporting Syrian civil society, independent journalists, civic groups, and women and youth activists, to advance the cause of democracy and human rights. I believe DRL's programs protect civic space for Syrian civil society groups to advocate for the needs of their communities; play an active role in the political process; promote reconciliation and stabilization of areas recently liberated; hold local governance institutions accountable; contribute to accountability and transitional justice efforts; and provide support to survivors of torture and sexual and gender-based violence. While other donors have ceased or limited their support for these Syrian civil society actors, DRL has provided continuous assistance to help protect civil society's role as positive change agents within Syria, in neighboring countries, and in the diaspora. If confirmed, I will look closely at DRL's programmatic efforts in Syria to determine if any changes are needed to ensure the continued success and impact of these efforts, to ensure our programs remain aligned with our policy, and to ensure our partners can continue to operate as safely as possible.

Question. Do you agree that the United States should not be funding reconstruction efforts in Syria? Please explain your answer.

Answer. If confirmed, I would not support reconstruction assistance to Syria until there is irreversible progress toward a political resolution to the conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254. I would support the United States continuing to provide humanitarian aid in Syria, including certain early recovery assistance, to build resilience and restore Syrian civilians' access to basic services, so

long as these are delivered on the basis of need and conducted by independent and impartial humanitarian agencies.

Question. What steps, if confirmed, will you take to bolster civil society in country?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure the United States continues its strong support for courageous Syrian civil society actors whose efforts are critical to advancing peace and stability in Syria. I understand DRL has provided continuous assistance to maintain civil society's role as positive change agents within Syria, including through efforts to protect and expand civic space and encourage meaningful citizen participation in public policy and governance; promote local reconciliation; support human rights and accountability efforts; and facilitate reintegration of returning IDPs, among other activities, as well as Syrians in neighboring countries and the diaspora. If confirmed, I will ensure DRL continues to work closely with interagency colleagues to ensure the continued success and impact of these efforts, and that our partners can continue to operate as safely as possible.

Question. What steps, if confirmed, will you take to bolster human rights defenders in country?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure DRL continues its strong support for courageous Syrian human rights defenders whose efforts are critical to advancing peace and stability in Syria. I understand DRL has provided continuous assistance to ensure human rights defenders' efforts to contribute to accountability and transitional justice efforts; provide support to survivors of torture and gender-based violence; play an active role in the political process; and promote stabilization in areas liberated from ISIS. If confirmed, I will ensure DRL continues to work closely with interagency colleagues to support and encourage the continued success and impact of these efforts, and that our partners can continue to operate as safely as possible.

Question. Syrian-Russian forces continue to deliberately and openly attack civilian entities, community centers, and populations. How would you engage with the intra-Department and interagency to promote a political solution through United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage the United States to remain engaged with the U.N., our allies, and our international partners to encourage all possible efforts to advance a political resolution to the conflict through a U.N.-facilitated, Syrian-led process as laid out in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254, including a nationwide ceasefire and the release of arbitrarily detained Syrians. Peace and stability in Syria, and the greater region, can only be achieved through a political process that addresses the root causes of the conflict, including the Assad regime's ongoing campaign of arbitrary detention and violence against his own people, and promotes accountability for the innumerable atrocities the Assad regime and its allies have perpetrated against the Syrian people.

Question. The use of arbitrary detention and torture by the Assad regime continues to shock the conscious. Please explain what tools are available to you, if confirmed, to hold the regime accountable for its crimes against civilians?

Answer. If confirmed, I would use every tool at my disposal to promote an end to the Assad regime's vicious campaign of arbitrary detention and torture in Syria. I will consult with our DRL team and Department colleagues to assess which tools are most appropriate to achieving this objective, including continued support for human rights and documentation groups laying the groundwork for accountability efforts; support for former detainees, families of the missing, and other survivors of the regime's abuses; the continued use of targeted sanctions that promote accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses and limit their access to resources; and ensuring our efforts to advance a political resolution also address the root causes of the conflict and promote accountability for the innumerable atrocities the Assad regime and its allies have perpetrated against the Syrian people.

Question. The recent botched evacuation in Afghanistan highlights some serious gaps in the policy decisions made by this administration. What conditions would a Biden administration place on future assistance to Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will monitor closely how any future Government of Afghanistan respects and protects human rights, especially for women, girls, and minority groups, and fundamental freedoms that have become an integral part of the life of all Afghan citizens, and actively engage our bilateral and multilateral partners to maintain unity in holding the Taliban accountable to their actions. If confirmed, I also commit to ensuring unhindered U.S. humanitarian assistance continues to safely flow to support the needs of Afghan people and that female aid

workers are granted the ability to fully participate in the delivery of aid. I will work to increase support to human rights defenders, independent journalists, and civil society activists who remain in Afghanistan. The provision of humanitarian assistance is a demonstration of the U.S. commitment to the Afghan people, and an important part of ensuring they remain protected and supported. If confirmed, I will encourage the United States, to work with other governments, with financial institutions, and with NGOs to support humanitarian and emergency assistance to Afghans whose lives depend on it.

Question. U.S. efforts in Afghanistan dramatically improved conditions for women, minority and youth but now are at great risk of violence and regression from the Taliban. How should the State Department safeguard the gains made for Afghan women, minority, and youth in the current security environment?

Answer. The meaningful participation of women and members of minority groups in governance has a positive effect on the economic, political, and health aspects of a country and its people. If confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to hold the Taliban to its stated commitment to allow U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghans with the proper documentation who wish to leave the country to do so. I will also continue to support efforts to hold the Taliban to international expectations on respecting the fundamental human rights of all Afghans, including those of women, children, and members of minority and vulnerable groups. I will also work with the international community, including the United Nations, to hold the perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations accountable for those actions. Part of my job, if confirmed, will be to make sure the Department—as well as the interagency—is aware of the fragile situation for women, minorities, and youth and has all the updated information available so we can make decisions as U.S. Government that lessens the burdens—and threats—they face and increase protection and opportunities.

Question. Do you feel that this administration failed women, girls, and youth in Afghanistan given the botched evacuation?

Answer. Over 124,000 American citizens, lawful permanent residents (LPRs), locally employed staff, Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs), and Afghans at-risk, including women, children, journalists, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and members of minority groups were evacuated from Afghanistan prior to September 1. That said, many vulnerable Afghans remain in Afghanistan and will need support and protection. The administration will continue to hold the Taliban to their commitment to allowing the safe passage of American citizens, LPRs, and Afghans with the proper documentation, including women and children, who desire to leave. The meaningful participation of women and members of minority groups in governance has a positive effect on the economic, political, and security health of a country. If confirmed, I will work with the rest of the interagency to press the Taliban on the international community's expectations of their ability to uphold the rights of all Afghans, including women and children. I will engage our multilateral and bilateral partners on the same, to ensure they are pushing the same message of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need to form an inclusive government that includes women and members of minority groups. I will work with the international community, including the United Nations, to hold the perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations accountable for their actions.

Question. How will you continue to support vulnerable populations in Afghanistan and the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially for Afghan human rights defenders, women, children, journalists, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, members of minority groups, and other vulnerable persons. I will support U.S. efforts to hold the Taliban to its stated commitment to allow American citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghans with the proper documentation who wish to leave the country to do so, as well as press them to respect human rights, including those of women and children, in Afghanistan. I will also look for ways for the State Department to support multilateral initiatives that protect and support vulnerable populations, work with regional governments, multilateral organizations, international civil society organizations and USAID colleagues. I will seek to maintain our robust relationships with Afghan human rights defenders both inside and outside Afghanistan. If confirmed, my commitment to these relationships will remain unwavering as we work with academics, human rights defenders, women activists, and disability activists on these issues.

Question. The U.S. recently killed 10 civilians, including seven children, via an over-the-horizon drone strike in Afghanistan. The U.S. has killed civilians in numerous other errant strikes. Would other countries be justified in boycotting, divesting, and sanctioning the United States? Why or why not?

Answer. I share my deepest condolences with the families and friends of those who were killed by the strike. While the United States, like all other countries, has a right to defend itself and, if confirmed, I will defend that right, there has been tremendous work in the area of how best to respond to civilian casualties and a number of lessons learned that if implemented robustly can help generate both effectiveness towards national security goals and good will amongst local communities. General McKenzie stated on September 17, “This strike was taken in the earnest belief that it would prevent an imminent threat to our forces and the evacuees at the airport. But it was a mistake and I offer my sincere apology.” Secretary Austin said that “We will endeavor to learn from this horrible mistake. To that end, I have directed a thorough review of the investigation just completed by U.S. Central Command. I have asked for this review to consider the degree to which the investigation considered all available context and information, the degree to which accountability measures need be taken and at what level, and the degree to which strike authorities, procedures and processes need to be altered in the future.” I believe such a response is important not just to the immediate friends and family of those killed but also for us as a country and is morally responsible. If confirmed, I will support the approach described in these statements.

Question. Is it your opinion that the policy and objectives being advanced by the Chinese Communist Party pose the greatest foreign policy challenge to the United States today and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future?

Answer. There is no doubt that the PRC poses the most significant challenge of any nation to the United States in terms of our values and the interests of the American people. If confirmed, I will pay special attention to the PRC, whose pernicious attacks on human rights, dissent, and the rule of law are on the rise domestically and fast becoming a common export. Our priority must be making sure the PRC does not succeed in its efforts to undermine international human rights and the rules-based order.

Question. If not, why not?

Answer. There is no doubt that the PRC poses the most significant challenge of any nation to the United States in terms of our values and the interests of the American people.

Question. What do you believe is our greatest foreign policy challenge?

Answer. I believe there is not one issue that is our greatest foreign policy challenge but instead a number of interlocking ones that include digital and technological advancements, the climate crisis, rising authoritarianism, and an increasingly aggressive China. These transnational issues are already testing democracies worldwide and, left unchecked or ill-coordinated, have the potential to lead to frayed alliances, institutional vulnerabilities, massive, large scale and persistent migration, and a serious deterioration of basic, fundamental freedoms. If we don’t rise to the occasion to respond to each of these developments in a coordinated way, the consequences to democracy, security, and human rights could be catastrophic.

Question. Will the Biden administration continue public presidential meetings with, and support for, the Dalai Lama as conducted by the Trump administration?

Answer. Yes. I understand administrations from both political parties have long welcomed engagement with, and support for, His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a globally renowned religious leader. If confirmed, I would support a continuation of that practice.

Question. Will you commit that the Department of State will meet with the Dalai Lama’s representatives, as the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor did in 2020?

Answer. Yes. I understand administrations from both political parties have long welcomed engagement with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. If confirmed, I would support a continuation of that practice.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to confront the Chinese Government on the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang?

Answer. The United States should continue to speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and deter future abuses. If con-

firmed, I will continue concrete U.S. Government action—in coordination with our allies and partners whenever possible—to promote accountability for ongoing atrocities and genocide in Xinjiang, including through the imposition of visa restrictions, tightening of export controls, enforcement of import restrictions, imposition of financial sanctions, and multilateral initiatives. We will continue to caution businesses about the economic, legal, and reputational risks of supply chain links to entities that engage in human rights abuses, including forced labor in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China.

Question. Due to the massive amounts of human rights abuses being committed by the Chinese Communist Party, do you believe they should be allowed to host the Olympics in 2022?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the human rights violations and abuses being committed by the PRC. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State continues to play a strong leadership role in global efforts to combat serious human rights abuses committed by the PRC, domestically and abroad, and consults closely with our allies and partners to establish a shared approach regarding the Olympics.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) members select the Olympic host. If confirmed, I will engage with the IOC and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee to advocate for human rights to be considered in the selection of host cities consistent with the Olympic Charter, which highlights respect and human dignity as key values.

I am deeply concerned by the human rights violations and abuses being committed by the PRC Government and the PRC Government's abhorrent genocide and crimes against humanity against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State continues to play a strong leadership role in global efforts to end the genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, combat human rights abuses committed by the PRC, domestically and abroad, and will consult closely with our allies and partners to define our common concerns and establish a shared approach.

Question. Legislation currently under consideration proposes a human rights briefing for the Olympic athletes on Team USA. The briefing would help inform athletes about major human rights abuses committed by the government hosting the Olympics, and alert them to narratives that the government pushes to deflect or deny such abuses. Do you support such a proposal?

Answer. I support raising awareness among athletes of the human rights abuses committed by the government hosting the Olympics. If confirmed, I will consult with key stakeholders, including the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, in developing an approach that does so.

Question. Would you devote Department of State resources and personnel toward working with the International Olympic Committee and other relevant stakeholders to ensure such briefings are provided to as many American athletes as possible prior to the 2022 Olympics?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with key stakeholders, primarily the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, in developing our approach to continue to conduct outreach on human rights issues to American athletes chosen or competing for a place on Team USA prior to the 2022 Olympics.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and relevant others in the Department to ensure that briefings, including about PRC human rights and atrocities, are provided to as many American athletes chosen or competing for a place on Team USA prior to the 2022 Olympics.

Question. Do you support a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Olympics? Why or why not?

Answer. I understand this is a strongly bipartisan issue that many in Congress are focused on and I understand why. If confirmed, I will closely consult with key stakeholders in developing our approach, ideally a shared approach with allies and partners, in advance of and during the 2022 Olympic Games. I will review this issue in light of the PRC's abhorrent human rights record, including genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. The PRC has an abhorrent human rights record, including the commission of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang. I believe the United States should continue to speak out consistently and

jointly with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and deter future abuses, including a potential diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Olympics. I personally support such a diplomatic boycott as a way of signaling U.S. disapproval of the PRC's behavior.

Question. The CCP has cracked down on the most basic rights of the people of Hong Kong. How will you address the human rights abuses occurring in Hong Kong?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the PRC and Hong Kong Governments' increased efforts to wield the National Security Law as a tool to curtail the exercise of human rights, dismantle civil society, and silence dissenting views. If confirmed, I will support the United States' continued efforts to press the PRC to abide by its international obligations and commitments; to cease its dismantlement of Hong Kong's democratic institutions, autonomy, and rule of law; to immediately release and drop all charges against individuals unjustly detained in Hong Kong; and to respect the human rights of the people of Hong Kong.

Question. Do you believe that reaching a climate agreement should be the top priority in our dealings with China? If so, why?

Answer. Addressing the climate crisis with urgency is a top priority for the administration, but without question, so is protecting human rights. I believe human rights should not be given a back seat even as other issues come to the fore. The administration has said rights are not a negotiating chip in engagements with the PRC or any other country for greater action on climate. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that that approach continues.

Question. If not, what should be our top priority instead?

Answer. The administration's Interim National Security Strategy states that "we will only succeed in advancing American interests and upholding our universal values by working in common cause with our closest allies and partners, and by renewing our own enduring sources of national strength." If confirmed, I will seek to ensure the promotion of our democratic values are at the center of U.S. foreign policy, including in our dealings with China.

Question. The PRC Government and Chinese companies have been implicated in corruption at home and in its dealings with other countries around the world. If confirmed, will you commit to highlighting corrupt Chinese practices and prioritize assistance to help counter corruption, including corruption caused or exacerbated by the Chinese Government or Chinese companies?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Several countries have forcibly returned Uyghurs fleeing persecution and abhorrent human rights abuses by the Chinese Communist Party. How will you and interagency partners work with other nations to discourage, and eventually end, this practice?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners to urge third countries to act to avoid complicity in the PRC's human rights violations and abuses committed against Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minorities from Xinjiang, including by providing protection to and preventing the forcible return of individuals seeking to flee the PRC's repressive policies.

Question. Do you consider the human rights abuses committed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against the Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minorities, including forced sterilization, to constitute a genocide? If not, please explain.

Answer. Yes. As Secretary Blinken has said, the PRC has committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. These atrocities remain ongoing.

Question. The Chinese Government continues to "Sinicize" religions, which the Congressional Executive Commission on China describes as "a campaign that aims to bring religion in China under closer official control and into conformity with officially sanctioned interpretations of Chinese culture." These policies affect Christians, Muslims, Han Buddhists, Taoists, and many others. What can the Biden administration do to support freedom of religious practice for the people of China, free from interference and enforced conformity?

Answer. I share your concerns regarding the ongoing deterioration of freedom of religion or belief in the PRC. The PRC demonstrates blatant disregard for freedom of religion or belief and exercises extreme hostility toward members of all religious

and spiritual communities, including predominantly Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, Protestants, Catholics, and Falun Gong. These communities have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government.

The PRC is engaged in human rights abuses—and in the case of Xinjiang, genocide and crimes against humanity—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 abuses, and I will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and to deter future abuses. I will also continue to urge the PRC to uphold its international commitments with respect to freedom of religion or belief for all individuals and call on the international community to condemn with a united voice the PRC's atrocities in Xinjiang.

Question. The Vatican extended its agreement with the Chinese Government that establishes a process for appointing bishops in China. Under the Agreement, bishops in China are in communion with Rome but also approved by the Chinese Government. The details of this agreement have never been made public. Despite the agreement, Catholic bishops not affiliated with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association continue to face persecution. Do you believe this Vatican-China agreement advanced human rights and religious freedom in China? If so, why? If not, why not?

Answer. As I understand, despite the provisional agreement between the Holy See and Beijing, the PRC continues to repress Catholics, particularly clergy and laypersons who refuse state control of religion. In his book published late last year, Pope Francis characterized Uyghurs in the PRC alongside members of other religious and ethnic communities as persecuted due to their beliefs.

If confirmed, I would encourage the Holy See to speak out publicly against the PRC's human rights violations and abuses of members of minority religious and ethnic communities. I would also encourage the Holy See to hold the PRC Government accountable to the terms of the provisional agreement and make the terms of the agreement public to promote accountability for the PRC's commitments.

Question. If confirmed, will you prioritize religious freedom issues in China in your diplomatic engagements with Vatican officials? What will you emphasize to them in these engagements?

Answer. The Holy See has a long history of promoting freedom of religion or belief, including through advocacy and interfaith dialogue, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with the Vatican on this issue. If confirmed, I would encourage the Holy See to speak out publicly against the PRC's human rights violations and abuses of members of minority religious and ethnic communities. I would also encourage the Holy See to hold the PRC Government accountable to the terms of the provisional agreement and make the terms of the agreement public to promote accountability for the PRC's commitments.

Question. Xi Jinping has emphasized the desire to ensure that Hollywood filmmakers use their position to "tell China's story well". This translates into Beijing's overreach into and censorship of Hollywood films through explicit censorship requirements for the Chinese market, boycotts and economic pressure, and acquisitions of industry corporations by Chinese companies. As Hollywood director Judd Apatow recently said, "Instead of us doing business with China and that leading to China being more free, what has happened is that China has bought our silence with their money".

- Will the Biden administration, including yourself and other senior State Department officials, engage the film industry regarding the pernicious impact of censorship by the Chinese Government and other authoritarian governments on freedom of expression and other principles that are fundamental to the political system of United States?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What are your views on the implications and consequences of Beijing's tactics in Hollywood for the PRC's overall strategy to exercise malign influence across various types of U.S. media? What other types of media in the United States are at risk of being subjected to tactics we are seeing used by Beijing to influence Hollywood?

Answer. I am concerned by the PRC's campaign of disinformation and censorship, which extends well beyond its borders and directly impacts the information environment in the United States. The PRC's attempts to control freedom of expression are not limited to Hollywood or U.S. media but extend into cultural, academic, and social media spaces as well.

If confirmed, I will engage with governments and nongovernmental actors, including media organizations and private institutions, to promote freedom of expression and support U.S. entities in resisting PRC malign influence and coercion. I will also work closely with partners and allies to build resilience to, and jointly confront, the PRC's efforts to control the global information environment.

Question. China is starting to build extraterritoriality into its laws and regulations, not just the Hong Kong National Security Law but also numerous other laws and regulations. Please describe what you think the implications are for human rights abroad and for the United States in particular.

Answer. The PRC continues its efforts to reshape the international rules-based order to advance its own interests, including by utilizing its laws and regulations to commit transnational repression. These actions threaten global peace and stability and threaten human rights and democratic institutions and actors in the United States and globally.

If confirmed, I will work closely with our partners to address these challenges from a position of strength, reengage in international institutions, and resist attempts to rewrite the rules that govern these institutions. I will use all available diplomatic tools to promote accountability for these egregious abuses and support human rights defenders and civil society organizations seeking protection.

Question. Will you commit not to advise or support entrance into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis. I believe these two goals are complementary.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests and focus on what Beijing does—not what it says it will or won't do. I will not advise that the United States sacrifice vital U.S. interests or our values for PRC promises on climate change. We can speak the truth about the PRC's human rights abuses and atrocities and promote accountability for them while working to reverse the effects of climate change.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests, including a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea that ensures freedom of navigation. I believe this goal is consistent with and supportive of the President's goals on climate change.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests, including the continuation of activities that protect and promote the rules-based order in the South China Sea such as freedom of navigation exercises. I will not recommend decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend making changes in our defense relationship with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address climate change while deepening and strengthening strategic alliances including in the Indo-Pacific region in line with U.S. interests, including the protection and promotion of human rights; I believe these goals are complementary.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis while deepening and strengthening strategic alliances including in the Indo-Pacific region in line with U.S. interests, which include the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights; I believe these goals are complementary. If confirmed, I will support cooperation with the PRC where it is in line with these objectives.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address climate change while deepening and strengthening strategic

partnerships including with Taiwan in line with U.S. interests, including the protection and promotion of human rights; I believe these goals are complementary.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address climate change while deepening and strengthening strategic partnerships including with Taiwan in line with U.S. interests, including the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights; I believe these goals are complementary. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, I will seek to enhance the U.S. relationship with Taiwan, including the defense relationship, as a way of implementing the President's vision of a foreign policy with democracy and human rights at the center.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests and to work alongside U.S. allies and partners to confront the PRC's anti-competitive, market distorting, and coercive behaviors. I will not recommend against pursuing policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend terminating sanctions against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests. I will make recommendations regarding sanctions and Entity List designations that promote and protect human rights and labor rights, including forced labor and I will recommend those not be lifted until there is progress on human and labor rights. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to advocating for U.S. policies that protect and promote human rights and hold PRC and CCP officials accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including the ongoing atrocities in Xinjiang and campaign of repression targeting Tibetans, Hong Kongers, lawyers, and human rights defenders. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis.

Question. Recently the Government of Bangladesh has forcibly moved Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazaar to Bhasan Char, an island in the Bay of Bengal. This move was done without consultation with donor countries and international organizations. If confirmed, do you commit to discussing this move with Bangladeshi Government officials?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will uphold the U.S. Government's long-standing commitment to ensure movements of displaced persons are informed and voluntary. I recognize and appreciate the generosity Bangladesh has shown in hosting nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees since they fled horrific atrocities and abuses in Burma in 2017. I believe that the United States, as the leading contributor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Rohingya crisis, also has a responsibility to ensure Bangladesh respects these refugees' human rights, including freedom of movement. If confirmed, I will work with other donor countries and international organizations to message consistently to Bangladeshi authorities that any transfers must be in full coordination with humanitarian organizations and align with humanitarian principles.

Question. Do you commit to pressing the Bangladeshi officials to ensure that no further moves before the United Nations conducts a thorough and independent technical and protection assessments to determine the safety, feasibility, and desirability of relocating refugees Bhasan Char?

Answer. Yes. I understand the United States has consistently recognized and appreciated the challenges and responsibilities that the Rohingya humanitarian response has placed on the Government and people of Bangladesh. If confirmed, I will

commit to supporting consistent, strong U.S. messaging to urge Bangladesh to permit the U.N. to conduct a comprehensive technical and protection assessment on Bhasan Char. I would also commit to working with Bangladesh and humanitarian groups to ensure that such relocations are voluntary and based on informed consent without pressure or coercion.

Question. Do you support United States security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Yes. U.S. national security benefits when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and do not unduly restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we develop and maintain such important security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, guided by President Biden's insistence that U.S. interests and values are inseparable.

Question. Do you believe that U.S. security alliances and partnerships can contribute to improving human rights records in relevant countries?

Answer. Yes, I believe U.S. security alliances and partnerships as important aspects of foreign policy can and should be used for positive effect on countries' human rights records. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation.

Question. Do you consider the Philippines to be a strategically important ally of the United States? Please explain your position.

Answer. Yes. The U.S. alliance with the Philippines is one of the oldest and most strategically important in East Asia. Continued engagement with the Philippine Government is vital to regional security. At the same time, in that engagement, I believe it is crucial for the U.S. to emphasize the importance of shared values including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to sustain a stable, bilateral partnership. If confirmed, I will raise human rights concerns—from arbitrary and unlawful killings to targeting the independent press—at every possible opportunity with the Government of the Philippines.

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?

Answer. The United States' effort to build a network of allies and partners that can credibly and collectively respond to shared security threats has the benefit of strengthening the free, open, and inclusive regional order, which is in our national interest. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue that goal while helping to ensure that our engagement with those partners and allies includes promotion of human rights and accountability for abuse. I believe that respect for human rights is integral to maintaining strong and sustainable countries and partnerships.

Question. 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. If confirmed, I will support continuing a robust security partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including through appropriate arms transfers consistent with existing U.S. law and provisions that promote and protect human rights.

Question. Do you support United States security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Yes. U.S. national security benefits when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and do not unduly restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we develop and maintain security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, guided by President Biden's insistence that U.S. interests and values are inseparable.

Question. Do you believe that U.S. security alliances and partnerships can contribute to improving human rights records in relevant countries?

Answer. Yes, I believe U.S. security alliances and partnerships as important aspects of foreign policy and can be used to positive effect on countries' human rights

records. While security alliances have manifold reasons to exist, the important role they can also play as a joint investment in promoting democracy and human rights is central to also advancing U.S. national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation.

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 am committed to engaging with Congress, as appropriate, on our actions and engagements with partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region, including those partners and allies in Southeast Asia.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. Our alliances and partnerships are a strategic advantage over our competitors and the strength of this network of defense relations cannot be taken for granted. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting with Congress, as appropriate, on our actions and engagements with all partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region, including those partners and allies in Southeast Asia.

Question. How will you prioritize Internet Freedom within the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor bureau and across the Department?

Answer. I strongly believe that the same human rights people have offline must be protected online, including the rights to freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I will support DRL's efforts to promote internet freedom by raising our concerns bilaterally and building and participating in multilateral and multi-stakeholder coalitions such as the Freedom Online Coalition, where we play a leadership role. I will support investment in global internet freedom programming to support digital safety, policy advocacy, technology, and research to help global internet users overcome barriers to accessing the open internet.

Question. Do you believe that internet shutdowns are a threat to human rights?

Answer. Yes. In May, Secretary Blinken condemned the use of partial or complete government-imposed internet shutdowns, among other tactics, to prevent the exercise of freedom of expression online. I believe that in addition to restricting the exercise of human rights, including the right to expression and assembly, internet shutdowns disrupt access to essential services such as healthcare and emergency services, and negatively impact the economy. If confirmed, I will support DRL's efforts to address internet shutdowns by raising our concerns bilaterally, continuing our participation in multilateral fora that are working to raise awareness such as the G7, and supporting our efforts in multi-stakeholder coalitions such as the Freedom Online Coalition, where we play a leadership role.

Question. The Department has been focused on the idea of "internet freedom" as a key programmatic effort to combat and counter malign influence and authoritarian governments. How will you bring more cohesion to the various internet freedom programs throughout the department?

Answer. I will support DRL's continued leadership of the State Department's efforts to promote internet freedom globally through a variety of bilateral and multilateral engagements as well as through foreign assistance programming. I understand that DRL works to advance the U.S.-led vision of the open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet, governed in a manner consistent with international human rights standards and democratic norms. I also believe growing concerns around digital authoritarianism or tech governance are tremendously important policies on which DRL needs to engage given how these tools are used to undermine democracy and restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will ensure that DRL continues to coordinate throughout the Department on internet-related issues, such as cybersecurity, disinformation, and emerging technologies.

Question. Do you believe that these programs are effective in providing training and tools to civil society?

Answer. Yes, I believe that DRL's global internet freedom programs are effective in providing training and tools to civil society. My understanding is that since 2008, the State Department has invested over \$320 million in global internet freedom programs, which support digital safety, policy advocacy, technology, and research to help global internet users overcome barriers to accessing the open internet. These

programs support leading anti-censorship tools that allow millions of internet users worldwide to safely connect to the uncensored internet, which helps to advance U.S. business opportunities abroad, foster the free sharing of information across borders, and counter political repression around the world. They also help to protect journalists and activists operating in repressive environments from online censorship and cyber-attacks. I believe these efforts ensure that users have access to diverse information and perspectives, which play a critical role in combatting corruption, countering disinformation, undermining extremist narratives, strengthening democratic norms, and promoting accountability for violations of human rights.

Question. If confirmed, how would you expand internet freedom programming to additional countries with shrinking civil societies and/or space for free online expression?

Question. If confirmed, I will prioritize this critical programming and apply DRL's deep expertise on regional and country-level threats to human rights online to direct resources to where they are most needed. I believe that the Department should apply available resources to innovative technical programs, including surging and sustaining support for critical anti-censorship platforms, in order to counter technical developments in censorship and surveillance by repressive governments, and further develop programs to provide protection against accelerating cyber threats to civil society and independent media. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues—and Congress—to expand these vital programmatic efforts.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that information collected by the bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations (CSO) and then used by the bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor are harmonized and used for the improvement of programmatic efforts?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to foster what I understand is a productive relationship between DRL and CSO. DRL will utilize all data sources available to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs.

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. How does the task force define success?

Answer. I will work with the various interagency players in the task force, if confirmed, to refine and clearly articulate our successes, but ultimately the goal is to identify the various risk factors for atrocities and then address, mitigate, and ameliorate them, thereby reducing the likelihood of an atrocity occurring. This measurable reduction in risk is success.

Question. How would you, if confirmed, use this data as the Assistant Secretary of DRL?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest and most effective decisions possible including where to focus diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, allocation of resources, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues.

Question. What efforts can the task force undertake to amplify public messaging on signs of atrocities and/or other conflict indicators?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek out opportunities to encourage the Task Force to present atrocity prevention messaging in whatever fora are available, including multilateral and within the civil society and non-governmental space. If confirmed, I will also consult with interested Members of Congress.

Question. What efforts can DRL undertake to amplify public messaging on signs of atrocities and/or other conflict indicators?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek out opportunities to amplify atrocity prevention messaging in whatever fora are available: multilateral, with DRL's extensive networks in the civil society and non-governmental space, and with partners across the interagency. I also believe in some cases calling out human rights abuses and looking for ways to course correct and address impunity can be an important way to respond to signs of atrocities before they worsen. If confirmed, I will also consult with interested Members of Congress. I understand the Secretary participated in the rollout of this year's Elie Wiesel annual report and I will further expand this high-level involvement and attention.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will collaborate with the State Department and inter-agency to use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Afghanistan to support our goal goals and objectives. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and potential to partnerships with likeminded colleagues, depending on the policy goals under consideration. I will also regularly engage civil society members that fled Afghanistan to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that does not create additional security risks.

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. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Tigray?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the atrocities underway in Tigray, the dehumanizing rhetoric, clear indications from the U.N. that the region is “sliding into famine,” and the government’s recent decision to eject U.N. humanitarian officials from the country. I am grateful for this committee’s activity on Ethiopia and its repeated efforts to draw attention to the Tigray crisis and Ethiopia’s growing instability. If confirmed, addressing the crisis in northern Ethiopia would be one of my top priorities. I would use all appropriate tools available within the Task Force to ensure the USG’s response to ongoing atrocities in northern Ethiopia continued to involve a whole-of-government, coordinated response. And I would work through the Task Force to ensure that the United States continues to use every available tool to urge all parties to end the conflict in northern Ethiopia, cease all gross violations of human rights, hold those perpetrators accountable, and allow full and unhindered humanitarian access so that those in need receive urgently needed assistance.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Burma?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the most informed decisions possible on what tools to utilize in Burma. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic assistance, sanctions regimes, other forms of support for civil society, public messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage civil society members that fled Burma to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn’t create additional security risks.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the most sound decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Venezuela. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, assistance, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage civil society members that fled Venezuela to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn’t create additional security risks.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Yemen?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Yemen. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, assistance, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage Yemeni civil society members, including individuals who have fled Yemen, to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn’t create additional security risks.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Syria?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Syria. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts,

assistance, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage Syrian civil society members, including individuals who have fled Syria, to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn't create additional security risks. I will also assess what is already funded by DRL and what additional support would be useful.

Question. Do you commit to regular, quarterly briefings to Congress on the efforts of the Task Force as well as those within the Department?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to continuing what I understand is a productive, ongoing, regular conversation between the Department and interested congressional members and committees about atrocity prevention efforts.

Question. State Department employees have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID-19 working from home, and Department management issues. What is your understanding of morale throughout the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)?

Answer. As a nominee I have not discussed morale issues with anyone at DRL, but I understand that the bureau is full of passionate and experienced civil service and foreign service officers committed to advancing human rights and democracy around the world and pushing back against authoritarianism and democratic backsliding. The Biden administration's public commitment to putting human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy, and its demonstrated pledge to advancing the human rights of all persons, are important validations of DRL's centrality to the mission of the State Department.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across DRL?

Answer. If confirmed I would seek to hold regular meetings with each office within DRL to really get to know the bureau, the work, and the teams. I also would conduct "deep dive" reviews to understand each team's long-term vision, current priorities, and the challenges they face. If confirmed, I would be as accessible as possible to the entire bureau, keeping an "open door" policy and blocking off regular times on the schedule to meet with any DRL staff. If confirmed, I won't only be there to lead the bureau, but also to support the team, amplify and advance shared priorities, and reward hard work. Morale is in part about leadership, team strengthening, and seeing "wins" on the board, but it is also dependent on proactive recruitment and retention policies. To that end, if confirmed I would strive to continue to strengthen the bureau's reputation as one of career-enhancement and excellence. I would also support DRL staff's career development within the wider State and foreign affairs community. I would seek to rely on the expertise that already exists in the bureau to ensure staff feel empowered, are heard, and know that they are having impact. Responsibility and accountability for the A/S are essential, but I would be equally focused on encouraging problem-solving by staff while making sure they know I'm in their corner and ready to contribute as needed so that together we can tackle the challenges that come our way. That's what I've always done and it's what I'll do at DRL if confirmed.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across DRL?

Answer. I am excited by the potential, if I am confirmed, to help guide DRL into a team that is even better unified to promote and support human rights and democracy around the globe in a genuine and principled manner. Foremost, I would seek to create opportunities for DRL's offices to collaborate more closely on functional issues like counter-authoritarianism, technology and human rights, and arms sales/security assistance. Part of creating that unified mission and vision will mean defining goals with the staff, within the framework the President and the Secretary have set, and then empowering the experts to implement them with encouragement and top cover. Once our goals are set, if confirmed, I will encourage DRL colleagues to reinforce relationships with allies in and out of the building—including in Congress. Finally, I would want to make sure we're learning lessons whenever possible and course-correcting whenever necessary. Programs and policies need to be closely integrated and matched with the current moment, which means being flexible and open to changing direction as needed.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for Assistant Secretaries of State. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I believe effective leaders need to surround themselves with an empowered team. My support of my team means they will support me; we all bring complementary skills to the table. At DRL, if confirmed, I would seek to encourage staff

to think boldly and take risks to advance our shared goals, knowing that I will have their back. I want to empower problem-solving before elevating. I want to build trust through our mutual belief in the power of the United States to do good in the world, and through our shared work to overcome the challenges in seeing that belief fully realized. Good management also sometimes requires engaging more senior principals and responding to their needs while simultaneously providing direction to staff. If confirmed I will seek to balance both while helping staff value how their work fits into a larger picture. Humility and humor are key to me, balanced with clarity of purpose and a calm, steady approach.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to a Department setting, where resources may not be readily available and your workforce are career employees?

Answer. My hope is that my style may be refreshing and invigorating for career employees, for whom I have great respect and admiration. They deserve someone who believes in them. I believe strongly in the talent and expertise of the bureau, so I want to elevate and support them in areas where I am able, even if resources are not readily available. Sometimes support is less about more money and bigger offices, and more about a leader who will listen and take action. I've spoken to a number of former DRL Assistant Secretaries who served in administrations of both parties, to hear their guidance on policy, vision, and management strategies. I believe there is a lot to learn from their experiences.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on the Department leaders to integrate themselves into Bureau operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. No matter one's appointment authority, I think any Assistant Secretary's goal is to maximize the contributions that every member of the team can make and understanding how the bureau operates is essential to good management and good policy making. If confirmed, I intend to take the time to understand how DRL has operated, what the culture has been, and what's worked, what needs to be fixed, and what disagreements, if any, need to be resolved so we can function as a united team. I am not afraid to make tough decisions if there's a need but will want to do so after a full review and adequate consultation.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No, it is never appropriate or constructive, and as a leader I have never and will never tolerate such behavior.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate performance reviews for both Foreign and Civil Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performance in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes. Constructive feedback is an important part of holding staff accountable for their work, holding supervisors accountable for their management, and ensuring strong work products. If confirmed, I will make sure all formal evaluations are completed on time and with a high degree of specificity. For those whom I may not directly oversee, I will put time on my calendar to ensure we are discussing their goals, concerns, and accomplishments.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage the managers in your bureau to provide clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes, I would, because such feedback is essential to helping high achievers continue to excel, helping other employees become high achievers, and retaining talent in a competitive environment.

Question. If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the DRL Bureau to counter malign Russian Government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to countering malign Russian Government influence around the world, including in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will take a comprehensive view of this complex problem and its effects on democracy and human rights in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will advocate for the use of all of our tools to counter Russian malign influence in the hemisphere, including diplomatic engagement, technical exchanges, foreign assistance, and public diplomacy. DRL's existing policy and programmatic lines of ef-

fort focused on anti-corruption, civil society, and strengthening rule of law should continue, and undercut Russian malign influence and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region.

Question. If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the DRL Bureau to counter malign Chinese Government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) represents a serious challenge to U.S. interests and values 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 and working with likeminded partners—whether aligned governments or regional organizations. 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.

Question. Are China's growing commercial ties and investments in Latin America a threat to human rights in the hemisphere? Please explain.

Answer. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) aggressive efforts to expand market share for state-affiliated firms, carrying out of infrastructure projects, implementation of disinformation campaigns, and export of surveillance and censorship tools play a direct and indirect role in human rights violations and abuses in Latin America. The lack of transparency in the PRC's transactions and its increase of the region's dependence on debt financing enables corruption. The PRC's infrastructure projects often ignore both labor and environmental laws, undermining individual workers' rights and labor standards more generally. The PRC's manipulation of media outlets silences investigative journalists who hold human rights abusers publicly accountable while suppressing negative stories of the PRC's activities in the region. The proliferation of untrusted vendors' surveillance and control equipment in the region also increases the risk to human rights defenders and those willing to expose human rights violators. The PRC's activities take place throughout the region and result in countries adopting policies inconsistent with democratic values.

Question. Are Russia's activities in Latin America a threat to human rights in the region? Please explain.

Answer. Russia's engagement in the region is marked by disinformation, military and equipment sales, and energy deals, all with implications for human rights in the region. The Biden administration is committed to countering disinformation and imposing costs on Russia for its aggression and malign activities across the globe. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor closely Russia's activities in the region, including its relationships with Cuba, the illegitimate Maduro regime in Venezuela, and the Ortega-Murillo Government in Nicaragua. I will work with colleagues and the interagency to promote and protect human rights, combat disinformation, and combat corruption and reduce impunity in Latin America.

Question. According to the 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, fentanyl and other highly potent synthetic opioids continue to be the most lethal category of illicit substances in the U.S. The 2020 DEA report on fentanyl flows to the United States indicates that Mexican transnational criminal organizations are producing increased quantities of fentanyl and cartels such as the Sinaloa and the New Generation Jalisco cartel are the primary trafficking groups responsible for smuggling fentanyl into the U.S. from Mexico.

- Please explain how illicit drug trade impacts human rights in Mexico.

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in Mexico are a threat to public health, safety, and human rights. Crime and violence are at record-high levels in Mexico, with as many of three-fourths of all homicides tied to organized crime. Mexico reported 34,515 homicides in 2020 and 34,648 in 2019, a rate of around 29 per 100,000 inhabitants.

As to other human rights abuses, for example, indigenous persons in isolated regions reported incidents of forced labor, in which cartel members forced them to perform illicit activities or face death. Minors were recruited or forced by cartels to traffic persons, drugs, or other goods across the border. Migrants were also recruited by criminal organizations to conduct illicit activities. To enable their criminal activities, TCOs corrupt democratic institutions and put the safety and livelihoods of ordinary citizens at risk. If confirmed, I will continue the State Department's work with government partners in Mexico to build institutional capacity to dismantle TCOs and hold them accountable for their behavior.

Question. The Ortega regime in Nicaragua has repeatedly failed to take action to pass meaningful electoral reforms—which the U.S., OAS, EU and U.N. have called for. The U.S. has leveraged sanctions and diplomatic tools, but what other options are on the table?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the United States' ongoing efforts to rally international pressure on the Ortega-Murillo Government, through public statements by Secretary Blinken, regular media engagements by Department leadership, and bilateral and multilateral diplomacy with our partners, such as joint public condemnations that call out the Ortega-Murillo Government's attacks on democracy. If confirmed, I will support continued use of the diplomatic and economic tools available to the Department, such as sanctions and visa restrictions.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing and maintaining policies and programs to create acceptable conditions for free and fair elections in Nicaragua?

Answer. Yes. As Secretary Blinken stated on August 7, the Nicaraguan electoral process, including its eventual results, has lost all credibility. The Ortega-Murillo Government has made no effort to honor its agreement with the opposition to begin electoral reforms ahead of the November election. To the contrary, it has changed the legal code and implemented new, vague laws based on Russian legislation that restrict human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will support continuing U.S. policies and programs in support of the Nicaraguan people's desire for a return to democracy.

Question. What strategies would you employ to improve the capacity of the democratic opposition to coalesce and become a credible challenge to Ortega?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to build the capacity of and strengthen civil society organizations that work to promote human rights protections, democratic governance, and transparency.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. President Ortega has ensured the rigged elections on November 7 will proclaim him victorious. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to hold the Ortega-Murillo Government accountable. Through USAID and the Department of State, we will continue to support Nicaraguan civil society organizations, independent media, and human rights defenders as they fight to restore democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. We will continue to work with democratic actors, inside and outside of Nicaragua, to promote consensus-building and unification around their efforts to challenge President Ortega and Vice President Murillo's authoritarian government. Our continued support will help to demonstrate to the Nicaraguan people that the international community has not forgotten them.

Question. Please describe the long-term implications for Nicaragua and the region if Ortega fraudulently extends his time in office.

Answer. The Ortega-Murillo Government will not have a democratic mandate following fraudulent elections in November. The June resolution of the Permanent Council of the OAS stated just this—that the measures adopted by the Government of Nicaragua do not meet the conditions for transparent, free and fair elections to which all member states have committed under the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Thus, it is foreseeable that a fraught election could further isolate the government internationally and rekindle domestic unrest. At the same time, a fraudulent election in Nicaragua could embolden other autocratic governments in the region. The consolidation of power under Ortega and Murillo will also have migration implications for the region, as an increasing number of Nicaraguans decide to leave their country due to continued repression. If confirmed, I will support consideration of all diplomatic tools to address the fraudulent elections in Nicaragua.

Question. Should the U.S. support an internationally-accompanied negotiation between the Ortega regime and the Nicaraguan democratic forces, as the Biden administration is supporting in Venezuela? Please explain.

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Nicaraguan people's expressed desire for democracy. I will collaborate with the embassy in Managua and Department staff in Washington to continue to work with civil society and the international community to support opposition voices in Nicaragua and within the Nicaraguan diaspora. It is past time for free and fair elections so the people of Nicaragua can turn the page on the corrupt and repressive Ortega-Murillo Government.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. The United States continues to seek to increase bilateral and multilateral pressure on the Ortega-Murillo Government. With President Ortega and Vice President Murillo throwing the leading opposition figures in jail and crushing all political dissent, the repressive conditions in Nicaragua do

not support the prospect of negotiations. If confirmed, I will continue to support the unilateral and multilateral efforts to hold the Ortega-Murillo Government accountable and explore with allies a coordinated path forward to address the electoral sham scheduled for November 7.

Question. Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to harbor U.S. fugitives?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals toward Cuba, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on this issue.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals toward Cuba. In May, the administration certified Cuba as a Not Fully Cooperating Country with U.S. counter-terrorism efforts, which I fully support. If confirmed, I will consult closely with my counter-terrorism and other colleagues in reviewing the facts and legal standards in determining my position on whether Cuba should be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST).

Question. Would you advise establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba while it continues to provide safe harbor to fugitives from the U.S. justice system?

Answer. I am aware that Cuba harbors several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on or convicted of charges of political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades. If confirmed, I will support the regular U.S. calls on Cuba to return fugitives from justice and would look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I am aware that Cuba harbors several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on or convicted of charges of political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades. If confirmed, I will strongly support the regular U.S. calls on Cuba to return fugitives from justice and would not advocate for increased diplomatic engagement unless it would enhance respect for human rights and democracy in Cuba.

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 in Venezuela?

Answer. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be used for states that are terrorists, based on fact, analysis, and intelligence. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until there's full clarity that the government in question has taken all steps necessary to relieve themselves of the criteria needed for such a designation. Regardless of the state sponsor of terrorism designation, I do believe other corresponding punitive measures are an important tool to be used on repressive governments and/or officials. I will consult closely with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward, including on the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I am very concerned about the support Cuba has provided to the Maduro regime to engage in human rights abuses against the Venezuelan people. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism (SST) designations should be based on fact, law, and analysis. I believe an SST designation should not be lifted until the government in question has taken all steps necessary to meet the criteria needed for rescission. 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 am committed to carefully reviewing the facts and the law in determining my views on whether Cuba should continue to be designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism and to consulting closely with Congress on the issue.

Question. Please describe the trajectory of Cuban involvement in Venezuela.

Answer. Cuba has long had deep engagement in Venezuela's military and intelligence services. Fidel Castro was a close confidant and advisor to Hugo Chavez. With Cuba's support, the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, has ignored the Venezuelan people's calls for change and a return to democracy, and learned from Cuban advisors how to spy on its own citizens and suppress dissent. Venezuelan secret police have perfected the torture tactics, systems of social control, and mechanisms of repression that Cuban authorities have used against their own people for decades. If confirmed, I would seek to thwart such abuses.

Question. Do you agree that Cuban military and intelligence support is the linchpin to Maduro's survival in Venezuela?

Answer. Cuba shields the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, from some of the effects of international economic and diplomatic pressure, while providing the intelligence and muscle that improves Maduro's ability to cling to power. I understand that Cuban military and intelligence advisors actively support Maduro through the provision of security forces, intelligence officers, and by providing direction to Venezuelan authorities. They equip the Maduro regime with the tools he needs to repress any domestic or internal dissent, including in his military. Cuba also provided thousands of medical professionals to Venezuela, before and during the COVID-19 crisis, allowing Maduro to avoid the domestic political consequences of his failed economic and health policies. Allegations of forced labor and using the mission to conduct political interference and intelligence collection on behalf of Maduro are widely reported by former participants. If confirmed, I would seek to stem these practices.

Question. Please describe your views on the most effective approach to persuade the Cuban regime to play a more positive role in Venezuela.

Answer. I understand the United States will continue to coordinate closely with likeminded nations, including within the EU and OAS, to promote a negotiated solution to the crisis in Venezuela. The aim is to counter interference and raise the costs to Cuba for supporting any anti-democratic actions or human rights abuses by the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela. I support this approach.

Question. Please explain your views on how the international community can exert pressure on Cuba for its involvement in Venezuela.

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the United States' efforts to continue to exert pressure on Cuba through Secretary Blinken's public statements, regular media engagements by Department leadership, bilateral diplomacy with other countries in the region, and multilateral diplomacy. I would also continue U.S. efforts to protect and support the human rights of Cubans and to empower them to determine their own future.

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba and Venezuela if the United States were to elevate its diplomatic relations with Cuba by nominating and confirming an Ambassador.

Answer. I believe the protests that began on July 11 have demonstrated how important it is for U.S. diplomats to engage directly with the Cuban people. I understand the U.S. diplomatic corps will continue to engage directly with and support civil society, including human rights defenders and political dissidents, as part of an overall effort to empower the Cuban people and their desire for freedom. If confirmed, I would strongly support such continued engagement.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. Our primary goal in Cuba and Venezuela is to promote democracy and respect for human rights and any potential change in our diplomatic relations must serve to further this goal. The United States must ensure that any changes to our diplomatic engagement do not negatively affect our ability to support the societal demands in Cuba and Venezuela for democratic reforms. If confirmed, I will closely evaluate the impact of potential changes to diplomatic engagement on the administration's ability to promote democracy and human rights.

Question. Please describe your understanding of the role of military-controlled firms in the Cuban economy.

Answer. The Cuban Government exercises significant control over most of Cuba's important economic sectors. For example, the Cuban Government benefits from remittance fees that are handled through its remittance processor, Financiera Cimex S.A. (FINCIMEX), which is a military-controlled entity. State-owned stores as well as the medical missions program are also an economic boon for the Cuban Government, which significantly marks up prices in the stores and keeps a large portion of medical workers' salaries. The Armed Forces Business Enterprise Group (GAESA), which is led by Raul Castro's son-in-law, is involved in all sectors of the economy. The Cuban military controls tourism, including through ownership of Gaviota Hotels.

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba if U.S. policy were to facilitate or allow financial transactions that benefit military-controlled firms in Cuba.

Answer. Democracy and human rights are at the core of the administration's efforts toward Cuba. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses through efforts that maximize benefits to the Cuban people and minimize or eliminate any benefits

to the Cuban Government and its military. I look forward to consulting with Congress on these efforts.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I share your concerns about Cuba's military, intelligence, and security services' role in serious human rights abuses against the Cuban people, and I recognize the military's role in the Cuban economy. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses, including by minimizing or eliminating any financial benefits to the Cuban Government and its military.

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba if U.S. public and private engagement with Cuba were to disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people?

Answer. Democracy and human rights are at the core of the administration's efforts toward Cuba. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses, including efforts that maximize benefits for the Cuban people and minimize or eliminate any benefit to the Cuban Government and its military. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on these efforts.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I share your concerns about Cuba's military, intelligence, and security services' role in serious human rights abuses against the Cuban people, and I recognize their role in the Cuban economy. I would oppose any move that would disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services at the expense of our efforts to lift the Cuban people out of oppression. If confirmed, I will further the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses, including efforts that maximize benefits for the Cuban people and minimize or eliminate any benefit to the Cuban Government and its military intelligence, or security services.

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 U.S., United Nations, independent media outlets and NGOs have documented and called out the Cuban regime's exploitative and coercive practices toward its doctors participating in its overseas medical programs.

Can you describe your understanding of how Cuban doctors are forced into participating the program and sent to a foreign country, as well as the conditions by which they live while in this program?

Answer. I understand that former participants in Cuba's overseas medical programs have stated that the Cuban Government coerced some participants to remain in the program, including by withholding their passports and medical credentials; restricting their movement; using "minders" to conduct surveillance of participants outside of work; threatening to revoke their licenses to practice medicine in Cuba; retaliating against their family members in Cuba if participants left the program; or imposing criminal penalties, forced exile, and family separation if participants did not return to Cuba as directed by government supervisors.

Question. Can you describe how these programs only go to serve the Cuban Government at the expense of the Cuban people?

Answer. The export of professional services, including medical missions, remains Cuba's largest source of foreign exchange earnings. I understand that it is difficult to ascertain the exact amount of proceeds due to a lack of transparency in bilateral agreements with host countries. Contracts often involve direct payments to the Cuban Government with former participants reporting receiving roughly 10 to 25 percent of the amount paid by the host governments to the Cuban Government for their services. In addition, there are reports of in-kind transfers of medical equipment for medical professionals in South Africa and of oil for doctors in Venezuela and Algeria.

Question. Do you consider the Cuban regime's overseas medical missions to be exploitative human trafficking efforts?

Answer. I understand there are documented reports of widespread abuse and exploitation of medical professionals within the medical program, including allegations that the Cuban regime coerced some participants to remain in the program, including by withholding a large portion of their salaries; restricting their movements; using "minders" to conduct surveillance of participants outside of work; threatening to revoke their medical licenses; retaliating against their families in Cuba if participants leave the program; or imposing criminal penalties, exile, and family separation.

tion if participants do not return to Cuba as directed by government supervisors. I agree with the Department of State's conclusion that these practices are "clear indicators of human trafficking." If confirmed, I will urge countries to take the necessary measures to protect Cuban medical workers and to seek transparency on contractual agreements between the Cuban Government and the medical professionals.

Question. Do you commit to instructing our Embassies in countries that accept Cuban medical missions to communicate to host governments to inform them of the Cuban regime's forced labor practices?

Answer. I am very concerned about the human and labor rights abuses within the Cuban medical missions program. If confirmed, I will highlight these issues with host governments and work with our officers in the field and foreign government officials, at the highest appropriate level, to urge them to take necessary measures to protect Cuban medical workers and to seek transparency on contractual agreements between the Cuban Government and medical professionals. I will encourage countries to put steps in place to prevent exploitation and forced labor, and to proactively monitor these programs, given persistent allegations that the Cuban Government are compelling medical professionals to work.

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 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. The Cuban intelligence and security apparatus has infiltrated Venezuela's security and military forces, helping Nicholas Maduro to maintain his stranglehold over his people while allowing terrorist organizations to operate.

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. Considering the well-documented ties between the Maduro regime and the ELN, and Cuba's harboring of ELN terrorists, why should the Cuban regime not be included in the list of States Sponsors of Terrorism?

Answer. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be used for states that are terrorists, based on fact, analysis, and intelligence. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until there's full clarity that the government in question has taken all steps necessary to relieve themselves of the criteria needed for such a designation. If confirmed, I will consult closely with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward, including on the previous administration's decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I am very concerned about Cuba's harboring of members of the ELN. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be based on fact, law, and analysis. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until the government in question has taken all steps necessary to meet the criteria needed for rescission. If confirmed, I am committed to carefully reviewing the facts and the law in determining my views on whether Cuba should continue to be designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism and to consulting closely with Congress on the issue.

Question. Over the last three decades, Colombia has emerged as source of economic and stability in the region, in great part due to the success of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and Plan Colombia. Yet, policy decisions made during the negotiations of the 2016 deal with the FARC created new challenges for Colombia and our relations. Coca production in Colombia 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?

Answer. Yes. Significant and sustainable reductions in coca cultivation and cocaine production will deliver significant health and security benefits for Americans by reducing the amount of cocaine flowing to the United States. The U.S. Government's new counternarcotics strategy for Colombia pursues sustainability through an integrated, bilateral focus on integrated supply reduction, rural security and development, and environmental protection. Integrated implementation of these pillars will reduce cocaine-related overdoses and violence in the United States, and slow migration caused by narcotrafficking-related violence in drug-transit countries. If confirmed, I would support this approach.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the nexus between growing coca cultivation and violence against human rights defenders in Colombia.

Answer. The enormous profit margins associated with the cocaine trade mean that narcotrafficking organizations will violently oppose any interference in their money-making activities, whether it be from the Colombian Government for prosecuting offenders; human rights defenders and social leaders for their efforts to support crop substitution and public advocacy on behalf of rural communities; or competition from rival criminal organizations. Narcotrafficking organizations will target anyone who interferes in their illicit business model.

In areas with significant narcotics trafficking, coca cultivation, and where organized criminal groups exercise significant control, human rights challenges abound, including killings of social leaders, including human rights defenders. I understand that a review by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) of social leader murders in 2020 found that 93 percent occurred in areas the Colombian National Police identify as being under the control of criminal organizations. The UNODC has found that in Cauca, the department with the highest level of social leader killings, the probability of a social leader being killed is 4.3 times higher in areas where coca is grown. I understand that Embassy Bogotá's integrated counternarcotics and rural security strategy aims to reduce coca cultivation while also expanding state and CNP presence to rural areas to reduce the influence of armed groups and curtail the violence they perpetrate against social leaders and the general public. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the nexus between community participation in Colombia's National Program for Integral Substitution and the rate of social leaders' killings.

Answer. Narcotrafficking organizations' profits depend upon having farmers who either work directly for them or from whom they buy coca. The National Program for Integral Substitution (Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos—PNIS) seeks to convince farmers to switch to the cultivation of legal commodities. As the Government's authority is weaker in rural areas, the farmers are vulnerable to threats from the narcotrafficking organizations.

I understand that INL invests an average \$10 million annually to implement human rights programming that seeks to improve protections of human rights defenders (HRDs) and help Colombian authorities pursue accountability for crimes against HRDs. Since its creation, INL has assisted the unit of specialized human rights prosecutors in the Attorney General's Office with training, mentoring, and equipment and is now working with specialized human rights judges to provide similar assistance. If confirmed, I would support these efforts and look for ways to build on them.

Question. Do you agree that the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela is the direct result of the political and security conditions imposed by the Maduro regime in that country?

Answer. Yes. Since 2015, nearly 5.7 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee the economic, political, and humanitarian crisis caused by the Maduro regime's abuses, corruption, and mismanagement, making it the largest external displacement of persons in the Hemisphere's history. I understand the United States supports a wide range of life-saving humanitarian programs for Venezuelans, such as food assistance; emergency shelter; access to health care, water, sanitation, and hygiene supplies; support for livelihoods; and protection for vulnerable groups including women, youth, LGBTQI+, and indigenous people. If confirmed, I would support the continuation of that assistance.

Question. Can the humanitarian crisis be resolved on Maduro's watch?

Answer. Maduro could resolve the underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis by restoring democracy and respect for human rights, as well as taking the necessary steps to rebuild the Venezuelan economy. 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 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, to meet their most urgent needs. I am deeply committed to the Venezuelan people and strongly support their desire for free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and the return to the rule of law and democracy, which can only have a positive impact the humanitarian crisis.

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. On September 22, the United States announced more than \$336 million in additional humanitarian, economic, development, and health assistance at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Of this total, nearly \$247 million is for humanitarian assistance and more than \$89 million is for economic, development, and health assistance. The United States is the largest donor of foreign assistance for the Venezuela regional crisis, having provided over \$1.9 billion in funding since Fiscal Year 2017. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. There has been more than a dozen failed attempts at negotiating with Maduro. They have occurred in an environment of engagement during the Obama administration, and under the pressure of punitive measures implemented by the Trump administration.

- Is the United States using all available tools to create the appropriate conditions for a successful negotiation with the Maduro regime to transition to democratic rule in Venezuela?

Answer. I understand the United States continues to support a negotiated, Venezuelan-led 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.

I also understand the State Department continues to prioritize coordination with its closest regional partners, as well as its European partners, to improve the effectiveness of our sanctions, address growing humanitarian needs, and support a negotiated, political solution. I understand the United States remains steadfast in our support to the Venezuelan people in their struggle for the restoration of democracy and rule of law. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. The United States supports a Venezuelan-led solution to the crisis, which the Venezuelans have decided must be a negotiated solution that leads to free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and a return to rule of law and democracy in Venezuela. The United States will continue to advocate for pressure from regional and European partners to pursue this end. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. Please explain how the United States could work with the European Union—and specifically Spain—to create the right conditions for a credible transition to democratic rule in Venezuela.

Answer. I understand the Department regularly engages with the international community bilaterally and in multilateral fora to raise awareness of human rights violations and abuses in Venezuela and to get other countries and international bodies to join us in pressing the Maduro regime to uphold democracy and respect human rights. If confirmed, I would support these efforts and look for creative ways to double down on these efforts, including support for justice and accountability measures, programs that strengthen democratic institutions, transparency, rule of law, inclusion, empowerment, and access to information.

Answer. Will you, if confirmed, advocate for the release of the nine American Citizens currently held on political charges and against their will in Venezuela? How will you work with the regional bureau and Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will advocate for the release of all American citizens currently held on political charges and against their will in Venezuela. I will consult with all relevant Bureaus and Offices, including the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, to resolve these cases.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. The safe return of wrongfully detained U.S. nationals is a top priority for the Biden administration. Using wrongful detention

as a bargaining chip represents a threat to the safety of everyone traveling, working, and living abroad. The U.S. opposes this practice everywhere. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs and WHA to identify how DRL can help ensure the safe return of the nine American Citizens currently held on political charges in Venezuela and any other American who is wrongfully detained.

Question. In September 2020, the U.N. Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela cited evidence of unlawful executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture in the country since 2014, amounting to crimes against humanity. If confirmed, what tools will you use to ensure every person responsible is punished for their actions and brought to justice?

Answer. I understand the United States will continue to hold the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, and regime-aligned individuals accountable for their human rights abuses by applying a wide array of diplomatic and economic tools, including employing sanctions and visa restrictions. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. In December 2020, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) accused the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of failing to take swift action after allegations that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's Government committed crimes against humanity. Do you support the ICC opening a formal investigation into these allegations?

Answer. I understand the United States is committed to promoting accountability for human rights violations and abuses in Venezuela, which is a party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. If confirmed, I will promote the importance of accountability for the horrific violations and abuses that continue to be committed in Venezuela. Where domestic systems are unable or unwilling to genuinely pursue the justice that victims deserve and that societies require to sustain peace, international courts such as the ICC can play a meaningful role in advancing accountability. I understand the United States is united with like-minded democracies in denouncing human rights violations and abuses that have occurred in Venezuela and in calling for accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the victims.

I understand the United States is aware of the ICC Prosecutor's ongoing evaluation of whether to open an investigation into the situation in Venezuela.

Question. Please explain your understanding of how the Maduro regime operates as a narco-terrorist regime.

Answer. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including dissident FARC factions and the ELN—exploit the lack of rule of law created by the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, to traffic narcotics. President Biden has been clear that he believes Maduro is a dictator and that his administration will stand with the Venezuelan people and their call for a restoration of democracy through free and fair elections. I agree with the “VERDAD Act” and the administration that there must be a negotiated solution to the problems in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with allies, such as Colombia, to combat drug trafficking in the Andean region in ways that are both meaningful and economically sustainable. I also will support U.S. Government efforts to increase multilateral pressure on Maduro, call for the release of political prisoners, and implement sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. Please explain your views on the role of the Venezuelan military in narcotics trafficking.

Answer. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including dissident FARC factions and the ELN—exploit the lack of rule of law created by the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, to traffic narcotics. President Biden has been clear that his administration will stand with the Venezuelan people and their call for a restoration of democracy through free and fair elections. I agree with the “VERDAD Act” and the administration that there must be a negotiated solution to the problems in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with allies, such as Colombia, to combat drug trafficking in the Andean region in ways that are both meaningful and economically sustainable. I also will support U.S. Government efforts to increase multilateral pressure on Maduro, call for the release of political prisoners, and implement sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. Please explain your views on the relationship between the Maduro regime and U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations, FARC and ELN

Answer. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including dissident FARC factions and the ELN—exploit the lack of rule of law created by the illegitimate Maduro regime to traffic narcotics.

Question. In Africa, DRL focuses its programs on non-presence countries or where limited democracy, rights and governance (DRG) investments are made by USAID. Do you agree with this approach? Why?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure DRL continues to consider many factors in determining where to support democracy and governance program goals, including those mentioned above. I believe it is important for DRL programming to continue to support U.S. policy objectives on the continent—while also maximizing effectiveness and avoiding duplication—through close coordination with other funders, including USAID. I understand that DRL's approach to programming, however, is different from other bureaus within the Department and other U.S. agencies due to its close connection with activists and human rights defenders on the ground and programmatic flexibility which allows it to address emerging opportunities and challenges. Recognizing this, I believe DRL should remain invested in certain countries with a USAID presence, such as Sudan and Nigeria, where DRL's programming can complement and amplify other programs and given long-standing and sensitive human rights concerns that could complicate aspects of the bilateral relations.

Question. In your role as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, if confirmed, how will you follow through on administration statements that "Africa is a priority for the Biden administration"? How will you demonstrate—through DRL's work and in your engagements within the Department—that the U.S. respects and values our African partners while being clear about our values and expectations, particularly as it relates to respect for democratic norms, human rights and rule of law?

Answer. Promoting and advancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a top priority for the United States in Africa. If confirmed, I would seek ways to support democratic advancement on the part of governments and stand with citizens, civil society, and the private sector to hold their governments to be more responsive and accountable. I would also travel regularly to the continent and meet with a range of actors, including opposition leaders and members of the independent media. In diplomatic engagements, I would encourage close attention to free and fair elections and attempts to manipulate term limits, the context in which elections are held, respect for democratic norms, media freedom, and the health of civil society.

Question. Across Africa, the USG has invested in a number of early warning early response (EWER) systems focused for conflict prevention and mitigation. What is your assessment of EWER systems as an effective conflict prevention tool in Africa?

Answer. I understand EWER systems across Africa provide communities at risk for conflict and atrocities practical means to take a lead role in their own protection. I believe by creating low-cost, easy to use means of communicating with security providers and other communities at risk, these USG-supported programs have empowered previously unprotected or ignored communities and have evidently prevented escalations of conflict in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria especially at the grassroots, community-level.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. EWER systems across Africa enable vulnerable and remotely located communities at risk for conflict and atrocities practical means to take a lead role in their own protection. I believe that by creating low-cost, easy to use means of communicating with security providers and other communities at risk, these U.S. Government-supported programs have empowered previously unprotected or ignored communities and have evidently prevented escalations of conflict in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. I understand U.S. Government investments also seek to support EWER systems that can be

easily adapted and managed by local actors, ensuring sustainability and ownership at both the government and community level.

Question. Do you feel they are a good investment of U.S. resources given limited resources for conflict prevention and resolution in Africa?

Answer. Yes. I understand these early warning systems use radio and SMS to communicate, and that the training required to use them is cost-effective. Trained community members can in turn train others in their operation, and partnerships with telecom and security providers ensure that the communication channels remain available at a very low cost. I believe their sustainability and effectiveness make them a good investment of limited resources in this field.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. Yes, especially when paired with training and capacity support for community members to identify violence trends and forecast risks to prevent attacks before they happen. Preventing violence and interrupting cycles of retaliatory intercommunal violence helps save lives and is a more impactful and cost-effective intervention than responding to conflict once it has broken out. Moreover, I understand that these early warning systems use radio and SMS to communicate, and the training required to use them is cost-effective. I understand trained community members can in turn train others in their operation, and partnerships with telecom and security providers ensure that the communication channels remain available at a very low cost. Their sustainability and effectiveness make them a good investment of limited resources in this field. While sophisticated defense systems have their place in protecting vulnerable populations in Africa, EWER systems that utilize technology already in regular use in at-risk locations can be much more effective in alerting populations in real time by being readily accessible, quick to stand up, and easy to use.

Question. Are you supportive of DRL investing in EWER systems in Africa? If yes, in what circumstances are they appropriate?

Answer. Yes. I believe EWER systems can be appropriately deployed in a number of situations where security providers are either slow or reluctant to provide quality protection for communities at risk for conflict due to ethnic, religious, resource, or other reasons. I understand due to the ease of use, DRL-supported EWER access is not limited to only a certain subset of users; indeed, we have seen tangible success when groups often overlooked for leadership roles—youth and women—have been empowered to use these systems. DRL's EWER systems are also appropriate and effective even where the government is the primary perpetrator. I believe in those circumstances, the alerts can be directed to alternative sources for response, such as local civil society or regional or international actors.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. Yes. EWER systems can be appropriately deployed in any number of situations and locations where security providers are either slow or reluctant to provide quality protection for communities at risk for conflict due to ethnic, religious, resource, or other reasons. I understand that due to their ease of use, DRL-supported EWER access is not limited to a certain subset of users and has demonstrated success when groups often overlooked for leadership roles—youth and women—have been empowered to use these systems. I believe DRL's EWER systems are also appropriate and effective where the Government is the primary perpetrator of abuses. In those circumstances, the alerts can be directed to alternative sources for response, such as local civil society or regional or international actors. I understand DRL also seeks to deepen its programs' coordination with security actors active in locations of mutual priority to ensure that information sharing is maximized.

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 the activities of opposition parties and candidates. In 2020 alone, we saw ruling parties and incumbent leaders apply authoritarian tactics under the guise of democracy, including in Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and in the last year, four coups d'état have occurred in Chad, Guinea and two in Mali:

What is your perspective on balancing the sometimes competing U.S. priorities of security and democracy and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when some of our top security partners—including Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Chad and Mali—periodically or consistently engage in undemocratic practices or experience undemocratic and unconstitutional transitions of power?

Answer. A 2019 Afrobarometer study encompassing survey data from 34 African nations found that 68 percent of Africans believe democracy is the best form of government, while 78 percent reject strong-man rule and 72 percent oppose military

rule. While it is in the U.S. interest to support African states facing security crises, we must make clear to African leaders who flout democratic norms that respect for human rights and democratic institutions is in their best interest, as well as that of their people, and their country. Without meaningful democratic governance, African states will not be well-positioned to expand peace and security and foster economic growth.

Question. In your view, which should take priority in Africa?

Answer. I firmly agree with President Biden's stated commitment to place respect for human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy. I also believe considering the human rights and democracy components of U.S. security engagement is an important element of policy development and can help guide and strengthen how the administration engages in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in countries with weak or nascent democracies. If confirmed, I look forward to participating in an interagency policy process as the Biden-Harris administration develops a fresh U.S. approach for Africa that addresses our national interests in Africa including respect for human rights and democratic norms, as well as security.

Question. How can the U.S. better engage the African Union on issues related to democracy, human rights, corruption, and rule of law?

Answer. I understand that democracy and governance is a core pillar of the U.S. High Level Dialogue with the African Union (AU), and one through which the U.S. Government works to advance the shared values of promoting democratic institutions and human rights on the continent throughout the year. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Ambassador to the AU as well as the AF bureau to seek policies that continue to counter corruption; promote constitutional reform undertaken in a democratic and transparent manner; mitigate conflict; protect civilians; support transitional justice; protect the independence of accountability mechanisms, such as the African Commission of Human and People's Rights; and promote political space for civil society. I also welcome the strategic use of U.S. foreign assistance resources to advance shared democracy, human rights, and good governance priorities through the AU, such as the ongoing technical assistance in support of the AU Assembly presidency in an effort to advance democracy and human rights, and training for youth experts on the AU's transitional justice policy.

Question. In the last three years, Sudan and Ethiopia embarked on unexpected democratic transitions. While the U.S. was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing adequate resources has been a challenge in both cases:

- As Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, how will you work inside DRL and with the Africa Bureau to be better prepared to contribute financial and diplomatic resources to support democratic transitions and opportunities that emerge unexpectedly in Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek to build on democratic openings across the Africa continent and in close coordination with the recently confirmed A/S for Africa to ensure we are coordinating closely and maximizing our resources and aligned in our policy approach. I would work to develop and coordinate strategic U.S. diplomatic engagement and assistance on democracy and human rights for countries in transition, working closely with the Africa Bureau, as well as colleagues from throughout the J Family, USAID and beyond.

Question. What lessons have the challenges to the transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia taught us about how to best support unexpected democratic transitions in the medium and long term?

Answer. The challenges in the transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia have taught us that the democratic transition process is extremely fragile and that success requires sustained medium and long term support but also that civil society—and women in particular—are important partners to understand alternative perspectives in transitioning countries.

If confirmed, I would work to support democratic institutions, so that they're strong, accountable, able to govern capably, and have the capacity to support credible and inclusive elections, enabling a peaceful transition to a democratic state; promote the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms including through legal reforms; and promote comprehensive transitional justice measures and credible, independent justice mechanisms.

Question. Russian malign activity in Africa is of increasing concern, particularly given credible reports of election interference, the engagement of Russian mercenaries, including Wagner Group, in Northern Mozambique, and Russia's security

sector support to the Touadera administration (which includes an exemption to the U.N. arms embargo) in the Central African Republic (CAR).

- In your opinion, what should the U.S. be doing in Africa to counter malign Russian interference in elections, other democratic processes, and to reduce its influence over elected leaders?

Answer. I understand that the United States supports efforts by African nations to develop strong peace and security institutions to improve access to justice through capacity building and technical assistance. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen 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 African governments' abilities to mitigate conflict, stop human rights abuses and violations, hold those responsible for such actions accountable, and help countries achieve stable democracies that do not require the short-term security assistance of malign external actors. As has been demonstrated in multiple contexts, governments that partner with groups like Russian-supported Wagner become weaker, poorer, and less secure. As a practical matter, leaders in such countries lose control of their militaries and natural resources. Specifically, to counterbalance Russia's influence, if confirmed, I will pursue opportunities to stand up to Russian malign influence and reaffirm America's commitment to countries that uphold democracy and human rights. Additionally, I will work with partners to develop security alternatives for governments facing conflict and poverty.

Question. The recent coups d'état in Mali are recent examples of the fragility of the Malian state. What is your assessment of the status of the Algiers Accord and prospects for its implementation?

Answer. The events in May of this year underscore just how important it is that Mali conducts free and fair elections on time in February 2022 and that the Head of the Transition and the Prime Minister of the Transition should not under any circumstances be candidates for the forthcoming presidential election. Without a legitimate government in place, it will be very difficult to make progress on the key provisions of the Algiers Accord.

Question. In your opinion, should the Algiers Accord remain the primary framework for peacebuilding and governance in Mali? If so, why? The recent coups d'état in Mali are recent examples of the fragility of the Malian state.

Answer. In my opinion, the United States should continue to support the Algiers Accord, because, if implemented, it would play a substantial stabilizing role in Mali and the region. In particular, Accord provisions that concern decentralization and government services for marginalized populations will help respond to ongoing grievances that erode state legitimacy and fuel conflict.

Question. In light of the recent coups d'état in Mali and Chad, would you agree that Niger is the U.S.' most important democratic ally in the Sahel? If yes, do you feel that U.S. democracy and governance support to Niger is sufficient to reflect the importance of this strategic relationship? If no, why not?

Answer. Niger is a democratic example for the region, especially for the transition governments in Mali and Chad. In February, the transition from former Nigerien President Issoufou, who voluntarily stepped down after two terms, to President Bazoum was Niger's first handover from one democratically elected president to another. Mauritania similarly achieved its first peaceful democratic transition of power in 2019. I understand Niger is a strong partner of the United States on matters of regional security through its participation in the G5-Sahel Joint Force, MINUSMA, the MNJTF, and D-ISIS Coalition. U.S. democracy and governance support to Niger totaled \$1.78 million in FY2021. I believe greater U.S. democracy and governance support to Niger would further strengthen Nigerien democratic institutions and serve as a bulwark against growing regional anti-democratic trends.

Question. Given the ongoing political and constitutional crisis in Somalia, do you feel U.S. policy toward Somalia requires a re-think? If no, why not? If yes, in what alternative ways should the U.S. support democracy and human rights in Somalia?

Answer. I believe that it is always important for the United States to reflect upon its policies and seek to ensure that its approach will bring about the best possible outcome, and this is especially true when there is a crisis. I understand the administration recently completed a comprehensive policy review for Somalia, which identified addressing the political dynamics at the root of the current political situation as necessary for advancing long-term stabilization goals for the country.

If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that implementation of U.S. policy toward Somalia helps resolve the political and constitutional crisis and supports long-term democracy and human rights objectives. If confirmed, I will welcome your engagement and make myself available to brief you on these efforts.

Question. Immediately following the indirect selection of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (aka Farmajo) as President of Somalia in 2017, the U.S. engaged with the Somali Government in Mogadishu on the premise that Somalia would hold one-person-one-vote direct elections in 2020.

- Was this a realistic expectation to set in 2016 or has U.S. policy been based on a fundamentally-flawed assumption?

Answer. I am not aware of the deliberations that followed the indirect selection of Farmajo as President of Somalia in 2017, but I am aware that one-person-one-vote direct elections have not yet come about in Somalia.

Question. How do you view the prospects of one-person-one-vote direct elections in Somalia in the future?

Answer. Somalia is a deeply challenging context, but I am always hopeful about the prospects for democracy and the tenacity of people to pursue a governance system that truly affords them fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting efforts towards more inclusive, representative governance in Somalia, to include one-person-one-vote elections when feasible.

Question. Is it an appropriate approach to orient U.S. democracy and governance programs toward a specific electoral event in Somalia? If no, what is a more prudent approach for building democratic institutions and norms?

Answer. I believe that democracy is an evolving process. While elections are seminal events that often serve as milestones for measuring democratic progress, they are insufficient markers for building or consolidating a democratic state. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that U.S. democracy support continues to be holistic in its response to challenges and focuses on building institutions and support norms globally. I understand that while DRL does not currently have any programs in Somalia, any future investment should be strategically targeted in coordination with interagency efforts to further democratic priorities in country.

Question. Is it your view that a coup d'etat occurred in Guinea on September 5, 2021 to depose President Alpha Conde?

Answer. On September 5, military officers led by Colonel Mamdy Doumbouya deposed duly elected President Alpha Conde and seized power. Doumbouya's dissolution of the constitution and government plunged Guinea into a political crisis. COL Doumbouya now exerts de facto control over the Guinean Government.

Question. What is your assessment of the challenges to democracy and human rights in Liberia?

Answer. Corruption is endemic in Liberia and affects nearly every facet of life. In 2019 and 2020, Liberia ranked 137 of 180 countries and territories on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, having fallen from 120 in 2018.

Recent editions of the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report note that restrictions on freedom of expression are among the most significant human rights issues in Liberia. Journalists sometimes perceive the Government's approach to them as antagonistic and sometimes self-censor as a result. Individuals protesting against the Government must apply for a permit from the Ministry of Justice before organizing demonstrations, though the laws and regulations regarding permits remain unclear. Other significant human rights issues in Liberia include violence against women, including widespread female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls; ongoing impunity for serious human rights abuses and violations, and harsh prison conditions and lengthy pretrial detention; and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons.

Question. Do you feel that issues of justice and reconciliation from Liberia's civil wars has been adequately addressed? If no, what options for justice and reconciliation in Liberia should be explored?

Answer. Liberia's 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission report recommended a mix of criminal accountability and restorative measures to address the crimes committed during the country's civil wars to include prosecution of gross violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law and monetary reparations and memorialization of victims. To date, I understand the Liberian Government has not implemented the majority of the recommendations from the TRC

report. Efforts to promote justice and reconciliation in Liberia must be Liberian-led. This is not to say that all Liberians feel their issues from that long war have been resolved, and questions about how the administration can continue to support those needs remain important. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States stands ready to be a partner to Liberia in justice and reconciliation efforts and will continue to encourage the Liberian Government and people to pursue such efforts.

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 trend of elected leaders seeking to change constitutions or laws in order to remain in office, or transfer power to members of their family, is deeply concerning and undermines critical governing institutions that bring stability. President Biya has been in power for nearly 40 years and is among the world's longest ruling leaders. If confirmed, I will seek to promote democracy, respect for human rights, and accountability in Cameroon and will use a range of tools to do so.

[Additional Response—11/11/2021]. I am deeply concerned by the trend of unconstitutional changes in power in Africa and efforts to manipulate constitutions and laws in a manner that undermines democratic transfers of power, including in favor of successions within families. While Cameroon's constitution is clear regarding the presidential transition process, it has not been tested in more than 40 years. It is important that the Government and people of Cameroon work to strengthen institutions to ensure a democratic transition should the President be unable to complete his term. An unconstitutional transfer of power to any would-be successor could exacerbate current challenges and lead to instability. If confirmed, I will work with our Embassy in Yaoundé and like-minded partners to engage the Cameroonian Government and civil society actors interested in strengthening Cameroon's democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and accountability. I will also reaffirm the United States' strong support for countries to respect their constitutions during transitions in power and to oppose extra-constitutional changes or maneuvers to facilitate successions within families.

Question. As Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, if confirmed, how can DRL better support a resolution to the Anglophone Crisis and the significant and longstanding challenges to democratic elections and democratic governance in Cameroon?

Answer. I share your concerns about the ongoing violence in Cameroon and the crisis in the Anglophone region. 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, I will seek to promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses and ensure any Cameroonian security force unit that may be nominated for assistance is fully vetted for allegations of gross violations of human rights, consistent with the Leahy law.

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 Cameroonian Government take concrete steps to move this effort forward. I would also continue to pursue engagement with African nations, France, other likeminded partners, and U.N. Security Council member states to find ways to promote a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence.

Question. DRL has led the USG's efforts to support electoral processes and a democratic transition in CAR since the lead up to CAR's 2016 elections. In your opinion, what areas are most critical for U.S. democracy, governance and human rights support to focus on in CAR in the post-2020/21 election period?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with colleagues throughout the State Department and interagency and with likeminded governments to identify areas where interventions may advance democracy, governance, justice and accountability, and respect for human rights in the Central African Republic (CAR). I understand that the United States has historically supported CAR's efforts to develop strong institutions and strengthen rule of law through capacity building and technical assistance. I am deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses by the CAR Armed Forces and Russian-supported mercenaries, respectively, and reports of violence by armed groups against civilians and increased use of IEDs. I am equally

concerned by credible reports of money laundering and a wide range of illicit trafficking and believe the U.S. has a role to play in further investigating these allegations and ensuring they do not undermine CAR's electoral process. The CAR Government's pending commission of inquiry will be critical to demonstrating its commitment to justice and accountability. If confirmed, I will seek to strengthen the CAR Government's ability to expand access to justice for more Central Africans, prevent human rights abuses and violations, promote accountability for those responsible, and help the country achieve stability and security without calling on malign actors for short-term security assistance.

Question. What is your perspective on the performance of the Tshisekedi administration to date?

Answer. Since President Tshisekedi took office in 2019, the DRC has released unjustly detained individuals; established an anti-trafficking agency; and realized the highest-level corruption conviction in DRC history. These were among the steps that merited the reinstatement of DRC's AGOA eligibility. I was pleased to see the first U.S.-DRC Human Rights Dialogue occur in June 2021 with the support of the Tshisekedi administration and if confirmed, I will aim to advance and deepen the commitments made during that dialogue.

Question. Do you feel that the Tshisekedi administration is in a position to continue to advance reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption, the security sector and the natural resources sector?

Question. I understand that under the Tshisekedi administration, the DRC saw the highest-level corruption conviction in that country's history. If confirmed, I would work with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and partners in the DRC to help address corruption and encourage accountability for corrupt actors with all available tools. The DRC has a long history of corruption and abuse in the mining and security sectors so a core component of any strategy must be engaging on both issues in a meaningful way that can bring about a more professional and effective security sector and a mining sector that truly benefits all Congolese. Essential to doing this work will be close collaboration with local communities and civil society groups.

I believe that the United States should support 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.

Question. In your view, how can the U.S. best continue to support democratic reforms in DRC, including 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. If I am confirmed, I would work to ensure appropriate resources are in place to help our Congolese partners with this important task.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the legitimate victor of a free and fair electoral process in 2023?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work diligently to support a free and fair electoral process and a constructive election environment in the run up to and including the 2023 elections. The declared winner of the presidential election should reflect the will of the Congolese people at the ballot box through a transparent, impartial, and inclusive electoral process.

Question. What is your assessment of the current human rights situation in Burundi?

Answer. Since the election of President Ndayishimiye, the Burundian Government has lifted bans on media outlets associated with the political opposition, freed imprisoned journalists and human rights defenders, increased efforts to address trafficking in persons, and taken steps to end abusive practices by the ruling party's youth militia. However, I am also aware of the recent report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, which documents ongoing human rights violations, the absence of adequate democratic space, ongoing targeting of journalists, denial of freedom of association to civil society, and a lack of meaningful structural reform. If confirmed, I will engage with colleagues from across the State Department and the interagency to address the current human rights situation in Burundi.

Question. Do you feel the democracy and human rights situation in Burundi has improved or declined in Burundi since President Nkurunziza's death and the inauguration of President Ndayishimiye? How?

Answer. I understand that Burundi's 2020 elections took place in a markedly different atmosphere from that in 2015 and were characterized by a competitive process with relatively little violence. Since the election of President Ndayishimiye, the Burundian Government has lifted bans on media outlets associated with the political opposition, freed imprisoned journalists and human rights defenders, increased efforts to address trafficking in persons, and taken steps to end abusive practices by the ruling party's youth militia. However, I am also aware of the recent report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, which notes the absence of any structural reform to "durably improve the [human rights] situation" and multiple ongoing human rights violations and other concerns. If confirmed, I will engage with colleagues across the State Department and the interagency to assess the approach of President Ndayishimiye's administration and review Burundi's progress on democracy and respect for human rights.

Question. In your opinion, have the conditions in Burundi adequately changed for the Departments of State and Treasury to consider terminating the Burundi Sanctions Program?

Answer. I understand the Burundi sanctions program has been a valuable tool to deter abuses and promote accountability among those connected with the 2015 violence and instability in the country. If confirmed, I will engage with the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Bureau of African Affairs, and the Department of the Treasury to assess whether Executive Order 13712 remains an effective tool to advance our foreign policy goals in Burundi, including improved respect for human rights. I will also consider the use of all available tools to respond to human rights violations and abuses in Burundi.

Question. Do you feel that the upgrading of Burundi from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report was an objective reflection of the efforts of the Burundian Government, specifically its justice sector, to make good faith efforts to improve the TIP situation in Burundi?

Answer. I understand that Burundi's 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report tier ranking as Tier 2 Watch List was based on the Burundian Government's increased efforts, including by the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Interior, at the direction of the Office of the President, to counter trafficking in persons. These efforts 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 commit to working with Burundi to ensure it continues to prioritize countering trafficking in persons.

Question. Kenya will have elections in 2022. In your opinion, are planned levels of USG support to Kenya's electoral process adequate?

Answer. I understand that the United States has invested significant resources over the last two decades in support of free and fair elections and democratic reform in Kenya, covering a broad set of programming areas. If confirmed, I would assess the electoral climate and work with colleagues to determine whether planned levels of U.S. Government support are adequate for the 2022 general elections in Kenya and whether additional funding, if available, would be merited. I believe continued U.S. engagement and programs for the August 2022 elections can help Kenya, one of four U.S. strategic partners in Africa, conduct credible elections and forestall the violence and instability that have too often plagued prior election cycles. I strongly support the ongoing efforts to enhance accountability and transparency of the election process, support anti-corruption efforts, promote initiatives to mitigate possible election-related violence and protect human rights, strengthen civic engagement and voter education, and improve the information and media environment.

Question. While there was hope that the end of Mugabe's 37 year reign as president of Zimbabwe would usher in democratic and economic reforms that would enable the beleaguered country to cast off its pariah status, the three years of leadership under President Mnangagwa has demonstrated a continuation, if not worsening, of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and kleptocratic behavior of the ZANU-PF regime. What tools does the U.S. have at its disposal that are underutilized to encourage democratic and economic reforms in Zimbabwe?

Answer. 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 are matters of great concern. I greatly appreciate that this committee has publicly called out repressive actions taken by the Zimbabwe Government. The State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Harare also issue condemnations when appropriate and publicly voice support for the courageous Zimbabwean women and men who speak out against government corruption and abuses. I understand the U.S. supports governance programs that improve electoral processes, refine citizen advocacy strategies, and enhance public accountability measures. It provides support to those the Zimbabwean Government singles out for abuse, and imposes targeted sanctions to promote accountability for corrupt actors and those who abuse human rights and undermine democratic processes. If confirmed, I will work with this committee, civil society, regional neighbors, and likeminded partners to direct more attention to the situation in Zimbabwe so that, together, we can increase the pressure on the Government to respect democratic principles and human rights. If confirmed, I will also work with interagency partners to mobilize 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 U.S.' portfolio of democracy assistance to Zimbabwe. Do you commit to working with the Africa Bureau to review the Department of State's posture on political party support to Zimbabwe?

Answer. 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 since it took power after the 2018 election.

If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe, as well as how to better engage civil society organizations, build confidence in the electoral commission, and encourage more regional engagement.

Question. As Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, would you support the investment of DRL resources into programming that would support investigative journalism and research to better understand corruption and kleptocratic networks in Zimbabwe?

Answer. It is important to look into all options available that would help counter the corrupt and authoritarian actions of the Government of Zimbabwe. If confirmed, I will explore new funding options for DRL interventions in Zimbabwe while factoring how such programs would complement existing USAID programs in country to ensure effectiveness and avoid duplication of efforts, as well as the availability of funds, the timing of appropriations, and procurement lead times.

Question. Given the supermajority retained by the MPLA in the August 2017 legislative elections, has President Lourenco and his party used this legislative power to push through the necessary democracy and human rights reforms from the start of their current term in office as prioritized by the United States and the international community? If so, what are these specific democracy and human rights reforms? If not, what has the U.S. done to ensure that Angola's Government makes these necessary reforms?

Answer. I understand the Government of Angola has made significant progress in its efforts to combat corruption, including investigations and prosecutions of current and former government officials and adopting a new penal code which increased penalties for corrupt officials. The Government has also taken steps to hold officials accountable for human rights abuses. Though challenges remain, the Government has noted that human rights are a matter of national security and acknowledged the need for oversight provided by civil society organizations across the country. Since the release of the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Angola has demonstrated further commitment to combat human trafficking by increasing the criminal penalties for human trafficking; convicting and sentencing traffickers to prison; and conducting a national awareness campaign on human trafficking. Angola also modified its religious registration law to reduce restrictions on Islam and other religions. I understand the United States looks forward to discussing ways to build upon Angola's progress at their fourth Bilateral Dialogue on Human Rights in the coming months. If confirmed, I intend to use that and other opportunities to strengthen bilateral cooperation to support Angola's anti-corruption efforts, enhance accountability mechanisms for human rights violations and abuses, advance democratic governance, and support protections for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to peaceful assembly and freedoms of expression, association, and religion or beliefs.

Question. While Angola's constitutional court rejected the opposition parties' legal petitions in the last election for alleged irregularities, what specific electoral reforms are needed to address some of the concerns raised in those petitions as well as to improve the overall electoral process for the 2022 polls?

Answer. The 2022 legislative elections will be an opportunity for Angola to demonstrate its commitment to democratic governance. A transparent planning process for the elections will aid in their success.

If possible, I would also like to see local elections held in conjunction with the legislative elections, noting that they would be the first to be held in recent Angolan history.

Question. The ruling MPLA under the leadership of President Lourenço introduced changes to the electoral law that would centralize the counting of votes instead of doing it at the level of each municipality and province. Given that centralized counting of votes is not a best practice in results management, particularly in terms of engendering confidence in the transparency and credibility of transmission of election results, how would the centralizing of vote counting be seen in your view? Given the concerns raised by opposition candidates in the 2017 elections through their legal petitions citing the lack of transparency by the electoral commission and alleged vote counting irregularities at the provincial level, would such a law engender greater confidence in the electoral process? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Answer. President Lourenço has shown a willingness to take into account the concerns of minority parties as well as the public demand for free and fair elections. The draft law could present logistical challenges in registering voters in remote areas, and constraints in the prescribed electoral timeframe could lead to low voter registration and participation abroad. As the law is debated and refined, the U.S. Government should continue to advocate for transparency and adherence to international norms.

I also note that on September 11, Angola saw its largest political demonstration since before the pandemic began in response to the draft election law, and that the peaceful nature of the march and the authorities' willingness to permit such a sizeable gathering, despite standing COVID restrictions, is a hopeful signal as Angola gears up for its 2022 legislative elections.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In 2016, the Washington Examiner quoted you as saying that the human rights situation in Cuba was improving. Specifically, you said that in "Cuba we've seen more engagement on HR issues." In 2021, you opposed the State Department's decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism:

- Do you believe that the human rights situation in Cuba is improving? And if so, what specific indicators are you looking at to make this determination?

Answer. I do not believe that the human rights situation is improving. In response to peaceful protests in July, Cuban security forces violently repressed the protests, arresting hundreds of demonstrators simply for exercising their rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as numerous human rights activists. If confirmed, I pledge democracy and human rights in Cuba will remain at the core of our Cuba policy.

Question. Can you explain why you oppose Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism?

Answer. As a nominee I do not have access to information that would enable me to have an informed opinion as to whether Cuba should be designated as a state sponsor of terrorism. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be used for states that are terrorists, based on fact, analysis, and intelligence. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until there's full clarity that the government in question has taken all steps necessary to relieve themselves of the criteria needed for such a designation. Regardless of the state sponsor of terrorism designation, I do believe other corresponding punitive measures are an important tool to be used on repressive governments and/or officials. If confirmed, I will consult closely with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward, including on the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

Question. Are you aware that Cuba continues to provide safe haven to convicted criminals on the FBI's most wanted list, like Joanne Chesimard, who executed a

New Jersey State Troop in 1973 and William Morales who was convicted in a U.S. District Court for possession of explosives and other crimes?

Answer. Yes, I am aware that Cuba harbors several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on or convicted of charges of political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades. If confirmed, I will support the regular U.S. calls on Cuba to return fugitives from justice.

Question. If confirmed, will you advocate for Cuba to be de-listed as a state sponsor of terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy, including the previous administration's decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. I will consult with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward.

Question. In July of this year, we witnessed the largest protests against the regime in 62 years. It's clear from the videos and messages shared, that these protests were clearly sparked by decades of mismanagement and human rights abuses by the regime. The unprecedented size and spread of these protests are directly related to ordinary Cubans' access to internet circumvention tools like VPNs. If confirmed, you will oversee the Bureau at State, which is responsible for U.S. assistance to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba.

- If confirmed, do you commit to support robust funding for the democracy movement in Cuba?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will use all tools at my disposal to support independent civil society and democratic actors in Cuba, including through robust funding for democracy and human rights programs. I believe that these programs, including those that promote internet freedom, are central to empowering independent civil society organizations and ordinary citizens to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba.

Question. If confirmed, will you support providing internet circumvention tools that allow Cubans unfettered and uncensored access to the internet?

Answer. I understand the United States provides funding—over \$70 million globally on an annual basis—to support the development, deployment, and operation of the latest secure and reliable technical solutions to counter Internet censorship, content blocking, and shutdowns, and other violations of Internet Freedom. I also understand U.S.-supported programming makes secure circumvention and communications tools available to internet users everywhere, including in Cuba. If confirmed, and with the continued appropriations support for these activities, I will ensure DRL continues these critical programs.

Question. In 2018, you tweeted in support for the anti-Semitic BDS movement, praising AirBnB for removing rental listings of homes located inside the West Bank.

- Do you still support this decision?

Answer. I firmly reject the BDS movement, which unfairly singles out Israel. If confirmed, I will work with Israel to counter efforts to delegitimize it around the world, while respecting the First Amendment rights of Americans and supporting U.S. businesses.

Question. Do you view the BDS movement as hateful and anti-Semitic?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has been clear that it resolutely opposes the BDS movement. I also have made clear that I firmly reject the BDS movement. The administration has stated it will always fully respect Americans' First Amendment rights, while also remaining a strong partner in fighting efforts to delegitimize Israel. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to support Israel's further integration into the international community, and to oppose the BDS movement and any efforts to delegitimize Israel.

Question. In July 2020, you praised an op-ed by Peter Beinert that argued for Israel to discard its identity as a Jewish State. This conflicts with longstanding U.S. support for Israel as a Jewish state.

- Can you clarify whether or not you fully endorse the views expressed by Beinert in this op-ed? Specifically, like Beinert, do you no longer believe in a Jewish state?

Answer. I believe that Israel is a democratic and Jewish state. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Question. Can you clarify, is it "cruel" to limit Tehran's support for groups that violate the human rights of ordinary people across the region?

Answer. The Iranian Government has a deeply troubling record on human rights both at home and abroad. If confirmed, I am committed to working to disrupt Iran's efforts to repress, harass, harm, or otherwise violate the human rights of individuals in any part of the world, including via its support for violent partners and proxies, and to continuing to use a variety of tools, including sanctions, to counter Iran's support for violent partners and proxies in the region.

Question. Has your opinion of the Iranian Government changed since Raisi's election as President?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration's Iran policy is designed to advance U.S. interests, which include deterring and punishing human rights abuses, regardless of who is in power in Tehran. If confirmed, I will ensure that we deploy all available tools to promote accountability for human rights violators.

Question. If the Iranian Government is still replete with nasty characters, do you believe that providing that regime with sanctions relief advances democracy and human rights in Iran?

Answer. The Iranian Government regularly denies Iranians their human rights, including through severe restrictions on the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, religion or belief, and expression. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to call out and stand up to Iran's human rights abuses, and to maintain and impose sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals perpetrating human rights abuses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Recently, the United States and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency agreed upon a framework for cooperation which includes a mutual commitment to abide by the Foreign Assistance Act's prohibition on assistance to UNRWA without adequate oversight of funding, specifically over funds which could end up in the hands of terrorist. But UNRWA has displayed an insufficient track record in exercising oversight of its funds, even after committing to our government to do so:

- At what point is it necessary to accept that the constant flow of U.N. support is enabling corrupt entities in the region and not actually helping bring about peace and security? What options exist for alternative, U.S.-led and U.S.-facilitated assistance?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration supports the work of UNRWA, which provides critical services to vulnerable Palestinian refugees. UNRWA is a lifeline for thousands of Palestinian refugees in the region. I understand the United States and UNRWA have reaffirmed a commitment to uphold the principles of accountability, neutrality, and transparency. I understand the Department is deeply engaged with UNRWA, including on key reforms related to efficiency, effectiveness, and importantly neutrality. I want to be clear—neutrality means antiracism, combatting anti-semitism and tolerance.

The Department is committed to ensuring U.S. Government funding does not end up in the hand of terrorists, including Hamas. The administration provides assistance to trusted international organizations and NGOs in a manner consistent with U.S. law and does not direct assistance to Hamas. The Department takes oversight of U.N. operations, including UNRWA, seriously to ensure U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching the intended recipients.

Question. Do you agree with President Biden that further conditioning security aid to Israel would be "outrageous"?

Answer. Yes. The Biden-Harris administration remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security and will work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership. If confirmed, I will support these efforts to strengthen our bilateral ties.

Question. Do you acknowledge that Israel's security environment is unlike any other in the world, by means of its very existence?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Is the Human Rights Council serving the interests of the United States when it consistently displays bias against the state of Israel?

Answer. The U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) has flaws, including in particular the Council's problematic membership and its disproportionate focus on Israel. If

confirmed, I am committed to ensuring with colleagues the HRC can be as effective and balanced as possible, and will continue to advocate that the HRC treats Israel in the same way as the HRC handles any other country. When the United States has a seat at the table, we are able to advocate on Israel's behalf. The U.S. is hopeful about moving resolutions out of Agenda Item 7, which will be a step in the right direction. Advancing democracy and protecting human rights are vital to U.S. national security interests. U.S. leadership in multilateral venues, including the Human Rights Council helps focus international attention on the world's most egregious human rights situations such as Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Ethiopia, Burma, and help direct U.N. assistance to countries in transition like Sudan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Cuba

Question. The Cuban regime annually proposes a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly condemning the U.S. for policies toward Cuba, and among other things calling for the embargo to be lifted. The U.S. has consistently voted against this measure, with the exception of 2016, when the Obama-Biden administration instead abstained from the vote. Long-standing policy of the U.S. to use its voice and vote to oppose this measure was restored under the Trump administration. The Biden administration has extended this policy, and this year U.N. Ambassador Thomas Greenfield voted against the Cuban-sponsored resolution condemning the United States' congressionally mandated trade embargo at the United Nations General Assembly.

Meanwhile, the United States Congress has been and remains committed to maintaining America's embargo on Cuba. The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-114) codifies the U.S. embargo. The executive branch is prevented from lifting the embargo without congressional concurrence through legislation until certain democratic conditions set forth in the law are met.

- Do you agree with the Congressionally mandated policy mandating an embargo?

Answer. The LIBERTAD Act codifies the bulk of the embargo and the circumstances under which it can be ended. Unless it is repealed or amended by Congress, the embargo can only be ended if the President determines Cuba has entered a transition to democracy. The administration is committed to implementing U.S. law while ensuring its policies advance the right to self-determination for the Cuban people, greater freedom for the Cuban people, and expanded support for pro-democracy, human rights, and independent media in Cuba. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting these goals as part of the administration's policy toward Cuba and consulting with Congress on ways to advance them that is consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Do you agree with the decision to vote against U.N. resolutions condemning the U.S. embargo?

Answer. Yes. Under LIBERTAD, the embargo is U.S. law. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the administration's policy approach to Cuba consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Please describe what policies you would take to deepen Congress's policy mandating an embargo of Cuba?

Answer. Democracy and human rights in Cuba are at the core of the administration's efforts to empower the Cuban people to determine their own future. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's goals to support the Cuban people to further strengthen Cuban civil society, and to increase pressure on the regime for its repression and human rights violations, as the Biden administration did this past July following the Government's brutal response to protests. I look forward to consulting with Congress on the way forward and to ensuring our policy towards Cuba is rooted in broad support for fundamental values.

Israel/State Dept

Question. On July 8, 2014 our Israeli allies launched Operation Protective Edge in response to a string of Hamas terrorist attacks and atrocities. The State Dept. among other things called on Israel to avoid civilian casualties and committed to resupplying them with military technology they required to defend themselves. On July 31 you criticized that stance as "consistently inconsistent" in a post on Twitter. Your view is particularly worrisome because, if confirmed, you would contribute to decision-making related to providing resources to allies in crisis conditions.

- Please clarify what you meant by the criticism that the State Dept. being “consistently inconsistent” for urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties while seeking to resupply Israel.

Answer. I strongly support Israel's right to self-defense and the United States' continued commitment to Israel's security. I also believe that mitigation of civilian casualty risks, consistent with U.S. law, should be considered for all U.S. arms sales. My tweet was an unnuanced expression of that objective. If confirmed, I will support the United States' continued commitment to Israel's security and will work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership. Secretary Blinken also has underscored the U.S. expectation that Israel should do everything it possibly can to mitigate the risk of civilian casualties, which I believe is in line with our shared values and common strategic interests.

Question. Please describe human rights concerns that you believe are relevant to decisions related to supplying our Israeli allies with resources they need to defend themselves.

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. The President has also made it clear that the rule of law and respect for human rights are front and center in U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will join this administration in insisting on adherence to our agreements on the use of U.S.-origin defense equipment by our allies and partners, compliance with the laws of armed conflict, and respect for human rights.

Question. In May 16, 2018 you criticized the United States Government on Twitter for being “virtually silent” on “Israeli security forces’ disproportionate attacks on Palestinians in Gaza.” This assessment is not a legal assessment: it is an institutional judgment about the role of U.S. Government officials. These assessments and others like them would be significant if you are confirmed for role as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Please list which Israeli actions in the context of your May 16, 2018 post you believe the U.S. Government should have been more vocal about?

Answer. I believe that the United States should continue to underscore the expectation that Israel, as a key democratic ally in the region, should do everything it possibly can to mitigate the risk of civilian casualties. It is critical for all parties to refrain from unilateral or disproportionate steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, such as annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, and incitement to violence.

Interbranch Cooperation

Question. In January 2020 Sens. Cotton, Cruz, and Braun sent an oversight letter to then-Attorney General Barr requesting that he “review the activities of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) and its sister organization NIAC Action for potential violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).” You criticized this request, and joined a letter saying that the Senators had used “tactics [that] have no place in our political process or our national discourse, and risk turning our Justice Department into a political tool.”

- Do you believe that the Senators’ letter asking for a review of activities has no place in our political process?

Answer. To the contrary, I believe Congress has a strong role to play in exercising vital oversight functions. In joining that letter, I was expressing concern about the potential for federal law enforcement power to be misused to intimidate or silence civil society organizations. If confirmed, I would seek to be in regular communication with Congress and meaningfully accommodate oversight requests.

Question. Please describe your understanding of the role that elected officials play in overseeing agencies charged with investigating potential violations of statutory regulations such as FARA, in the context of your potential role as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor?

Answer. Elected officials have an important oversight function. I commit to working with Congress to accommodate its need for information to conduct oversight.

Question. 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 that the PRC has committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, and that these crimes are ongoing.

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. The United States should continue to speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible for those abuses. If confirmed, I will advocate to continue concrete U.S. Government actions—in coordination with allies and partners whenever possible—to promote accountability for ongoing atrocities and genocide in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China, including through the imposition of visa restrictions, tightening of export controls, enforcement of import restrictions, imposition of financial sanctions, and multilateral initiatives. I will also look to engage the private sector on questions related to digital authoritarianism and the economic, legal, and reputational risks of supply chain links to entities that engage in human rights abuses, including forced labor in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China. Finally, if confirmed I will work with DRL colleagues and other non-governmental entities to ensure civil society is adequately supported to monitor, document, and respond to China's abuses—wherever they may occur.

Israel / Sovereignty

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. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration gives great weight 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. The Biden administration has not reversed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the Biden-Harris administration has not altered U.S. policy on this important issue. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The administration also recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will 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 the Golan Heights?

Answer. I understand that U.S. policy regarding the Golan has not changed since the beginning of the Biden-Harris administration. 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 is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. 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 handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has engaged in discriminatory policies, in response to which the private sector has an important role to play in not promoting or pursuing?

Answer. I believe all governments, including the United States and Israel, should work to end discrimination of any kind. If confirmed, I will work with all partners, including the private sector, to address discrimination and help ensure all people are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Question. If so, please describe which discriminatory Israeli policies you believe the private sector has an important role to play in not promoting or pursuing.

Answer. If confirmed, I will review all available evidence and work with all partners to address discrimination—whether targeting Israelis or Palestinians—and ensure full compliance with existing U.S. policy and law, while also ensuring that all people are treated with the fundamental dignity and respect they deserve.

Question. The Biden administration has repeatedly expressed commitments to providing assistance to Lebanon, including in the absence of any government or in the context of a government controlled or unduly influenced by Hezbollah. If confirmed, you would have a central role in evaluating the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and you would have significant equities in what a response would look like.

- Do you believe that it would be in America's national security interest for resources to go to the Government of Lebanon even if that government was controlled or unduly influenced by Hezbollah?

Answer. Hizballah is a terrorist organization, and the United States undertakes rigorous measures to safeguard U.S. assistance from conferring benefits to Hezbollah or any other terrorist group, including thorough oversight, vetting, and robust risk mitigation practices. If confirmed, I would ensure the Department continues to support our vital interests in Lebanon through the ongoing but carefully allocated provision of U.S. assistance, including to Lebanese civil society, which helps to bolster Lebanon's resiliency, stability, and security.

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. The Houthis, with continued Iranian support, remain intransigent and focused on their military offensive against Marib. The offensive is the single biggest threat to peace efforts and is exacerbating an already-dire humanitarian crisis, placing at risk the approximately one million internally displaced persons who found refuge in Marib after escaping fighting in other parts of the country. The Houthis also exacerbate the humanitarian consequences of the fuel situation at Hudaydah port by stockpiling fuel and manipulating fuel prices, driving up the cost of fuel far beyond the reach of most Yemenis. In addition, the Houthis continue to interfere in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

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. The Biden administration revoked the terrorism designations of Ansarallah, sometimes referred to as the Houthis, in recognition of the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. I understand the administration listened to concerns voiced by the United Nations, humanitarian groups, and bipartisan members of Congress, among others, regarding potential impacts the designations could have had on Yemenis' access to essential basic commodities. The short time that passed between the designations and their revocations limited the impact the designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports. According to

U.N. data, food and other humanitarian assistance items are moving through Yemeni ports at normal rates.

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. The short time that passed between the designations and their revocations limited the impact that designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports. The situation has been especially critical in Marib, where the escalation of hostilities has caused additional needs and secondary displacement. Critically, delivery has safely continued of life-saving food, emergency shelter, water, and sanitation and hygiene supplies, as well as essential non-food items, such as blankets and water containers.

Question. In May 2014, you criticized the United States Government for having done "little to follow up" on calls to create distance between the U.S. and Nigerian security forces, who you described as "barely more palatable" than Boko Haram fighters who had kidnapped hundreds of girls. In contrast, many in Congress and across the federal government see the Nigerian Government as a critical national security partner.

- Do you continue to believe that the U.S. should limit security cooperation with the Government of Nigeria?

Answer. Nigeria faces numerous security threats, including terrorism, rural banditry, kidnapping for ransom, herder-farmer violence, separatist attacks, maritime piracy, and rampant criminality. I understand the U.S. Government's strategy takes a holistic approach to help Nigeria address insecurity by harnessing a range of security, governance, and development tools. Nigeria is an important national security partner and has taken some steps to investigate alleged abuses by both the police and the military, which are essential steps to addressing longstanding impunity. A central part of U.S. security cooperation is focused on helping Nigeria build capable, well-equipped, professional, accountable security forces that effectively respond to threats, protect civilians, and respect human rights. U.S. Government also supports rule of law capacity building efforts, community-based conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs, livelihoods programs, and provides humanitarian assistance to build resilience among conflict-affected populations.

If confirmed, I will support the U.S. goal of a stable and secure Nigeria while ensuring the United States continues to use its engagements with the Nigerian Government to prioritize respect for human rights and accountability for past human rights violations and abuses.

Question. What specific steps do you envision pursuing in your role as Assistance Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, should you be confirmed, that would limit cooperation with either the Government of Nigeria or Nigerian security forces?

Answer. If confirmed, I would underscore that the United States expects the Nigerian Government and security forces to demonstrate a strong commitment to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and to prioritize accountability for past human rights violations and abuses. Assessing credible information of gross violations of human rights, consistent with the Leahy Law, and consulting with the Africa bureau would be an essential part of assessing whether cooperation should be limited. If confirmed, I would support the thorough vetting of Nigerian security force units, consistent with U.S. law, to ensure that we are not providing assistance to those units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

Question. How would you characterize the professionalism of Nigerian armed forces today?

Answer. Nigeria has an estimated 120,000 active-duty personnel in the military with a 70,000-person army. I understand the Nigerian Police Force lacks appropriate staffing and resources with only 375,000 police in a country of over 200 million citizens. The military is deployed on operations in 35 of the 36 states to support Nigeria's overstretched police force, but the reality is both are stretched.

According to the State Department's Human Rights Report, there were reports that members of the Nigerian security forces committed human rights abuses in 2020 and impunity remained a significant problem. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts across the U.S. Government as well as international partners to convey the consistent message that we need to see steady improvement toward more professional and accountable Nigerian security institutions.

Question. How would you characterize the Buhari administration in the context of counter-terrorism operations?

Answer. Defeating Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, and other violent extremist organizations is essential for the security and prosperity of Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin. Violent extremist groups have caused at least 35,000 deaths in northeast Nigeria in the last decade, as well as displaced more than two million persons. In the Northeast, Nigeria is fighting insurgencies against ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram with an increasingly overstretched and undermanned Nigerian Army. Lacking manpower, the armed forces desperately need an increase in resources. Additionally, support for non-military responses to countering terrorism—including increased development, good governance, and economic opportunities remain vital. Beyond being stretched, limited capability and uneven local government willingness to intervene present counter-terrorism challenges.

Question. Which countries would you advocate to be added or removed from the State Department's Country of Particular Concern list?

Answer. The law gives the Secretary of State the responsibility of making CPC designations, which provides important leverage to engage on religious intolerance, a central human rights concern. The 2020 International Religious Freedom Report was released in May, and Secretary Blinken will now have his first opportunity to undertake the annual designations, and without prejudging Secretary Blinken's CPC designations, I am confident the Secretary will carefully review the religious freedom situation in all countries and make designations based on the criteria set forth in the IRF Act.

These designations are one of a range of tools the Department has to promote accountability for governments and non-state entities that are religious freedom violators, and it is a very important tool. If confirmed, I will support the implementation of the full range of these tools, in partnership with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

Question. 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. Do you believe Nigeria should remain or be removed from the State Department's Country of Particular Concern list?

Answer. There are serious human rights issues in Nigeria. Although I cannot forecast any decisions regarding potential designations, I share Congressional concern about religious freedom issues in Nigeria. Religious freedom is a key U.S. foreign policy priority and I understand the Department continues to closely monitor human rights and the religious freedom situation in Nigeria. As with every region, the causes of conflict in Nigeria are complex. In addition to religious differences, ethnicity, politics, lack of accountability, access to justice, and competition over land resources are also drivers of the violence. Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, as amended, the Secretary takes into consideration all relevant information available in his annual review of designations. If confirmed, I will make Nigeria a priority and I commit to work with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and Congress to address religious freedom concerns in Nigeria.

Question. Please describe the degree to which you consider anti-blasphemy laws to be acute threats to global or regional human rights?

Answer. I understand that the U.S. Government uniformly opposes apostasy, blasphemy, and anti-conversion laws, which are frequently used to oppress those whose religious beliefs differ from the majority. If confirmed, I will urge governments to eliminate such laws.

Laws against blasphemy or apostasy are too often used and abused by governments, as a means of protecting or extending their powers, to target political dissenters or members of religious or ethnic minority groups. These laws are also too often used and abused by individuals as a pretext to justify violence against those whose religion or ethnicity differs from their own or to settle personal grievances. When governments actively or passively support such individuals, instead of protecting members of minority groups, those in society who want to take the law into their own hands are empowered to use violence against these victims.

Therefore, I consider these laws to be acute threats to human rights, especially freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.

Question. If confirmed, how would you orient the bureau to mitigate the effects or erode the scope of blasphemy laws?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom to urge governments to annul these laws and to oppose

the enforcement and abuse of these laws, especially enforcement with criminal penalties.

Question. 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. Yes. I recognize that there are times when unclassified information from various sources, taken together, can result in revealing classified information damaging to our national security. In those instances, that information must be secured. If confirmed, I commit to avoiding the over-classification of materials required by Congress for the oversight of the Department.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 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, Kaine, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Romney, and Young.

Also Present: Senator Graham.

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 to consider nominations for four important positions—Senator Jeff Flake to be Ambassador to Turkey, Ambassador Mark Gitenstein to be the U.S. Representative to the European Union, Ms. Cindy McCain to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, and Governor Jack Markell to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD.

So congratulations on all your nominations, as well as to your families who are part of the sacrifice in this process. We certainly appreciate them as well.

The four of you have a distinguished history of public service and advocacy, and I appreciate your willingness to serve the country in this capacity.

I understand that Senator Coons will be introducing Senator Flake—in a great, grand show of bipartisanship at a time that it is difficult to achieve it here—and Governor Markell. And that Senator Graham, who we welcome back to the committee—he left us precipitously—will be introducing Ms. McCain.

So, Senator Coons?

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch.

Before proceeding with more detailed introductions, I ask unanimous consent to add a statement from my predecessor, former Senator Ted Kaufman, a detailed statement of introduction in support of Mark Gitenstein to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the EU.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, so ordered.
[The information referred to follows:]

INTRODUCTION OF HON. MARK GITENSTEIN BY FORMER SENATOR TED KAUFMAN

Senator KAUFMAN. As a former member of this committee and as a friend and colleague of Mark Gitenstein, I am pleased to introduce Mark to this committee to be Ambassador to the European Union.

I have known Mark for over 40 years and have worked closely with him as a colleague on the staff of then-Senator Biden and later in then-Senator Biden's transition to the vice presidency. More recently, I worked closely with Mark in setting up the Vice President's transition to the presidency.

I know him to be a man of integrity, principle, intelligence and drive.

He also brings exactly the right experience to the job.

From 2009 to 2012, he was the U.S. Ambassador to Romania. The U.S.-Romanian Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement was negotiated and signed during his tenure.

In 2012, Romanian President Traian Băsescu awarded Mark with the "Star of Romanian Grand Cross," the country's highest civil order.

Mark also led efforts to strengthen the rule of law and fight corruption in Romania, doing so with considerable diplomatic skill and success. In the midst of this struggle to preserve the rule of law in Romania, he was honored in 2011 by Nine O'clock, the premier English speaking journal in Romania, as the best foreign diplomat in Bucharest.

He developed deep expertise in rule of law and intelligence issues in his 17 years working on the Senate staff. These included his tenure as Chief Counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee, and its Subcommittee on Criminal Justice. He also served as counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee, and the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights.

Mark has spent over 25 years in private law practice. Especially in the last eight years, he has focused on strengthening energy independence for Romania, a key issue he will face for all of Central and Eastern Europe should he become Ambassador to the EU.

Mark has the core values and toughness to deal with the Russians. He also possesses the keen ability to build consensus and enhance our relationships with European allies. As a creature of the Senate, Mark will also be very mindful of, and responsive to, this committee's oversight responsibilities.

He knows well the President and the key leaders of the administration's foreign policy and national security teams.

Having Mark in Brussels will greatly enhance the ability of this administration to accomplish one of its critical goals: to rebuild multilateralism by rebuilding trust between the U.S. and the EU. The sooner we can get Mark to Brussels, the better.

Senator COONS. And I join Senator Kaufman in urging support for Mark Gitenstein, who I know will be a very capable and experienced Ambassador, his second term of service as an Ambassador to now an entire region so critical to all of us.

I have known Jack and his wonderful wife, Carla, for 32 years. In Delaware, we pride ourselves on being able to work together. We are a State of neighbors, a State that cares about solving problems and doing the right thing. And no one epitomizes that more than our former Governor and State treasurer, Jack Markell.

As State treasurer for 10 years, Governor for 8 years, Jack has been guided by strong values and a sharp intellect. His passion for helping others is rooted in his faith and strengthened when, at age 17, he had a chance to travel to India and to see profound inequality and deep poverty. And in the decade since, he has built a remarkable record of achievement, of creating opportunity, of not just talking the talk, but of taking effective action.

Across two decades in leadership, he led innovative financial literacy and banking access initiatives; managed a severe fiscal crisis that affected our whole country, but did so responsibly in Delaware; helped grow our local economy; and showed real vision in

creating new opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. He helped create Pathways to Prosperity in the State of Delaware, a national model for helping workplace experience and college credit opportunities for young people, and launched one of the best language immersion programs in kindergarten.

He has a deep understanding of the private sector and economic development. He has an MBA from the University of Chicago, and helped launch and create the telecom company Nextel, a company now valued at \$35 billion. So he understands both how to solve complex problems and how the United States can work with our OECD partners to put in place policies to create conditions for economic growth.

He led both the Democratic Governors Association and the National Governors Association, and today, he is leading Operation Allies Welcome, the resettlement of thousands of the Afghan partners who served alongside us in our 20 years of conflict.

A dedicated and capable public servant, with the experience, intelligence, and character to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the OECD, I look forward to supporting him not just in his nomination, but in his service and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if I might, I am also honored to introduce my friend and our former colleague, Senator Jeff Flake.

Senator Flake, to be clear, is a conservative Republican from Arizona, and I am a Democrat from Delaware. In the 6 years we served alongside each other, we voted on the opposite way of virtually every vote we ever took in the Senate. But during those 6 years, I came to know Jeff as an honorable man, as a principled public servant, as a patriotic American, and a loyal friend.

We traveled together to more than a dozen countries—West Africa, East Africa, and Northern Europe. We had the bonding moment of both being chased by elephants in Mozambique. We worked together on legislation to protect wildlife from trafficking, to protect the rule of the law on the Judiciary Committee, to promote free and fair elections and economic reforms in Zimbabwe, where he did his mission service.

Senator Flake has long championed American leadership around the world by promoting the rule of law, protecting human rights, and through strong international agreements. And his deep sense of right and wrong has not wavered. I am confident that his commitment and character thoughtfulness and skills will serve him well in a very demanding post as Ambassador to Turkey, where his abilities will be greatly needed to navigate difficult security issues and one where his service will reinforce the importance of bipartisanship in foreign policy.

I know he will be even more successful with his amazing wife, Cheryl, by his side, and I look forward to supporting Senator Flake's nomination and encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons.

I noticed you said you are a Democrat from Delaware. You did not define what type of Democrat from Delaware, but in any event—

Senator RISCH. There are different types?

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Well, he said Senator Flake was a conservative Republican. So I thought maybe he wanted to share some light—we have to have a little fun here. Otherwise, it is tough to get through the day.

To our dear colleague, Senator Graham.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LINDSEY GRAHAM,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH CAROLINA**

Senator GRAHAM. Glad to be back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Our good friend Chris Coons is a short Democrat from Delaware, as I am a short Republican from South Carolina. We literally see eye-to-eye on everything.

So I just want to let the committee know when Cindy called me last week and asked me to introduce her to the committee, I stopped for a second and thought, wow, I am very proud to do it. I know John is looking down with pride. President Biden chose wisely.

She is being nominated to be the Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome. So all of us will be visiting you.

I am very familiar with this program because, along with Senator Coons, I am the vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee that deals with the State Department's budget and the United Nations' budget. And the World Food Program just received the Nobel Peace Prize. That is run by David Beasley, the former Governor of South Carolina.

They received the Nobel Peace Prize because the World Food Program has made a huge difference. With the advent of war and climate change, there are so many people in this world not knowing where their next meal comes from, and the World Food Program has stepped up to the plate, and the American taxpayer should be proud. The agency that Cindy has been nominated to lead as an Ambassador I think is the key to this whole problem. It is one thing to provide meals. It is another thing to provide the ability to grow your own food.

And Senator Risch, I am going to be all in working with this committee as an appropriator, along with Senator Coons, to beef up the capability of people throughout the world in impoverished regions to be able to farm as if it were the 21st century, not the 18th century.

Cindy has a heck of a resume. I think we all know Cindy in a variety of roles. She has been a public figure for a long time. But to those who have not followed her career, you should have. She has been deeply involved in the human trafficking scourge of the planet. She has been to the developing world, particularly Africa, numerous times, dealing with women's issues and humanitarian problems.

But I know her best from traveling with her where we went to Africa with the Gates Foundation and others to look at how to modernize farming practices. We visited a woman who had two daughters, basically farming with her two daughters, and the Gates Foundation and Department of Agriculture was trying to provide her with seeds that were more drought-resistant and over

time to increase her family's capability to feed itself and actually earn money.

So I am excited about this part of the World Food Program, this agency, and I want to pledge to Cindy that I am going to do everything I can to increase your capability to provide the best farming practices for those people who are on the bubble in terms of being able to live and those people in dire situations to turn their lives around.

And one thing that Cindy and I were talking about was water. Water is the new oil. And this agency, I think, is going to be very aggressive in how to manage water and make sure that we get the best utilization where water exists and desalinization programs where it does not. So, Mr. Chairman, Senator Risch, I am going to be talking to you a lot about the portfolio under Cindy's control.

And I just end with this. I have never known a more decent, capable person in my life. An Ambassador is supposed to represent America in the best fashion. I think the two nominees here today that I know, Jeff and Cindy, will be the best advocates for American interests in Turkey, and I can assure you that when Cindy McCain shows up in the room anywhere in the world, people already know her, they respect her, and she will be a great face for America. And working with Governor Beasley, we are going to turn this world around when it comes to feeding people.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

I know that both of our colleagues have other obligations, and so they should feel free to leave when they need to.

Let me turn to our nominees. Senator Flake, welcome back to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Given Turkey's aggressive actions in the region as well as the repressive tactics used by the Erdogan regime against its own people at home, we need an Ambassador who will not hesitate to hold Turkey accountable and will push it to live up to the principles that undergird NATO membership—individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Erdogan's repression is unbecoming of a democracy and unbecoming of a NATO ally. Democracies do not jail journalists, intimidate academics, and infringe upon freedom of religion. They do not renege on their commitments to stop violence against women, and they do not put political opponents in prison.

So, Senator, you will have your work cut out for you, and I look forward to hearing how you plan to address some of these challenges awaiting in Ankara.

Ambassador Gitenstein, we welcome your nomination to this post at a critical time in the transatlantic relationship. The bond between the United States and the European Union has been tested in recent years. Former President Trump repeatedly mocked our European allies while sabotaging the strategic relationship at seemingly every turn. I believe that close ties between Brussels and Washington are not just in our national interest, but in the interest of democracies everywhere.

Going forward, smart diplomacy, careful coordination with our European allies will be critical to dealing with the challenges we both face, whether it be Russia's ambitions in Eastern Europe, Chi-

na's growing soft power influence and investment in the Balkans, or Turkey's aggressive behavior in the Eastern Mediterranean. Having an Ambassador who works with our European allies will be an important first step.

As Nord Stream 2 continues to be a concern, I hope you will develop a strategy with our European friends on a comprehensive energy plan that shields Europe from extortion at the hands of the Kremlin. In short, we need someone with your knowledge, expertise, and proven record as a diplomat in Brussels as quickly as possible.

Ms. McCain, congratulations on your nomination. I admire your years of advocacy for vulnerable peoples around the world, including your commitment to combatting human trafficking globally. You shared that powerful commitment with your husband of almost 40 years and our much-admired and missed colleague, Senator John McCain.

For these reasons, I believe you are a superb choice to serve as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture. The challenges these U.N. agencies face today, as you and I discussed yesterday, are enormous.

In this year alone, the number of people in need of urgent food assistance is expected to reach 270 million people, double that of 2020. Conflict and instability continue to push millions of people into acute food insecurity. Climate change threatens food production, and the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change exacerbate the situation even further.

Your role at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organizations are of the utmost importance in supporting the United Nations work to eradicate poverty, hunger, food insecurity, and promote sustainable agriculture-led economic growth. Your strong leadership will be essential to empowering, supporting, and guiding these agencies in this critical work.

Governor Markell, congratulations on your nomination. Appreciate your service not only as the Governor of Delaware, but most recently as the White House coordinator for Operation Allies. At a time of growing nationalistic sentiment, we have to remain at the leadership of international economic and financial institutions, not abdicate that role. We have to work with our allies to create a stronger, more inclusive global economy that benefits everyone.

The OECD is an important tool for U.S. diplomacy. Together, with OECD member states, which account for 63 percent of the world's GDP and three-quarters of all of the world trade, we can confront the challenges of a global economy. So I look forward to hearing how you plan to approach the OECD upon your confirmation and how you will use your position to advance U.S. interests, such as free markets and good governance, in the liberal international order.

With that, let me turn to our distinguished ranking member for his opening comments. Senator Risch?

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

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

Good morning, and thank you, all four of you, for your willingness to serve in these capacities. And to your families, as noted by the chairman that families certainly share the sacrifice.

On the nomination of the Ambassador to the European Union, the EU was one of the world's key economic unions, and its regulatory regimes are increasingly attempting to set standards for the world. This week, the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council will meet for the first time in Pittsburgh. There are a lot of trade and regulatory issues to discuss, and the results, or lack thereof, are likely to impact our joint ability to stand up against China's predatory trade practices with which we are all familiar.

I was very glad to see that last year, the EU and U.S. started a U.S.-EU dialogue on China. We need to use these discussions to start advancing shared priorities and policies, including those raised in my recent report on transatlantic cooperation on China.

Sadly, European leaders have grown louder in their calls for strategic autonomy, an idea in which European Union nations should decrease their interconnection with the U.S. or contribute to an EU member-only military force. Proponents of this movement claim it will enhance NATO capabilities and will allow Europe to engage in military operations that are outside of U.S. interests. I remain concerned that it will, in fact, deepen divisions within NATO.

Europe is and will continue to be one of our closest allies. There are very few places on the planet where our culture and our values are as congruent as they are with our European friends. As together, their population is much equivalent to the United States, and it is going to take the work of both in order to stand up to the 1.5 billion people of China.

Finally, the Balkan nations are under heavy pressure from China and Russia, which could be better resisted if there was greater integration with the rest of Europe. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on all of these important issues.

On the nomination of Ambassador to Turkey, the relationship between the United States and Turkey has been at an impasse over Turkey's purchase and deployment of Russian S-400 missile launchers. As everyone knows, the system is not interoperable with NATO, and Erdogan, not understandably, insists on buying—it has the S-400 missiles and which makes collaboration with NATO more difficult at best.

Erdogan has claimed that we would not sell them the Patriots that are in the same class as the Russian S-400. We know that is not true. Senator Shaheen and I delivered a letter in 2012 to the Turks at the time they were shopping, telling them they should buy, and we were ready to deliver as many as they needed. Erdogan shrugged when I handed him that letter.

The human rights situation in Turkey also remains difficult. Turkey is one of the highest jailers of journalists and opposition activists in Eurasia and has persecuted multiple locally employed staff of our U.S. missions there. This is not acceptable.

To be fair, Turkey was a key collaborator in Afghanistan, and our military-to-military contacts remain strong. Turkey also continues to house millions of Syrian refugees, and its cooperation is key to delivering aid and assistance to Syria.

Senator Flake, I know that you will be able to straighten these matters out, and happy to be sending you to Turkey to do so.

On the nomination of Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, for 60 years, the OECD has been an important part of our foreign economic policy. As China seeks OECD membership, it is important that our Ambassador understands the challenges we face today from a rising China that promotes a socialist model.

This model seeks to undermine and replace the private sector growth model that has lifted hundreds of millions, indeed, billions of people out of poverty around the world and has led to the greatest period of prosperity in human history. Today, many regret letting China into the WTO. We should not repeat past mistakes.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter and to working with you to meet this challenge head on.

On the nomination of Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, the United States is the most generous donor of humanitarian assistance globally. We need a strong and capable representative to the U.N. agencies in Rome—the World Food Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development—to ensure that these agencies are as efficient and effective as possible so we can spread our assistance further and save more lives.

Additionally, our representative must fight against malign Chinese influence in the U.N. I believe you are up to the task, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these matters.

Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, we will start with our nominees' testimony. We ask you to summarize your testimony in about 5 minutes. Your full statements will be included in the record without objection.

And we will start with Governor Markell and work our way down to Ms. McCain.

STATEMENT OF HON. JACK A. MARKELL OF DELAWARE, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. MARKELL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to start by thanking Senator Coons for his generous introduction. The Senator and Annie have been great friends of Carla and mine for three decades, as he mentioned. We are all incredibly proud of the work he is doing in the U.S. Senate for the people of Delaware and the country.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear as the nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and I am grateful to President Biden and to Secretary Blinken for their confidence.

I am indebted to my family, who have played an important role in my being here. My wife, Carla, who is with me today; our kids, Molly and Michael; as well as my mom and sister and her family.

I am also grateful to my father and brother who are no longer with us, as well as to my brother's family.

We are at an inflection point in human history with democratic norms receding in many parts of the world and the global economic system under strain from COVID-19. The OECD has long been a forum to advance our common values and demonstrate what democracies can deliver. But the United States and our allies must continue to demonstrate that democracy, human rights, free markets, and capitalism better deliver growth and innovation and a good quality of life for all our citizens.

The more we show that, as Secretary Blinken has said, the more we can refute the lie that authoritarian countries love to tell. The OECD provides the policy rationale that underlies our economic system and magnifies our voice. President Biden has said we are in competition with China and other countries to win the 21st century. We have to do more than just Build Back Better. We have to compete more strenuously.

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch, you deserve enormous credit for your bipartisan work on the Strategic Competition Act, which strengthens the U.S. response and abilities to confront the threat of the PRC. The world's authoritarian regimes are trying to show the world that their autocratic systems of single party rule and state-driven economics deliver better results. The OECD is so important, given the democratic community's ongoing competition with the world's autocratic and authoritarian regimes.

I believe I come to the committee with the right package of skills and experiences to advocate on behalf of the United States. After graduating from Brown University, I earned an MBA from the University of Chicago. My private sector career is primarily focused on telecommunications. As Senator Coons mentioned, I helped lead the wireless revolution as the 13th employee and senior vice president at Nextel.

I had long been interested in a career in public service. I always believed that my country had given me enormous opportunities, and I wanted to play a role in ensuring that similar opportunities are available to future generations.

As Governor, I was concerned about the impacts of globalization and automation. I knew that the States and countries that out-educate today will outcompete tomorrow. That is why I have worked hard to ensure that our children had opportunities to thrive in school. For those who wanted to go to college, my team worked to secure opportunities for them to do so, even when they could not afford it.

And we also recognized that many of our young people wanted to go directly to work. So we created terrific new programs to help them do exactly that with the skills needed for good-paying jobs. Good jobs are the best way to solve social problems.

I served as chair of the bipartisan National Governors Association. I learned so much from my colleagues of both parties, and I imagine that the former Governors on this committee also had the chance to learn from and share with their colleagues when they served as Governors.

Although Governors compete with each other to deliver the best economic climate for their constituents, we realize that our States

do better when the U.S. does better, and that is one reason OECD is so important.

I will close on a personal note. Both of my parents were first-generation Americans. My dad signed up to fight in the Army during World War II at the earliest opportunity, and he served proudly in Europe. My grandparents left Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania at the turn of the 20th century, seeking a better life in the United States.

It would have been beyond my grandparents' wildest imagination when they left Eastern Europe that their grandson would have the opportunity to serve Delaware as Governor and then potentially our country as the U.S. representative to a multilateral institution that fosters prosperity for all. They came to the United States in the first place seeking exactly that. It would be an extraordinary honor to play a small part in shaping policies that provide those same benefits for future generations.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Markell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JACK A. MARKELL

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear as the nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence.

I am indebted to my family for the love and support which have played an important role in my being here—my wife, Carla, our kids, Molly and Michael, as well as my mom and sister and her family. I am grateful to my father and brother who are no longer with us, as well as to my brother's family.

We are at an inflection point in human history, with democratic norms receding in many parts of the world and the global economic system under strain from COVID-19. The OECD has long been a forum to advance our common values and demonstrate what democracies can deliver.

But the United States and our allies must continue to demonstrate that democracy, human rights, free markets, and capitalism better deliver growth and innovation and a better quality of life for all our citizens. And as Secretary Blinken has said, "The more we and all democracies can show the world that we can deliver—for our people, for each other—the more we can refute the lie that authoritarian countries love to tell." That's why the OECD is so important—it provides the policy rationale that underlies our economic system and magnifies our voice and our partners' on the many issues where we share common values.

As President Biden has said, "We are in competition with China and other countries to win the 21st Century. We have to do more than just build back better ... We have to compete more strenuously."

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch: You deserve enormous credit for your bipartisan work on the Strategic Competition Act, which strengthens the U.S. response and abilities to confront the threat of the PRC.

The world's authoritarian regimes—like the PRC and the Russian Federation—are trying to show the world their autocratic system of single party rule and state-driven economics is more efficient and delivers better results for their people.

The OECD is more important now than ever before given the democratic community's ongoing competition with the world's authoritarian regimes. That's why I am so honored about the opportunity to serve.

I believe I come to the committee with the right package of knowledge, skills, and experiences to effectively advocate on behalf of the United States with other Ambassadors to the OECD as well as with the OECD itself.

After graduating from Brown University, I earned an MBA from the University of Chicago. My private sector career was primarily focused on telecommunications. I helped lead the wireless revolution as the 13th employee and Senior Vice President at Nextel.

I had long been interested in a career in public service. I always believed that my home state and my country had given me enormous opportunities, and I wanted

to play a role in ensuring that similar opportunities are available to future generations.

As Governor of Delaware, I was concerned about the impacts of globalization and automation on the people of my state. I knew the states and countries that out-educate today will out-compete tomorrow. That's why I worked hard to ensure that our children had opportunities to thrive in school. For those who wanted to go to college, my team worked to secure opportunities for them to do so, even when they couldn't afford it. And we also recognized that many of our young people wanted to go directly to work so we created terrific new programs to help them do exactly that, with the skills needed for good-paying jobs.

I believe strongly that good jobs are the best way to help solve social problems.

I was honored to serve as chair of the bi-partisan National Governors Association. I learned so much from my colleagues of both parties. I imagine that Ranking Member Risch along with Senators Kaine, Romney, Rounds and Shaheen also had the chance to learn from and share with their colleagues when they served as Governors.

Although Governors compete with each other to deliver the best economic climate and quality of life for our constituents, we realize that our states do better when the United States does better. That's one reason OECD is so important.

I will close on a personal note.

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It would have been beyond my grandparents' imagination when they left Eastern Europe that their grandson would have the opportunity to serve Delaware as Governor and then, potentially, our country, as the U.S. Representative to a multilateral institution that fosters prosperity for all. They came to the United States in the first place seeking exactly that. It would be an extraordinary honor to play a small part in shaping policies that provide those same benefits for future generations.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador? If you could just put your microphone on, please?

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Can you hear me now?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARK GITENSTEIN OF WASHINGTON,
NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA TO THE EUROPEAN UNION, WITH THE
RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY**

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored by President Biden's nomination to be U.S. Ambassador to the European Union.

If confirmed, serving as this Nation's Ambassador to the EU would culminate my work with the President, beginning with our days together as young men, when I joined his Senate staff in the 1970s, to four decades later in my recent work as U.S. Ambassador to Romania during the Obama-Biden administration.

First, I want to acknowledge my family's role in making my appearance here possible. My late parents and grandparents taught me that patriotism and my Jewish faith are the guideposts of my actions. My sisters taught me that independent, intelligent women are the light of the world.

My children and grandchildren prove that our future is bright because the next generation is undaunted by many of the challenges we face. Most of all, my wife, Libby, who is with me here today—my partner and the love of my life—who still believes in

me, especially at those moments when a touch on the shoulder and a word of reassurance are essential.

I grew up in Alabama and graduated from high school in Birmingham when the United States was confronting its own crisis in democracy during the 1960s. As I pursued my undergraduate degree in history from Duke, I watched with awe and pride as the civil rights movement gained its footing against Bull Connor and George Wallace.

In my summers, I worked with reform-minded politicians in Alabama and in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, acting in my home State to dismantle segregated schools. I came to understand in a very vivid way how a strong Constitution and civil rights protections in a federated system can bring Democratic and Republican principles to the rule of law in a recalcitrant locale.

This experience drove my passion as Ambassador in Romania to help the EU strengthen democracy and free markets in Romania and taught me how, in 21st century Europe, the EU continues to hold dear its founding documents and values. I know firsthand how the United States, working with multilateral and regional organizations, especially the EU, can strengthen democracy, build free markets, and act as a bulwark against autocracy.

If confirmed, I promise to carry forward those values and principles both at the U.S. Mission at the U.N. and to the work of the EU itself.

One other aspect of my history is also relevant. My father's family was Moldovan and Romanian, my mother's Polish and Austrian. Going to the EU, like serving in Bucharest, is a return to my family's roots. I do so with great humility, recognizing that we have as much to learn from the Europeans and the EU, as they do from us.

If confirmed, my top goal will be revitalizing and raising the level of ambition in the U.S.-EU relationship and supporting the deep and ongoing cooperation between the United States and the EU at all levels, including between the Congress and the European Parliament. I will work to advance the agenda President Biden and his EU counterparts set at the June 2021 U.S.-EU summit. This includes working together to end the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future global health challenges; protecting our planet and fostering green growth; strengthening our trade, investment, and technological cooperation; and building a more democratic, peaceful, and secure world.

The U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council meeting taking place tomorrow in Pittsburgh and our joint pledge earlier this month to reduce global methane emissions are two perfect examples of the kind of values-driven, future-focused cooperation with the EU that I would prioritize as Ambassador, if confirmed.

In a very real sense, both the EU and the United States are evolving, dynamic experiments in democracy. Both seek to form a "more perfect union." While at different stages, neither side is finished with its work.

I can think of no greater privilege than to be part of what President Biden calls the challenge of our generation, proving that democracy and strong, independent institutions are the best form of governance. They are, indeed, the shortest and surest route to the pursuit of happiness.

I know from my experience in Romania that serving as Ambassador is a great challenge, but it is also one of the best jobs in government. If confirmed, I will use that position to strengthen U.S.-EU relations and build support for the administration's foreign policy in the interests of all Americans.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Gitenstein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARK GITENSTEIN,

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If confirmed, serving as this Nation's Ambassador to the EU would culminate my work with the President beginning with our days together as young men when I joined his Senate staff in the 1970s, to four decades later in my recent work as U.S. Ambassador to Romania during the Obama-Biden administration.

First, I want to acknowledge my family's role in making my appearance here possible: my late parents and grandparents taught me that patriotism and my Jewish faith are the guideposts of my actions; my sisters taught me that independent, intelligent women are the light of the world; my children and grandchildren prove that our future is bright because the next generation is undaunted by the many challenges we face. Most of all, my wife, Libby—my partner and the love of my life—who still believes in me, especially at those moments when a touch on the shoulder and a word of reassurance are essential.

I grew up in Alabama and graduated from high school in Birmingham when the United States was confronting its own crisis in democracy during the 1960s. As I pursued my undergraduate degree in history from Duke, I watched with awe and pride as the civil rights movement gained its footing against Bull Connor and George Wallace. In my summers, I worked for reform-minded politicians in Alabama and in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, acting in my home state to dismantle segregated schools. I came to understand in a very vivid way how a strong Constitution and civil rights protections can bring democratic and republican principles to the rule of law in a recalcitrant locale.

This experience drove my passion as Ambassador in Romania to help the EU strengthen democracy and free markets in Romania and taught me how, in 21st-century Europe, the EU continues to hold dear its founding documents and values. I know firsthand how the United States, working with multilateral and regional organizations, especially the EU, can strengthen democracy, build free markets, and act as a bulwark against autocracy. If confirmed, I promise to carry forward those values and principles both at the U.S. Mission to the EU and to the work of the EU itself.

One other aspect of my biography is also relevant. My father's family was Moldovan and Romanian, and my mother's Polish and Austrian. Going to the EU, like serving in Bucharest, is a return to my family's roots. I do so with great humility, recognizing that we have as much to learn from Europeans and the EU, as they do from us.

If confirmed, my top goal will be revitalizing and raising the level of ambition in the U.S.-EU relationship and supporting the deep and ongoing cooperation between the United States and EU at all levels, including between the Congress and the European Parliament.

I will work to advance the agenda President Biden and his EU counterparts set at the June 2021 U.S.-EU summit. This includes working together to end the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future global health challenges; protecting our planet and fostering green growth; strengthening our trade, investment, and technological cooperation; and building a more democratic, peaceful, and secure world. The U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council meeting taking place tomorrow in Pittsburgh and our joint pledge earlier this month to reduce global methane emissions are two perfect examples of the kind of values-driven, future-focused cooperation with the EU that I would prioritize as ambassador, if confirmed.

In a very real sense, both the EU and the United States are evolving, dynamic experiments in democracy. Both seek to form a "more perfect union." While at different stages, neither side is finished with its work. I can think of no greater privilege than to be part of what President Biden calls the challenge of our generation: proving that democracy and strong independent institutions are the best form of

governance. They are, indeed, the shortest and surest route to the “pursuit of happiness.”

I know from my experience in Romania that serving as ambassador is a great challenge, but also one of the best jobs in government. If confirmed, I will use that position to strengthen U.S.-EU relations and support the administration’s foreign policy in the interests of the American people.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Senator Flake?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JEFFREY LANE FLAKE OF ARIZONA,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

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

It is an honor to be nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, and I am grateful for the trust that the President and Secretary of State Blinken have placed in me.

I have the greatest respect for this committee. It was my home when I was in the Senate. I have served with most of you. I know of your experience, your expertise, your deep commitment to the national interest. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining a close, consultative relationship with each of you.

I would like to start by thanking my family—my wife, Cheryl, and our five children—Ryan, Alexis, Austin, Tanner, and Dallin. They have sacrificed much through the years and yet still have managed to continually assume the best and look for the good. I am more grateful than I can express.

I should note that more than 30 years ago, when we were in college, my wife was part of a singing-dancing touring group at BYU called the Young Ambassadors, and they traveled to Turkey. So when I was asked if I might want to be Ambassador to Turkey, Cheryl said, “I suppose it is your time now.” And I look forward to traveling with her and cannot wait for the Turkish people to meet my wife, Cheryl.

I am well aware that, if confirmed, I will be the first political appointee to this position in more than 40 years. I will arrive at a particularly pivotal moment in U.S.-Turkey relations. The United States has a longstanding and complex relationship with Turkey, a NATO ally for nearly 70 years. There are areas where our interests intersect and where we are firmly aligned. There are areas where we profoundly disagree.

As this committee is well aware, we have for decades worked closely with Turkey to advance our national security interests, from Korea to Afghanistan and beyond. Our partnership with Turkey enables us to defend NATO’s eastern flank and project U.S. power in the region.

But our interests extend beyond the security realm. Turkey is an important economic partner, hosting more than 1,900 U.S. companies, including some of our largest and most recognized brands, and the United States is Turkey’s fourth-largest source of imports. If confirmed, I look forward to robustly fostering this vital economic relationship.

Having said that, our relationship also faces profound challenges. Despite the United States' efforts to address Turkey's security needs, Turkey still chose to purchase and test fire the Russian S-400 system. This action ran counter to the commitments all allies made at the 2016 NATO summit and rightly triggered Turkey's removal from the F-35 program and the imposition of CAATSA sanctions.

If confirmed, I will consistently reiterate that disposing of this system is the path to removing CAATSA sanctions. I will also warn Turkey that any future purchase of Russian weapons risks triggering further CAATSA sanctions in addition to those already imposed.

At the same time, we should encourage Turkey to purchase U.S. defense items that keep the Turkish military interoperable with NATO. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee to determine what defense trade with Turkey is in the U.S. national interest.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, as we all know, the authoritarian, anti-democratic impulse is resurgent in the world. There is no value that defines us more as Americans than the rights of free people to determine the course of their lives and the destiny of their countries. In my career, I have not hesitated to speak out on such issues.

I am troubled by Ankara's democratic backsliding and the negative trajectory in terms of freedom of expression, freedom of association, and peaceful assembly in Turkey. Restoring the full freedoms of the Turkish people is a good in itself, and rebuilding confidence in the rule of law in Turkey would go a long way toward expanding the potential for further economic investment and international partnerships. If confirmed, I will challenge Turkey to uphold its domestic and international human rights commitments while also pushing Turkey to live up to its status as a NATO ally.

While some of Turkey's recent actions have advanced U.S. interests in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Black Sea, other actions have been destabilizing and unhelpful. If confirmed, I will encourage Turkey to support efforts to find a sustainable long-term solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and encourage peaceful and diplomatic resolutions to disagreements in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Despite the very real challenges to U.S.-Turkish relations, Turkey is an indispensable ally, anchored in NATO and acting as both a bridge and a buffer to a region in constant flux. Our national interest is served when the United States and Turkey work together to confront the very real threats to global peace and security that emanate from Russia, from Iran, and elsewhere in the region.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, if confirmed, I am committed to working with you, as both former and future colleagues, to advance our national interests, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Senator Flake follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JEFFREY LANE FLAKE

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor to be nomi-

nated to be the United States Ambassador to Turkey. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I have the greatest respect for this committee. It was my home when I was in the Senate. I have served with most of you. I know of your experience, your expertise, and your deep commitment to the national interest. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining a close, consultative relationship with each of you.

I would like to start by thanking my family—my wife Cheryl and our five children—Ryan, Alexis, Austin, Tanner, and Dallin. They have sacrificed much through the years and have somehow managed to continually assume the best and look for the good. I am more grateful than I can express.

I am well aware that, if confirmed, I will be the first political appointee to this position in 40 years, and will arrive at a particularly pivotal moment in U.S.-Turkey relations. The United States has a longstanding and complex relationship with Turkey, a NATO ally for nearly 70 years. There are areas where our interests intersect and we are firmly aligned, and there are areas where we profoundly disagree.

As this committee is well aware, we have for decades worked closely with Turkey to advance key national security interests, from Korea to Afghanistan and beyond. Our partnership with Turkey enables us to defend NATO's eastern flank and project U.S. power in the region. Turkey has submitted a credible plan to meet defense spending commitments by 2024 and regularly provides forces for NATO missions in the region, such as its recent deployment of F-16s to Poland.

Our interests extend beyond the security realm. Turkey is an important economic partner hosting more than 1,900 U.S. companies, including some of our largest and most recognized brands, and the United States is Turkey's 4th largest source of imports. If confirmed, I look forward to robustly fostering this vital economic relationship.

However, our relationship also faces profound challenges. Despite the United States' tireless efforts to address Turkey's security needs, Turkey still chose to purchase and test fire the Russian S-400 system. This action ran counter to the commitments all Allies made at the 2016 NATO Summit and rightly triggered Turkey's removal from the F-35 program and the imposition of CAATSA sanctions.

If confirmed, I will consistently reiterate that that disposing of the system is the path to removing CATSAA sanctions. I will also warn Turkey that any future purchase of Russian weapons risks triggering further CAATSA sanctions in addition to those already imposed.

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Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, as we all know, the authoritarian, anti-democratic impulse is resurgent in the world. There is no value that defines us more as Americans than the rights of free people to determine the course of their own lives and the destiny of their countries. In my career, I have never hesitated to speak out on such issues. I am troubled by Ankara's democratic backsliding and the negative trajectory in terms of freedom of expression, freedom of association, and peaceful assembly in Turkey. Restoring the full freedoms of the Turkish people is a good in itself and rebuilding confidence in the rule of law in Turkey would go far toward expanding the potential for further economic investment and international partnerships. If confirmed, I will challenge Turkey to uphold its domestic and international human rights commitments while also pushing Turkey to live up to its status as a NATO Ally.

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Mister Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, if confirmed, I am committed to working with you, as both former and future colleagues, to advance our national interests. I look forward to taking your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Ms. McCain?

STATEMENT OF CINDY HENSLEY MCCAIN OF ARIZONA, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE

Ms. MCCAIN. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and the distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be here.

Sitting here in the place that my husband, John, loved the most is a little bit bittersweet for me. Senator Graham, although he is not here now, thank you for all that you said, your kind words. We are so lucky to have him as part of our family.

I am pleased to join my colleagues on this panel today, especially Senator Jeff Flake. Both our family and the entire State of Arizona are grateful for your leadership and for your friendship.

I am grateful and honored to be President Biden's nominee as the United States Representative to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Agencies in Rome. I hope to bring honor, civility, and transparency to the role that you have entrusted me to accept.

One in three people globally do not have access to enough food, and that, simply said, is not okay. I plan to spend my time, if confirmed, working tirelessly to lower that number. I would be honored to help advance U.S. values and worldwide global food security efforts.

The goal is simple to state, but very difficult to achieve. Alleviate hunger and promote agricultural development to increase food access and stability for the hundreds of millions of food insecure around the world. I am very optimistic that with the partners and team we currently have in place in Rome and around the world, we can build on all of the already impressive accomplishments in this arena.

There has never been a more important time for the U.S. leadership on food and agricultural issues both within the U.N. agencies and around the world. I have been working on humanitarian issues the majority of my adult life. My parents taught me that as a woman, I could do anything. My husband, though, instilled in me the desire to serve a cause greater than myself.

I have had the opportunity to pull landmines out of the ground in Mozambique, Angola, and Cambodia. I worked on school feeding programs in Congo and Uganda. I have been able to elevate the plight of Syrian refugees in Greece, Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon as they fled conflict in their home country. I have battled human trafficking not only here in the United States, but in Southeast Asia and in Europe.

Early in my humanitarian journey, I led a group of medical professionals to multiple conflict zones. I have witnessed firsthand what hunger, conflict, and the ravages of natural disaster can do to communities and families. I have seen U.N. agencies at their best, and at their worst. If confirmed, I will welcome your guidance and wisdom on how best to represent U.S. policies and priorities in Rome.

There are certain things that I look forward to focusing on. Being from Arizona, water has always been an issue. I would like to focus

on the intersection of access to water and agricultural needs. I hope to promote American thought leadership, innovation, and technology so others may use less water to feed more people.

I will also focus on representing and fostering U.S. values and integrity. We need to guard against malign actors in the U.N. system and hold others accountable for good governance and transparency. I take very seriously my role in ensuring that the U.S. taxpayer money is not being misused or misspent and will work to reduce redundancy, sharpen focus, and improve efficiency.

The U.S. leadership in this fight against hunger is a tribute to the work of this committee and our workers on the ground around the world, but government contributions just are not enough to take on all of the current global crises we face. I would like to expand public-private partnerships, to bring both new ideas and new donors to fight hunger and food insecurity. I look forward to developing new relationships as we develop local economies and fight poverty.

I have seen firsthand the use of hunger as a weapon in conflict, and it is simply unacceptable. It goes against everything we stand for as a country, and I would like to use the reach and the power of our diplomacy to ensure no person goes hungry at the hands of another person.

Finally, I would like to close by paying a brief tribute to my late husband and your former colleague, John McCain, and to the great cause of his decades of service, human dignity. His efforts to defend human rights wherever they were denied and to advance the values of our democracy to every corner on Earth were undertaken to serve that one end, respect the dignity of every human life.

John believed he had as much dignity as any other person on the Earth, but not one measure more, and he felt a personal responsibility to those of his fellow human beings who suffered oppression and deprivation. Should I be confirmed, he would expect me to use my opportunity to serve the same end, and I will do my very best to do so and hope that he would be proud of me.

Thank you, and I welcome any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McCain follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CINDY HENSLEY MCCAIN

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, I am honored to be here. Sitting here in the place that my husband John loved the most, is bitter-sweet. Senator Graham, thank you for the kind introduction, we are so lucky to have you as part of our family. I am pleased to join my colleagues on this panel, especially Senator Jeff Flake, both our family and the entire state of Arizona are grateful for your leadership and friendship.

I am grateful and honored to be President Biden's nominee as the United States Representative to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome. I hope to bring honor, civility and transparency to the role you have entrusted me to accept. One in three people globally don't have access to enough food, and that, simply, is not OK. I plan to spend my time, if confirmed, working tirelessly to lower that number.

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If confirmed, I will welcome your guidance and wisdom on how best to represent U.S. policies and priorities in Rome. There are certain things that I look forward to focusing on.

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Finally, I'd like to close by paying brief tribute to my late husband, your former colleague, John McCain, and to the great cause of his decades of service—human dignity. His efforts to defend human rights wherever they were denied and to advance the values of our democracy to every corner on earth were undertaken to serve that one end—respect for the dignity of every human life. John believed he had as much dignity as any other person on earth, but not one measure more, and he felt a personal responsibility to those of his fellow human beings who suffered oppression and deprivation.

Should I be confirmed, he would expect me to use my opportunity to serve the same end, and I will do my best to do so in the hope that he would be proud of me. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. McCain. I am sure he will be.

Let me, before I start my questions, ask questions on behalf of the committee as a whole. These are 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 each of you. So I would 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?

Mr. MARKELL. Yes.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Yes.

Senator FLAKE. Yes.

Ms. MCCAIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep the committee fully and currently informed about the activity under your purview?

Mr. MARKELL. Yes.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Yes.

Senator FLAKE. Yes.

Ms. MCCAIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Mr. MARKELL. Yes.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Yes.

Senator FLAKE. Yes.

Ms. MCCAIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And lastly, do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Mr. MARKELL. Yes.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Yes.

Senator FLAKE. Yes.

Ms. MCCAIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay, thank you. All of the nominees have answered yes to all four questions.

So we will start a round of 5 minutes. I will start off with myself.

Senator Flake, for many decades, the Armenian genocide has been denied by the descendants of those who perpetrated it. In 2019, the Senate recognized the Armenian genocide for the first time. In April of this year, on Armenian Remembrance Day, President Biden joined us in acknowledging this truth.

In the past, you voted against resolutions which recognize the genocide. Will you join this body and the administration in reaffirming the Armenian genocide?

Senator FLAKE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

If you are confirmed, will you reiterate that commitment on April 24, which is Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day?

Senator FLAKE. I will.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We have talked here, your own testimony this morning, I must say I listened to your statement, and it certainly is more positive than I would have posited as it relates to Turkey. I guess that is the role of a potential Ambassador. Certainly, when we talk about arms sales again, as the committee that has jurisdiction over arms sales, I see no arms sales going to Turkey unless there is a dramatic change-around on the S-400 and moving forward.

His latest calls, Erdogan's latest calls for supposedly purchasing more is certainly not an invitation to find a pathway to arms sales from the United States. So I just put that out there as something that is truly concerning to me. I wish it was different. I wish he would change course.

Senator Risch spent a lot of time with President Erdogan in the previous administration trying to convince him of a different pathway and was largely rebuffed. And so I think we have given off-ramps to Turkey. Unfortunately, they have chosen not to take it. So that is a concern as well.

If President Erdogan makes additional significant purchases from the Russian defense sector, I assume you will strongly support the imposition of additional CAATSA sanctions?

Senator FLAKE. I will. As I mentioned in the statement, they need to know that any purchase of additional Russian weapons will result in additional CAATSA sanctions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. And these CAATSA sanctions will not be lifted until they have disposed of the current system they have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

More than 35,000 Turkish troops remain in Northern Cyprus, now almost 5 decades after Turkey first invaded in 1974. Most recently, President Erdogan now pushes for a two-state solution, something that is not recognized by the United Nations, something that is not recognized by our Government, and flagrantly violates the U.N. Security Council resolutions on the occupied section called Varosha.

Will you commit to speak out publicly and privately in the event that Turkey continues to violate Cyprus' exclusive economic zone?

Senator FLAKE. I will. I was pleased to see after the December visit by Erdogan to Cyprus that the United States Government spoke out, as did the U.N., that any of the action that was contemplated with Varosha, for example, would violate Security Council Resolutions 550 and 789.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And then we will—and I will look forward to your—you said in your opening statement, so I will not explore it more with you, other than to say there are more lawyers and journalists in Turkish jails today than in any other part of the world. That is saying something, considering some parts of the world that are pretty authoritarian.

So the question of human rights is something we would expect you to also engage vigorously upon your confirmation.

Let me turn to Ambassador Gitenstein. France's reaction to AUKUS, I understand the French concern about the consequences or the economic impact of the cancellation of their agreement with Australia, not with us. But France is a vital partner in dealing with China and other global challenges. How do you intend to go about strengthening the U.S. relationships with European allies like France to work together to meet the China challenge?

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Well, first of all, I was very pleased to see that the President and President Macron had apparently a very good conversation. They reached some common ground. And if I were confirmed and I were sitting in Brussels right now, I would immediately reach out to the leadership of the EU and to the French Ambassador and try and build a personal relationship like I did in Romania and try and strengthen those relationships.

But to the extent the French intend to pursue a strategy, I think as the Ranking Member Risch referred to, in terms of an independent military strategy, it has to be very carefully coordinated with NATO. I have become very friendly with the proposed U.S. Ambassador to NATO Julie Smith. We intend to meet on a very regular basis and develop a common message point and platform and communication with the EU on these very issues.

So while we want to work with the French, it has to be consistent with our national security needs and especially as it relates to NATO.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. One last question.

What steps will you take to increase pressure on the Kremlin and work more closely with the EU to support, you know, a more robust—we have had a series of economic sanctions and other things for Russia's transgressions. The annexation of Crimea, its constant engagement in Ukraine, its use of chemical weapons against its opponents, and so much more. But we have not always been able to get our European allies to join us in a more robust multilateral approach.

How would you approach that?

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. With respect to the Russians?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Well, I think this is a vital concern to the United States right now. I am sure someone is going to ask me sometime later about Nord Stream, and I see that I do not have much time to respond to that right now, but I believe that the malign activity of the Russians in the EU and the European region has been demonstrable.

I spent most of the last 10 years of my life in and out of Romania and Central and Eastern Europe, and their efforts are relentless. And they are intended to divide the EU and to divide the EU from us, and it is extremely dangerous. And it is extremely insidious.

I saw it throughout my time as Ambassador in Romania, especially on energy issues, and I think the first step in this regard is to build a unified position with respect to energy issues, but a lot more with respect to Europe. And so I intend to work very hard on that, and indeed, one of the main reasons I talked to the President and the now Secretary of State about wanting this job was because I saw the power that the EU can play on anti-corruption and energy security if all the players in the EU work together, and especially if the Central and Eastern European countries, as I call the borderlands, which are very much the targets of this effort.

And I want to work directly with them and directly with the leadership of the EU on all of these issues. That is why I want to be the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, and I hope you will confirm me.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate your answer.

I have questions for the other nominees, but in deference to our colleagues, I will turn to the ranking member.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Flake, let me say having known both you and your lovely wife, whoever made the decision to send her instead of you with the singing and dancing ambassadors made the right decision. So thanks to whoever made that decision.

Senator FLAKE. Well said.

Senator RISCH. On a much, much, much more serious note, this deterioration of the relationship between Turkey and the United States is—is just heartbreaking really for us. They have been a really good ally over the years, and we have done such good things with them. The country itself has made huge strides in its economy and everything else.

The S-400s, I guess, is the apex of our problems, but I hope you will put in your pocket a copy of the letter that Senator Shaheen and I delivered in Ankara in October of 2012, when Turkey was in the process of buying the kind of missiles they were looking for. Both Erdogan and the many, many diplomats, ministers, and everything else we have met with from Turkey tell us, oh, no, we had to buy the S-400s because you would not sell us the Patriots.

Well, Senator Shaheen and I know better than that. We hand delivered that letter to the foreign minister in Ankara in his home and urged them, and the letter itself you can see urges them to buy those.

Why they have turned to Russia is actually beyond me, especially when you look at the history between those two countries that is centuries old and the problems and the animosity they have had. For whatever reason, just absolutely Erdogan—and I think this all comes down to Erdogan. Erdogan himself just has no interest in promoting this relationship with us and with NATO, which is absolutely stunning, given the fact that many, many, many nations on the planet would give a whole lot to be part of NATO. And here they are, tearing the relationship apart.

I have explained to him and others have explained to him that they cannot be part of the military actions that NATO takes or part of the defense system that we have had if they are putting S-400 missiles in their country. It just cannot be done.

And to show you how determined they are, they paid for 5 of the F-35s that are sitting here in the United States. The chairman and I will not allow those planes to be delivered. We have told them that as long as they got S-400s in the country, they cannot have the F-35s. And we are very determined on this, and not only that, they were making 900 parts for the F-35, and we pulled those back.

And so that is how determined they are on this. I do not understand it. I do not get it. And I have spent a lot of time talking with them, and maybe when you come back, you will have some answers for us.

But if I were you, I would take that letter along so when they try to tell you what the facts are, you can show them the facts are not as they say. So it is a real problem, and gosh, we would sure like to welcome Turkey back into the fold. But I think as long as Erdogan is there, I think we have got a serious problem.

So good luck, and we will help you as we can. Is that the letter you have in your hand?

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. I do have it right here.

Senator RISCH. Good for you. You got my vote, Senator. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Let us move over. Governor, China is seeking membership in the OECD, and gosh, we had a real disappointment when they were let into the WTO. And it is not getting any better that is for sure.

Tell me your thoughts about letting China into the OECD.

Mr. MARKELL. Thank you for the question.

One of the core strengths of the OECD is the shared values amongst the members, a commitment to democracy, a commitment to a market-oriented economic system. While there may be some who see the growth in OECD membership as a metric that mat-

ters, I do not. I think it is incredibly important that we continue to have allies who maintain those same values.

In fact, one of the real strengths of the OECD, the data that they put out, the research that they put out, is that they are very well positioned to call out China on issues that matter, on the export—credit subsidies and the like. So I think we should have an incredibly high bar when it comes to accession into OECD membership, and that is the position that I will certainly be taking there and certainly something I look forward to consult with this committee on as well.

Senator RISCH. Well said. I think your description, too, of the requirements for membership is very clear, and it certainly does not describe China by not even close. So thank you for that.

Ambassador Gitenstein, you are going to a place where we, as Americans, have over the years unfortunately not fully appreciated our cousin's view of things and have not worked as hard as we should to keep this together. Things like the European strategic autonomy discussion is occurring, and I think that is tragic. There is no place on the planet that is closer to us on values and on culture than our friends in Europe.

So you have got your work cut out for you, but we need to convince them that with the dangers in the world, with the rising of China, with the malign activity of Russia, there is nothing more important than the strategic relationship between the United States of America and our European cousins. I hope you will work at that.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. I read your report on China, and I thought it was excellent. One of the first things I will do is encourage them to read that report because it makes a very strong case for the threat that China presents to the European Union and to Europe generally and that the notion of developing a common platform between the United States and the EU is important to both the United States and the EU to their strategic interests. And it is extremely important that we reach common ground on these issues, from regulatory issues to strategic issues.

And as I said earlier to the chairman's question, we cannot do anything on military strategic independence without carefully coordinating it with NATO.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Thank you very much, Senator Risch. Next, we have Senator Cardin on Webex.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And let me thank all four of our nominees for their willingness to continue to serve our Nation, and I particularly also want to thank your families. This really is a day for the Senate family with Jeff Flake and Cindy McCain. So it is particularly gratifying to see both of you before us, and both of you stressed in your opening statements the importance of advancing American values and human rights in the posts that you have been nominated to.

Ms. McCain, I particularly appreciate your just desire to follow in the late Senator McCain's path in regards to advancing human rights, advancing his legacy, and building on his legacy. I miss your late husband and his passion in the United States Senate and his partnership in advancing so many important issues, including the Global Magnitsky law.

And Senator Flake, I very much appreciated our opportunity to have a conversation in regards to Turkey. As you have heard from many of us, Turkey presents enormous challenges through our relationship. We recognize the strategic importance of Turkey, and we want to build on that relationship. We recognize the important partnership they have in NATO, but we cannot allow the security breaches that we have seen. You have already heard from our chairman and ranking member on that.

I want to drill down a little bit on human rights. As Senator Menendez said, they have more journalists in prison than any other country. You really cannot challenge the Erdogan Government and be safe from harassment or arrest.

What is your strategy to advance democratic values and human rights in Turkey as our representative in Turkey when you are confirmed?

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you.

This issue particularly of press freedom is one that has been an issue of mine for years during my time in the House and the Senate. I have spoken out on this on a number of occasions, and it is a concern. Turkey currently detains more journalists than any country but China. That is not consistent with the values that we all share in terms of plurality—or pluralism and religious freedom, press freedom, freedom of assembly. A number of issues come to mind.

But I think that I will, if I am confirmed, continue the practice of speaking truth to power, of speaking out and being frank, as our current Ambassador has done and as the State Department and our President has done on this issue. So that is what I intend to do is to be frank.

Senator CARDIN. As you know, you will have partners in this committee that will support your efforts and do whatever we can to help. We want our embassy to be welcoming to those that are speaking on behalf of human rights within Turkey.

Ambassador Gitenstein, I very much appreciated our conversation and your knowledge and commitment in a large part of Europe, particularly those in the developing democratic societies. We have two countries, in addition to Turkey, that are very much backsliding on democratic values and institutions in Hungary and in Poland.

Tell me what you have learned from Romania and how you would apply that to dealing with strengthening democratic institutions in those parts of Europe where we are seeing a backsliding.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Well, thank you for that question, Senator.

Well, first of all, I have discussed this extensively with the President over the last 5 or 6 years, and he knows about the work that I did in Romania. And he feels very strongly that one of the primary goals of his foreign policy is to stand up to autocracies wherever they occur. And as you and I discussed, if we cannot get this right in the EU, we probably cannot get it right anywhere.

And I think one of the most encouraging things that is happening within the EU is that they are conditioning their EU structural funds on reporting requirements as they relate to the rule of law and anti-corruption. And I saw in Romania how valuable that

is because, as you know, Romania was admitted to the EU on condition, which is known as the cooperation verification mechanism, which is a benchmarking and reporting system that has worked quite well in Romania, and it should work well in Hungary and Poland.

And this will depend entirely on whether the EU continues to press with the conditions they have set on those funds. And as an Ambassador, I will certainly argue for that.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin.

Next, we have Senator Young on Webex. Actually, I am told he is not ready. So we will go to Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you. Excuse me, thank you, Madam Chair.

Let me just thank all four of you for your willingness to continue serving our Nation. We have known each other in various roles and various ways over decades or over years, and I know each of you to be a person of great skill and character and capability. You are going to places where we need you, and we need to continue to reinforce that America sends its best and brightest to represent us around the world.

I am excited to hear how you will work together with the EU and the OECD and, in partnership with our NATO Ambassador, will reinforce our values. And Senator Flake, you are going to have quite a challenge dealing with Turkey and trying to strike a balance between their dramatic backsliding on human rights and transparency and democracy, and our strategic relationship is still trying to bring them, as it were, back into the fold.

And Mrs. McCain, we have traveled to many countries together, African countries in particular, and I know your passion, your skill, and your determination has already earned the admiration of all of us here for your hard work combatting human trafficking, fighting for a better future for women and girls, and bringing American values that are rooted in our shared commitment to democracy to your advocacy around the world.

So I look forward to supporting all four of your nominations. If I could briefly, both for Ambassador Gitenstein and for Governor Markell, one of the most challenging issues for the global digital economy is determining the right balance, when law enforcement authorities should have access to citizens' personal data and balancing legitimate security concerns with individual privacy.

And in particular, the safety of human rights advocates and minority party politicians in increasingly repressive countries. We have referenced in your earlier conversations Hungary, Poland, and others.

The OECD has often excelled, Governor Markell, at finding sensible solutions and setting implementation standards for democratic governors, part of why I agree with you. We should be very cautious about China's engagement.

But on this issue, the OECD has hit a road block, and the EU has been reluctant to move multilateral talks forward. As Ambassador to the OECD, how would you work together with Amba-

sador Gitenstein at the EU to balance data privacy and security interests?

Mr. MARKELL. Thank you for the question, Senator Coons.

I will say this is one of those issues not only are there differences between the U.S. and Europe, there are some, frankly, philosophical differences even within our own country about how this ought to be addressed. Ambassador Gitenstein and I have actually talked a couple times about opportunities to work together. This is one of them.

This is actually also an area where I think it would be important to consult with this committee to get your sense of this particular issue. The OECD excels when it is focused on technical issues like standards, data, research, and reports that ensure that the policy-makers can make the best possible decisions. But I do think this is one of those places where there is so much overlap between the work of the OECD, the influence of the European Union, as well as negotiations backdrop.

So Ambassador Gitenstein and I have developed an excellent relationship, and I know that on this particular issue it is one that we will engage with together frequently.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And Ambassador Gitenstein, you referenced the EU-U.S. Trade and Technology Council convening in Pittsburgh. I am glad Secretaries Blinken and Raimondo and Trade Representative Tai will attend, and I am interested in hearing how you think we should move forward, both on that balance that Governor Markell was speaking to and how we work together on a raft of new regulations with the EU on AI and digital platforms as well.

I also think on climate and on a border carbon adjustment, we have an enormous opportunity with the EU. I would be interested to hear your views on these complex issues.

Ambassador GITENSTEIN. Well, I am as anxious as you are to see what happens in Pittsburgh tomorrow. You know, because I am not yet confirmed, I am not cleared on all the pre-decisional materials that have been prepared for that, but I can just speak as from my experience, which is I first got to know then-Senator Biden working on the FISA statute, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which grew out of the work that I did on the Church committee. And I know how difficult it is to strike the balance between national security and privacy, but it has to be improved, and I think that statute needs to be improved.

And as the Europeans have begun to break new ground in this area with GDPR, I have some questions about how effective that is, and it needs—and you know, because of the Schrems decision, the Europeans are insisting, rightfully, I think, that there be some consolidation of positions between the EU and the United States on those issues. And I think they are going to be difficult issues to resolve, but I intend to put a lot of energy into that.

This is just on the digital privacy and security issues. We will work closely with Jack. Jack and I have become very good friends, and I hope we will meet regularly on this. But the OECD and the EU need to be on the same page, and I will certainly argue for that within the administration and within the EU.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Senator Flake, you are going to have a difficult balancing act. There is a lot of issues on which to hold Turkey accountable, from Cyprus to repression of religious minorities to the ongoing tense relations with Greece, to the Armenian genocide recognition. There is lots of other things in addition to the S-400 and their human rights violations.

Are there any areas where you think we can actually increase our collaboration partnership and work with them in a positive way or hold that out as a carrot at the same time that you are holding to a tough line on CAATSA sanctions and on insisting that they pull back from their embrace of Russia?

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you.

As I mentioned in my remarks, there are areas where we have worked with them and continued to work closely with them. They have pushed back against Soviet—Russian aggression in Ukraine and with Georgia. They have supported those countries' aspirations to become members of NATO. So they have been useful there.

They help, to some degree, with the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Syria and were willing to help with regard to Afghanistan and the airport and were with us to the end there. So there are some things that we can build on. But as you mentioned, there are a lot of issues that are challenging, and we will work with them where we can, challenge them where we must.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator.

Mrs. McCain, the chairman, having returned, notes that I have taken great liberties with the time allowed for questioning—

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Great liberties.

[Laughter.]

Senator COONS.—I look forward to talking with you separately about public-private partnerships and look forward to supporting your important work and the ambassadorship in Rome.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen, I understand, is next on our list.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

Congratulations to all of you on your nominations, and thank you for your willingness to serve in these important capacities.

And I just want to endorse the comments my colleague Senator Coons made with respect to both our Ambassador to the EU and OECD. We do have to dramatically expand the cooperation between the United States and these two entities, and not just saying it, but taking the practical steps to implement it, especially with respect to the challenge from China around the globe and look forward to working with both of you on that.

Mrs. McCain, congratulations on your nomination. Look forward to supporting you in this important post.

Senator Flake, great to see you and appreciated the conversation that we had. As we discussed, I grew up in a Foreign Service family, spent many of my early years in Turkey. I have great affection for the people of Turkey.

But President Erdogan has taken Turkey way off track and in the wrong direction, both with respect to NATO commitments overall, as well as other actions, malign actions in the region, and un-

dermining human rights at home. And some of them have already been mentioned. He doubled down just this weekend on national TV here on taking another round of S-400s. That means that we will continue to discontinue any cooperation on the F-35s, given the security compromises that would exist.

We need to make sure we implement fully the CAATSA sanctions, and I understand that you have already said in this hearing that you would support an increase in CAATSA sanctions if they proceed with the next purchase. Is that correct?

Senator FLAKE. That is correct.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. You also know that Turkey is out to destroy the Syrian Kurds. Would you agree that the Syrian Kurds have been the tip of the spear for us in our fight against ISIS?

Senator FLAKE. They have been an effective partner with us in defeating ISIS, yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So here we have an erstwhile ally trying to destroy the major partner we had in the fight against ISIS.

I heard my colleagues raise the issue of the situation in Eastern Med and Cyprus. In Cyprus, President Erdogan is going backwards, right? They have now retreated from what had been the agreed-upon approach to the talks there, bizonal, bicomunal approach. And recently, would you agree that his actions in Varosha violated U.N. Security Council resolutions?

Senator FLAKE. Yes, most definitely.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. We also have seen him aiding and abetting the attacks against Armenia. And then, at home, an ongoing effort to actually disqualify and ban the HDP, which is the third-largest political party in Turkey, is it not?

Senator FLAKE. It is.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Okay. Senator Langford and I are going to be soon sending a bipartisan letter to the President raising concerns about these issues, but my question to you is this. President Erdogan has repeatedly taken these actions. He has said very publicly that he does not care what the United States says, does not care what we say. He said that just 6 weeks ago.

So really what matters is what we do. The CAATSA sanctions have gotten their attention, although they have not changed their conduct yet, but it is having an impact on their military. With respect to the HDP and actions on Cyprus, what do you propose that we actually do beyond words to get Turkey's attention?

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you. Thank you for the question.

And let me just say and commend this committee for pushing so hard for CAATSA sanctions, Section 231. When people say you guys talk but do not do anything, this committee and the Congress and the administration did. And it has had an impact, a significant impact on Turkey's economy because their defense industry is a big part of their economy. And being out of the F-35 program has hurt, and they know that.

With regard to other issues, obviously Cyprus, it was in violation—the action or the statements that were made in July with regard to Varosha, regard to a two-state solution. There is no two-state solution in Cyprus. As you mentioned, it needs to be a bizonal, bicomunal federation negotiated between the parties. That has been our consistent position, and it needs to continue to be.

With regard to banning of political parties and some of the other democratic backsliding, we need to make clear, as we have, and continue to make clear that that is inconsistent with democratic values and inconsistent with commitments that have been made. And so I think that we will continue to speak out on those issues and continue to act with regard to new arms purchases with additional sanctions, and that has got their attention. It has hurt, and it needs to, and I want to commend this committee for doing it.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you. I just hope we will take those kind of actions with respect to these other activities that are being taken, and the EU has an important role to play in concert with the United States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand Senator Young is with us virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, Chairman, thank you.

Ms. McCain, the Chinese Communist Party is actively seeking to use the U.N. standard-setting bodies to their own unique advantage. From telecommunications to international aviation and, yes, agriculture, the authorities in Beijing understand that the U.N.'s specialized agencies possess an outsized ability to help them reshape the global order.

If confirmed, how would you use your position to ensure that FAO is actually seeking to accomplish its core missions and that its activities are free from bias, including from its senior leadership?

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

First of all, if I am confirmed, I will ensure that U.S. leadership and partnerships will not falter on my watch. I am also concerned about their leadership positions and where they are damaging and undermining organizations with malign influences and nefarious practices.

I will be watching very closely to ensure that the FAO DG is following our leadership, which ensures our values and transparency, building coalitions to ensure our leadership remains strong, and I am also committed most definitely to food safety and its global impact. Best-case scenario in what I am saying is that I am watching.

Senator YOUNG. All right. Thank you for that answer.

So the FAO has been doing very important work for a number of years, staving off hunger for millions. And this has been due in large measure to the resources that it can bring to bear in moments and in places of great crisis. Its record in supporting and growing ag capacity and resiliency in the developing world is, however, less positive.

One overlooked dynamic at play is the success that regulators overseas, especially within the European Union, have had in keeping U.S.-led Ag tools like groundbreaking development of genetically modified crops out of the FAO's toolbox, even as they would potentially reduce the threat of drought in paths from crucial staple crops. If confirmed, how would you seek to ensure that the FAO embraces all possible means of supporting the resiliency of agricultural systems, including ones widely practiced in America?

In short, how would you seek to ensure that the FAO actually embraces science in furtherance of feeding those who are hungry?

Ms. MCCAIN. Thank you for the question. Oh, sorry.

There, is that—can you hear me?

Senator YOUNG. Yes.

Ms. MCCAIN. I apologize. Thank you for the question.

It is, indeed, an issue, and it is a problem. What I would do is, number one, as I mentioned earlier, is building coalitions and bringing in more of our technology and our biotech overall. And most of all, making sure that we keep track of not just what our leadership is doing, but how we can best strengthen our ability, our multilateralism, our advancement in other areas.

The science and technology are key to our ability to be able to help grow more food with less water, grow more food independently, build sustainable villages, and build sustainable crops. I am a very strong supporter of that. Without that, I do not see how we go any farther with it. We are not going to be able to feed the multitudes that we have unless we consider every option.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you for embracing that. It will require, I think, some robust and tenacious diplomacy to persuade some of our European friends of the merits of that position. But I suspect you are going to be doing that. So, thank you.

Ms. MCCAIN. Senator, I have been compared to a chihuahua before in that I bite the ankles and bark enough until people listen to me. And so you have my commitment to being not only determined, but one that will follow through and make sure people hear.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ms. McCain.

I think I have 1 minute left, and so I will very quickly ask a question of Mr. Markell. Mr. Markell, the members of the OECD collectively produce 60 percent of the world's goods and services, and they account for 75 percent of global trade. As was indicated earlier, China is not a member, but you indicated I think they are seeking membership.

I understand that India may also be hesitant to join, as they are a large but still emerging economy. What would the consequences be for India becoming a member, and is this something you would advocate for?

Mr. MARKELL. Senator, I am not sure I—

The CHAIRMAN. I think you are good now.

Mr. MARKELL. Thank you. Senator, I could not understand the entire question. I think it had to do with the accession of other countries into OECD membership.

Senator YOUNG. India. Yes, India in particular.

Mr. MARKELL. Okay. So one of the real strengths of the OECD is that its members share a number of common values, not only democracy, not only a commitment to free market systems, but also to a level playing field. Things like a real commitment to anti-bribery, to intellectual property protections, and the like.

The bar for entrance for any new country, including India, is extraordinarily high, and my commitment is certainly to consult with this committee, but also to—should I be confirmed—to bring to my position at the OECD a real sense that we do have a very high bar which is only met through actions, not words.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member Risch.

And congratulations to this very finely qualified panel of nominees. I have the good fortune to consider three of you as friends.

Jack, you and I worked together as Governors, and you did such good work as a Governor and as chair of the National Governors Association.

Jeff Flake, you were a partner on so many initiatives on this committee, somebody I deeply admire and miss as a member.

And Cindy, we have worked together, and I had the pleasure of sitting with your husband, both on this committee and on the Armed Services Committee. And I will never forget the first time I traveled with your husband, Senator McCain, on a bipartisan delegation, and I think it was to the Middle East and the first press event we did. He said something, and I was stepping to the microphone to dramatically disagree with him. I had been in the Senate for about 2 months and wondered how he would take it.

So I said, "I am going to disagree with you." And he said, "Get up there and disagree with me. We need to show them that we are not all a monolith here." And we were fast friends from that moment.

So thank you all for your service. Ambassador Gitenstein, you are the only one with the good fortune not to have had to work with me in the past.

Let me ask to, Ms. McCain, the three food programs that are based in the U.N. that you will work in representing the United States, they have all faced major challenges because of COVID, which both affect donors, increase food insecurity, and then also make the task of delivery of programs more difficult. So if you could share a little bit about the challenges that this last 18 months has meant for these programs and, as you are starting in to contemplating the position, the kinds of things we should be thinking about from Congress' side to help get through this tough chapter.

Ms. MCCAIN. Well, first of all, thank you very much for the question. And I am glad you survived the trip to the Middle East we used to call the "McCain death march." So I am glad you made it through.

I would like the committee to know that I am very committed to keeping U.S. leadership within the World Food Program and others. That is of deep importance to me and I think also to the United States. And that has never been more present and more definitive than the fact that World Food Program won the Nobel Peace Prize as a result of the good work that they do.

But the U.S. is the largest donor by far. We have to continue to do more. We have to. Whether it is thinking outside the box, bringing new people in, putting together groups that we can discuss good ideas, bad ideas, whatever it may be. But I am committed to making sure that we talk to everybody and we understand issues and consider new ideas in all of this.

I also want to encourage new donors and more country involvement. We carry the load of this, which we do brilliantly, but I would like to make sure that we are able to bring in more people,

more ideas, as I said, and more countries to be a part of this. It is important.

Our public-private partnerships have to be expanded as well, and they do a marvelous job. But I am very committed to making sure that we expand our public-private partnership options here.

And also to consider a push for diversity and inclusivity, which is the question—the prior question that you asked me, and more. And most of all, making sure within that diversity and inclusivity that we have a safe workspace for people to work in. And of course, pushing for more technology and innovation in all of this is part of what I feel is not only important, but it is imperative in what we do.

And I would like to get on the ground and really examine what is going on with the issues that you initially talked about and see what can be done, what changes can be made, if that is the case.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ms. McCain. I think that you are very well suited for the position.

Senator Flake, the questions that I wanted to ask you have generally been covered by my colleagues. But I guess, you know, maybe big picture, here would be something I hope after some time there you might come back and educate us on.

I think we all share this frustration with the Erdogan and feel like there was some promise at the start, and then it has taken this turn in a number of ways that have been hostile to the United States. But friends of mine who are in Turkey basically say it is not that hard to understand Erdogan's position vis-a-vis the United States if you look at the Turkish population's attitude about the United States.

Now these things can self-reinforce, but you know, leaders are not going to be warm and fuzzy to the United States if the populations have a lot of anti-U.S. sentiment. And I do not know this as an expert on Turkey, but people I know who are experts point out to me a lot that the Turkish population's view of the United States is quite negative. And as an Ambassador, A, you would be in a position to dig in and find out if that is true and then share with us why, but also you will have a unique opportunity with your own diplomatic background from having been in the Senate to, having shared why, giving us strategies and undertaking efforts yourself to start turning that around.

We are not going to have a government that is going to really be a great ally of the United States if their population is very anti-U.S. in their public sentiment, and I would look forward to having that conversation with you, should you be confirmed—and I am confident you will be—down the road after you have been in Turkey for a while.

Thank you very much to the panel, and yield it back, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to each of our nominees this morning. We are especially delighted to see our former Senate family back here again.

I am going to begin with you, Mrs. McCain, and I would have identified you more as a Great Dane than a Chihuahua. So I have had Afghans since the takeover of the Taliban who have said to me that they really hope that the United States and the international

community will not prevent humanitarian aid from going to the Afghan people because of our opposition to the Taliban. We know there are 14 million in Afghanistan who are food insecure, 2 million of them children who are malnourished.

Winter is coming. So the situation is only going to get worse. So can you talk a little bit about how you will work with the U.N., with the United States, to ensure that desperately needed food gets to those Afghans who are really in need.

Ms. MCCAIN. Thank you for the question, and it is like many of you and all of you, I mean, having had two sons in Afghanistan, I have watched with great interest and many times great horror, seeing what is actually occurring and has occurred there.

Once again, our most vulnerable are being preyed upon, which is the usual drill in a lot of these countries. The U.S. is the largest single donor, though, to humanitarian assistance within Afghanistan and within the region as well. I commit that we will continue the lifesaving support that those need, if I am confirmed.

Most of all, if I am confirmed, I will support all efforts to ensure that humanitarian assistance and in Afghanistan benefits those that it is going to, which is, as you know, is about transparency and the ability to really have good partners on the ground. And I will also continue to monitor what is going on within the country. It is a dicey project, and I know you know that.

It is certainly an evolving situation as well, much like Yemen and Ethiopia right now, and we will continue to work on best practices in addressing the needs of the conflict zones in that area. And if I am confirmed, you have my commitment to do the best I can.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much for that answer, and if I can be helpful, please let me know.

Ms. MCCAIN. Thank you. I would rely on the entire committee for help.

Senator SHAHEEN. Absolutely. I know that we are ready to help.

Senator Flake, tomorrow President Erdogan is supposed to meet with Vladimir Putin. They are ostensibly discussing cooperation in Syria, and yet given the surge of Turkish troops in Northwestern Syria to combat Russian airstrikes this week, is there still a threat of a Russian-Turkey joint offensive in Syria, do you think? And how should we respond to that in the United States?

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator.

I have not had classified briefing yet. I have not been confirmed. So I would defer questions to Department of Defense on the possibilities there.

But the meeting with Putin, obviously Ankara has had at least a transactional relationship with Russia on a number of issues. As we mentioned, the purchase of weapon systems. But they have also pushed back in a number of areas as well. Crimea, been consistent in saying that that is part of Ukraine territory and the selling arms to Ukraine and also supporting Ukraine and Georgia in their sovereignty.

So, yes, it is an interesting relationship. I will be very interested to see what comes out of that meeting, to the extent that we know. But with regard to Syria, I would defer to those who know more than I do right now.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I hope when you get confirmed that that will be an area of focus.

Senator FLAKE. It will.

Senator SHAHEEN. Because, obviously, it is a very difficult situation in the country, as you know.

Governor Markell, as you are probably aware, we are having negotiations around tax policy right now, and it is an issue that the OECD has also been working on. They have had an ambitious framework for how to coordinate tax policy. How optimistic are you that their process can result in agreement, and what should we be thinking about with respect to that as we are looking at what we might do on taxation of income of multinational corporations?

Mr. MARKELL. Well, thank you very much for the question, Senator.

Since I have not been confirmed, I have not been read into all the details yet. My sense is that it is the Treasury Department that has really taken the lead in those negotiations, but the OECD has an important role to play because it provides so much of the technical assistance.

And so, should I be confirmed, obviously I will be supporting the position of the administration, and I look forward to consulting with this committee for your guidance as well.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you. I know of no other members seeking recognition. So I have one or two final questions before we close.

Ms. McCain, what you and I spoke about yesterday, the reality of in the context of food insecurity a disproportionate impact upon women and girls, 10 percent higher among women as of 2019. So will you make it part of your advocacy, upon confirmation, for women and girls who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic-related food insecurity?

Ms. MCCAIN. Yes, Senator. And may I say that from my experience around the globe and everything that I have done, and all too often our women and children are disposable. And that simply, in this case that I do not buy that, and it is not going to happen.

The CHAIRMAN. Fine, thank you.

And also I think you referred to some of your experiences on water and what not. But part of our challenge globally in terms of food supply chain is the question of climate change, which the Food and Agriculture Organization approaches in a national, regional, and global context using the Paris agreement as structure to which the entity collaborates with member nations.

I hope that as we—in the first instance, this program is about helping people in need, the emergent nature of it. But the question becomes once we have a population that we are directly feeding through these programs, there is an opportunity to also change and transform their lives and how we ultimately create more food, as you suggested, with less water. I hope that you will make that a significant part of your mission upon confirmation.

Ms. MCCAIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Finally, Governor, one of our former colleagues questioned you only about India, but I am more interested as well about the expansion of OECD membership. There are 38 members in the OECD, along with 5 partner countries and 6 countries vying to become full-fledged members. Two of those partner countries include China and India. Russia has been trying to get in for several years but was basically shut out after their invasion of Ukraine in 2014.

What are your thoughts on the accession program for countries trying to join the OECD?

Mr. MARKELL. Thank you for the question.

There should be a very high bar. The OECD, unlike many other multilaterals, has characteristics and qualifications for membership, which are very much focused on a commitment to democracy, a commitment to market-oriented economic systems. And it has just never been more important that countries that share those values demonstrate that we can deliver better than those who have other approaches.

And so there are some who believe that increasing the membership of the OECD is a metric that we should care about. I do not agree with that. I think the OECD is extraordinarily valuable to its member countries. I think it is a great place for convening of like-minded countries, and so I think the bar to accession is extremely high.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I share your view. Expansion should be based upon those who can meet and share the same values, not just simply for the sake of expansion. So I appreciate that.

And the other point about the OECD, I am increasingly concerned that the United States is not well positioned to engage in economic statecraft for the 21st century, both including promoting U.S. jobs, business investments, engaging in development, financing for infrastructure, and setting standards for emergent technologies and the digital economy. These are all incredibly important areas, as well as that, you know, an American company goes abroad and has maybe got the best product, maybe they got the best performance, maybe they got the best delivery, but they cannot suborn that foreign government under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Unfortunately, other countries in the world do engage in that process, including countries or companies within the European Union. How do you see, view your role in the OECD in both helping us in these different areas of economic statecraft?

Mr. MARKELL. Well, thank you for that question as well.

My view is that American businesses and American workers can compete successfully anywhere so long as there is a level playing field. And I believe that one of the most critical goals and pieces of the OECD mission is to ensure that there is, in fact, a level playing field.

The OECD's Anti-Bribery Convention is one of the most important things that the OECD has ever done. It ensures that not only member countries live up to those standards, but it sets a model for other countries as well. I know that Senator Cardin on this committee has done some really important work over the years, including the CROOK Act, which he has been pushing.

So whether it is things like anti-bribery, whether it is around issues of stopping the theft of intellectual property, whether it is making sure procurement opportunities are available to U.S. businesses, this is just one of the most important parts of what the OECD does, and I will—if confirmed, I will ensure that focusing on a level playing field is at the very top of my priority list.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And I will just call to your attention, I am sure you are familiar with this, adherence to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which is a key international framework on responsible business conduct, are required to establish a national contact point to help promote the guidelines to businesses and other stakeholders.

I hope that when you are confirmed, you will work to make that system strong and effective to deal with some of the challenges we have been talking about.

Mr. MARKELL. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

All right. I understand there are no other members seeking recognition.

With that, with our thanks to the nominees, the record for this hearing will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, Wednesday, September 29. To colleagues on the committee, please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than tomorrow, Wednesday, September 29.

To the nominees, there will inevitably be questions for the record. I would urge you to answer the questions expeditiously and fully so that your nominations can be considered before a full business committee.

And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JACK A. MARKELL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Can you expand upon how you view your role at the OECD, if you are confirmed, in helping to renew and replenish US economic statecraft instruments?

Answer. The work of the OECD rests on the shared values of the member nations: a commitment to democracy, human rights, transparency, and open market based economic principles. If confirmed, I will work to coordinate U.S. Government agency engagement with the OECD to ensure the organization's recommended policies and regulations reflect those values and interests and will secure the agreement of other member nations. The resulting policies and regulations will, in turn, help create and expand legitimate investment and financing opportunities for U.S. business and promote U.S. job creation.

Question. Where do you see the biggest challenges? Biggest opportunities?

Answer. I see the most pressing challenge today is building back our economies and societies after the COVID-crisis in a better, more inclusive way. This brings with it opportunities to address the climate crisis, to ensure the gains of trade are shared by all, to manage the disruptive impact of critical and emerging technologies, and to find inclusive and equitable economic strategies consistent with our shared values. If confirmed, I will work to keep the OECD focused on its strengths of high-quality, unbiased data collection and evidence-based analysis to make policy recommendations in those areas. It is here where U.S. engagement and leadership can

ensure the organization remains an effective institution that benefits the American people.

OECD Guidelines Review

Question. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are a pioneering set of standards that promote responsible business conduct. The guidelines were last updated in 2011, and the OECD is currently undertaking a stocktaking to see if they are still fit for purpose or need revision. Several stakeholders have identified gaps in the guidelines, particularly in the areas of gender, environmental impacts, and protections of human rights defenders.

- How will you ensure that the potential updated guidelines are strengthened to further incorporate high standards in these areas?

Answer. I agree with you on the importance of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (Guidelines), a key set of recommendations from governments to businesses that promote responsible business conduct. I understand the ongoing stocktaking exercise will assess the guidelines, their implementation, and the OECD's overall work on Responsible Business Conduct. If confirmed, I will work with officials from the State Department and other U.S. Government agencies to take into account stakeholder input and consider ways to further strengthen the guidelines consistent with our shared values.

Question. How will you ensure that this review results in a strengthening—rather than a weakening—of the current standards?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with officials from the State Department and other U.S. Government agencies to take into account the input of all relevant stakeholders, including affected groups, and consider ways to further strengthen the Guidelines consistent with our shared values. I agree on the need to avoid a weakening of the guidelines.

Question. As the U.S. Representative to the OECD, how will you ensure that the NCP system 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 government recommendations to companies on responsible business practices, including with respect to human rights. If confirmed, I will work with the State Department and other agencies to review the current work of the U.S. NCP, consider feedback from concerned stakeholders, and take appropriate steps to ensure the mechanism we have in place is a meaningful one.

China

Question. As you know, this committee has been very focused on reframing our relationship with China through the lens of strategic competition—as evidenced by our bipartisan approach in passing the Strategic Competition Act. This historic, bipartisan legislation is clear-eyed about the challenges we face, and is designed to meet this consequential moment in U.S.-China relations.

- How do you plan on using your position at the OECD to effectively confront and compete with China?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the People's Republic of China (PRC) actions in international organizations that aim to reshape the international order to align with its authoritarian system. If confirmed, I will keep at the forefront of my actions the focus that any OECD engagement with the PRC must support member nation interests and uphold the norms, high standards, and practices that underpin the rules-based global economic order. Additionally, I will work to leverage the OECD's role in developing best practices for global trade, digital economy policy, anti-corruption, infrastructure, and other policy areas to counter alternative models pushed by authoritarian states that undermine global values, rules, and norms.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARK GITENSTEIN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

U.S.-EU trade

Question. Economic ties between the United States and the EU were damaged under President Trump, particularly with the imposition of tariffs on EU food and beverage imports. These tariffs put additional financial strain on families in my home state of New Jersey, many of whom work in food processing, as well as many restaurants who tried to stay afloat during the pandemic. President Biden suspended these destructive tariffs in March 2021. How will you advance stronger trade ties between the United States and the EU as ambassador? Will you commit to seeking a permanent resolution of the large civil aircraft dispute so that consumers, restaurants, and food importers have certainty in the U.S.-EU trade relationship?

Answer. The United States and the European Union represent the largest economic relationship in the world. The Transatlantic trade and investment relationship is vital for our mutual prosperity. If confirmed, I will work closely with the EU and member states to resolve or deescalate difficult bilateral issues, including in trade, with the EU and other partners. I will work together with our European partners to protect the rules-based global trading system—a system under threat from non-market economies. This includes resolution of the large civil aircraft dispute. In addition, I will work with our trade experts in the U.S. Government, in consultation with business, labor, and other stakeholders to support policies that advance our trade and investment objectives with the European Union for our mutual benefit.

China

Question. The United States has expressed strong support for the Three Seas Initiative as an alternative for Chinese investment plans like the 17+1 format. How do you plan to engage European members on Three Seas and other proposals to reduce Chinese malign influence in Europe?

Answer. I agree with Secretary Blinken that the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) is an important tool to bring the private sector to the table alongside governments to make infrastructure projects happen and to develop robust connections among our Central European Allies that link them closer to each other and to Western European countries. If confirmed, I will work with the EU to support resilient infrastructure in Europe, including through the 3SI and the Build Back Better World and Blue Dot Network initiatives. If confirmed, I will use all the tools at our disposal to work with our EU partners to promote an affirmative vision that is rooted in our shared values and promote high-quality, resilient infrastructure both in Europe and globally.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARK GITENSTEIN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Russia has been slowing its supply of natural gas through Ukrainian pipelines, which has left some EU members at an all-time low in pre-winter stores of fuel. These empty tanks have pushed energy prices in Europe up very high. EU energy regulations state that no single pipeline owner may supply more than 50 percent of the EU's energy capacity.

- Should the flow of Russian natural gas not return to normal before winter, do you believe that the EU will consider suspending or breaking its regulations with regard to Russian supplier, Gazprom, and allow it to provide more than 50 percent of its natural gas supply to fulfill the increased demand in the winter months?

Answer. I am concerned gas storage in Europe is low and the market is undersupplied compared to prior years. The lower-than-normal levels of gas storage illustrate the importance of diversified energy supplies and suppliers to meet Europe's energy security goals. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the European partners to enhance energy security for member states.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to calling on the European Union to implement the rules and regulations required by the Third Energy Package on Nord Stream 2 as well as on the Turk Stream 1 and 2 pipelines?

Answer. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a Russian geopolitical project that undercuts the energy security of a significant part of the Euro-Atlantic community. I un-

derstand the administration continues to work with Germany, Ukraine, and other European Allies and partners to reduce the risks of an operational Nord Stream 2 pipeline. This includes the package of measures detailed in the July 21, 2021 U.S.-Germany Joint Statement on support for Ukraine, European Energy Security, and our Climate Goals. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the European Union to apply Third Energy Package directives to ensure that all energy projects in Europe are implemented in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner that promote competition.

Question. Some leaders have been discussing the concept of strategic autonomy in Europe's security posture for almost a decade, and in recent years discussion of it has risen due to the perceived decline of American leadership in the world and a weakening of relations with Europe. Strategic autonomy has now become a major topic of discussion among EU leaders following the U.S. surrender of Europe's energy security to Russia through the concession of Nord Stream 2, the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal that exposed our allies' vulnerabilities in conducting security operations without close U.S. involvement, and the recent AUKUS deal, which, while a good move for our mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific, left a major ally feeling disenfranchised, overall sending a poor message on how the United States values its allies.

- Is it in the interests of the United States for EU nations to pursue strategic autonomy and develop a military that launch major operations outside of our transatlantic military alliances?

Answer. The administration is committed to re-engaging allies and partners and revitalizing our alliances. I welcome European efforts to strengthen European defense that would enhance Transatlantic security. If confirmed, I will work closely with the EU and member states to ensure that this work is complementary to and not duplicative of NATO's efforts and strengthen practical participation by the United States in EU defense programs. I look forward to engaging with Allies and EU partners to reinforce the unparalleled value of Transatlantic cooperation and the NATO Alliance.

Question. How would strategic autonomy improve the issue of burden sharing in defense cooperation between the U.S. and EU members?

Answer. The EU and EU member states are important partners in addressing key foreign policy, security, and economic issues. A strong EU and strong EU member states committing more resources to defense contribute to the goal of enhanced Transatlantic security. If confirmed, I will work with the EU and EU member states to promote greater U.S. participation in European defense projects and ensure that EU Defense initiatives are coherent, interoperable, complementary to and not duplicative of NATO efforts. If confirmed, I will support continued NATO-EU cooperation and to ensure increased burden sharing by Allies.

Question. How would the formation of a European army open the door to the EU pursuing unilateral security interests that diverge from those of the United States?

Answer. A strong Europe, including EU member states should contribute to the goal of enhanced Transatlantic security. If confirmed, I will work with the EU and EU member states to ensure greater U.S. participation in EU defense initiatives and that these initiatives remain coherent, interoperable, complementary with, and not duplicative of, NATO efforts. Additionally, if confirmed, I will seek ways to support continued NATO-EU cooperation.

Question. Should the EU focus efforts more on expanding its membership, or more on helping current members improve their political and economic situations?

Answer. The EU is an important partner in addressing key foreign policy, security, and economic issues. Member states with durable and capable democratic institutions and strong economies enhance this partnership. Closer integration into key European and Euro-Atlantic institutions has strengthened democratic institutions and rule of law in aspirant countries, contributing to political stability and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will work with the EU and member states to maintain a focus on governance, rule of law, anti-corruption reforms, independent media, and vibrant civil societies—in short, urging the EU to both support accession-related reforms in candidate states and help current members improve democratic governance and rule of law.

Question. What is the consensus in the EU about expansion, given that some members, such as Hungary, have seen democratic backsliding in recent years?

Answer. I am concerned about backsliding on democratic principles and institutions in some EU member states, including in, but not only in, Hungary. The trans-

atlantic relationship is deeply rooted in the United States' and European Union's shared commitment to democratic values, including the rule of law, judicial independence, and media freedom. These values are an essential part of our relationship with the EU and a topic of frank discussions with member states; a demonstrated commitment to democracy and its institutions is also a prerequisite for EU accession. The administration supports the EU and EU member states' efforts to reverse democratic backsliding within the bloc, and we work alongside the EU to support democratic institutions and promote rule of law reforms in states working towards EU accession. If confirmed, I will work with the EU and member states to support and strengthen democracy across Europe.

Question. China has already been making inroads in Europe by laying debt traps in the Balkans, building the PEACE cable to France, buying stakes in major seaports, and creating formats that divide Europe, like the 17+1. Fortunately, European nations have begun to recognize the threat that China poses and have shut down Chinese attempts to influence educational institutions and businesses.

- What are some concrete ways you will help the United States Government coordinate with and provide mutual support to EU members to combat China's influence?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with the EU and member states on collective approaches to challenging non-market policies and coercive economic practices that undermine the fair and transparent operation of the global economy, including those from the PRC. If confirmed, I will also work with the EU to support resilient infrastructure, including through the Build Back Better World and Blue Dot Network initiatives and the Three Seas Initiative. Finally, if confirmed, I will use all the tools at our disposal—including the U.S.-EU dialogue on China and the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council—to address the challenges posed by the PRC and promote rules of the road that reflect the democratic values shared by the United States and Europe.

Question. Do you believe that the United States should honor its earlier commitment to have the Development Finance Corporation invest \$300 million in The Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund?

Answer. I understand that U.S. International Development Finance Corporation continues to strongly support the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) and is engaged in promising discussions with the investment adviser of the 3SI Investment Fund. The relevant parties are working intensively on a vehicle to enable DFC to announce its support to the fund consistent with U.S. legal and regulatory requirements. DFC financing can serve as a catalyst in developing renewable and reliable energy networks that can drive development and growth across priority regions. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the EU to promote investments in quality infrastructure and exploring ways to align our respective infrastructure initiatives.

Question. Will you work to urge the European Union to increase its investments in eastern and southern European infrastructure projects (even those outside of the EU), improve its oversight of strategically-important asset sales?

Answer. The United States is committed to working through the G7's Build Back Better World initiative and the Blue Dot Network to support quality, inclusive, sustainable, and high-standard infrastructure development, including in Europe. We also are a strong supporter of the Three Seas Initiative. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the EU to promote investments in quality infrastructure and exploring ways to align our respective initiatives. Also, if confirmed, I will continue discussions on investment screening approaches under the framework of the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council.

Question. What strengths to you see in the European Union's recently-released EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific? What do you see as the main weaknesses in this Strategy?

Answer. The United States and EU share a vision of the Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and based on the rule of law and democratic values and that contributes to the security and sustainable development of the region. Both prioritize cooperation to promote secure, sustainable, free and open maritime supply routes and supply chains. I was glad to see the President and Secretary of State welcomed the EU's new strategy. If confirmed, I will work with the EU as we each implement our respective Indo-Pacific strategies to ensure our approaches are complementary, are rooted in our shared values, and support shared initiatives like Build Back Better World.

Question. The Balkans, as the poorest and least Euro-integrated region on the continent, have come under heavy pressure from Russia and China.

- How could greater integration with the rest of Europe help reverse and resist these outside forces that seek to use the Balkans as an inroads to Europe and establish a beachhead of influence on the continent?

Answer. Closer integration with key European and Euro-Atlantic institutions has proven to contribute to political stability, strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law and advancing economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will work to support the countries of the Western Balkans as they seek to join the Western community of democracies, including by undertaking the required reforms. These efforts will buttress them against malign actors who seek to undermine democratic principles, subvert the rule of law, and divert these countries from their Western paths.

Question. How great of an obstacle do good governance issues, such as corruption, rule of law, and electoral problems pose to Balkan integration into Europe?

Answer. Closer integration with key European and Euro-Atlantic institutions has proven to contribute to political stability, strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law and advancing economic prosperity. The people of the Western Balkans states deserve transparency, rule of law, multi-ethnic democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will work to support their aspirations and support the reform process to help these countries maintain their paths toward the Western community of democracies.

Question. How would the efforts to improve corruption, rule of law, and economic issues in the Balkans benefit from an increase in effort from the EU to integrate the region?

Answer. Closer integration with key European and Euro-Atlantic institutions has proven to contribute to political stability, strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law and advancing economic prosperity. The people of the Western Balkans states deserve good governance, rule of law, multi-ethnic democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and economic opportunity. However, disillusionment with delays on the Western Balkans' EU path opens the door for harmful influences from our strategic rivals. If confirmed, I will work to support the Western Balkans' European aspirations and support the reform process to help these countries maintain their paths toward the Western community of democracies.

Question. In the wake of Brexit, the UK, Ireland and the greater European Union have been left to tackle the issue of the EU-UK customs border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

- How will you engage in negotiations on this issue to ensure that U.S. trade interests are protected, and that the Good Friday Agreement is preserved?

Answer. The United States supports a close and cooperative relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, based on a shared understanding of democratic values, national security, law enforcement, and a broad range of other interests. The United States also wants to see a confident, forward-looking Northern Ireland with a prosperous economy that reflects the identity and aspirations of every tradition. If confirmed, I will encourage both sides to keep the door open to continued dialogue that will enhance the prospect for long-term, positive solutions and promote strong trade and investment ties with the EU, while preserving the Good Friday Agreement.

Question. Should the EU-UK customs border be formed along the border of Ireland and Northern Ireland, or between the island of Ireland and the island of Great Britain, with Northern Ireland receiving a special condition to maintain unity with the rest of the UK? Do you believe there is a better proposal for a solution to the customs border issue?

Answer. Recent unrest in Northern Ireland underscores the importance of safeguarding the gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. If confirmed, I will encourage all parties to prioritize political and economic stability and to negotiate when differences arise. I would emphasize the need to ensure any Brexit outcomes do not undermine the progress made since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. If confirmed, I will support the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and welcome the provisions in both the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol which help protect hard-won gains.

Question. In July 2020, the European Court of Justice struck down the Privacy Shield program, invalidating a critical mechanism for transferring personal data from the EU to the U.S. This has raised significant concerns about the continued viability of transatlantic data flows at an important moment for U.S. economic re-

covery, as data flows support more than \$245 billion in U.S. digital exports to Europe. There is an ongoing interagency effort to negotiate a successor privacy framework with our European partners, without which U.S. companies are likely to increasingly face barriers to engaging in cross-border digital commerce with Europe.

- If confirmed, will you prioritize the on-going negotiations to replace the Privacy Shield program?

Answer. I understand the urgency of this issue for American businesses and for our Transatlantic ties more broadly. If confirmed, I would prioritize continued U.S.-EU negotiations on an enhanced Privacy Shield Framework to facilitate continued transatlantic data flows while ensuring sufficient privacy protections for individuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

Question. Toward that goal, what steps do you plan to take to support a swift and successful conclusion to the efforts to produce a successor Privacy Shield framework?

Answer. I understand the urgency of this issue for American businesses and for our Transatlantic ties more broadly. If confirmed, I would prioritize continued U.S.-EU negotiations on an enhanced Privacy Shield Framework to facilitate continued transatlantic data flows while ensuring sufficient privacy protections for individuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

Question. This month saw the launch of the U.S.-EU Trade & Technology Council (TTC). While the TTC will cover a broad set of issues, it is well-suited to support U.S. engagement with the EU's proposed Artificial Intelligence Act. As with GDPR, the AI Act is likely to be enacted and set a global benchmark for AI regulation.

- If confirmed, will you seek to engage with your EU counterparts—both directly and through the Trade and Technology Council—as the EU's AI Act moves forward toward avoiding divergent regulatory approaches while supporting interoperability in AI governance?

Answer. The United States welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the EU on governance approaches to technology that advance innovation, take a risk-based approach that reflects our shared democratic values, and address shared global challenges. The U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council is a key forum for joint efforts to foster trustworthy, secure, and responsible AI that reflects our shared values and commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of all our citizens. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing this effort and to ensure our respective regulatory frameworks maintain a risk-based, innovation-friendly approach.

Question. Given the importance of the EU-U.S. bilateral and the breadth of pressing tech-related issues, how will you seek to comprehensively balance the interests of U.S. businesses with the strategic goal of enhancing a steadfast relationship with our European allies?

Answer. Building on our shared democratic values and economic relationship—the world's largest—if confirmed, I will use my role as U.S. Ambassador to the EU to implement and inform an agreed interagency approach to achieve an appropriate and comprehensive balance between national security and economic security goals. In my previous experience as U.S. Ambassador to Romania, engaging with government officials and stakeholders from business, labor, and civil society was essential to build relationships and find common ground, even on tough issues.

Question. What are your thoughts regarding restarting the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks with Europe? What are your thoughts regarding completing free trade agreement talks with the U.K.?

Answer. The administration is reviewing its policies on trade agreements to ensure that trade supports middle-class jobs and labor. If confirmed, I will work with our trade experts in the U.S. Government, as well as business, labor, and other stakeholders to support policies that advance our trade and investment objectives with Europe our mutual benefit.

Question. The U.S. and the EU have, generally speaking, highly developed regulatory processes based on science that are intended to keep our people healthy and safe. As part of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks under President Obama, exploratory efforts were made to find ways to better coordinate or to find equivalence in our respective regulatory processes. Studies conducted at the time of TTIP suggested significant potential cost savings to both sides through potential alignment on regulatory outcomes. Sometimes these savings were far greater than a simple tariff cutting trade agreement would have provided. In addition, to the extent the U.S. and EU could agree on common approaches to regulation, we together could set global standards for others to follow. What are your

thoughts about strengthening engagement on the regulatory front between the U.S. and the EU? Is this a realistic goal to think we could create some convergence between us on the regulatory front? How would you contribute to pursuing it, if confirmed?

Answer. President Biden and his EU counterparts established the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council in June 2021 as a forum to shape the rules of the road for the 21st century economy and demonstrate how democratic approaches to trade, technology, and innovation can improve the lives of our citizens. The inaugural ministerial meeting took place in Pittsburgh on September 29. The two sides intend to discuss ways to avoid non-tariff barriers, particularly in emerging technology such as artificial intelligence. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our respective regulatory frameworks maintain a risk-based, innovation-friendly approach.

Question. For decades, China has been underwriting steel production through cheap loans and other government interventions. Such Chinese Government support to Chinese steel has hurt the steel industry in the U.S. This overproduction has also injured many other countries as excess Chinese steel (produced according to political directives and not necessarily in response to market demand) is dumped, creating ripple effects throughout the rest of the world including in Europe. Europe should be a potential natural ally in forming a coalition to pressure China to reform its steel practices. What are your thoughts on how we might partner with Europe on countering such anti-market practices by China?

Answer. The United States and the European Union committed in May to enter into discussions that would address global steel and aluminum excess capacity and the deployment of effective solutions, including appropriate trade measures to preserve our critical industries. By working together with our allies to address excess capacity and non-market practices, we can support strong domestic steel and aluminum production, inputs in supply chains critical to our national security. If confirmed, I will support efforts to resolve or deescalate difficult bilateral issues with the EU and other partners and focus on the shared threat we face from non-market economies.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARK GITENSTEIN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. What is the unify vision of the European Union?

Answer. The President has emphasized the United States' continued commitment to the goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. A strong relationship with a united European Union will be essential to face the challenges of the present and future. If confirmed, I will work to revitalize and raise the level of ambition in our relations with the EU to address the challenges we face and promote an affirmative vision rooted in our shared democratic values.

Question. Do you support a European Union having its own Army?

Answer. A strong Europe, including EU member states, should contribute to the goal of enhanced Transatlantic security. If confirmed, I will work with the EU and EU member states to ensure greater U.S. participation in EU defense initiatives, and that these initiatives remain coherent, interoperable, complementary with, and not duplicative of, NATO efforts. Additionally, if confirmed, I will seek ways to support continued NATO-EU cooperation.

Question. How do you plan to plan to foster a "transatlantic view" for security vs. the "Europe alone" attitude espoused by President Macron?

Answer. The EU is a vital partner in addressing key foreign policy, security, and economic issues. A strong EU contributes to enhanced transatlantic security. If confirmed, I will work with the EU and EU member states to ensure that EU security and defense initiatives are coherent, complementary, and interoperable with and not duplicative of NATO efforts. If confirmed, I will seek ways to support and enhance continued NATO-EU cooperation to address the multiple and evolving security challenges confronting the United States, NATO Allies, and EU member states. There is strength in numbers. We are more effective in facing common threats if we work together and combine our resources and expertise than if we work separately.

Question. How can the EU work with NATO to advice the common interest of European Security?

Answer. The administration has committed itself to re-engaging European allies and partners. I welcome European efforts to strengthen European defense including by spending more on defense. If confirmed, I will work closely with the EU and EU member states to ensure that defense efforts should be coherent, complimentary, and interoperable with and not duplicative of NATO efforts. If confirmed I will seek to strengthen NATO-EU cooperation and work with Allies and partners to enhance Transatlantic security. Julie Smith, if confirmed, and I have committed to meet weekly in Brussels towards this goal.

Question. Would you say that Russia, not climate change is the biggest threat to European Security?

Answer. The administration has worked with the EU on strengthening our mutual ability both to resist Russian use of energy as a weapon and to combat climate change, and if confirmed I will continue to do so.

Question. How can the EU stand up to Russia when it continues to peruse Russian energy?

Answer. Europe's continued reliance on Russia for its energy supply remains a top threat to its energy security. Russia is the main EU supplier of crude oil, natural gas, and solid fuels. Russia's nuclear fuel supply monopoly in Central and Eastern Europe is also a matter of concern. The administration strongly supports diversification of energy supplies to diminish the role of geopolitics in energy markets, reduce consumer prices, and enhance energy security. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the European Union on enhancing energy security for member states and pushing back against Russia's attempts to use energy as a weapon.

Question. Would you oppose further European joint energy projects with Russia?

Answer. The administration strongly supports diversification of energy supplies to diminish the role of geopolitics in energy markets, reduce consumer prices, and enhance energy security. If confirmed, I look forward to working with European Union on enhancing energy security for member states and pushing back against Russia's attempts to use energy as a weapon.

Question. What should be the lesson the EU should learn from Ukraine who has had their energy turned off by Russia and now faces severe energy shortfalls this winter?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support the administration's efforts to work with our allies and partners to promote a more secure and sustainable energy future for Ukraine and frontline NATO and EU countries, and to push back against Russian attempts to use energy as a weapon.

Question. Do you see Turkey becoming an EU member in the foreseeable future?

Answer. Turkey will need to meet the EU accession conditions, including implementing reforms that ensure respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic institutions. To do this, Turkey will need to undertake reforms to reverse the democratic backsliding that has occurred. If confirmed, I will encourage both the EU and Turkey to continue to concretely advance a positive EU-Turkey agenda and to encourage Turkey, in coordination with our embassy in Ankara, to undertake the necessary reforms.

Question. What would have to change to make that happen or happen faster?

Answer. Turkey will need to meet the EU accession conditions, including implementing reforms that ensure respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic institutions. It will also have to make more technical reforms ranging from customs union modernization to migration cooperation. If confirmed, I will encourage both the EU and Turkey to continue to concretely advance a positive EU-Turkey agenda and to encourage Turkey, in coordination with our embassy in Ankara, to undertake the necessary reforms.

Question. How can the EU work with Turkey to manage the humanitarian crisis that is still ongoing in southern Europe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with our partners in the European Union and member states on providing humanitarian assistance and diplomatic engagement with Turkey and other countries to respond to the humanitarian issues in the southern Europe. We have encouraged Turkey to maintain its close coordination with the EU and international organizations to promote coordinated, effective, and efficient humanitarian responses in southern Europe.

Question. If confirmed, will you prioritize the on-going negotiations to replace the Privacy Shield program?

Answer. I understand the urgency of this issue for American businesses and for our Transatlantic ties more broadly. If confirmed, I would prioritize continued U.S.-EU negotiations on an enhanced Privacy Shield Framework to facilitate continued transatlantic data flows while ensuring sufficient privacy protections for individuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

Question. What steps do you plan to take to support a swift and successful conclusion to the efforts to produce a successor Privacy Shield framework?

Answer. I understand the urgency of this issue for American businesses and for our Transatlantic ties more broadly. If confirmed, I would prioritize continued U.S.-EU negotiations on an enhanced Privacy Shield Framework to facilitate continued transatlantic data flows while ensuring sufficient privacy protections for individuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

Question. If confirmed, will you seek to engage with your EU counterparts—both directly and through the Trade and Technology Council—as the EU’s AI Act moves forward toward avoiding divergent regulatory approaches while supporting interoperability in AI governance?

Answer. Yes. The United States welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the EU on governance approaches to technology that advance innovation, take a risk-based approach, reflect our shared democratic values, and address shared global challenges. The U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council is a key forum for joint efforts to foster trustworthy, secure, and responsible AI that reflects our shared values and commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of all our citizens. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing this effort and to ensure our respective regulatory frameworks maintain a risk-based, innovation-friendly approach.

Question. Given the importance of the EU-U.S. bilateral and the breadth of pressing tech-related issues, how will you seek to comprehensively balance the interests of U.S. businesses with the strategic goal of enhancing a steadfast relationship with our European allies?

Answer. Building on our shared democratic values and economic relationship—the world’s largest—if confirmed, I will use my role as U.S. Ambassador to the EU to implement and inform an agreed interagency approach to achieving an appropriate and comprehensive balance between national security and economic security goals. In my previous experience as U.S. Ambassador to Romania, engaging with government officials and stakeholders from business, labor, and civil society was essential to build relationships and find common ground, even on tough issues.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JEFFREY LANE FLAKE BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The Azerbaijani military attacked ethnic Armenian positions using Turkish drones during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. Satellite images showed Turkish F-16s at an airport in Azerbaijan, and Armenia claims that a Turkish F-16 shot down one of its planes in Armenian airspace in September 2020. Reports indicate that Turkey recruited and paid Syrian mercenaries to aid Azerbaijan’s military. What tools would you use as Ambassador to hold the Turkish Government accountable for its role in exacerbating international conflicts as it did in Nagorno-Karabakh?

Answer. Over the past several years Turkey has pursued a more independent foreign policy that has at times advanced American interests and in some cases has been unhelpful and destabilizing. If confirmed, I will work with counterparts in the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury, and the United States Congress to encourage and, if necessary, pressure Turkey to take actions in line with NATO and U.S. interests in the region. If confirmed, I will support efforts to engage bilaterally and multilaterally to advance conflict resolution and normalization in the Caucasus.

Question. Ever since the 2016 coup attempt, the Erdogan regime has engaged in increasingly systematic human rights violations, including through mass detentions, undermining elections, arbitrary arrests, indefinite detention, and in some cases, torture. President Erdogan has undermined the judiciary, attacked the free press, and repressed civil society and the political opposition. How will you use your role as Ambassador to highlight these abuses and put pressure on the regime to meet its values oriented commitments as a NATO ally?

Answer. It is in the U.S. national interest for Turkey—a key player on regional issues—to be a stable, democratic, prosperous, and reliable Ally and partner. If con-

confirmed, I will reinforce the importance of democracy and human rights to our bilateral relationship and urge the Government to make the necessary reforms to reverse democratic backsliding. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, uphold fair trial guarantees, enable civil society and independent media to operate, support the empowerment of women, and defend the rights of all. I will call for the immediate release of all those incarcerated for exercising their fundamental freedoms and participate in events that promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. As recently as last week, 22 Turkish fighter jets committed 17 violations of Greek airspace in the Aegean Sea. This behavior is emblematic of past Turkish violations of Greek airspace, as well as forays into the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone. How will you engage the Turkish Government on these issues of aggression against U.S. allies and partners?

Answer. I understand the United States has been clear with Turkey that military flights through Greek airspace are unhelpful and provocative. If confirmed, I will encourage Ankara to respect the sovereign airspace of other countries and to operate state aircraft with due regard for the safety of navigation of civil aircraft. Where disagreements exist over the limits of a country's territorial airspace, I will urge coordination and discussion. Disagreements between Greece and Turkey should be resolved through diplomacy and engagement.

Question. Turkey's military efforts against the Syrian Kurds, including through Turkish-sponsored Syrian proxies, undermine U.S. counterterrorism objectives and serve as a major point of friction in what could be a more unified U.S. and Turkish approach to Syria. Previous administrations actively worked to manage and mitigate Turkish concerns with U.S. support to the Syrian Democratic Forces. If confirmed, will you pledge to reinvigorate diplomacy on this front, despite its role as a cross-Bureau issue within the Department?

Answer. Turkey is an important member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. If I understand correctly, the administration is cognizant of Turkey's long-standing concerns about U.S. cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the counter-ISIS campaign. The SDF's efforts were critical to collapsing ISIS's fraudulent "caliphate" and remain essential to further degrading the group. The Biden administration remains committed to countering ISIS and other terrorist threats to the security of the United States, its partners and allies. If confirmed, I pledge to fully engage with my counterparts across bureaus in the Department of State and in the Department of Defense to advance U.S. policy goals in Syria.

Question. The Turkish Government is actively seeking U.N. approval and cooperation to facilitate the return of Syrian refugees in Turkey to Syria, despite the unsuitable ground conditions for doing so. This reflects the efforts of select European nations, but poses an unacceptable humanitarian and political precedent. If confirmed, will you pledge to advocate against these actions with the Turkish Government, and work collaboratively to identify opportunities to reduce tensions associated with Syrian refugees communities in Turkey?

Answer. The administration appreciates Turkey's generosity in hosting four million refugees, 3.6 million of whom are from Syria, and acknowledges the challenges of doing so both for the Turkish Government and local communities. In line with U.N. assessments, the administration does not believe conditions in Syria at this time are conducive for any systematic or large-scale returns, and I agree. Consistent with international principles, refugee returns should be safe, dignified, informed, and voluntary. If confirmed, I will work with Turkey in line with these principles and explore ways to reduce tensions related to Syrian refugee communities in Turkey and reinforce the administration's position on returns.

Question. The maritime boundary agreement between Turkey and Libya is based on a flawed reading of international maritime law and infringes on the legitimate maritime claims of Turkey's Mediterranean neighbors, especially Greece. What will your message be to Turkey on this? Will you call on them to respect the legitimate claims of their neighbors?

Answer. It is my understanding that the United States generally does not take a position on other states' maritime boundary disputes and calls on all parties to refrain from all actions that risk heightening tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. If confirmed, I will consistently urge Turkey to resolve maritime delimitation issues with its neighbors peacefully through dialogue and in accordance with international law. In addition, consistent with my understanding of the administration's policy, if I see provocative action being taken I will not hesitate to call it out.

Question. Turkish-backed fighters in Libya pose a significant threat to that country's stability and its upcoming elections, as do Russian-backed fighters from Wagner. Will you urge Turkey to withdraw these Syrians and commit to Libya's political process?

Answer. The administration made public statements strongly supporting the operationalization of UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and full implementation of the October 23 Libyan ceasefire. If confirmed, I will call on the Turkish Government to use its influence to encourage all Libyan parties to establish the framework and constitutional basis for on-time national elections on December 24.

Question. The EMGF is a great consortium of regional energy players, but its focus on natural gas is not sustainable. In order to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate change, all countries need to reduce their reliance and usage of fossil fuels to ensure that global warming does not exceed 2 degrees Celsius. While natural gas is less polluting than oil and coal, it is not a sustainable alternative. How do you think the United States should leverage its role as an official observer to push this forum past an explicit focus on natural gas to one that is focused on a diverse and sustainable regional energy mix?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. The Forum can help promote greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity throughout the region. If confirmed, I will build on the work between colleagues in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs, Energy Resources, and European and Eurasian Affairs to coordinate our engagement and am eager to learn more about the EMGF's announcement earlier this year that it plans to work with specialists to discuss and promote gas decarbonization. I will also take steps to encourage Turkey, which is not a member of the EMGF, to collaborate with regional partners in incorporating more renewable energy sources for their energy needs.

Question. Turkey is increasingly dependent on energy imports, especially fossil fuels. Turkey's nationally determined contribution (i.e. its Paris Agreement commitment) is critically insufficient to uphold the 2 degrees Celsius global warming limit outlined in the Paris Agreement. Turkey has not submitted an updated nationally determined contribution (required under the Paris Agreement) and their path to a 2 degree Celsius-aligned economy is unclear. How can the United States support lowering the carbon intensity of Turkish energy consumption and increase their climate ambition in line with the 2 degrees Celsius Paris Agreement target?

Answer. Turkey is a leader in renewable energy, producing almost half its electricity from renewable sources, especially hydropower. However, Turkey's current pledge to reduce levels of greenhouse gas emissions is weak and would still allow a doubling in the volume of Turkey's emissions over the next decade. If confirmed, I will engage with the Turkish Government and private sector to seek collaboration on technologies and investment in infrastructure critical to increasing Turkey's energy security and reducing emissions. I will urge Turkey not only to follow through on President Erdogan's very welcome announcement regarding its plan to ratify the Paris Agreement, but also to put forward a strengthened 2030 emissions reduction target consistent with achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. This is a sensitive ongoing investigation and is a top priority for Secretary of State Antony Blinken. I understand a major interagency effort is investigating what is causing the incidents and how the Embassy community can be protected. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure anyone who reports an anomalous health incident receives immediate and appropriate attention and care. If confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that any employee or family member who reports a possible anomalous health incident receives immediate and appropriate attention and care. If confirmed, I will communicate with our workforce to provide care for affected employees and their family members and work together with partners in Washington and the interagency to do what we can to protect against these incidents and, of course, to find the cause of what has been afflicting these members of our Embassy community. If confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JEFFREY LANE FLAKE BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Relations between Turkey and Greece have been strained in recent years, with exclusive economic zone disputes in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, pressures from mass migration, and tensions over Cyprus. How would you work with the U.S. mission in Greece to take a coordinate approach to protecting U.S. interests affected by the Greco-Turkish relationship?

Answer. The administration has been clear that it supports all efforts to reduce tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean and welcomes exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey. The Biden administration has also made clear that it is committed to ensuring stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected and protected, and that disagreements in the region should be resolved through diplomacy. If confirmed, I will work collaboratively with our Ambassador in Athens to pursue opportunities for the United States Government to encourage these two important NATO Allies to take the necessary steps to reduce tensions and resolve disputes.

Question. Since its initial intervention in January 2020, Turkey has deployed hundreds of troops and Syrian militia fighters to Libya in support of the then internationally recognized government, the Government of National Accord. After months of fighting between the Turkish-backed GNA and its eastern based rival, the Libyan National Army (LNA), which garnered support from Russia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) among others, a ceasefire agreement was reached in October 2020. Under the terms of the U.N. brokered agreement, both sides and their respective backers agreed to withdraw all foreign forces and mercenaries from the country. Despite the October 2020 ceasefire agreement, the U.N. Secretary General, in address to the Security Council remarked that thousands of foreign forces remained in Libya as of early September 2021, "with no discernible abatement of their activities." Furthermore, there continues to be ongoing violations of the U.N. arms embargo on Libya by a variety of actors.

- Please provide your assessment of Turkey's role in the conflict in Libya.

Answer. Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, including elections on December 24 this year. The administration also publicly and strongly supported the operationalization of UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and full implementation of the October 23 Libyan ceasefire. If confirmed, I will stress to our Turkish colleagues and all parties involved that it is essential to end the Libya conflict through an inclusive political process, providing essential public services, and through ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

[Additional Response—10/12/2021]. The United States has been clear that all foreign fighters and forces need to withdraw from Libya, including Turkish forces. Turkey supports a staged, coordinated withdrawal of its forces that is matched to a withdrawal of other foreign forces in the country. Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, including elections on December 24 this year. The presence of foreign fighters in Libya undermines U.S. goals of this Libyan-led political process to resolve the conflict. However, it is also the case that Turkey's intervention in 2020 secured Tripoli, preventing the fall of the Government of National Accord and averting a humanitarian crisis. As I understand, Turkey's foreign policy on Libya is aimed at cementing the position of an internationally recognized government in Tripoli that is friendly to Ankara's security interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa.

If confirmed, I will stress to our Turkish colleagues and all parties involved that it is essential to end the Libya conflict through an inclusive political process, providing essential public services, and through ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

Question. If confirmed, how do you propose to work with the U.N. to advance efforts to ensure Turkey's fully complies with the October 2020 ceasefire agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely with my counterparts in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) to ensure Mission Turkey informs and advances U.S. policy in Libya. In coordination with my colleagues in NEA and the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, I will also work with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to create the conditions for successful elections in Libya in December of this year.

Question. What are the prospects for a full Turkish withdrawal from the country to include its troops, mercenaries, and military equipment?

Answer. I understand the United States supports UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and full implementation of the October 23 Libyan ceasefire. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely with my counterparts across the State Department to ensure Mission Turkey informs and advances U.S. policy in Libya.

[Additional Response—10/12/2021]. While I am not able to comment on a hypothetical, as I understand, Turkey believes that its direct military intervention helped enable the then U.N.-recognized interim Government of National Accord (GNA) to repel a Russian-supported offensive. Turkey has also claimed credit for the de facto ceasefire since June 2020 that enabled a U.N.-led political process to take hold and the formation of a unity government.

However, the presence of foreign fighters in Libya undermines our goal of a Libyan-led political process to resolve the conflict. Turkey supports a staged, coordinated withdrawal of its forces that is matched to a withdrawal of other foreign forces in the country. We stand ready to facilitate such an agreement, and if confirmed, I will coordinate closely with my counterparts across the State Department to ensure Mission Turkey informs and advances U.S. policy in Libya.

Question. In your view, what interest does Turkey have in remaining involved in Libya?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to call on Turkey to operationalize UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and support an end to the Libya conflict through an inclusive political process, providing essential public services, and ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

[Additional Response—10/12/2021]. Turkey's foreign policy on Libya aims to cement the position of an internationally recognized government in Tripoli that is friendly to Ankara's economic and security interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. Turkey also hopes to secure a new Arab ally, preferably with an Islamist outlook, in a region where it has few. If confirmed, I will continue to call on Turkey to operationalize UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and support an end to the Libya conflict through an inclusive political process, providing essential public services, and ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

Question. Do you see Turkey's interest in remaining involved in Libya changing over the next year?

Answer. The administration made public statements strongly supporting the operationalization of UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and full implementation of the October 23 Libyan ceasefire. If confirmed, I will continue to call on all parties to support the U.N.-facilitated, Libyan-led political process to ensure free, fair, and credible elections.

[Additional Response—10/12/2021]. The administration made public statements strongly supporting the operationalization of UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and full implementation of the October 23 Libyan ceasefire. Current U.S. outreach to Turkey on Libya is focused on pressing Ankara to use its influence with Libyan parties to get them to reach an agreement on an electoral framework that would enable on-time national elections in December 2021. If confirmed, I will continue to call on all parties to support the U.N.-facilitated, Libyan-led political process to ensure free, fair, and credible elections.

Question. Turkey's objectives in northeast Syria run counter to U.S. interests, particularly with respect to the so-called Operation Peace Spring Zone, which it seized following an offensive in 2019, while we tacitly support their activities in the northwest.

- How do we reconcile these two contradictory policies?

Answer. The United States and Turkey share an interest in sustainably ending the Syria civil war. The United States is grateful for Turkey's continued support to 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey and for being a critical partner in ensuring Syrians have access to life-saving assistance, including through the continuation of cross-border assistance in northwest Syria. Turkey has also been an important member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The Biden administration remains committed to countering ISIS and other terrorist threats to the security of the United States and its partners and allies, to include through a limited military presence in northeast Syria. The Syrian Democratic Forces remain a capable and effective partner to U.S. forces on the ground. If confirmed, I will ensure we consult Ankara on Syria policy and seek areas for understanding while also making clear the United States' enduring security interests where we disagree.

Question. To what extent do you feel we share overlapping objectives in Syria?

Answer. The United States and Turkey share an interest in sustainably ending the Syria civil war. The United States is grateful for Turkey's continued support to 3.6 million Syrian refugees and for being a critical partner in ensuring Syrians have access to life-saving assistance, including through the continuation of cross-border assistance in northwest Syria. Turkey has also been an important member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The Biden administration remains committed to countering ISIS and other terrorist threats to the security of the United States and its partners and allies.

Question. Please provide your assessment of how Turkish-Russian cooperation in Syria impacts U.S. national security objectives, including with respect to the fight against terror.

Answer. Turkey worked with Russia to maintain the ceasefire in northwest Syria agreed to in March 2020. The maintenance of this ceasefire supports U.S. efforts to advance the political process as outlined in UNSCR 2254. The United States and Turkey share an interest in sustainably ending the Syria civil war. The United States is grateful for Turkey's continued support to 3.6 million Syrian refugees who fled the conflict. Turkey is also an important member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The Biden administration remains committed to countering ISIS and other terrorist threats to the security of the United States and its partners and allies.

Question. What are your plans for navigating our relationship with Syria given Turkey's longstanding concerns with respect to U.S. Syrian Kurdish partners?

Answer. The United States and Turkey share an interest in sustainably ending the Syria civil war. It is my understanding that the administration continues to consult Ankara on Syria policy and seeks areas for cooperation. Additionally, the United States recognizes Turkey as an important member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS while being cognizant of Turkey's long-standing concerns about U.S. cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the counter-ISIS campaign. The SDF is the primary counter-ISIS partner of the United States in Syria. The efforts of the SDF were critical to collapsing ISIS's fraudulent territorial "caliphate" and remain essential to degrading the group. The Biden administration remains committed to countering ISIS and other terrorist threats to the security of the United States and its partners and allies. If confirmed, I will continue to work together with Turkey and local Syrian partners for the safety and security of U.S. forces, partner forces, and civilians.

Question. In your view, can the U.S. find a way to balance Syria-Turkish policy short of reaching a solution to the Kurdish issue?

Answer. If I understand correctly, the administration's view is that stability in Syria, and the greater region, is best served through a political process that produces peaceful outcomes in Syria. The United States has committed to working with allies, partners, and the U.N. to ensure that a durable political solution remains within reach. I will continue work to address Turkish concerns while advancing critical U.S. national security interests.

Question. How do you plan to work with Turkey to ensure the continued delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria?

Answer. The United States is grateful for Turkey's continued support to millions of Syrian refugees who fled the conflict. Turkey has also remained an important partner in ensuring Syrians in Syria have access to life-saving assistance. This includes the facilitation of humanitarian assistance to those in need. Turkey was instrumental in the recent passage of UNSCR 2585, allowing for cross-border access

for humanitarian aid to Syria. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Turkey to expand humanitarian access to reach those in need.

Question. To what extent are you concerned about allegations of human rights abuses carried out by Turkish backed forces, including HTS, in Syria?

Answer. I am gravely concerned by continued reports that some Syrian groups that Turkey supports are violating the law of armed conflict and committing human rights abuses in Syria. On July 28, the United States imposed sanctions on Ahrar al-Sharqiya - an armed Syrian opposition group known to be receiving support from Turkey - for committing human rights abuses. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor these reports and would urge Turkey to reconsider its relationships with any groups that commit human rights abuses, use its influence to press them to cease human rights abuses, hold perpetrators accountable, and take steps to prevent any such abuses.

Question. Can you commit to working with Turkey to ensure unfettered access to the areas under its control?

Answer. Turkey has remained an important partner in ensuring Syrians have access to life-saving assistance. This includes the facilitation of humanitarian assistance to those in need inside Syria and helping to support Syrian refugees living in Turkey. If confirmed, I will work to ensure those in areas under Turkish control in northwest Syria have unfettered access to critical humanitarian assistance.

Question. In many ways, the growing rivalry between the United Arab Emirates and Turkey has played a key role in reshaping the Middle East and North Africa region, while simultaneously having a notable impact in countries across Africa as well.

- Please provide your perspective on the role the United States should play in mediating tensions between Turkey and our Gulf partners?

Answer. I think I can safely say that the United States would welcome and support efforts by Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to decrease tensions and strengthen cooperation. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Turkey to increase prosperity and security between the two countries and across the wider region.

Question. To what extent do you see this rivalry as having negative implications on U.S. national security interests?

Answer. I think I can safely say that tensions and rivalry between Turkey and the UAE only benefit our adversaries. The United States welcomes efforts to improve the relationship between Turkey and the UAE. If confirmed, I will encourage our NATO Ally Turkey to resolve disagreements in the region through diplomacy.

Question. The security relationship between the United States and Turkey has been at an impasse over the issue of Turkey's purchase and deployment of Russian S-400 missile launchers. How will you communicate to the Turkish Government that while we value Turkey as an ally, there is a limit to the anti-alliance behavior the U.S. will tolerate?

Answer. Turkey is a NATO Ally with which we have many common interests, as well as disagreements. Turkey had the opportunity to buy Patriot surface-to-air missile systems but chose to acquire and test the Russian S-400. This action resulted in significant negative impacts to Turkey, including the imposition of CAATSA sanctions and Turkey's removal from the F-35 program. If confirmed, I will be crystal clear that Turkey should not retain the S-400 system and that any new Russian arms purchases risk triggering new CAATSA sanctions in addition to those already imposed.

Question. Turkey is in increasingly difficult economic straits. Meanwhile, in 2019 and 2020, there was much talk of a U.S.-Turkey trade deal as a potential piece of a larger agreement to smooth over the issues in the bilateral relationship.

- Do you see the realization of a U.S.-Turkey trade deal as a realistic possibility in the next three years?

Answer. I see significant opportunities for the United States and Turkey to continue strengthening our trading relationship. If confirmed, I will seek to promote high-level trade and investment engagement with Turkey, including under the umbrella of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

Question. Do you believe that a trade deal with Turkey would be beneficial to the United States?

Answer. I believe that enhanced trade and investment ties with Turkey will help the United States and our business community by creating new trade opportunities

for our companies, in particular through reducing barriers to market access. If confirmed, I will work with our trade experts in the U.S. Government and business leaders to ensure that any trade arrangements with Turkey are in the best interests of the United States and our business community.

Question. Do you believe that a trade deal with Turkey would be beneficial to Turkey?

Answer. I believe that enhanced trade and investment ties with Turkey will be beneficial to Turkey by lowering market barriers between our countries, which will be critical to encouraging businesses on both sides to explore new commercial opportunities.

Question. Three current or (now) former locally-employed staff in our embassies and consulates in Turkey currently face restrictions on their freedom for having allegedly taken part in the 2015 coup against Erdogan in some small way. These allegations have very little substance to back them up, and these men are either in prison or unable to leave their home or the country.

- If confirmed, do you commit to be increasingly vocal with the Turkish Government about its role in this abuse of power and to advocate for the full release of these men and an end to their persecution?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing legal proceedings, imprisonment, or controls targeting of U.S. locally employed staff—Metin Topuz Mete Canturk and Hamza Ulucay—in Turkey based on unsubstantiated charges related to their official duties. It is my understanding that the United States Government remains deeply concerned by the prosecutions and detentions and follows their cases closely. If confirmed, I will advocate with the highest levels of Turkish officials for the immediate cessation of all judicial processes and restrictions targeting our locally employed staff s.

Question. Such realities are certain to have had an impact on the morale of locally-employed staff at Mission Turkey, and may have even impacted the Mission's ability to hire and retain good staff.

- What is your understanding of morale in Mission Turkey, particularly among LES?

Answer. It is my understanding that the administration has repeatedly expressed concerns regarding Turkey's continued unjust legal proceedings and judicial controls targeting local staff working for our diplomatic mission in Turkey. If confirmed, I will reiterate to Ankara the importance of the immediate cessation of all judicial processes and restrictions targeting our locally employed staff. And if confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of State remains focused on this issue.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across the Embassy and Consulates?

Answer. If confirmed, I will build on the work of my predecessor, along with the rest of the leadership team of the Embassy and Consulates, to be a firm advocate for the welfare, safety and security of all staff members of Mission Turkey, and especially for the locally employed staff. I will, if confirmed, convey clearly to all members of the Mission Turkey team that the safety and well-being of the staff are my highest priorities.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Turkey?

Answer. If confirmed, I will immediately assess the situation that prevails across Mission Turkey, review and update the Mission's priorities, strategy, and activities in full alignment with the strategy and priorities of the President and the Secretary of State. As Chief of Mission, I will continually maintain security, morale, well-being, productivity, and effectiveness across all of Mission Turkey -- Embassy and Consulates equally - throughout my tenure.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with the Turkish Government to push for significant human rights reforms, including rights for religious minorities and women and girls?

Answer. If confirmed, I will publicly and privately urge the Government of Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, enable the participation of civil society and independent media, uphold fair trial guarantees, support the empowerment of women and defend the rights of all, including freedom from gender-based violence. If confirmed, I will also host and participate in events that promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is in the U.S. national interest for Turkey to be a stable, democratic, prosperous, and reliable Ally and partner. Al-

though Turkey has withdrawn from the Istanbul Convention on the prevention of violence against women, I will urge them to honor their commitments made in that treaty. If confirmed, I will work with Turkey on areas of mutual concern, reinforce the importance of democracy and human rights to our bilateral relationship, and urge the Government to make the necessary reforms to reverse democratic backsliding.

Question. In the 2021 State Department Human Rights Report, Turkish authorities were described as using “antiterror laws broadly against opposition political party members, human rights activists, media outlets, suspected PKK sympathizers, and alleged Gulen movement members or groups affiliated with the Gulen movement, among others, including to seize assets of companies, charities, or businesses.”

- Please describe your engagements, if confirmed, to address these egregious human rights concerns in Turkey?

Answer. The July 2016 coup attempt was a deeply traumatic event for Turkey. I understand and appreciate the Government of Turkey’s need to bring the alleged perpetrators of the 2016 coup attempt to justice, but the quality and impartiality of justice matters. Strong judicial independence and respect for the rule of law must accompany any investigation, legal process, or detention to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will urge Turkey to revise its antiterrorism laws in line with the recommendations outlined by the United States during Turkey’s 2020 Universal Periodic Review and in accordance with international standards. Strong democratic institutions and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms would expand our potential for partnership in Turkey and around the world.

Question. If confirmed, what steps can the United States Government take to hold Turkey accountable for their excessive numbers of unlawfully held detainees?

Answer. If confirmed, I will call for the immediate release of all those incarcerated based on limited or dubious evidence or on a seemingly arbitrary basis, such as in connection with exercising their fundamental freedoms. Osman Kavala and Selahattin Demirtas are two such cases. I will also urge the Turkish Government to reduce pre-trial detention lengths and revise their antiterrorism laws to meet international standards. Prosecutions must be based on evidence, respect the rule of law, and be consistent with Turkey’s domestic and international commitments and obligations to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Open source reporting has indicated Turkey is abusing the INTERPOL red notice system to target individuals who dare to criticize or belong to a movement the Government does not agree with. Turkey’s abuse of an international organization to subvert fundamental human rights cannot stand. What actions will you take, if confirmed, to demonstrate this practice is not tolerated?

Answer. I understand and appreciate the Government of Turkey’s need to bring the alleged perpetrators of the 2016 coup attempt to justice, but the quality and impartiality of justice matters. If confirmed, I will urge Turkey to conduct any investigation, legal process, or extradition against individuals alleged to be involved in this crime, or any other, in a manner that respects human rights, due process, and the rule of law.

Prosecutions and extraditions must be based on evidence, respect the rule of law, and be consistent with Turkey’s domestic and international obligations to human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will also urge third-country partners to resist pressure and follow due process standards in cases where Turkey seeks politically motivated deportations, removals, or expulsions that may violate international norms or agreements.

Question. According to the 2021 State Department International Religious Freedom Report and Human Rights Report, Turkey has very little tolerance for religious freedom, a fundamental human right. How will you continue to bolster religious freedom in country and work with civil society to increase understanding?

Answer. I understand the Turkish Government maintains several restrictions on the exercise of freedom of religion or belief of concern to the United States. These include limitations on the rights of members of religious minority groups.

If confirmed, I will publicly and privately urge the Government of Turkey to respect freedom of religion or belief and the rights of members of religious minority groups. I will also advocate for issues of top importance to religious minority leaders, such as free and fair religious foundation board elections and the reopening of the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary.

Question. Internet freedom, or the ability to use the internet without state-sponsored censorship, is limited in Turkey. What can you do, if confirmed, to support this crucial tool for civil society?

Answer. I also have concerns about the Government of Turkey's use of censorship and overly broad terrorism and insult laws to silence critical voices. The Turkish Government's efforts to restrict freedom of expression online, including on social media, run counter to democratic values.

If confirmed, I will convey my firm belief that freedom of expression - including online - strengthens democracy and needs to be protected. I will also urge the Government to revise existing laws to meet international standards, ensure appropriate judicial oversight on media or online regulations, and to refrain from passing new laws that further restrict the freedom of expression online.

Question. President Erdogan's involvement in the Cyprus issue is increasingly concerning. If confirmed, what actions will you take to promote peace and potential reunification between the Republic of Cyprus and the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus?"

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to make clear to Turkey and Turkish Cypriots the U.S. position in support of a Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation consistent with U.N. Security Council resolutions to benefit all Cypriots and the wider region. Calls for a two-state solution are unhelpful and will not find an audience in the international community. We appreciate the U.N. Secretary-General's efforts to facilitate the relaunch of political discussions. The status quo is unacceptable, and we hope both sides will engage with the U.N. Secretary-General and his team with openness, flexibility, and compromise to find common ground to restart formal talks. Ultimately though, the responsibility for finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves.

Question. Turkey jails more journalists than any other country on earth. If confirmed, what steps will you take to advocate for freedom of the press in country?

Answer. I understand Turkey remains second only to China in numbers of incarcerated journalists, and uses censorship, insult, and antiterror laws widely to silence critical voices. If confirmed, I will make clear to the Turkish Government the integral role a free and independent press plays in any democracy. I will urge the Government of Turkey to revise laws or regulations that restrict media freedom and urge that they refrain from passing additional, restrictive laws. I will also engage with Government of Turkey interlocutors to encourage the release of all media workers incarcerated in connection with exercising their fundamental freedoms. I will also engage with media workers and civil society in Turkey to listen to and elevate their concerns on media freedom.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with the Turkish Government to end the practice of forcible repatriation of Uyghurs to China?

Answer. President Erdogan referred to the PRC repression targeting Uyghurs in Xinjiang in 2009 as a genocide. I understand that Turkey currently hosts between 30,000-60,000 Uyghurs. Turkey has welcomed Uyghurs for more than two decades under a variety of visa and immigration statuses. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to meet regularly with the Turkish Government to discuss Turkey's continued support for Uyghurs in the face of PRC pressure.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JEFFREY LANE FLAKE BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In April of this year, President Biden formally recognized the Armenian genocide, something that I, and others, welcomed as it has been an overdue action that I have advocated for years for. However, more work needs to be done. We should continue to press countries that still deny this genocide, like Turkey and Azerbaijan, to end their denials and take the steps necessary to accept responsibility for this crime.

- In your opinion, do you recognize the Ottoman Empire's actions against the Armenians in 1915 as a genocide?

Answer. Yes. President Biden's statement for Remembrance Day this year noted that the United States mourns the one and a half million Armenians who were victims of the Armenian genocide during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. We welcome efforts by Armenians and Turks to acknowledge and reckon with this pain-

ful part of their histories, which is a critical step towards building a foundation for a more just and tolerant future.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to press the Turkish Government, and others, to stop denying the Armenian genocide?

Answer. If confirmed, I will implement the administration's policy, honoring the victims of the Armenian genocide and encouraging Turkey to acknowledge and reckon with this painful part of its history.

Question. Turkey has been a NATO member since 1952. However, under President Erdogan, Turkey has not lived up to the values of the NATO Alliance. Its dismal human rights record, purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system despite U.S. objections, and its aggression towards other U.S. allies, like Cyprus, Greece and Israel suggest that Turkey is more of an adversary than a partner to the United States.

- Do you believe that Turkey may be more of an adversary?

Answer. Turkey is a NATO Ally with whom we have many common interests, as well as profound disagreements. If confirmed, I will work with you to encourage and, if necessary, pressure Turkey to take actions in line with U.S. interests in the region and its responsibilities as a NATO Ally. If confirmed, I will continue to collaborate with Turkey in areas of common interest including in Central Asia, Syria, the Black Sea, and others. Working with Turkey to address some of its legitimate security concerns will assist us in that effort. I will also speak clearly and frankly when Turkey's actions or words run counter to our interests.

Question. What is your opinion of the state of democracy in Turkey?

Answer. Turkey is a key NATO Ally and critical regional partner, and the United States is committed to improving the relationship between our two countries. It is in our interest to keep Turkey anchored to the Euro-Atlantic community. We work together closely to confront the serious challenges that face both of our countries. While we may have differences of opinion on some topics, I want our Turkish partners to understand that U.S. concerns come from an Ally and friend that seeks to preserve and deepen our relationship in every dimension.

The United States continues to emphasize the importance of the Turkish Government's adherence to policies and actions that build public trust in the country's democratic institutions and the rule of law, as well as upholding human rights commitments. If confirmed, I will publicly and privately urge the Government of Turkey to make meaningful reforms that ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of speech and assembly, are guaranteed in accordance with Turkey's own constitution. I will urge the U.N. to restore judicial independence, uphold fair trial guarantees, respect the rule of law, and enable civil society and independent media to function freely.

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take to improve Turkey's interactions with other NATO members?

Answer. Turkey's relations with NATO member countries run the gamut between close cooperation to outright antagonism. As the second largest military in NATO, host of the NATO Land Component Command, and a regular contributor of forces to NATO regional missions, Turkey plays a major role in keeping NATO's collective defense credible. If confirmed, I will encourage additional Turkey-NATO collaboration in areas of common interest, including in Central Asia, Syria, and the Black Sea. I will also speak clearly and frankly when Turkey's actions or words run counter to NATO's interests and work with my fellow Ambassadors in other NATO member countries to do so.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JEFFREY LANE FLAKE BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Last year, a Turkish court sentenced several locally-employed staff of our diplomatic mission to Turkey to lengthy prison sentences for allegedly supporting groups opposed to the Erdogan Government. If confirmed, what will be your strategy for supporting these individuals, including seeking their prompt release and supporting their family?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing legal proceedings and controls targeting U.S. locally employed staff in Turkey based on unsubstantiated charges related to their official duties on behalf of our Government. If confirmed, I will sup-

port and defend our locally employed staff. In my understanding that the U.S. Government remains deeply concerned by the prosecutions and detentions and follows their cases closely. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all judicial processes, including movement restrictions, are lifted for Metin Topuz, Mete Canturk, and Hamza Ulucay. It is my understanding that the United States Government continues to consult with our locally employed staff and their families and to advocate with the highest levels of Turkish officials for their immediate release from all judicial processes.

Question. How will you ensure that Turkish nationals who directly assist our diplomats are off-limits to the Government's own brand of justice?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing prosecution, imprisonment, or legal controls targeting U.S. locally employed staff—Metin Topuz, Mete Canturk, and Hamza Ulucay—in Turkey based on unsubstantiated charges related to their official duties. It is my understanding that the U.S. Government remains deeply concerned by the prosecutions and detentions and follows their cases closely. If confirmed, I will advocate with the highest levels of Turkish officials for the immediate cessation of all judicial processes and restrictions targeting our locally employed staff. The safety and security of all employees of U.S. Embassy Ankara and our consulates in Istanbul and Adana will be my highest priority, if confirmed.

Question. Erdogan has made the production, use, and export of highly capable combat drones a pillar of his country's defense industry and security partnerships throughout not just the region, but the world. The Turkish military has utilized and advised on the use of drones in Iraq and against Nagorno-Karabakh, in many cases drawing no separation between legitimate military targets and civilians. If confirmed what steps should we take to rein in this behavior?

Answer. Turkey is one of the top producers and exporters of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in the world. As Turkey is a relatively cost-effective supplier of advanced drone technology, NATO Allies such as Poland and partners such as Ukraine have sought to purchase Turkish UAVs. Turkey has sold UAVs to countries with whom we would not share this technology. If confirmed, I will stress the importance of Turkey using its capabilities to bolster NATO efforts and to advance mutual U.S. and Turkish goals.

Question. How does Turkish drone proliferation affect our own security partnerships in the region?

Answer. Turkey is one of the top producers and exporters of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in the world, specializing in the production of cost effective unmanned aerial systems. Turkish UAVs in most cases do not directly compete with more advanced U.S. platforms. Turkey's willingness to sell UAVs to countries with whom we would not share our own technology has at times been problematic for regional security. If confirmed, I will stress the importance of Turkey using its UAV capabilities to bolster NATO efforts and to advance mutual U.S. and Turkish goals. This approach would support our policy of preventing state or non-state actors from gaining capabilities that would undermine the safety and security of the United States and our allies and partners.

Question. What have the intervening two years taught us about both the limits of our diplomacy towards Turkey, but also how we must adapt to secure our national interests?

Answer. Over the past several years, Turkey has pursued a more independent foreign policy that has at times advanced U.S. interests but which in some cases has been unhelpful and destabilizing. If confirmed, I will commit to working with colleagues in the executive branch and Congress to find ways to continue strengthening our longstanding relationship with Turkey, while not shying away from identifying and addressing the areas where we disagree.

Question. How have the past several years instructed your views on the appropriateness of our continued military presence at Incirlik Air Base? Should we refocus that presence elsewhere within NATO?

Answer. Our military presence in Turkey, including at Incirlik Air Base, allows for a better defense of NATO's Southern flank and for supporting United States interests in the region. The United States benefits from our presence at Incirlik, and, if confirmed, I will not seek to relocate or reduce this presence. At the same time, the U.S. should continue to maintain and pursue new security partnerships with our Allies throughout the region.

Question. In his interview with CBS this weekend, President Erdogan noted that his Government's preference would be that the United States withdrawals all of our

troops from Syria, who are active in our efforts to fully defeat ISIS. Given Turkey's own continued presence in Syria, and especially considering the speed and indiscriminate nature of its invasion in 2019, how do you interpret Erdogan's desire for our withdrawal?

Answer. As I understand, Turkey has long-standing concerns about U.S. cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces, which Ankara views as tied to Kurdistan Workers Party. The United States has an interest in advancing the campaign against ISIS, to include through preserving a limited military presence in northeast Syria. The Syrian Democratic Forces remain a capable and effective partner to U.S. forces on the ground. If confirmed, I will ensure we consult Ankara on Syria policy and seek areas for understanding while also making clear the United States' enduring security interests.

Question. What do you believe is Erdogan's goal for Syria?

Answer. The United States and Turkey share an interest in sustainably ending the Syrian civil war. We will continue to consult Ankara on Syria policy and seek areas for cooperation. Turkey is an important member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. I understand that the administration's view is that stability in Syria, and the greater region, can only be achieved through a political process that represents the will of all Syrians and that the United States is committed to working with allies, partners, and the U.N. to ensure that a durable political solution remains within reach.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CINDY HENSLEY MCCAIN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Conflict & Food Insecurity

Question. Today, conflict drives the top ten worst food crises in the world. Food insecurity in conflict-affected countries continues to deteriorate, and people there rely more and more on the U.N. food agencies to provide food relief.

- How can the World Food Program improve its work in conflict-affected countries? What should it do to expand the reach of its food assistance?

Answer. Armed conflict is the primary driver of acute food insecurity globally, impacting eight of the ten worst food crises in the world. U.N. Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018) emphasizes the link between armed conflict and food insecurity and lays out clear expectations regarding the need for unfettered and unhindered humanitarian access. If confirmed, I will work to ensure concerted and collective diplomatic pressure to enable humanitarian access in conflict-affected countries.

Question. How can the U.N. food agencies increase the effectiveness of their aid efforts in the face of national government actions that hinder humanitarian access and deliberately perpetuate food insecurity?

Answer. National interference in aid operations and the obstruction of humanitarian access are unacceptable. If confirmed, I will apply strong diplomatic advocacy on behalf of the Rome-based agencies, including in coordination with like-minded countries, to exert pressure on United Nations Member States denying humanitarian access to their citizens. If confirmed, I will work with our colleagues across the respective U.S. Missions to the United Nations, interagency partners in Washington, and other United Nations Member States to leverage diplomatic engagement and demand full access in conflict-affected and food insecure countries.

Question. How would the principles, priorities and recommended approaches detailed in the Global Food Security Strategy influence your work, if confirmed, at U.N.-FAO?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that U.S. engagement continues to be aligned with the principles and priorities outlined in the Global Food Security Strategy. The U.S. commitment to invest \$10 billion domestically and internationally toward transforming food systems to be more effective and inclusive was a first step and clear demonstration of U.S. leadership in accelerating progress toward global food security.

Afghanistan

Question. How can U.S. leadership at the U.N. food agencies promote sustained international engagement in Afghanistan to ensure that millions of people are not pushed to the brink of starvation?

Answer. All three Rome-based food security agencies—FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and WFP—have continued their operations in Afghanistan and are working in at least 28 of the country's 34 provinces. U.S. diplomatic and financial leadership has proven critical to these operations. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to enable the Rome-based agencies to carry out their life-saving work, ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable, and pursue burden-sharing with allies and partners to ensure sustainability.

Question. You have been a fierce advocate for women and girls throughout your life. If confirmed, how do you plan to advocate for the women and girls who have disproportionately been impacted by pandemic-related food insecurity?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically and disproportionately impacted women and girls; the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity is 10 percent higher among women than men, compared with 6 percent in 2019. If confirmed, I will work with FAO, WFP, and the Rome-based International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to ensure implementation of their gender action plans, and the delivery of concrete results that advance gender equality. If confirmed, I will also continue U.S. support for the innovative partnership between FAO and the IDLO focused on ensuring women and girls' access to affordable and nutritious food even as countries adopt emergency measures in response to health crises.

Question. How can FAO facilitate collaboration across U.N. organizations (like the U.N. Environment Program, UNICEF, and U.N. Development Program) to promote adaptation and resilience in developing countries' agricultural and food production sectors?

Answer. FAO's recently approved Strategic Framework (2022–2031) elevates climate change and prioritizes climate action in the food and agriculture sectors, noting in particular the need to increase adaptation activities. The FAO also plays a key role in implementing the One Health approach, which takes as a whole human health, animal health, and environmental health through a formal tripartite agreement between FAO, WHO, and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) with U.N. Environment Program (UNEP) participation. FAO, WFP, and IFAD conduct regular Rome-based agency coordination on climate change and other topics. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that FAO works with WFP, IFAD, and other U.N. agencies to match science and evidence-based solutions to national development plans, as part of the follow-up to the U.N. Food Systems Summit held on September 23.

Question. What role should FAO have in assisting member nations in developing their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)?

Answer. As the lead U.N. agency for agriculture, FAO provides expert guidance to countries on the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors in their NAPs. Through targeted guidelines, FAO plays a pivotal role in assisting members in reducing vulnerability of the agriculture sectors to the impacts of climate change by building adaptive capacities and resilience, addressing agriculture in the formulation and implementation of NAPs, and enhancing the integration of adaptation in agricultural development policies, programs and plans. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that FAO continues to integrate climate change adaptation into all of its programs and provides better climate-adaptation evaluations and data.

U.S. Leadership & Donor Engagement: Donor investments to U.N. food agencies increased in 2020, but the increase did not match the surge in global food needs, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Up to 161 million more people faced hunger in 2020 compared to 2019. As you know, humanitarian appeals, including those focused on food assistance, often remain grossly underfunded. The United States is the largest financial contributor to the U.N. food agencies.

Question. How much funding do you think the United States should provide to the U.N. food agencies in Rome?

Answer. The United States is the largest single financial contributor to the Rome-based agencies, and our generosity to this partnership has saved millions of lives. With the generous bipartisan support of the Congress, U.S. financial contributions have remained relatively steady over the last few years. The United States needs to continue to press others to do their share in shouldering their financial obligations to support these agencies. If confirmed, I will continue to press other countries and stakeholders for an equitable division of funding responsibility and burden sharing to fulfil humanitarian and development needs.

Question. If confirmed, you will help lead donor engagement. In what ways can the agencies improve their outreach efforts given that current engagement has not resulted in adequate fundraising?

Answer. It is critically important that other countries and non-state actors step up to match the incredible generosity of the American people. Humanitarian needs are increasing globally, and they will continue to rise if we continue to see growing conflicts, pandemics, and climate shocks. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Rome-based agencies apply a focused and coordinated approach towards resource mobilization and financing throughout each organization. If confirmed, I will also press the agencies to identify new sources of revenue and will urge other donor countries to maintain or increase their contributions in the face of increasing needs.

Climate

Question. In 2010, FAO launched climate-smart agriculture designed to help develop technical, policy, and investment conditions to achieve sustainable and secure agriculture development under climate change.

- Should the United States increase its technical and financial contributions to support this initiative?

Answer. The FAO's Climate Smart Agriculture initiative is an important part of the U.N.'s commitment to address climate change, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with the FAO to ensure that the initiative advances our climate change goals. Additionally, if confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that U.S. leadership, led by the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative recently announced by Secretary Vilsack, will guide FAO's work in this initiative.

Agriculture

Question. Agriculture, including forestry, fisheries, and livestock production, generate around a fifth of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. The Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture (MICCA) program generates technical knowledge, working on the ground to monitor, assess, and implement mitigation strategies.

- How can this program be strengthened?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that farmers have access to available tools and scientific advancements, especially new technologies for sustainable, climate-smart agriculture. In particular, USDA's new Climate-Smart Agriculture Partnership Initiative can provide guidance to the Rome-based agencies to enhance and create new markets and streams of income for farmers while strengthening rural economies and improving tracking and monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration.

Question. How should FAO engage to address global agriculture's contribution to the climate crisis (i.e., reducing agriculture's carbon footprint and increasing the capacity of Agricultural activities to capture carbon) and prioritize climate mitigation?

Answer. FAO has a key role in ensuring the development of agri-food systems that produce more food with more socio-economic benefits, but less impact on the environment and natural resources. If confirmed, I will ensure FAO continues to support countries to enhance capacities to implement Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change through evidence-based programs and projects related to the agriculture, land, water, and food sectors.

Question. How should FAO approach aquatic resource protection and better integrate marine-based foods (seafood) into its programming?

Answer. Seafood from fisheries and aquaculture are a vital source of food and nutrition in the diets of many around the world—supplying both critical protein and high-quality nutrition to billions—and they are crucial components in sustainable development and developing climate-resilient food systems. If confirmed, I will strongly support efforts by the FAO to recognize the unique role of fisheries and aquaculture in the global food system and promote actions to protect the important contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CINDY HENSLEY MCCAIN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Humanitarian Assistance

Question. Long-established humanitarian principles suggest that food aid should be “agnostic,” meaning that it should be targeted toward those with the greatest need regardless of their affiliation. Unfortunately, there is also a long history of food aid being used by malign actors as a weapon against those it is meant to help.

- If confirmed, are you prepared to halt aid deliveries to areas where it is being manipulated by malign actors?

Answer. The World Food Program has significant experience programming humanitarian assistance in conflict settings and continues to strengthen its systems of oversight to ensure that assistance is not misused. With U.S. support, the World Food Program (WFP) has developed robust systems for beneficiary identification and risk mitigation and has stopped distributions in Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere when it determined food risked being stolen or diverted. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that assistance is delivered to those who most need it and is not manipulated by malign actors.

The World Food Program takes a blended approach in its food aid programs: it provides commodities in areas where food is scarce and market-based assistance (electronic transfers, vouchers, etc.) where food is available but inaccessible. When providing commodities, the agency often has to provide “blanket” feeding. When providing market-based assistance, there is room to target assistance more deliberately. There are benefits and risks associated with each of these approaches. If confirmed, it will be your job to find ways to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks associated with each of these approaches, so that the WFP can reach the right people with the right support in the right place at the right time.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to advocating for the use of biometrics within the World Food Program and across other U.N. agencies, particularly when providing market-based assistance, in order to more effectively target assistance, verify beneficiaries, and eliminate duplication and waste?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate for the implementation of effective and context appropriate accountability and monitoring mechanisms, in addition to coordinated needs assessments, to ensure that food assistance reaches the people who need it most. Biometrics is an appropriate accountability tool in contexts with the requisite technology, and if confirmed, I will support the implementation of the most effective accountability tools.

Question. Beyond biometrics, are there other ways in which you would seek to enhance the WFP’s efficiency and effectiveness, so we can stretch U.S. food aid dollars farther and save more lives?

Answer. The U.S. Government and WFP work closely together to refine methods for beneficiary targeting and identification, to seek efficiencies in the transport and delivery of food, and to monitor and evaluate programs to improve impact and minimize opportunities for waste, fraud, abuse or diversion. The United States has partnered with WFP to advance technical solutions and innovations, in order to ensure more efficient delivery of assistance. If confirmed, I will take an active interest in further enhancing our collaboration to ensure the most efficient use of taxpayer funds to reach the largest possible number of people in need.

Balanced Assistance

Question. The United States works both bilaterally and through multilateral institutions - including the United Nations food and agriculture agencies in Rome—to ameliorate humanitarian conditions, promote food security, and catalyze agriculture-led economic growth in developing countries.

- In your view, what is the appropriate balance between U.S. bilateral and multilateral assistance for food aid and food security?

Answer. Given the growing complexity and number of global humanitarian crises, the flexibility to use the right tool in each intervention and to work with a range of implementing partners is critical. The U.S. Government relies on U.N. partners, including the U.N. World Food Program and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as a number of NGO partners to implement food and nutrition programs around the globe. Each crisis calls for a unique blend of partners and assistance modalities to ensure that beneficiaries are reached with the right assistance. Both bilateral and multilateral assistance is critically important, and the appropriate balance varies across countries and contexts. If confirmed, I am committed

to ensuring that we utilize appropriate, accountable, and cost-effective humanitarian assistance mechanisms to meet food security needs.

Question. Are there instances when U.S. bilateral assistance might be more appropriate than assistance delivered through the U.N. agencies for food and agriculture?

Answer. The United States provides robust bilateral and multilateral assistance through USAID. USAID works with a range of implementing partners, including U.N. agencies and NGO partners, to carry out its mission of saving lives and reducing food insecurity. If confirmed, I am committed to evaluating and supporting effective, efficient, and accountable delivery of food assistance through the most appropriate means, whether bilateral or as delivered through the U.N. agencies for food and agriculture.

Question. What role could or should the private sector play in promoting food security and catalyzing agriculture-led economic growth?

Answer. Improving U.N. food security agencies' agility in terms of creative and innovative partnerships, including with the private sector, has been a long-term U.S. policy priority. The United States consistently emphasizes the need to integrate private sector views, expertise, and resources during the U.N. Food Systems Summit planning process. This includes the need to account for the aspirations and daily concerns of farmers themselves. If confirmed, I will not support the private sector as an indispensable part of the solution to today's challenges and will its critical role in advancing food security and agriculture-led economic growth.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to advancing science-based approaches to promoting food insecurity at the Food and Agriculture Organization, including through the use of innovative agricultural technologies?

Answer. Advancing science-based approaches is at the core of this administration's policies on addressing food insecurity. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the U.N. agencies for food and agriculture and other United Nations Member States to press for science-based decision making and greater acceptance of biotechnology.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:07 p.m. by video-conference, Hon. Chris Van Hollen, presiding.

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

Also Present: Senators Duckworth, Udall, and Graham.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Good afternoon, everybody, officially. Welcome to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

We have some terrific nominees we are going to hear from this afternoon. Before I give some brief opening remarks, though, in deference to our colleagues who are here to introduce some of our nominees, I am going to turn it over to them.

I understand we have Senator Markey here to introduce Leader Cronin. We have Senator Barrasso here to introduce Dr. Gawande, and we, I think, are expecting Senator Duckworth to introduce Captain Sullenberger.

Why don't we kick this off? I see Senator Barrasso.

Senator Barrasso, why do not you kick us off and please introduce Dr. Gawande?

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman, and I am pleased to welcome to the committee and to the Senate Dr. Atul Gawande, who is a fellow physician, and President Biden has nominated him to be Assistant Administrator for Global Health at USAID.

Dr. Atul Gawande is truly a highly respected and well known voice in American medicine. He is a surgeon. He is a writer. He is a researcher. In domestic health care discussions, he normally needs no introduction.

Dr. Gawande has devoted his life to public health as well as to medicine. His appreciation for the field started with his parents. They were both physicians, doctors, who emigrated from India to the United States.

He earned a Bachelor's degree in biology and political science from Stanford University. He is a Rhodes Scholar, earned a Master's degree in philosophy, politics, and economics at Oxford. Graduated from Harvard Medical School. Also earned a Master's of public health.

Dr. Gawande completed his general surgical residency training at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and in 2006, he was named a MacArthur Fellow for his work researching and explaining problems faced by surgeons in training.

Dr. Gawande continues caring for patients as a general and endocrine surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. He is a professor at Harvard Medical School.

He is training the next generation of doctors and, as a professor, he is focused on surgical safety, avoiding errors, and health system innovation.

Mr. Chairman, over the years, Dr. Gawande has come to this very office in this room where I am sitting today doing this introduction to meet in a bipartisan way with groups of senators to discuss issues of health care, and he and I know that there are a number of political issues on which he and I do not agree.

But let me just tell you why I am here in front of the committee today. For nearly 20 years, I have been pointing to his remarkable books, and when I talk with medical students I bring the books.

When I talk to sometimes lay organizations and groups, I talk to the books. When I talk about health care and health care providers, I talk to the books. I have all four of them here.

The first one I read was called "Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science." Knowing how realistic he is and understanding even though you do your very best and put forth your best efforts, it does not always work out the way you would like as a surgeon.

The next book I read was one called "Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance," all aimed at improving performance, in getting better. Even though we live in a world that is complicated, we can always try to do better.

And then we have Sully up here going to be nominated. "The Checklist Manifesto," taken from pilots, what pilots have learned and how we can apply those in the operating room and we have, certainly, done that at the Wyoming Medical Center and at hospitals all across the country, and I believe thousands of lives have been saved by avoiding medical errors as a result of the work that he has done.

And then the book that Senator Booker made reference to, Atul Gawande "Being Mortal," what happens as we age in life and how we care for our parents, and then how our children end up caring for us.

Dr. Gawande has a commitment to excellence, and you read through his books and you come up with the words of diligence, overcoming obstacles, avoiding errors, which is why I believe he would be a very valuable asset and why I am happy to introduce him today.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso, and thank you for being here to introduce Dr. Gawande.

And now I am going to turn it over to our colleague, Senator Markey, who is going to be introducing Leader Cronin, who has been nominated to be our Ambassador to Ireland.
 Senator Markey?

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,
 U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

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

It is my pleasure today to introduce my friend, Claire Cronin, as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, and I would also like to take this time to send my warmest regards to her husband, Ray, and two daughters, Kara and Kerry, who I am sure are watching right now.

Claire, fittingly, comes before us today as a proud public servant from eastern Massachusetts. In her hometown of Brockton, Massachusetts, the city of champions, the undefeated Rocky Marciano shattered boxing records to earn Brockton that title.

The Marvelous Marvin Hagler amplified the legend, and Claire Cronin continued in that tradition by shattering glass ceilings and being a champion in her own right.

The Massachusetts State Legislature, also known as the General Court, traces its earliest origins back to 1629 and the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Claire wrote one of its latest chapters by becoming the first female chair of the Judiciary Committee, and more recently, the first female majority leader of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

And while Claire will not be the first female U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, I will note that the only two others to hold that honorable posting also hail from Massachusetts.

As a legislator, former litigator, professional mediator, Claire has always taken the time to listen and respond to the needs and concerns of a diverse set of constituents and stakeholders.

I have seen the way she builds genuine deep bonds within her community by fighting to improve the lives of those she represents. Her commitment to public service, diplomatic acumen, and work ethic are supreme and all critical skills that will serve her well in Dublin.

Claire's leadership has also earned her multiple honors. Most recently, she was awarded the Jewish Community Relations Council Legislative Leadership Award, and was also named the Emerge Massachusetts 2020 Woman of the Year.

The U.S.-Ireland relationship is one of the warmest and closest we have. Our shared values and ancestral ties serve as a bedrock of our modern dynamic relations in the area of commerce, education, culture, and research.

As a proud Irish American, Claire understands that foundation well, and as a maverick public servant she is the ideal candidate to deepen and expand the cross community engagement and ties between our two nations.

There is an old Irish proverb that says, may the hinges of our friendship never grow rusty. I have the utmost confidence that

with Claire at the helm, our relation with Ireland will flourish very, very greatly for the 21st century.

Congratulations on your nomination, Claire. I look forward to seeing the history you write in the next chapter.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Markey, for being here with those good words.

And I see my colleague and friend and ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee, Mike Rounds, is here now and we are both honored to be chairing this full committee hearing for these great witnesses.

Now let me turn it over to Senator Duckworth who is going to be introducing Captain C. B. “Sully” Sullenberger III to be the representative to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Senator Duckworth, take it away.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS**

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. It is so hard to follow Senator Markey. I am not as poetic as he is, but I will do my best.

[Laughter.]

Senator DUCKWORTH. It is a real privilege to join the committee today to introduce my good friend, fellow pilot and President Biden’s nominee for the distinguished rank of ambassador and U.S. Representative to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, Captain Chesley Burnett “Sully” Sullenberger III.

Mr. Chairman, Captain Sullenberger has dedicated his entire professional life to the pursuit of aviation safety. I commend President Biden for nominating him to represent our nation before ICAO and I am confident that his expertise, experience, and dedication to public service will strengthen our efforts to achieve greater cooperation in international air transportation.

He will restore America’s leadership in international institutions at a time when our adversaries are openly questioning our capabilities. The United States’ FAA and our aviation regulations are the gold standard for the world.

This gold standard has been tarnished by the failures in oversight of the Boeing MAX-8’s development and deployment. We are fixing these failures here at home, but our adversaries seek to undermine America’s leadership by exploiting tragedy for their geopolitical gain.

Captain Sullenberger’s confirmation as Ambassador to the ICAO will immediately send a signal to the world that United States excellence in aviation and aviation safety is here to stay.

While he is best known for piloting the Miracle on the Hudson, Captain Sullenberger is a longtime aviation safety expert, a renowned public speaker, and a successful author.

Born and raised in Denison, Texas, Captain Sullenberger pursued his childhood love of aviation by learning to fly while still in high school. He pursued his passion for flying at the United States Air Force Academy, where he received the Outstanding Cadet in Airmanship Award.

He went on to serve as a fighter pilot in the United States Air Force, serving in both North America and Europe, and became a flight leader and training officer attaining the rank of captain.

After serving our nation in uniform, Captain Sullenberger became an airline pilot with Pacific Southwest Airlines in 1980, which was then later acquired by U.S. Airways, and he flew with U.S. Airways until his retirement in 2010, though he still flies privately.

Throughout his career, Captain Sullenberger has been an active and passionate safety advocate. While in the Air Force, he was selected to perform accident investigation duties and later he also served as a representative of the Airline Pilots Association during National Transportation Safety Board accident investigations.

Captain Sullenberger served as APA's local air safety chairman, where he contributed to FAA advisory circulars. He was also instrumental in developing, implementing, and eventually teaching U.S. Airways' crew resource management course.

Of course, Captain Sullenberger may be best known for his heroic actions on January 15th of 2009 when he and his crew safely guided U.S. Airways Flight 1549 through an emergency water landing in New York City's Hudson River after their Airbus A-320 lost thrust following bird strikes in both engines.

Thanks to the calm and collected leadership of Captain Sullenberger and his fellow crew members, tragedy was avoided that day and all 155 people aboard Flight 1549 were rescued and reconnected with their families.

Because of him and his crew, children still have their parents, grandmothers and grandfathers were there for the birth of their grandchildren, and many more lives were impacted positively than just the 155 he saved on that day.

Time Magazine ranked Captain Sullenberger second in its top 100 most influential heroes and icons of 2009, and France awarded him their highest order of merit, the Legion of Honor.

Captain Sullenberger is presently an international lecturer and keynote speaker focusing on the importance of aviation safety, high-performance systems improvement, leadership and crisis management, among other topics.

It speaks to Sully's love of country that after already serving his nation in uniform and after a second career ensuring the safety of the flying public he is now willing to take on this new tour of duty.

When he called me and said he was thinking of accepting this nomination, I both cheered him on and offered him words of caution because he is taking on a heck of a lot, and I am so grateful that he is willing to do it.

We Americans are lucky to have Captain Sullenberger on our side and that he will be our representative, and the world is lucky that he will be there, once confirmed, as Ambassador to the ICAO to truly regain aviation safety as a premier institution when it comes to the traveling public.

If confirmed, I have no doubt that Captain Sullenberger will continue his long-standing passion for safety and cooperation in global air travels as our nation's Ambassador to the ICAO.

I thank the committee for allowing me to introduce my friend and strongly encourage all senators to support Captain Sullenberger's nomination to be ICAO Ambassador.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Duckworth, for that very eloquent and, I would say, poetic as well introduction.

And I am just going to introduce briefly the members of our second panel. I will have a fuller introduction later. We just had introductions from the three distinguished nominees on our first panel. We have another round of equally distinguished nominees on the second panel and I am just going to go through that list.

We have with us Mr. Kent Doyle Logsdon to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, Ms. Sharon L. Cromer to be Ambassador to the Republic of Gambia, Ambassador Virginia E. Palmer to be our Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana, and Howard A. Van Vranken to be Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana.

I am going to keep my opening remarks short because we have a lot to cover, and as Senator Rounds and my colleagues know, we also have a couple of votes that are scheduled to take place shortly. We will have to juggle those.

These hearings, of course, are a very important part of the Senate's constitutional responsibility of advice and consent, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has historically taken this responsibility very seriously.

This hearing is part of that process. I will say, and the chairman of the full committee, Senator Menendez, has mentioned this, we do have a backlog of nominees who have been appointed by the President, recommended by the President, but still do not have hearings scheduled.

And so it is really important as we do our constitutional duty and also make sure that we are addressing the national security and foreign policy concerns of our country that we get those folks through the hearing process just as quickly as possible.

With that said, I am pleased that we have these seven exceptional nominees before us today on two panels. These nominees, if confirmed, will help promote the United States' interests on issues of central importance to our country and to this committee, including aviation safety, climate change, bolstering the global pandemic response and vaccine rollout, and strengthening our relationships in key countries in Europe and in Africa.

We have big challenges ahead but I am made more optimistic by the sterling credentials, diverse backgrounds, and impressive careers of today's nominees.

We are joined by several distinguished career members of the Foreign Service, a Senate-confirmed Ambassador, a respected state legislator, a leading surgeon and public health researcher and writer, and one living breathing Miracle on the Hudson.

And by the way, if you have not seen the movie "Sully" I recommend it to you. I just saw it again recently.

Welcome to all of you. Now I want to turn it over to my colleague, Senator Rounds, for any opening remarks, and then we will begin with witness testimony.

Senator Rounds?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROUNDS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA**

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon to all of you on what is no doubt one of the proudest days of your life and that of your families. Your commitment to public service is commendable. I want to thank you and your families for your willingness to serve.

Let me just begin by just saying I am a part of the Sully Sullenberger fan club. Captain Sullenberger, you were piloting U.S. Airways Flight 1549 on January 15 of '09 when it struck a flock of geese, taking out both engines. Your quick action to ditch the plane in the Hudson River saved all 155 souls on board.

After serving as an Air Force pilot and 30 years as an ATP—an air transport pilot—you have spent the last 10 years as an international lecturer and keynote speaker on a number of topics, including aviation safety.

I will be interested to hear about your concerns and priorities for the ICAO, China's rising influence in international bodies such as the ICAO, and whether ICAO might play a role in helping restore post-pandemic international air travel.

Dr. Gawande, if confirmed, you will bring decades of experience in medicine and public health to the USAID. I believe your work running various public health nonprofits may provide management and logistics experience relevant to USAID's enormous global health supply chains.

If confirmed, you will need to navigate a highly fractured U.S. Government response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. You will also have to manage USAID's relationship with the CDC, which for decades has been fraught with conflict, particularly in countries where both agencies have a presence.

I will be interested to hear your views on how you plan to help elevate global health security and pandemic preparedness as a national security priority.

As the ranking member of the Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee, I would appreciate hearing your views about the future of U.S.-China collaboration on public health in Africa generally and the Africa CDC specifically.

I also note that you have described abortion as a woman's right to choose. I am pro-life. I would like to hear whether you think USAID funding should go to support abortion in foreign countries.

Ms. Cronin, as we all know, the United States and Ireland enjoy close relations and have extensive historical and cultural ties. More than 31.5 million U.S. citizens and residents claim Irish ancestry, and I suspect even more on the 17th of March.

Ireland is a reliable international partner and is currently a rotating member of the U.N. Security Council. We have worked closely with Ireland, particularly on pushing back on China's abuses.

That does not mean there is not hard work to be done. There is room for improvement in the area of countering human trafficking, for example.

It will also be a challenge to persuade Ireland to adopt widely-accepted economic measures that it perceives might make it less attractive for foreign investment, such as the 15 percent global corporate tax minimum.

I also look forward to hearing about how you might draw upon your background as an attorney, mediator, and skilled politician to reinvigorate implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in the wake of COVID and the post-Brexit and Northern Ireland Protocol.

Thank you all for being here today and I look forward to your comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Now we will go straight to our witness testimony and why do not we lead off with Captain Sullenberger?

Captain Sullenberger, let me turn it over to you.

**STATEMENT OF CAPT. C.B. SULLENBERGER III OF TEXAS,
NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA ON THE COUNCIL OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION WITH THE RANK
OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE**

Captain SULLENBERGER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, members of the committee, I am deeply honored to be with you today as the President's nominee to become the U.S. Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Please allow me to begin my statement today with a few comments about my biggest supporters, my wife, Lorrie, and our two daughters, Kate and Kelly. Kate, our older daughter, is a doctor of veterinary medicine in an emergency clinic. Kelly is working full time as a manager of enrollment for a major university and will finish her Ph.D. in the spring.

My wife, Lorrie, put her career on hold to stay home with our girls when, as an airline pilot, I was gone two-thirds of every month. We were equal partners in leading our family through decades of airline life, and we are so grateful that both of our young women found their life passions early and have pursued them so enthusiastically and successfully. If confirmed, Lorrie and I are looking forward to an exciting new chapter in our lives.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply grateful to the President for this nomination and the confidence in me that he and Secretary of State Blinken have shown by asking that I assume this important role.

I seek this position because I want to once again serve this nation that has afforded me such wonderful opportunities that have filled my life with purpose and meaning.

In leveraging my life experience, I want to help restore and rebuild U.S. leadership in global aviation and increase economic opportunity for all Americans while improving their safety and security when they travel by air.

With COVID, climate change, and security threats, we are at an inflection point. While we are facing great challenges, we also have great opportunities to positively affect global aviation standards and recommended practices for decades to come.

At several points in my over half-century aviation career, along with my many colleagues, I have made significant contributions to our aviation progress.

At each juncture, after each success, I have hoped that my greatest contributions might still lie ahead, and at this juncture that is still my hope and my goal.

The International Civil Aviation Organization may be far from a household name but its purpose and performance are crucial to U.S. national security, and it benefits from the history of American leadership, dating to its founding in 1947.

A remarkable growth in civil aviation over the last 75 years is a testament not just to American innovation but also to the tangible value in multilateral bodies such as ICAO that facilitate cooperation, coordination, and mutual benefit.

If confirmed, I would strive to extend the legacy of U.S. leadership on matters related to aviation safety and security and to harmonize the global aviation standards.

I would underscore the administration's commitment to meaningful action on carbon offsets, sustainable aviation fuels, and gradual direct emissions reductions.

I would also focus intently on actions to strengthen ICAO's culture of transparency and accountability, actions that cannot be delayed, given the recent history of mismanagement at the organization.

I believe corrective measures became more achievable with the recent election of Juan Carlos Salazar as the organization's new secretary general and, if confirmed, I would be a relentless advocate for necessary reforms.

I would also be attentive to the risks posed to international organizations such as ICAO by authoritarian states who see benefit in undermining the purpose and performance of these multilateral venues.

Standard-setting bodies such as ICAO must work for the benefit of all its members, and in keeping with their intended roles, principles, and values. For ICAO, that means the safety, security, and sustainability of civil aviation.

That mission is threatened when member states disregard their international commitments, as in the case of the Belarus Ryanair incident or the repeated unannounced launch of missiles by the North Korean regime.

I also understand that successful American engagement at ICAO requires the strongest possible relationships across federal agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration, the Transportation Security Administration, and the Department of Transportation, and continuous conversation with aviation industry groups.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I would succeed many capable American representatives before me, and I would make every effort to live up to their collective standard.

If I am fortunate enough to represent the United States at ICAO it would be the honor of my lifetime.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

[Prepared statement of Captain Sullenberger follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHESLEY BURNETT SULLENBERGER III

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee: I am deeply honored to be with you today as the President's nominee to become the U.S. Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Please allow me to begin my statement today with a few comments about my biggest supporters, my wife Lorrie and our two daughters, Kate and Kelly. Kate, our older daughter, is a doctor of veterinary medicine in an emergency clinic. Kelly is working full time as a manager in enrollment for a major university and will finish her PhD in the spring. Lorrie put her career on hold to stay home with our girls when as an airline pilot I was gone two thirds of every month. We were equal partners in leading our family through decades of airline life. And we are so grateful that both of our young women found their life passions early and have pursued them so enthusiastically and successfully. If confirmed, Lorrie and I are looking forward to an exciting new chapter in our lives.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply grateful to the President for this nomination and the confidence in me that he and Secretary of State Blinken have shown by asking that I assume this important role.

I seek this position because I want to once again serve this nation that has afforded me such wonderful opportunities that have filled my life with such purpose and meaning. In leveraging my life experience, I want to help restore and rebuild U.S. leadership in global aviation and increase economic opportunity for all Americans, while improving their safety and security when they travel by air.

With COVID, climate change, and security threats, we are at an inflection point. While we are facing great challenges, we also have great opportunities to positively affect global aviation standards and recommended practices for decades to come.

At several points in my over half-century aviation career, along with many colleagues, I have made significant contributions to our aviation progress. At each juncture, after each success, I have hoped that my greatest contributions might still lie ahead. And at this juncture, that is still my hope and my goal.

The International Civil Aviation Organization may be far from a household name, but its purpose and performance are crucial to U.S. national security, and it benefits from a history of American leadership dating to its foundation in 1947. The remarkable growth in civil aviation over the last 75 years is a testament not just to American innovation, but also to the tangible value in multilateral bodies such as ICAO that facilitate cooperation, coordination, and mutual benefit.

If confirmed, I would strive to extend the legacy of U.S. leadership on matters related to aviation safety and security, and to harmonize global aviation standards. I would underscore the administration's commitment to meaningful action on carbon offsets, sustainable aviation fuels, and gradual direct emissions reductions.

I would also focus intently on actions to strengthen ICAO's culture of transparency and accountability—actions that cannot be delayed given the recent history of mismanagement at the organization. I believe corrective measures became more achievable with the recent election of Juan Carlos Salazar as the organization's new Secretary General, and if confirmed, I would be a relentless advocate for necessary reforms.

I would also be attentive to the risks posed to international organizations such as ICAO by authoritarian states who see benefit in undermining the purpose and performance of these multilateral venues. Standard-setting bodies such as ICAO must work for the benefit of all its members and in keeping with their intended roles, principles, and values. For ICAO, that means the safety, security, and sustainability of civil aviation. That mission is threatened when member states disregard their international commitments, as in the case of the Belarus Ryanair incident, or the repeated, unannounced launch of missiles by the North Korean regime.

I also understand that successful American engagement at ICAO requires the strongest possible relationships across federal agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration, the Transportation Security Administration, and the Department of Transportation, and continuous conversation with aviation industry groups.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I would succeed many capable American representatives before me, and would make every effort to live up to their collective standard. The United States has every reason to be proud of its leadership and continued preeminence in civil aviation, and I carry that pride with me. If I am fortunate enough to represent the United States at ICAO, it would be the honor of my lifetime.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Captain Sullenberger.

And as I mentioned, we are going to have some votes going on but we are going to try and keep this hearing going.

And I understand my colleague, Senator Rounds, is going to go vote and then he will return and I will go vote.

Next, let us turn it over to Dr. Gawande, who has been nominated to be Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development for Global Health.

Dr. Gawande?

**STATEMENT OF DR. ATUL A. GAWANDE OF MASSACHUSETTS,
NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOP-
MENT**

Dr. GAWANDE. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, members of the committee, I am honored to appear today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Administrator for Global Health at USAID.

I am immensely grateful to President Biden and Administrator Power for putting their trust in me at this critical time. Serving in this role would be a privilege and responsibility my parents could not have imagined for a child of theirs when they met in Brooklyn in the 1960s as young new doctors from India.

I would like to thank my late father, and among my family attending I would like to thank my mother and my sister, Sumeeta, for their love and support, my children, Walker, Hattie, and Hunter, who have made me so proud, and my wife, Kathleen, whose encouragement and sacrifices have made this opportunity possible.

I have been among the beneficiaries of USAID's vital work. My father grew up in a village in Maharashtra that went from suffering recurrent famine and praying for food aid to growing cash crops like sugar cane and cotton for export, thanks to USAID's critical support of agricultural development in India years ago.

Then as a child born in New York, I had an anaphylactic reaction to the smallpox vaccine, preventing my ability to complete vaccination and travel abroad.

USAID's leadership in helping eradicate smallpox in 1979 meant that I could not only travel and work in global health but even be nominated to lead the bureau and dedicated people behind that effort.

If I am confirmed, I commit to working with you and others in Congress in a bipartisan manner to strengthen and support USAID's staff and to further the agency's longstanding leadership in global health, and I will seek to specifically address three simultaneous colossal needs: controlling COVID-19, preparing for the next pandemic, and strengthening global health systems to regain the massive ground lost in advancing life expectancy.

The global health challenges that are facing USAID and our country are daunting. But if I am confirmed, I believe my career as a surgeon, journalist, and public health leader have prepared me for service as assistant administrator.

Over the last two decades, I have had a singular focus on reducing suffering and saving lives through leadership and innovation, to reduce disparities in systems of health care and public health worldwide.

In my research and writing, I have endeavored to expose gaps and produce solutions, and then in my public health roles I have worked to deliver those solutions widely.

And from this firsthand experience, I have learned not just how to make investments but how to use them to make systems work across a wide range of domains in health.

For instance, I led a global partnership that created a two-minute surgical safety checklist that was found in a trial in hospitals from Seattle to rural Tanzania to reduce complications and deaths by more than one-third. Then I helped lead a decade of work that has produced daily use of that checklist in 75 percent of surgical procedures globally.

Through Lifebox, an NGO I co-founded, we lowered the cost of oxygen-monitoring equipment for operating rooms in low income countries by 80 percent.

I also co-founded Ariadne Labs, a center for health systems innovation where we have improved the safety of childbirth in India and sub-Saharan Africa, strengthened outbreak response in the H1N1 Ebola and coronavirus pandemics, and improved primary care in low income countries.

Early in 2020, I turned my work toward the coronavirus pandemic. I co-founded CIC Health, a public benefit corporation to provide logistics and operations for U.S. COVID-19 needs that our existing health system struggled to meet.

We have provided now 3 million coronavirus tests and vaccinations across the Northeast and are now feverishly working to deliver testing capacity for thousands of schools in need.

This experience, along with my publications in medical journals, the New Yorker, and elsewhere during the pandemic led to two additional roles.

I was privileged to serve on the Biden-Harris Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board and then as a co-leader of STAT, a Rockefeller Foundation-supported alliance of COVID-19 officials for 40-plus states who have met weekly in a bipartisan manner for the last year to design and share solutions for controlling the pandemic.

Across my work, I have seen the quiet unrecognized heroism of the people in our public health and development agencies across the country and the world.

They have saved and are saving more lives than most will know by taking on the toughest health challenges of our time, and that is why I could not be more excited by the possibility of joining them at USAID.

It is an extraordinary privilege to be here. I look forward to answering your questions.

[Prepared statement of Dr. Gawande follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. ATUL GAWANDE

Senator Van Hollen, Senator Rounds, members of the committee, I am honored to appear today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Administrator for Global Health at the U.S. Agency for International Development. I am immensely grateful to President Biden and Administrator Power for putting their trust in me at this critical time.

Serving in this role would be a privilege and responsibility my parents could not have imagined for a child of theirs when they met in Brooklyn in the 1960s as young new doctors from India. I would like to thank my mother, my late father, and my sister, Sumeeta, for their love and support; my children-Walker, Hattie, and Hunter-who have made me so proud; and my wife, Kathleen, whose encouragement and sacrifices have made this opportunity possible.

I have been among the beneficiaries of USAID's vital work. My father grew up in a village in Maharashtra that went from suffering recurrent famine and praying for food aid to growing cash crops like sugar cane and cotton for export, thanks to USAID's critical support of agricultural development in India. Then, as a child, I had an anaphylactic reaction to the smallpox vaccine, preventing my ability to complete vaccination and travel abroad. USAID's leadership in helping eradicate smallpox in 1979 meant that I could not only travel and work in global health, but even be nominated to lead the bureau and dedicated people behind that effort.

If confirmed, I commit to working with you and others in Congress in a bipartisan manner to strengthen and support USAID's staff and to further the agency's long-established leadership in global health. And I will seek to specifically address three simultaneous, colossal needs: controlling COVID-19; preparing for the next pandemic; and strengthening global health systems to regain the massive ground lost in advancing life expectancy.

The global health challenges facing USAID and our country are daunting. But if confirmed, I believe my career as a surgeon, journalist, and public health leader have prepared me for service as Assistant Administrator. Over the last two decades, I have had a singular focus on reducing suffering and saving lives through leadership and innovation to reduce disparities in systems of health care and public health worldwide. In my research and writing, I've endeavored to expose gaps and produce solutions. In my public health roles, I've worked to deliver those solutions widely. And from this first-hand experience, I've learned not just how to make investments, but how to use them to make systems work across a wide range of domains in health.

For instance, I led a global partnership that created a two-minute surgical safety checklist that was found in a trial in hospitals from Seattle to rural Tanzania to reduce complications and deaths by more than one-third. Then I helped lead a decade of work that has produced daily use of the checklist in 75 percent of surgical procedures globally. Through Lifebox, an NGO I co-founded, we lowered the cost of oxygen-monitoring equipment for operating rooms in low-income countries by 80 percent. I also founded Ariadne Labs, a center for health systems innovation that has improved the safety of childbirth in India and sub-Saharan Africa; improved U.S. care in serious, life-limiting illness; strengthened outbreak response in the H1N1, Ebola, and coronavirus pandemics; and improved primary care in low-income countries.

Early in 2020, I turned my work toward the coronavirus pandemic. Nothing has made the gaps in the delivery of health and survival clearer. I co-founded CIC Health, a public benefit corporation to provide logistics and operations for U.S. COVID-19 needs that our existing health systems struggled to meet. We have provided three million coronavirus tests and vaccinations across the northeast and are now working to deliver testing capacity for thousands of schools in need. This experience—along with my publications in medical journals, the New Yorker, and elsewhere during the pandemic—led to two additional roles. I was privileged to serve on the Biden-Harris Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board, and as co-leader of STAT, a Rockefeller Foundation-supported alliance of COVID-19 officials for 40-plus states who have met weekly for the last year to design and share solutions for controlling the pandemic.

Across my work, I have seen the quiet, unrecognized heroism of the people in our public health and development agencies across the country and the world. They have saved and are saving more lives than most will ever know by taking on the toughest health challenges of our time. That is why I could not be more excited by the possibility of joining them at USAID.

It is an extraordinary privilege to be here. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Leader Claire D. Cronin, who has been nominated to be our Ambassador to Ireland.

Leader Cronin?

**STATEMENT OF HON. CLAIRE D. CRONIN OF MASSACHUSETTS,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
IRELAND**

Ms. CRONIN. Thank you to Senator Markey for the kind introduction.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, it is my honor to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence.

If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to work closely with Congress and the administration to advance United States priorities and reinforce our shared values in Ireland.

First, I would like to thank my husband, Ray, as well as our daughters, Kara and Kerry, for their love and support. I am also grateful to have the strong support of my brothers and sisters, and my close extended family—in-laws, cousins, nieces, and nephews, and of course, my dear friends, who have become a second family to me.

My career is rooted in public service and the law. My path was shaped by the example set by my parents. My mother was a public school teacher and my father a Pearl Harbor survivor who served in the Pacific throughout World War Two. He attended law school with the help of the GI Bill when he returned home.

I was honored to be elected to serve in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 2012. I was grateful for the opportunity to serve as the first woman to chair the Judiciary Committee in the House and today as the first woman House Majority Leader.

My experience as a mediator shaped my ability to work within the House in a constructive and bipartisan manner. When my grandfather left Donegal for the promise that America held, I cannot help but wonder what he would have thought if he knew his granddaughter will one day be testifying before this esteemed committee as the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland.

The Irish first arrived on our shores before the founding of our nation. Their significant contributions, sacrifice, and hard work helped define the American spirit and shape our success today.

Over 30 million Americans claim Irish heritage. The historical, cultural, and economic ties between the United States and Ireland are undeniable and will forever unite our countries.

This strong relationship is demonstrated within my own family. We are blessed and forever enriched by the addition of my sister-in-law Breffni, who was born and raised in Dublin.

If confirmed, the safety and security of Americans in Ireland will be my top priority. If confirmed, I will also advance the shared values that are the bedrock of our enduring ties.

These priorities include addressing global challenges together, increasing our shared prosperity, and strengthening our people-to-people ties.

Ireland has a strong commitment to multilateral institutions, which is central in promoting peace, prosperity, and stability.

While maintaining a policy of military neutrality, Ireland continues to be a valuable partner in maintaining global security through sustained contributions to U.N. peacekeeping, dependable humanitarian assistance, and membership in the D-ISIS Coalition.

If confirmed, I will work with Ireland to ensure that addressing global challenges and partnering in global security continue to be strong elements of our bilateral relationship.

Our economic relationship is the pillar of our strong ties. The U.S. is Ireland's strongest and largest trade and investment part-

ner. More than 900 U.S. firms operate in Ireland, and Ireland is currently the ninth largest investor in the U.S.

If confirmed, I will promote the United States as an investment and exchange destination for Irish companies and individuals, and advocate for increased two-way trade and investment to create jobs in the United States and Ireland.

The United States and Ireland remain committed to the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, which has been the bedrock of peace, stability, and prosperity in Northern Ireland.

If confirmed, I will encourage the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Ireland to engage in productive and cooperative dialogue to resolve the differences over the Northern Ireland Protocol. Our relationship is close and enduring, one that will continue to grow ever stronger as we work together on a range of shared issues.

If confirmed, I will advance our shared priorities and values, expand our rich economic and commercial cooperation, and strengthen our people-to-people ties.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Cronin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CLAIRE D. CRONIN

Thank you, Senator Markey, for the kind introduction.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, it is my honor to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to work closely with Congress and the administration to advance United States priorities and reinforce our shared values in Ireland.

First, I would like to thank my husband, Ray, as well as our daughters, Kara and Kerry, for their love and support. I am also grateful to have the strong support of my brothers and sisters and extended family, in-laws, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

My career is rooted in public service and the law. My path was shaped by the examples set by my parents—my mother was a public school teacher and my father a Pearl Harbor survivor who served in the Pacific throughout World War II. He attended law school with the help of the GI Bill when he returned home.

I was honored to be elected to serve in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 2012. While serving, I was grateful for the opportunity to serve as the first woman chair of the Judiciary Committee in the House, and today as the first woman House Majority Leader.

My experience as a mediator shaped my ability to work within the House in a constructive and bipartisan manner.

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If confirmed, I will work with Ireland to ensure that addressing global challenges and partnering in global security continue to be strong elements of our bilateral relationship.

Our economic relationship is a pillar of our strong ties. The United States is Ireland's strongest and largest trade and investment partner. More than 900 U.S. firms operate in Ireland and, Ireland is currently the ninth largest investor in the United States.

If confirmed, I will promote the United States as an investment and exchange destination for Irish companies, and advocate for increased two-way trade and investment to create jobs in the United States and Ireland.

The United States and Ireland remain committed to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which has been the bedrock of peace, stability, and prosperity in Northern Ireland.

If confirmed, I will encourage the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Ireland, to engage in productive and cooperative dialogue to resolve differences over the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The United States' relationship with Ireland is close and enduring—one that will continue to grow ever stronger as we work together on a range of shared issues.

If confirmed, I will advance our shared political priorities and values; expand our rich economic and commercial cooperation and strengthen our people-to-people ties.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Leader Cronin, and thank all of the nominees for their testimony here today, and now we will begin questions. We have got a lot of ground to try to cover.

Let me start with you, Captain Sullenberger, and it really is a two-part question. You referenced in your testimony the fact that ICAO is conducting an investigation of the May 2021 forced landing by Belarus of Ryanair.

That was the flight bound for Lithuania, and they did it in order to arrest a dissident journalist, a flagrant violation of human rights, assault on the free press, and potentially a contravention of international aviation law.

What options does ICAO have to address this kind of conduct in order to prevent a repeat of these kind of actions?

Captain SULLENBERGER. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that important question, and it is a very important question internationally.

The forced diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 by Belarus for the arrest of an opposition journalist showed flagrant disregard for international norms of aviation security and safety and, clearly, undermined the critical trust between pilots and air traffic control in the flight information region.

ICAO, as a U.N. organization responsible for setting global standards for the safety and security of international civil aviation, must ensure that those standards are upheld.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage our partners and allies to fully participate in the ICAO investigation by sharing all information relevant to the incident with ICAO's investigative team and to push for substantive findings, including a chronology of events to be presented to the Council in November.

Already steps have been taken to sanction those involved, including the Belarus minister of transport, the air navigation commissioner, and another official.

I think more action needs to be taken. There is, in the ICAO Charter Article 88, that in certain conditions we can temporarily remove the voting rights of a state for violating international norms.

I think it requires a whole-of-government approach. We should be pulling every lever necessary to hold accountable those responsible for this act.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for that response. Let me ask you briefly about the issue of climate change and ICAO's role in curbing carbon emissions from international aviation.

I know you are aware of the CORSIA initiative. What more should we be doing in this area and what role can you and ICAO play in making even more progress, going forward?

Captain SULLENBERGER. CORSIA is an important interim step and it is important that we begin immediately.

As you know, with any crisis any denial or delay lowers our chances of success. The sooner we start, the more options we are going to have to deal with this existential threat, the better those options will be, and the lower the cost total in the long run.

The administration supports legislative action to enable full U.S. implementation of CORSIA and, if confirmed, I will support this effort. Many U.S. airlines are already voluntarily beginning taking such action. Those actions remain voluntary through 2026.

I think, again, a whole of government approach. Everything we can be doing we should be doing, including a wide distribution of sustainable aviation fuels in particular.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I am now going to—I see Senator Rounds has returned and I am going to turn it over to him for questioning and go vote.

And Senator Rounds, I see Senator Shaheen is next after you but let me turn it over to you. I will be back. Thank you all.

Senator ROUNDS. [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just curious, will we be doing separate questioning for each of the members or can we discuss our questions with the entire panel at this time?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I think—feel free to ask anybody. If there is interest, we can do another short round for this panel because I did have some questions for some of the other witnesses on this panel as well.

Senator ROUNDS. Excellent. If it is okay with you, Mr. Chairman, I will do my questions with the entire panel and allow Senator Shaheen to do the same, and by that time you should be back in charge again.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. Take care. Thanks. Thank you.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just begin, first of all, by thanking all of you once again for participating and I want to begin with Captain Sullenberger.

In your opening statement, you identified some priority areas that you will focus on at the I-C-A-O, or ICAO. Can you elaborate on what you see as the major U.S. interests for participation in

ICAO, and also what benefits does the United States receive from membership?

Captain SULLENBERGER. Thank you, Senator, for that important question.

And that is part of why I want to serve in this capacity. I think it is important that we raise the level of awareness among the American people about what ICAO is and what it does and why it is important, and I want to use my public profile to help do that along with all my colleagues at FAA, at DOT, at TSA and in conference with your committee and the members.

It is important that the American people understand that in ICAO they are responsible for setting and enforcing the best practices, the standards and recommended procedures that airlines and all aviation operators use globally, and it is important for safety and security of everyone who travels internationally by air that those standards be as high as are practicable and that they are uniform and harmonized throughout the world.

And for American companies it is important that we try to harmonize these standards and practices globally so there are not great differences in procedures and standards between areas of the world, and it makes the whole use of airspace more efficient and makes our companies more successful and profitable.

It is important that we—go ahead.

Senator ROUNDS. No. Please finish.

Captain SULLENBERGER. It is important in advancing U.S. economic interests, and one of the things that has been brought up already that we really need to do is to restore and make more robust U.S. leadership in global aviation because we have powerful strategic competitors out there, and particularly the PRC.

And so we need to rally our allies, our partners, and like-minded states to promote values of democracy, of free markets, and not some of the values of autocratic states that appear in some ICAO documents at the request of the PRC that have been certified by the Communist Chinese Party, or that may include some of their rhetoric and their ideology.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. That kind of leads into my second question, sir. Some policymakers are concerned about the increasing influence and role of countries that are viewed as U.S. competitors in U.N. bodies.

For example, in recent years, U.N. specialized agencies, including ICAO, are increasingly being led by Chinese nationals. What is your assessment of China's efforts to increase its standing and influence in ICAO?

Captain SULLENBERGER. Currently, because of the methodology that is used based upon nations' contributions to U.N. agencies, we are allowed certain members of U.S. nationals to work in certain U.N. agencies.

Based upon our contributions and our funding for U.N. agencies, we should have at ICAO over 30 U.S. employees and now we have less than 10.

That is one of the things that is foremost in my mind is to improve opportunities for employment at ICAO for Americans who have the knowledge, the skill, the expertise to improve aviation globally and to advance U.S. values and interests and not those of

authoritarian states. That is one of the most important things that we can do.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. And, look, I appreciate your stepping forward and participating in the public policy discussions. Thank you.

Dr. Gawande, various provisions of law restrict the use of U.S. taxpayer funds to perform or promote abortion overseas. If confirmed, will you commit to upholding these laws in both letter and spirit?

Dr. GAWANDE. I am very clear Congress makes the laws. USAID is not permitted to fund abortion and I am committed to continuing to comply with the laws and regulations that are—that pertain here.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

The committee recently passed a bill to elevate global health security and pandemic preparedness as a national security priority, including by establishing a global health diplomacy lead at the State Department to better align the work of USAID and CDC in the field.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with this committee to make sure it is faithfully implemented?

Dr. GAWANDE. I will, certainly, work closely with the committee if the bill goes through to law to make sure it is appropriately—that we are in compliance with the law and that it is implemented.

I strongly support improving our pandemic preparedness and global health security response and look forward to working with you for ways that we can expand our capabilities even further.

Senator ROUNDS. Dr. Gawande, thank you very much.

Ms. Cronin, Ireland's economic environment attracts foreign investment due to its low tax rates. There has been tension over Ireland's resistance to the 15 percent global corporate tax minimum that over 130 countries have already signed on to.

How will you support efforts to advance solutions on tax issues with Ireland? And also, how would you help reconcile Ireland's differences with the global corporate tax minimum, or is there an alternative to be pursued?

Ms. CRONIN. Thank you very much, Senator, for your question. It is, certainly, an issue that has driven a great amount of discussion and, at times, controversy as we are moving forward with the U.S. proposed global minimum tax rate.

As you rightly stated, over 130 countries have come to reach consensus on this rate, and the idea behind it to level the playing field relative to foreign direct investment in other countries.

Ireland is one of the three countries within the EU who has not agreed to the minimum tax rate. I, certainly, recognize their desire for tax sovereignty, although Ireland has a very strong and positive climate for investment.

They have a well-educated English-speaking and multilingual workforce, a strong judiciary, proximity to both the United States and the EU, good transportation links. All of these things are factors that businesses do consider when they decide to locate in another country or do business there.

I think we have already seen that we have many, many industry leaders have a footprint in Dublin or in Ireland. Certainly, the tax

rate—the 12.5 percent tax rate—is something that may have been attractive to those seeking to invest.

But as I said earlier, there are many, many other factors which come into that decision. I think it is important to note the minimum global tax is a floor, not a ceiling. It does still allow good competition and a level playing field.

I know Ireland is very committed to work within a multilateral framework. I would work, try to facilitate discussions with tax experts from the U.S. to meet with Irish Government officials, work within the EOCB to, hopefully, over time, promote this minimum tax with Ireland and hope that without too much longer that they may join with 130 other countries who have agreed to do so.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, and thank you once again for stepping forward. My time has expired, and at this time I would turn to Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator Rounds, and congratulations to all of the nominees this afternoon. We look forward to the opportunity to serve with you.

I want to begin, Captain Sullenberger, with you, because you mentioned in your opening remarks the Ryanair flight, and I had the opportunity to be in Lithuania shortly after that flight was brought down by Lukashenko in Belarus.

And there was a real outrage not just in Lithuania but in Eastern European countries about the impact of a dictator being able to bring down a flight and how that would affect the freedom of all air travel.

I wondered if you could speak to what you think ICAO could do to address any future attempts like we saw in Belarus that brought down a plane just for political purposes.

Captain SULLENBERGER. It is very clear to me, Senator, that the United States must have an effective leadership role, again, with our allies, our partners, our like-minded states, to strengthen ICAO's standards so there is not a gap that autocrats can use and use our freedoms against us through deception, through coercion, to pose a situation where they say that there is a bomb threat and that the device might detonate if they fly into the next airspace or destination and that they must be diverted to Belarus.

And again, that fractures the trust between air traffic in that region and—air traffic control and the pilots and it violates every norm.

There is a debate about whether or not it violates international law. Perhaps the laws and the requirements, the standards, need to be strengthened to close these gaps that others might use to do something similar.

We should be using every lever of power, every bit of influence we can, to isolate, to punish those who do these kinds of acts and make it less likely that anyone else will do that.

But it is going to require a whole of government approach and a real effective partnership achieving consensus among many nations to do what needs to be done. It is going to be hard, but we have to start right now.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much for that response, and I hope you will, once confirmed, take the lead in trying to help make that happen at ICAO.

Dr. Gawande, I want to follow up with you. I remember your—some of your articles were, really, blueprints as we were looking at trying to do the Affordable Care Act and put in place an improved health care system. Thank you so much for all of your writings and your research.

I want to ask you about the global gag rule, because when the Biden-Harris administration took over one of the first things they did was to rescind the global gag rule, which I think has been very important to women and to families around the world because we know that it affects the ability of family planning agencies to really engage—often engage with their patients.

Can you speak to the difference that that makes in the ability to provide for the health of women around the world?

Dr. GAWANDE. Thank you, and thank you for the kind words, Senator.

First, I want you to understand I am a strong believer in the evidence that voluntary family planning and reproductive health services are essential to women's health and that there is ample evidence of benefit to infant and child health as well.

Second, I know there is a strong difference of views about the global gag rule and President Biden's decision to rescind the policy.

But I think we can agree that we have had now decades of bipartisan support that has made the U.S. government the global leader in funding voluntary family planning. And not only that, it has made USAID the global leader in technical expertise for enabling voluntary family planning support.

My core commitment, if I am confirmed to the agency, is going to be to, first, follow the law and applicable regulations, and then also advance our leadership in this space.

The global gag rule rescission allows the reach of our programs at USAID to a wider range of organizations that are having a remarkable commitment while also complying with the laws that require that USAID not fund abortion.

And so that ability to expand that leadership and that reach is the primary value that comes from that policy decision.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I really appreciate that answer and pointing out that family planning is not abortion, and we should stop including those organizations that help women determine their children, and how many children they can have and want to have and how to space out their families is different than abortion and we should stop treating them the same way. I appreciate that.

Ms. Cronin, congratulations to you as well. As a neighbor—a neighboring legislator, I appreciate the barriers that you have broken in Massachusetts.

And I wanted to—I am also the chair of the Subcommittee on Foreign Relations that deals with Europe and so I have been following the challenges relating to the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocols as Britain has left Brexit.

Can you talk about how you will work to ensure that the U.S. upholds its commitment to support trade to Northern Ireland and help ensure that the issues are being addressed in the framework of the protocol?

Ms. CRONIN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. And not only are we neighbors, I lived in Londonderry, New Hampshire, when you were elected as governor.

Senator SHAHEEN. Oh, good.

Ms. CRONIN. Yes.

[Laughter.]

Ms. CRONIN. Clearly, President Biden has stated that he is unequivocally committed to the preservation of the Good Friday Agreement. This is also very clearly shown with strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate in Congress—the Senate—and very strong bipartisan support as well.

This will be a shared priority for both the United States and, certainly, for Ireland as well. They have repeatedly expressed great concern that the hard-fought gains of the Good Friday Agreement have been maintained.

Recently, there has been some unrest regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol and its implications. If I were confirmed, I would work with Embassy London, Consul General in Belfast, and the Irish government to make sure that everyone would still come to the table and do everything possible and engage in constructive dialogue in order to preserve the hard-fought gains of the Good Friday Agreement.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I think that will be a real challenge as you take over your post, once confirmed.

I look forward to working with all of you—I am sure I am out of time at this point—and really appreciate your responses.

Ms. CRONIN. Thank you.

Senator ROUNDS [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

I know that our chairman is on his way back, and prior to stepping into the next panel, I just—I wanted to ask Dr. Gawande one more question.

I wanted to ask you a question touching on China, Africa, and public health. Amid an otherwise increasingly challenging relationship, the United States and China collaborated to assist the African Union stand up the Africa CDC.

This offered hope that we and China could work together to address some of the world's most challenging problems. Has that collaboration continued in the wake of COVID-19 and will China's construction of the Africa CDC headquarters in Addis give China leverage when it comes to addressing public health concerns in Africa?

Dr. GAWANDE. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Africa CDC has been an important organization for building capacity in Africa for public health services, public health structures and organization, and I think the critical part of my role, if I am confirmed, to the Global Health Bureau would be to engage directly with Africa CDC to ensure that our leadership, our close connection to Africa CDC, is sustained and that the global values that are reflected by the way we do our work are continued.

We know that China has approached our—their contributions on COVID vaccines in a very transactional way. Where we have donated at the world's most massive level to COVAX and bilateral agreements for vaccines, China has approached it by only providing—primarily providing sales for profit and not upholding the

same kinds of values and standards. I do think it is very important for us to be engaged in these organizations like Africa CDC.

I will, lastly, point out that President Biden has elevated the Africa CDC director to become the head of PEPFAR and lead HIV/AIDS here as a nominee, and so he will come before this group as well, I suspect, and I think that this is all an important reflection of how much value Africa CDC has added in a short period of time.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Doctor.

And, Mr. Chairman, I will turn the virtual gavel back over to you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN [presiding]. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Rounds, and thank you all for your indulgence of all of us as we go to vote.

And Senator Rounds really covered the question to Dr. Gawande that I want to focus on and just elaborate a little bit, because I think we are all pleased with the leadership that President Biden has shown in working to get vaccines deployed around the world and our contributions to COVAX.

But we have got a long way to go, we, meaning the international community, especially in Africa where we have got 17 percent of the world's population but only 2 percent of all the shots that have been delivered to date have been in Africa.

And according to the most recent estimate from the World Health Organization, less than 4 percent of the African continent's population has been fully inoculated.

We, on this committee and on the Africa Subcommittee and African Global Health Subcommittee, are going to want to work with you to address those issues.

My final question is also to you, which is, obviously, we want to have all hands on deck to defeat the pandemic. But as you well know, there are all sorts of other diseases that claim people's lives around the world, including especially in Africa. And in many cases, as we have sort of surged resources to deal with COVID we have seen spikes in some of the other areas—diseases in other areas.

Could you just talk a little bit about how we address both at the same time, even with the limited resources that we have got?

Dr. GAWANDE. Yes. These are colossal and daunting challenges to both take on the COVID-19 threat that we have right in front of us, prepare for the next pandemic, but realize that the response and the effects of COVID have severely damaged health care systems and public health gains we have made over the last couple of years.

We have seen vaccination for other conditions, for childhood illnesses, retreat. We have seen progress in preventing maternal and child death retreat. We have seen some of the same kinds of losses in our TB work.

And I think the most critical opportunities that we have there are to now reengage, understanding that we still have—we will have well into 2022 and beyond coping with COVID and, therefore, we will have to reinvigorate our prevention of maternal and child death programs, our HIV/AIDS work, and our TB work.

There are many opportunities to use our focus on COVID to strengthen the systems as a whole, help them get back on their

feet, and make it possible to move forward on basic fronts like primary care and delivery of these kinds of capabilities.

I think the bottom line will be that we have a extensive capability at USAID in those global health arenas. I think everybody has been all hands on deck on the COVID work and this is our opportunity to enable those teams now to also get back to advancing their lines of work, and if I am confirmed that is exactly what I will want to make sure we are doing.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Doctor.

And Leader Cronin, I think Senator Shaheen asked one of the questions I was going to pose to you regarding Ireland and our efforts to establish at least some minimum international corporate tax and, really, the role that you will play in urging Ireland to really support that effort to prevent a race to the bottom.

And I am going to submit for the record a couple questions regarding Brexit and its impact in relations with Northern Ireland and Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement.

But let me say to all of you what a terrific group of nominees with great experience, and we are looking forward to, hopefully, having a fairly rapid markup and vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on all your nominations.

I thank all of you for joining us, and now we are going to go to the second panel, unless there are any other members who have anything else to say.

If not, round one is over and we are going to start the second round. Thank you all for being here and for joining us, and congratulations on your nominations.

Dr. GAWANDE. Thank you.

Captain SULLENBERGER. Thank you.

Ms. CRONIN. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Ms. CRONIN. Thank you very much.

[Pause.]

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. I, certainly, see some of the nominees for the second panel and I am going to kick this off with introductions for each of you, and then you can make your statements and then we will have a round of questions.

I see another vote has just started so Senator Rounds and I will try to juggle this the way we did before.

Let me just introduce all of our distinguished nominees. We have Kent Doyle Logsdon, who is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and has spent the bulk of his three decades-long career in the European and Eurasia regions.

He is currently chief of staff to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. Among his past assignments he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Energy Resources, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, and chief of staff to both the Deputy Secretary of State for Management Resources and the Deputy Executive Secretary of the State Department.

He is the recipient of Presidential Meritorious Service Awards—the Presidential Meritorious Service Awards, as well as numerous other State Department performance awards.

He speaks Russian, Ukrainian, Thai, and German, holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and a Master's degree from the University of Virginia.

Welcome to you, Mr. Logsdon.

We also have Sharon L. Cromer, who is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as the USAID Mission Director at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana. Among her many past assignments, Ms. Cromer served as USAID Mission Director at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam and at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja.

Ms. Cromer has also served in USAID as the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator and Acting Assistant Administrator in the Africa Bureau, as Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Management Bureau, and as Acting Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator and Acting Assistant Administrator in the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

She is a recipient of a Presidential Rank Award, the USAID Administrators Reengineering Award, and a State Department Superior Honor Award.

Ms. Cromer earned her BA from Barnard College and her JD from Georgetown University Law School.

Welcome to you, Ms. Cromer.

Ambassador Virginia E. Palmer is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as both Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and as Acting Assistant Secretary for the State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources.

Previously, she served as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi where she oversaw an annual bilateral assistance budget of over \$500 million and the work of 11 U.S. government agencies.

Among her other past assignments Ambassador Palmer has also served as Deputy Chief of Mission and charge d'affaire ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in South Africa and Deputy Chief of Mission and charge d'affaire ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam.

Ambassador Palmer is the recipient of numerous superior honor, meritorious honor, and senior performance awards and speaks both Chinese and French. She received her Bachelor's of Science in Foreign Service degree from Georgetown University and her MA from the University of Virginia.

Welcome to you, Ambassador Palmer.

And Howard A. Van Vranken is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Secretary at the State Department's Executive Secretariat.

He previously served as Executive Director and Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and as Deputy Executive Director in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and South and Central Asian Affairs.

Earlier, Mr. Van Vranken served as Management Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Rabat, Morocco, and as Deputy Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Past postings also include assignments in Norway, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, Ireland, and the U.K. He is the recipient of multiple State Department awards and the Presidential Distinguished Service Award, and speaks Arabic, Farsi, and Norwegian. Mr. Van

Vranken received his BA from UC Davis and his MA from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Welcome to Mr. Van Vranken.

I am now going to—I do not know, Senator Rounds, if you have any statements here. If not, I was going to turn it over and begin the testimony.

Senator ROUNDS. Mr. Chairman, I will tell you what. I will enter my statement for the record and allow you to begin the testimony, and if you would like to coordinate a plan for both of us getting in to vote in a timely fashion, I would be all ears.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. I am happy to go first—vote first or second, whichever your preference is.

Senator ROUNDS. I will head out right now and, hopefully, get back in time to spell you sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. Thank you.

All right. Again, to all our nominees, thank you for your understanding. Senator Rounds is going to go vote, and then he will return and I will go vote as well.

Let us please begin in the order in which I made the introductions and we will begin with Mr. Logsdon.

STATEMENT OF KENT DOYLE LOGSDON OF PENNSYLVANIA, 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 MOLDOVA

Mr. LOGSDON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am honored to appear today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with Congress to advance our nation's interests in Moldova.

I would not be here without the love and support of my family: my wife, Michelle, who just retired after 35 years of service as a Foreign Service officer, initially with the U.S. Information Agency and then as a public diplomacy officer at the State Department, our children, who accompanied us to our overseas postings. We are very proud of their resilience and achievements.

Nora is a law student at the University of Virginia and Will is studying music production at Shenandoah University.

And, of course, my parents, who encouraged me in this career—my mother, Carroll, who passed away last year after contracting COVID, and my father, Bill, who just retired after nearly 60 years as a patent attorney.

The world changed after I joined the Foreign Service. The Berlin Wall and the USSR disappeared and the Cold War ended. My wife and I joined many of our colleagues in establishing and building relationships with new countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

I focused most of my diplomatic career working in or on issues involving the countries in this region, and it is exciting to see their progress and development in the past 30 years.

If confirmed, leading our mission in Chisinau would be a highlight of my diplomatic career. The U.S.-Moldova relationship is grounded in shared democratic values and support for a democratic, secure, and prosperous Moldova, anchored in Europe.

With an historic mandate, President Sandu and a reform-oriented government have launched an ambitious program to establish a more transparent and accountable democracy, build a stronger economy, and combat endemic corruption.

At the U.N. General Assembly, President Biden told the world about Moldovan voters' success in delivering a landslide victory for the forces of democracy with a mandate to fight graft to build a more inclusive economy.

Corruption threatens Moldova's economic prospects and democratic future. We must continue to support the Moldovan government's efforts to strengthen the capacity of its institutions to identify, investigate, and prosecute corruption. If confirmed, I will make the fight against corruption one of my top priorities.

We must also continue to be a steadfast partner to civil society, independent media, and other organizations committed to developing participatory democracy and promoting good governance.

Progress in the fight against corruption will strengthen Moldova's investment climate and ensure a level playing field for U.S. business. Moldova has strengthened its financial sector oversight and transparency, and continued reforms will help Moldova unlock further budgetary support from the European Union and IMF to strengthen its economy in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Support from the United States and the European Union is helping Moldova expand trade and market linkages with the West. The EU is now Moldova's largest trading partner. Moldova is linking its energy infrastructure to Europe and diversifying its energy supply to reduce dependence on Russian gas imports.

Moldova is also committed to transforming its defense forces and their capacity to contribute to international security and peacekeeping missions. U.S. security assistance has been key to this effort. The United States respects Moldova's constitutional neutrality and welcomes its efforts to build a more modern military equipped to counter emerging threats.

Russian malign influence and disinformation threaten Moldova's democratic development, ambitious reform agenda, and European trajectory.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the government leaders, civil society, and international partners to support Moldova's democratic reform agenda and build resiliency against malign influence and disinformation.

Resolving the Transnistria conflict remains a priority. The United States supports OSCE-led efforts to uphold Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity while acknowledging a special status for Transnistria.

We need to continue to press Russia to honor its commitments to withdraw its troops and munitions from Moldova, and we are committed to protecting the fundamental freedoms of citizens on both sides of the Dniester River.

If confirmed, I will continue to promote confidence-building measures and seek tangible results through the OSCE-led 5+2 process.

The Moldovan people have chosen a bold path of reform and Western integration. It is in our interest to support them. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the members of this committee and the Congress to do just that.

Improving Moldova's democracy, prosperity, and security will help us develop a key partner in Eastern Europe.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Logsdon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENT D. LOGSDON

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am honored to appear today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with Congress to advance our nation's interests in Moldova.

I would not be here without the love and support of my family. My wife Michelle, who just retired after 35 years of service as a foreign service officer, initially with the U.S. Information Agency, and then as a public diplomacy officer at the State Department. Our children, who accompanied us to our overseas postings. We are proud of their resilience and achievements—Nora is a law student at the University of Virginia and Will is studying music production at Shenandoah University. And my parents, who encouraged me in this career—my mother Carroll, who passed away last year after contracting COVID, and my father Bill, who just retired after nearly 60 years as a patent attorney.

The world changed after I joined the foreign service. The Berlin Wall and the USSR disappeared, and the Cold War ended. My wife and I joined many of our colleagues in establishing and building relationships with new countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I have focused most of my diplomatic career working in or on issues involving the countries in this region and it is exciting to see their progress and development in the past thirty years. If confirmed, leading our mission in Chisinau would be a highlight of my diplomatic career.

The U.S.-Moldova relationship is grounded in shared democratic values and support for a democratic, secure, and prosperous Moldova, anchored in Europe.

With an historic mandate, President Sandu and a reform-oriented government have launched an ambitious program to establish a more transparent and accountable democracy, build a stronger economy, and combat endemic corruption. At the U.N. General Assembly, President Biden told the world about Moldovan voters' success in delivering "a landslide victory for the forces of democracy with a mandate to fight graft, to build a more inclusive economy."

Corruption threatens Moldova's economic prospects and democratic future. We must continue to support the Moldovan Government's efforts to strengthen the capacity of its institutions to identify, investigate, and prosecute corruption. If confirmed, I will make the fight against corruption one of my top priorities. We must also continue to be a steadfast partner to civil society, independent media, and other organizations committed to developing participatory democracy and promoting good governance.

Progress in the fight against corruption will strengthen Moldova's investment climate and ensure a level playing field for U.S. business. Moldova has strengthened financial sector oversight and transparency. Continued reforms will help Moldova unlock further budgetary support from the European Union and IMF to strengthen its economy in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Support from the United States and the European Union is helping Moldova expand trade and market linkages with the West. The EU is now Moldova's largest trading partner. Moldova is linking its energy infrastructure to Europe and diversifying its energy supply to reduce dependence on Russian gas imports.

Moldova is also committed to transforming its defense forces and their capacity to contribute to international security and peacekeeping missions. U.S. security assistance has been key to this effort. The United States respects Moldova's constitutional neutrality and welcomes its efforts to build a more modern military equipped to counter emerging threats.

Russian malign influence and disinformation threaten Moldova's democratic development, ambitious reform agenda, and European trajectory. If confirmed, I will work closely with government leaders, civil society, and international partners to support Moldova's democratic reform agenda and build resiliency against malign influence and disinformation.

Resolving the Transnistria conflict remains a priority. The United States supports OSCE-led efforts to uphold Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity while acknowledging a special status for Transnistria. We need to continue to press Russia to honor its commitments to withdraw its troops and munitions from Moldova. And we are committed to protecting the fundamental freedoms of citizens on both sides of the Nistru River. If confirmed, I will continue to promote confidence building measures and seek tangible results through the OSCE-led 5+2 process.

The Moldovan people have chosen a bold path of reform and Western integration. It is in our interest to support them. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the members of this committee and the Congress to do just that. Improving Moldova's democracy, prosperity, and security will help to develop a key partner in Eastern Europe.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I look forward to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for your testimony.

Next, we will hear from Ms. Cromer.

STATEMENT OF SHARON L. CROMER OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

Ms. CROMER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today.

I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have shown in me as their nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Gambia.

If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with you and other distinguished members of Congress to advance our nation's security and foreign policy interests.

Mr. Chairman, I am here today the product of a loving family. My mother, Thelma Cromer, now deceased, showed me how to care for others and live abundantly despite having so little.

My father, Walter Cromer, Sr., drove a taxi right here in the nation's capital for 60 years and inspired in me the desire to explore the world.

My loving husband of 33 years, Arnold Sobers, Jr., supported me every step. Together, we raised two brilliant daughters, Courtney and Simone, and we now have two adorable grandchildren, Tanoor and Dunia.

I am very grateful to all of my family, friends, colleagues, and mentors across the globe. They are my heroes.

I have served proudly the American people for the past 35 years as a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I successfully advanced U.S. foreign policy in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and managed programs to reduce poverty, halt HIV/AIDS, eradicate malaria, and promote girls' education and women's economic empowerment.

I have mentored and sponsored employees of every race, gender, and sexual orientation, helping them to grow professionally and

fully contribute to advancing U.S. goals. I am committed to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce and in our programs.

As a young university student traveling in the Gambia, I experienced the warm hospitality and proud traditions of the Gambian people.

Today, Americans and Gambians share ideals of democracy, religious tolerance, good governance, and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will strengthen the U.S.-Gambian partnership.

After 22 years of authoritarian rule, in 2016 Gambians voted for a new president and commenced the transition from dictatorship to democracy. While some reforms have occurred, more must be done to realize the aspirations of Gambians for transparent, democratic, and accountable governance.

If confirmed, I will be a staunch advocate of the Gambia's ongoing democratic transition. I will combat corruption, promote economic prosperity, speak up for human rights, explore ways to improve the primary health care system, and maintain a strong security partnership.

I will pursue U.S. national security and foreign policy interests by helping the Gambian people achieve their goal to become a prosperous, secure, and democratic nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you today. I am happy to answer questions.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Cromer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHARON L. CROMER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have shown me as their nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia. If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with you and other distinguished members of Congress to advance our nation's security and foreign policy interests.

Mr. Chairman, I am here today, the product of a loving family. My mother, Thelma Cromer, now deceased, showed me how to live a life of abundance despite having so little. My father, Walter Cromer, Sr., drove a taxi right here in the nation's capital for over 60 years and inspired me to explore the world. My loving husband of 33 years, Arnold Sobers, Jr., supported my every step. Together, we raised two brilliant daughters, Courtney and Simone and we now have two adorable grandchildren. I am very grateful to all of my family, friends, colleagues, and mentors across the globe. They are my heroes.

Mr. Chairman, I have proudly served the American people for the past 35 years as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development. I successfully advanced U.S. foreign policy in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and managed large, complex inter-agency programs, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, Feed the Future, Power Africa, and wildlife anti-trafficking. I championed girls' education, women's empowerment, youth employment, and the rights of marginalized people, including LGBTQI+ communities, to prosper and live in peace and dignity. I have enjoyed mentoring and sponsoring employees of every color, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation; helping each one to grow professionally, assume greater responsibilities, and fully contribute to advancing U.S. goals. If confirmed, I will continue to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in the workforce and in our programs.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S. and The Gambia have a close bilateral relationship based on shared ideals of democracy, religious tolerance, good governance, security, and economic prosperity. As a young, university student traveling in The Gambia, I experienced the warm hospitality and proud traditions of the Gambian people. It was clear then, and I believe it is true today, that Gambians admire American culture

and traditions. If confirmed, I will strengthen the U.S./Gambian partnership for the benefit of both countries.

After 22 years of authoritarian rule, in 2016 Gambians voted for a new president and commenced the transition from dictatorship to democracy. While some promised reforms have been implemented, much more remains to be done if the aspirations of the Gambia people for a transparent, democratic government accountable to the people are to be realized. The upcoming December presidential election will be an opportunity for Gambians to show the world that they are committed to solidifying their hard-won democratic gains. The U.S. has been a steadfast partner, supporting the Independent Election Commission's successful voter registration effort and helping civil society organizations empower citizens through voter education. This December, Gambians will determine their path forward through a free, fair and peaceful election.

Given the opportunity, I will support The Gambia's ongoing democratic process. I will combat corruption and promote economic prosperity which will allow both U.S. and Gambian firms to invest and create good jobs. I will encourage trade and the use of the American Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). I will speak up for human rights, and explore ways to improve the primary health care system. Of paramount importance is the need to maintain a strong security partnership. I will pursue U.S. national security and foreign policy interests by helping the Gambian people achieve their goal to become a prosperous, secure, and democratic nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee for the opportunity to address you today. I am happy to answer any questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for your testimony.

Next, we are going to hear from Ambassador Palmer, who has been nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana.

Ambassador Palmer?

STATEMENT OF HON. VIRGINIA E. PALMER 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 REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Ms. PALMER. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as America's Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana.

I appreciate the confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me and [inaudible] today to have the opportunity to publicly thank my family for their love and support.

My husband Ismail Asmal, a retired Foreign Service Officer, is a wonderful partner and helpmate. My daughters Aliya and Nadia Amal and my son-in-law Paul Adamson are a source of great joy and pride and have a wonderful commitment to helping others. And my mother, Becky Palmer and late Richard Palmer, I want to thank them for their encouragement and example and for letting me take the grandbabies overseas.

I have had the great fortune to represent the country I love around the world for 35 years, 15 in Africa. I have worked in models of democracy and governance and private sector-led growth.

As Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi I oversaw an annual budget of \$500 million and led a talented team which helped Malawi achieve HIV epidemic control, improve food security, and serve as a democratic model for the continent. If confirmed, my experience gained as deputy coordinator [inaudible] to support Ghana's work to counter the spread of violent extremism, and as Principal

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources to help Ghana deal with significant energy sector challenges.

I bring to the job a commitment to the security and well being of embassy staff and a passion for diversity and inclusion, essential to getting policy right and to properly representing our values overseas.

Our close partnership with Ghana spans more than 60 years and is rooted in our shared commitment to democracy and human rights for all, peace and security and economic opportunity and prosperity. Ghana's long democratic tradition, robust media, religious tolerance, and strong civil society make it a leader in West Africa and a model for the continent. With democratic backsliding in the region, Ghana's example and leadership are now more important than ever.

If confirmed, my priorities will be encouraging inclusive economic growth and strengthening regional stability to make the United States—and Ghana—more secure and more prosperous. Essential to success in these endeavors will be work to help Ghana strengthen its democracy and accountability institution.

Until COVID-19 disrupted global markets around the world, Ghana's economy was one of the fastest growing in the world. With the economy beginning to recover from the pandemic, close to 120 American businesses are active in Ghana.

If confirmed, I will be a vigorous advocate for American companies and innovation, and will ensure U.S. public and private investments continue to support pandemic recovery in Ghana's journey to self-reliance.

We will do this by facilitating trade, improving access to credit, boosting agricultural production and enhancing domestic resource mobilization, and improving health and education outcomes.

Working in partnership with our Ghanaian friends to combat corruption and ensure a transparent business environment will be fundamental to these efforts.

Ghana is a key security partner and its leadership is critical to U.S. efforts to promote regional stability and combat violent extremism. We enjoy robust military and law enforcement cooperation.

Ghana is one of the top 10 contributors to U.N. peacekeeping missions and regularly hosts regional military exercises with the United States. It is an exporter of security.

If confirmed, I will work to drive integrated programs on economic growth, rule of law strengthening, security cooperation, and maritime and border security.

I also look forward to working with Ghana as it chairs the Economic Community of West African States, takes up a seat on the U.N. Security Council, and hosts the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, which will create a trading bloc of more than 1.3 billion people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to partnering with you to advance America's interests in Ghana and stand ready to answer any questions you may have now and in the future.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Palmer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. VIRGINIA E. PALMER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me by putting my name forward for your consideration. I am deeply grateful for the love and support of my husband Ismail Asmal, a retired Foreign Service Officer, my daughters Aliya and Nadia Asmal and son-in-law Paul Adamson, my mother Becky Palmer and late father Richard Palmer. I would also like to thank my foreign and civil service colleagues across the Government and Embassy locally engaged staff who do tremendous work, in very challenging circumstances, to strengthen U.S. partnerships with countries around the world.

I have had the good fortune to have represented the country I love in fascinating countries around the world for 35 years, 15 in Africa. Throughout my career, I have worked to share American models of democracy and governance and private sector-led growth. As Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi, I oversaw an annual budget of \$500 million and led a talented team which helped Malawi achieve HIV epidemic control, improve food security, and serve as a democratic model for the Continent. As Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in South Africa, I helped manage one of our largest missions and most complex relationships in Africa. If confirmed, I will also draw on experience gained as a leader of the State Department's Counter Terrorism Bureau to support Ghana's work to counter the spread of violent extremism in the region, and as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources to help Ghana deal with significant energy sector challenges—and opportunities. I bring to the job a commitment to the security and well-being of Embassy staff and a passion for diversity and inclusion, essential to getting policy right and properly representing our values overseas.

Our close partnership with Ghana spans more than 60 years and is rooted in our shared commitment to democracy and human rights for all, peace and security, and economic opportunity and prosperity. Ghana's long democratic tradition, robust media, religious tolerance, and strong civil society make it a leader in West Africa and a model for the continent. With democratic backsliding in the region, Ghana's example and leadership is ever more important.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee and Congress to advance U.S. interests in Ghana. My priorities will be encouraging inclusive economic growth and strengthening regional stability to make the United States—and Ghana—more secure and more prosperous. Essential to success in these endeavors will be work to help Ghana strengthen its democracy and governance institutions.

Close to 120 American businesses are active in Ghana and the country's economy is beginning to recover from the pandemic. Until COVID-19 disrupted global markets, Ghana's economy was one of the fastest-growing in the world, with GDP growth of seven percent from 2017 to 2019. Bilateral trade exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2020. If confirmed, I will be a vigorous advocate for American companies and innovation and will ensure U.S. public and private investments continue to support pandemic recovery efforts and Ghana's journey to self-reliance. We will continue to help Ghana create an enabling environment for inclusive private sector-led growth by facilitating regional trade, improving access to credit, improving agricultural production and market access, enhancing domestic resource mobilization, and improving health and education outcomes. Working in partnership with our Ghanaian friends to combat corruption and ensure a welcoming and transparent environment for business will be crucial to success of these efforts.

Ghana is a key security partner, and its leadership is critical to U.S. efforts to promote regional stability and combat violent extremism. We enjoy robust bilateral military and law enforcement cooperation. Ghana is among the top dozen contributors to U.N. peacekeeping missions and regularly hosts regional military exercises in partnership with the United States, including this year's Gulf of Guinea maritime security exercise, Obangame Express. If confirmed, I will work to drive integrated programs on economic growth, security sector cooperation, cyber security, and maritime and border security through our bilateral Security Governance Initiative. I also look forward to working with Ghana as it chairs the Economic Community of West African States, serves on the U.N. Security Council, and hosts the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, which will create a trading block of more than 1.3 billion people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to partnering with you to advance America's interests in Ghana and stand ready to answer any questions you may have now and in the future.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for your testimony.

And now we will hear from Mr. Howard Van Vranken, who has been nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana.

I turn it over to you, and I see that my colleague, Senator Rounds, has returned. I apologize. I am going to go vote. But I got somebody here who is going to report to me on your testimony when I return.

All right. I turn it over to you, Senator Rounds.

And Mr. Vranken, please proceed with your testimony.

Senator ROUNDS. [presiding.] Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF HOWARD A. VAN VRANKEN 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 REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

Mr. VAN VRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, members of the committee. It is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana.

I thank the President and Secretary Biden for the—excuse me, Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. I am also grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

I am especially grateful for my wife, Rebecca, who supported me during nearly two decades of marriage in the Foreign Service and for the endurance of my children—Grace, Robert, and Victor. I would not be here today without their tremendous and ongoing support.

Finally, I want to thank my parents, Robert and Helen, who tirelessly inspired me to explore and embrace the world beyond my native California. I am forever grateful for their sacrifices on my behalf.

During my 33 years of service with the Foreign Service, my work in Africa and the Middle East as well as assignments in Washington have prepared me to deliver impactful results for the American people in the important role for which I have been nominated.

I have served in senior leadership positions in a number of posts, including most recently in Morocco and in Iraq. If confirmed, I will work diligently and with integrity to further strengthen ties between the United States and Botswana.

Botswana is a strategically important and reliable partner on the African continent. We work with Botswana to advance shared global priorities including strengthening democratic institutions and promoting the respect for human rights, ending HIV and the COVID-19 pandemic, and advancing global health security.

Together, we also work on regional and bilateral priorities, including conserving the environment and natural resources, expanding trade and investment, and addressing regional transnational criminal and security challenges.

Our relationship is further strengthened through our valuable university partnerships and education linkages. If confirmed, as we emerge from the pandemic I will look to expand our in-person en-

agement to advance these priorities, especially through programming focused on youth and young women and girls.

Economic ties between the United States and Botswana were growing before the pandemic. Even as the United States remains the world's top purchaser of Botswana's diamonds, we will support Botswana's efforts to diversify its economy, to build a knowledge-based economy, and to improve opportunities for American businesses.

U.S. tourists attracted to the country's globally significant national parks and reserves will continue to present an important opportunity for Botswana as the pandemic recedes and travel resumes.

If confirmed, I will work with Botswana to deter and dismantle poaching organizations. I will also work with Botswana to realize the potential offered by Power Africa's mega solar project, an initiative which would transform Botswana into a regionally significant solar power producer, consumer, and exporter.

If confirmed, I will also continue to advance the priorities articulated in the DELTA Act to promote responsible natural resource and wildlife management practices in the Greater Okavango River Basin.

The United States has invested more than a billion dollars in Botswana's health sector through the President's emergency plan for AIDS relief, the PEPFAR program.

While there is still an estimated 9,000 new HIV infections annually in the country, Botswana has made impressive progress in its fight against HIV and it is near epidemic control.

That said, the threat posed by HIV cannot be underestimated. If confirmed, I look forward to securing the sustainability of our PEPFAR investment and leading our interagency health team as we continue to work with the government of Botswana on its HIV response.

If confirmed, I will also work to affirm President Biden's commitment to deliver additional COVID-19 vaccines to Botswana and its neighbors.

The Botswana Defense Force is one of the most professional militaries on the continent and our military engagement remains strong. The United States also sponsors the International Law Enforcement Academy, which has trained more than 12,000 law enforcement and criminal justice professionals from Africa, the Americas, and Southeast Asia.

Support for these institutions improve the rule of law in the country and on the continent, including the capacity to effectively respond to global issues like wildlife and timber trafficking, violent extremism, cybercrime, corruption, and trafficking in persons.

If confirmed, I will work to expand the U.S.-Botswana military partnership and our regional security role through education and training programs.

We expect to see a resurgence in the number of Americans visiting Botswana once we emerge from the pandemic. If confirmed, the safety of our staff and U.S. citizens in Botswana will remain paramount.

The U.S. Ambassador to Botswana also serves as a U.S. representative to the Southern African Development Community, and

I am excited about the opportunity to work towards increased security, health, and economic development across the region with our Southern African nation partners.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Van Vranken follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HOWARD A. VAN VRANKEN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is a great privilege and honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana. I thank the President and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. I am also grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration. I am especially grateful for my wife, Rebecca, who has supported me during nearly two decades of marriage, and for the endurance of my children, Grace, Robert, and Victor. I would not be here today without their tremendous support. Finally, I can say that my parents, Robert and Helen, tirelessly inspired me to explore and embrace the world beyond my native California and I am forever grateful for their sacrifices on my behalf.

During my thirty-three years in the Foreign Service, my work in Africa and the Middle East, as well as assignments in Washington, have prepared me to deliver impactful results for the American people in the important role for which I have been nominated. I have served in senior leadership positions in a number of posts including, most recently, in Morocco and Iraq. If confirmed, I will work diligently and with integrity to further strengthen ties between the United States and Botswana.

Botswana is strategically important and a reliable partner on the African continent. We work with Botswana to advance shared global priorities, including strengthening democratic institutions and promoting respect for human rights, ending AIDS and the COVID-19 pandemic, and advancing global health security. Together, we also work on regional and bilateral priorities, including conserving the environment and natural resources, expanding trade and investment, and addressing regional transnational criminal and security challenges. Our relationship is further strengthened through our valuable university partnerships and education linkages. If confirmed, as we emerge from the pandemic, I will look to expand our in-person engagement to advance these priorities, especially through programming focused on the youth and young women and girls.

Economic ties between the United States and Botswana were growing before the pandemic. Even as the United States remains the world's top purchaser of Botswana's diamonds, we will support Botswana's efforts to diversify its economy, to build a knowledge-based economy, and to improve opportunities for American businesses. U.S. tourists, attracted to the country's globally significant national parks and reserves, will continue to present an important opportunity for Botswana as the pandemic recedes and travel resumes. If confirmed, I will work with Botswana to deter and dismantle poaching organizations. If confirmed, I will work with Botswana to realize the potential offered by Power Africa's Mega Solar project, an initiative which could transform Botswana into a regionally significant solar power producer, consumer, and exporter. If confirmed, I will also continue to advance the priorities articulated in the DELTA Act to promote responsible natural resource and wildlife management practices in the greater Okavango River Basin.

The United States has invested more than \$1 billion in Botswana's health sector through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program. While there are still an estimated 9,000 new HIV infections annually in the country, Botswana has made impressive progress in its fight against HIV/AIDS and is near epidemic control. That said, the threat posed by HIV/AIDS cannot be underestimated. If confirmed, I look forward to securing the sustainability of our PEPFAR investment and leading our interagency health team as we continue to work with the Government of Botswana on its HIV response. If confirmed, I will also work to affirm President Biden's commitment to deliver additional COVID-19 vaccines to Botswana and its neighbors.

The Botswana Defense Force is one of the most professional militaries on the continent, and our military engagement remains strong. The United States also sponsors the International Law Enforcement Academy, which has trained more than 12,000 law-enforcement and criminal justice professionals from Africa, the Americas, and Southeast Asia. Support to these institutions has improved rule of law in

the country and on the continent, including capacity to effectively respond to global issues like wildlife and timber trafficking, violent extremism, cyber-crime, corruption and trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will work to expand U.S.-Botswana military partnerships and our regional security role through education and training programs.

We expect to see a resurgence in the number of Americans visiting Botswana once we emerge from the pandemic. The safety of our staff and U.S. citizens will remain paramount.

The U.S. Ambassador to Botswana also serves as the U.S. representative to the Southern African Development Community, and I am excited about the opportunity to work towards increased security, health, and economic development across the region with other southern Africa nations.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Van Vranken.

I have submitted my opening statement for the record. But I really feel it is important that we just share with you personally that I would suspect that every career diplomat wonders whether someday, after years of service, they might be nominated by the President of the United States to serve as an ambassador somewhere.

I just want to say congratulations, because after today none of you will have to ask that question again. For Ambassador Palmer, this is twice.

To all of you, thank you for your public service and your continued service on behalf of our country.

I have got a series of questions that I will start with, and then by then I would suspect that our chairman will be back in as well, and I am sure that he has a series of questions as well.

Let me begin with Mr. Logsdon. If confirmed as Ambassador, you will be going to Moldova at a very important time in its history. The president, Maia Sandu, and the new parliament have been elected on a platform of reform and plan to make changes to fight corruption across government, especially in the judiciary.

As Ambassador, how will you work with the new government to support the reforms and see them through to success?

Mr. LOGSDON. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate that question. And, obviously, as you mentioned, this is an historic moment, I think, for the government of Moldova, the people of Moldova, and the United States and our opportunity to assist.

It will not be just us saying we think these are good reforms. This is something we can do to assist the government. The government of Moldova has asked for some very specific kinds of support.

We have worked for many years with different parts of the government and with civil society, and I think the goal for us now is to find ways that we can continue to support President Sandu and her government's desired end state, which is to push back on corruption. That is exactly why the government and President Sandu were elected by the people of Moldova.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Cromer, the Gambia's democratic transition, spurred by the ouster of dictator Yahya Jammeh at the ballot box in 2016 was an unexpected victory for democracy on the continent.

Given recent challenges to democracy in West Africa, including four coups in the last year, what are the regional implications for Gambia's continued democratic development and what tools can

the U.S. consider to continue to appropriately support democratic and economic reforms as well as economic recovery from the Jammeh era, and more recently, the impacts of COVID-19?

I know I am giving you a multiple question item, but if you could, please, and I will ask again if there is any part of it that you are not comfortable with.

Ms. CROMER. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate the question.

First of all, let me say that the Gambians have decided their own fate. They have voted back in 2016 a new president and have moved on the path from authoritarianism to democracy. It is a difficult path, it is a lengthy path, and it takes a steadfast partner like the U.S. to help them build that democracy.

The top priorities of the U.S. Government, ones which, if given the opportunity to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Gambia, I would lead, would be, one, to help build a truly democratic state in the Gambia.

The second would be advancing country-owned, country-led, and sustained development that improves the lives and well being of Gambians.

And third, promoting an investment climate where both U.S. and Gambian enterprises can thrive and trade between the two countries creates good jobs and economic prosperity.

On the COVID front, I had the opportunity this morning to take a walk to the Washington Monument, and on the grounds of the monument there are over 660,000 flag, small flags that have been put in the soil of the Washington Monument grounds, each representing—each flag representing an American who has died of COVID.

This is a moving, beautiful, but sobering memorial to American lives and precious souls, and I would just like to say that the Gambia and other countries in Africa do not have the equipment, the vaccines, the trained staff, PPEs, to address the COVID pandemic, and the capacity to fight COVID-19 and future pandemics is extremely limited in the Gambia.

If confirmed, I will work with the stakeholders on the ground in the Gambia and here in Washington to see what more we can do to build up the Gambia's capacity.

Thank you.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Ms. Cromer.

Ambassador Palmer, Ghana has long been seen as a key U.S. ally in Africa and held up as a stable, democratic, and economic partner and a regional leader. I was impressed by what I saw when I visited Ghana in early 2020.

Given the deeply worrying trends in West Africa, does the U.S. need to adjust its engagement with Ghana to support the resiliency of its institutions and its leadership in the region? If yes, what would be your recommendations?

Ms. PALMER. Thank you for that that question, Senator.

I believe that, indeed, Ghana's example and leadership are very important in the context of democracy backsliding in the region.

I think we need to continue to work to fight corruption in Ghana and to ensure the sanctity of contracts so that Ghana can continue to be a welcoming environment for investment and trade and that sort of beacon or bastion to countering violent extremism.

I do not think we need to reorient. I think we need to continue to integrate our work to ensure inclusive economic growth, particularly in the north, to strengthen Ghana's accountability institutions and work, as I said, to improve contract sanctity and fight corruption.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Mr. Van Vranken, Botswana is a key partner in southern Africa, particularly given its historic credentials in democracy and maintaining stability and security.

However, challenges and opportunities in the southern Africa region abound including with a mounting extremist threat in Mozambique, the ongoing political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, efforts to address significant levels of corruption in Angola and South Africa, and the recent democratic transition in Zambia.

As the U.S. Ambassador to Botswana, how will you engage with our Botswanan partners on issues of regional significance? And also, do you view Botswana as an opportunity for bolstered U.S. trade and investment and, if yes, what tools will you employ to encourage increased trade and investment in a diversity of sectors including but beyond the tourism and extractive industries?

Mr. VAN VRANKEN. Thank you for those questions, Senator. They are very pertinent.

In terms of regional challenges, I think that, as you rightly identified, Botswana has a long tradition of democracy and, in that sense, stands as an example in the region.

The government of Botswana has also been a founding member of the Southern African Development Community, the group of Southern African nations, and the government of Botswana has never been shy about voicing outspoken views on regional peace and security issues, and sometimes differing publicly with the policy of the Southern African Development Community.

I think we should continue to encourage the engagement that Botswana has had in the recent past through the Southern African Development Community.

I would note that it was through SADC that Ghana or, excuse me, Botswana deployed nearly 300 troops as part of a standing force to northern Mozambique, and I think that that is something that we should applaud and encourage.

Regarding economic development and, particularly, trade and investment beyond the extractive or diamond sector as well as tourism, I think that there are areas that we can support Ghana.

We have already initiated an agreement—excuse me, a memorandum of intent between Botswana and Namibia for the Power Africa, the mega solar project. That would provide two to five gigawatts of solar power and would replace coal—imported coal-fired electricity that Botswana currently imports from South Africa, and would enable it to be a—potentially, a significant exporter of solar power in the region.

I think that there is ample opportunity for American firms in a project such as that. I also think that we should continue to find areas in AGOA as well as through Prosper Africa to facilitate trade between the two countries.

I do think that this is a potential area where we can collaborate to both of our satisfaction.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir.

And I know that our chairman is on his way back from the vote. I am going to take advantage of a few more minutes here to ask a couple of questions, and when the chairman comes in I know he will have a hard stop, but he is going to try to get some questions in. I see the chairman has just arrived back on the thing.

Mr. Chairman, I finished with my questions. I know that you have a hard stop coming up. Whenever you are completed it is fine with me if you close the meeting, sir.

And once again, I want to say just thank you to all of our guests here today in front of us, our applicants. Clearly, we have to say thank you for their hard work and dedication to public service and to the State Department here in our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Rounds, and thank all of you for your testimony. And I got a report on the questions that Senator Rounds asked, not surprisingly because we work together. He covered a lot of the territory that I would have between his questions and your comments.

I would, Mr. Van Vranken, just like to follow up on the issue of loss of dollars in Botswana as a result of the huge drop off in tourism because of COVID-19.

One of the other issues, though, in Botswana, as you know, in terms of their long-term sustainability and the sustainability of—continue to attract tourists is protection of wildlife, and there is a serious poaching issue still in Botswana.

Can you just talk a little bit about how the United States, through your efforts and USAID and others, can help address that poaching issue?

Mr. VAN VRANKEN. Thank you very much, Senator.

That is an excellent point. There has been a significant drop off in tourism dollars. To date, the United States has provided very important support to the government of Botswana to help them combat wildlife trafficking.

We have helped to build the capacity of the government to conduct intelligence-led operations focused on poachers. We have, for more than a decade, have provided wildlife trafficking intervention training through our International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana.

That has helped not only Botswana but also regional partners. I think that we should sustain those efforts and continue to work through the Southern African Development Community on law enforcement and anti-poaching efforts.

Thank you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I also had one follow-up as well on Ghana for Ambassador Palmer, because as you indicated, Ghana has had a robust democracy and peaceful transitions of power and have been supporters, overall, of human rights.

There was, though, a recent report by Human Rights Watch regarding discrimination—harsh discrimination against the LGBT community there as well as a proposed draconian anti-LGBT bill.

Could you just comment on that and what your role can be in addressing that matter?

Ms. PALMER. Thank you for that question, Senator.

It is an issue of a great deal of concern to me. I think it is important that we note that we are not asking for special rights for members of the LGBT community but only the rights that other Ghanaians enjoy under the Ghanaian constitution and the international human rights charters to which Ghana is a signatory.

There are moral and legal reasons for ensuring that the rights of the LGBT community are respected. But, importantly, there are also public order and public health reasons why draconian legislation and discrimination are a bad idea.

I think it is also very important to think about this just in terms of discrimination. What the LGBT community in Ghana is asking for, I understand, is freedom from violence, freedom from harassment, freedom from discrimination.

I am not equating my situation with that, but when I was falling in love with a nonwhite South African 35 years ago, our relationship was illegal and that is because his humanity was not respected and was not believed to be the same as mine. And, fortunately, those laws have changed and we think now how could that ever have been.

And I hope that that will be the case all over for vulnerable groups, including women and girls and the LGBT community, and I will work to ensure that those human rights are respected.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for that statement, and also your own experiences and how they can relate to this situation.

I want to thank all of you. I want to thank your family members, who you introduced. Usually, we have a chance to meet people in the hearing room. Unfortunately, we are not able to do that now.

As Senator Rounds said, I have a hard stop at 4:00 o'clock, but I do not know, Mike—Senator, if—I am happy to turn this over to you for additional questioning if you would like or we can close the hearing now.

Senator ROUNDS. Mr. Chairman, I intend to submit a couple of questions for the record. But other than that, I am prepared to close it at this time, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Okay.

Let me just, again, underscore the comments my partner, Senator Rounds, made just a few minutes ago and thanking all of you for your service.

As somebody who grew up in a Foreign Service family, I am proud of the service of our Foreign Service officers and the entire family at the State Department, and look forward to supporting your confirmation.

And maybe Senator Rounds and I will have a chance to come visit those of you in your countries where you are going to be representing the United States.

Thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 4:01 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CAPT. C.B. SULLENBERGER III BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

COVID-19

Question. What actions do you believe ICAO should take to protect the air traveling public, and flight crews aboard commercial airlines, from the COVID-19?

Answer. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on civil aviation is unprecedented. ICAO moved quickly to establish the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) to provide guidance to governments and industry operators to restart the international air transport sector safely and promote recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 on a coordinated global basis.

ICAO is convening a ministerial conference on COVID and aviation in mid-October to rally governments from every region to implement the CART recommendations and enable the recovery of international civil aviation. I believe these are the right first steps to move toward a safe restart of the aviation sector, and if confirmed, I will continue to promote these efforts to protect the air travelling public and flight crews aboard commercial airlines.

Question. Do you believe the global airline industry will adopt adequate policies to protect its customers and employees?

Answer. Airlines have already taken significant steps to protect customers and employees by implementing health mitigation measures such as requiring the use of masks on board aircraft, enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures, health assessments of crew and passengers, enhancing airport security checkpoint procedures, and the minimizing of in-person interaction through use of new technologies. For transportation and travel to resume safely and sustainably, it is in the best interest of the global airline industry to continue all of these measures, and if confirmed, I will continue to promote these actions.

Question. Do you believe ICAO has the authority and mandate to coordinate and establish some set of uniform standards or protections against the spread of the COVID-19?

Answer. The United States participated actively in ICAO's CART task force, which has issued three reports since the beginning of the pandemic. Each report provided substantive and actionable recommendations for promulgating a framework for the detection and control of COVID-19 among air passengers and crew such that more stringent control measures, such as mandatory quarantines, could be relaxed or removed entirely.

In the long-run, ICAO must continue to work with member States and the WHO to implement WHO recommendations on science and public health in the civil aviation domain, as well as to facilitate the efficient and secure flow of limited health information among air passengers and States to prevent and mitigate the effects of future pandemics on air transport. If confirmed, this will be a top priority of mine at ICAO.

Climate Change

Question. The ICAO Assembly at its 40th Session in 2019 adopted a resolution that reiterated two aspirational goals for the international aviation sector: a 2 percent annual fuel efficiency improvement through 2050 and carbon neutral growth from 2020 onwards.

- Do you think these goals is adequate?

Answer. It is important that ICAO Member States were able to come together to adopt these goals. If confirmed, I look forward to working with colleagues across the government to determine how best the United States can help achieve the existing climate goals and lead efforts to increase ambition where possible, consistent with the President's policy to press for enhanced climate ambition and the integration of climate considerations across a wide range of international fora, including on aviation. Aviation's recovery from the global pandemic also provides ICAO an opportunity to reassess whether these current goals are truly sufficient in light of the global recognition of the need to address climate change.

Question. What do you foresee as the biggest challenges to meet these goals?

Answer. Some of the biggest challenges ahead include making sure there is robust global participation, particularly for countries with significant international aviation activity, on ICAO measures like CORSIA, and accelerating both state and private sector deployment of cleaner technology, sustainable aviation fuels, and implementa-

tion of more efficient operations. Different countries have different profiles for aviation growth; some have very developed networks and industries with more opportunities for reducing emissions, while others are seeing significant expansion of aviation markets and are less likely to support increased ambition globally if they believe it will affect their industry.

Question. What tools should the Biden Administration provide to meet these goals?

Answer. The United States already plays a critical role at ICAO. To achieve these goals or to push for more ambitious goals, the United States needs to be a leader, and needs to work to develop a strong coalition of states to work with us both bilaterally and at ICAO. The Biden Administration is committed to working toward reducing the sector's emissions in a manner consistent with the goal of net zero emissions for our economy by 2050.

Question. In September 2021, a coalition of 100 environmental groups called on the Biden Administration to strengthen greenhouse gas emission standards in the airline industry.

- Do you think the current ICAO standards are sufficient? If not, what changes do you believe are necessary?

Answer. The current standards represent the first ever greenhouse gas emission standard for commercial aircraft. Establishing this global standard was an important achievement and a critical first step, but it is likely to be insufficient as technology advances. It will be critically important to strengthen these standards, and, if confirmed, that is something that I plan to pursue in ICAO.

Question. ICAO adopted the Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) in 2016 and in 2018 the parties to ICAO took further action to advance the CORSIA through the establishment of Standards and Recommended Procedures (SARPs) for parties to comply with the CORSIA.

- Does FAA have sufficient authorities to comply with the CORSIA that would meet the threshold of the SARPs?

Answer. It will be critical for the United States to be in a position to fully implement CORSIA, which U.S. airplane operators have broadly supported. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, and Department of State colleagues to ensure there is the necessary legislative authority to implement CORSIA and other ambitious climate measures.

Question. Will you commit to working with FAA on advising Congress on the development of legislation that may be necessary to ensure the U.S. is in full compliance with ICAO's CORSIA?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, in coordination with FAA, DOT, and DOS colleagues to ensure there is the necessary legislative authority to implement CORSIA and other climate measures.

Malevolent Influence in International Organizations

Question. Will you commit to working with likeminded countries to ensure the agenda and decisions of ICAO and Parties to the Chicago convention operate transparently, and that you will maintain vigilant of the weight and influence of countries that do not share the U.S.' values and economic interests?

Answer. Standard-setting bodies are essential to the national security and economic security of the United States, our partners, and allies. Organizations such as ICAO must remain transparent and accountable to member states, focused on mandates and core competencies, and led by independent, qualified individuals. If confirmed, I will prioritize working with allies and partners to strengthen ICAO's governance and its ability to fulfill its mandate: the safety, security, and sustainability of civil aviation. This will include opposing efforts by states, including the PRC, that seek to make ICAO and other international organizations less transparent and accountable or to use the organization to advance their own interests. If confirmed, I will also continue to support greater U.S. representation at ICAO, including by advocating for qualified and independent candidates.

Air Safety and Boeing 737 Max

Question. What role do you believe ICAO has to intervene or resolve country decisions to ground or prohibit Boeing 737 Max from their airspace?

Answer. It is up to a State's regulatory authority to determine whether to allow an aircraft to conduct operations within its territory. On November 18, 2020, the

FAA published the final Airworthiness Directive with its findings and decisions regarding recertification of the Boeing 737 MAX flight control systems. The FAA worked alongside Transport Canada Civil Aviation (TCCA), the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the National Civil Aviation Agency of Brazil (ANAC) in approving all the design changes to the Boeing 737 MAX. Following the FAA's rescission of its prior grounding order on November 18th, 2020, over 178 countries have since taken steps to allow the reintroduction of the aircraft.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CAPT. C.B. SULLENBERGER III BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In 2019, the State Department withheld about \$2 million in contributions pursuant to Sec. 7048(a) of the FY2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which mandates the withholding of 15 percent of contributions to international organizations that do not implement sufficient whistleblower protections. After the adoption and implementation of key ethics and oversight reforms, the U.S. restored full funding.

- If confirmed, will you direct the U.S. Mission to ICAO to push for the full adoption and implementation of the remaining ethics and oversight reforms?

Answer. The Administration is committed to improving transparency and accountability at ICAO, including eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse, as well as protecting whistleblowers from retaliation. If confirmed, I will focus intently on and fully support actions to help ICAO leadership develop a culture of transparency and accountability within the organization—actions that cannot be delayed given the recent history of mismanagement.

Question. How will you hold the body accountable for doing so given it has fallen way short in the past?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be a relentless advocate for necessary reforms. I believe corrective measures at ICAO became more achievable with the recent election of Juan Carlos Salazar, the former head of Colombia's civil aviation authority, as the organization's new Secretary General. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. engagement with ICAO leadership and other member states to ensure that ICAO's transparency and accountability mechanisms meet U.N. System-wide best practices.

Question. Are you familiar with the whistleblower scandal at ICAO in recent years where the secretary general of ICAO, Fang Liu, was accused by a senior official-turned-whistleblower of "toxic and hostile" leadership marked by "cronyism" and "favoritism," and where no investigation place and the whistleblower was fired by ICAO?

Answer. I am familiar with the whistleblower scandal that occurred at ICAO, and with the cyberattack that spurred it. Following a high-level claim of retaliation in June 2019, I understand that the U.S. Mission increased its efforts to address deficiencies in ICAO's ethics framework, investigation procedures, and Secretariat transparency. Concerted action on the part of the United States led to ICAO's adoption of a new whistleblower protection policy and new procedures for investigating complaints of staff misconduct in 2020. If confirmed, I will continue to work to assure that whistleblowers can report wrongdoing without fear of reprisal and will also commit to working closely with the organization to ensure it is effectively implementing its new whistleblower protection policy.

Question. In brief, a breach of ICAO's servers by a Chinese state-sponsored hacker group which took place in 2019 and revealed in 2019. The hackers reportedly gained access to the agency's system through a compromised laptop belonging to the son of then-ICAO Council President Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu. The hackers compromised the laptop of an ICAO official was in Beijing. Leaked documents show that ICAO staff sought to cover up the incident, and Liu reportedly ignored internal recommendations to investigate further. Are you familiar with this case which has been widely reported on?

Answer. Yes, I am familiar with the serious cyberattack at ICAO that was revealed in 2019, and the deeply flawed response within the organization. Important reforms were subsequently put in place to deal with the lack of accountability in the handling of this issue, and if confirmed, I will press for continued implementation of those reforms to ensure enhanced transparency in the handling of these types of cases.

Question. What is your perspective on protecting whistleblowers and do you commit to withholding the legislatively mandated portion of funds from ICAO if the agency reneges on its whistleblower protection reforms?

Answer. If confirmed, I will push to ensure that ICAO's transparency and accountability mechanisms meet U.N. System-wide best practices, and I will work closely with the organization to ensure it is effectively implementing its new whistleblower protection policy. I will also work to ensure that whistleblowers can report wrongdoing without fear of reprisal. I will ensure that the Department's actions with respect to ICAO are consistent with U.S. law, and that all options are explored in support of the organization's whistleblower protections.

Question. On January 8, 2020, the Islamic Republic of Iran shot down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, a civilian aircraft departing a Tehran airport. 176 innocent passengers and crew members were killed, including 138 people with ties to Canada. More than a year after the downing, the governments of Canada and Ukraine have rejected Iran's handling of, and investigation into, the PS752 downing, pushing for Iran's full adherence to international conventions. The G7 Summit Communiqué reaffirmed the G7's commitment to addressing this case.

- If confirmed, will you commit to publicly and meaningfully supporting our allies and partners in Canada and Ukraine to pursue full accountability, transparency, and justice in this case, including at ICAO?

Answer. The United States participated in the investigation of the shoot down of Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, with the inclusion of an accredited representative on the investigation team. I understand that the ICAO Accident Investigation Panel formed a working group to continue to discuss some of the unique circumstances raised by the accident. If I am confirmed, I am committed to continuing to work with our international partners to ensure the integrity of the accident investigation process, to push for accountability for those responsible for the shoot-down of Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, and to call on Iran to uphold its responsibilities to the victims and families of this tragic incident.

Question. Since 2013, Taiwan has been systematically excluded from participating at ICAO, including during key discussions to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the early days of the pandemic. Taiwan operates one of the busiest airports by passenger and cargo traffic in the world.

- Can you commit to championing Taiwan's bid to attain observer status at ICAO?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in ICAO, in line with longstanding U.S. policy. Aviation security, safety, and environmental impacts are matters of global importance, and should involve all interested stakeholders, including Taiwan, which has a major aviation sector and can both benefit from and contribute to technical discussions on aviation safety and security based on its own aviation experiences.

Question. How will the U.S. Mission to ICAO, in conjunction with the State Department, specifically work to assist Taiwan in its bid?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press ICAO leadership to provide meaningful participation for Taiwan at all appropriate levels and events. It is critical that Taiwan both contribute to and benefit from technical aviation safety and security discussions that occur at ICAO in various fora. If confirmed, I will make this a priority at ICAO and work with the State Department and other agencies to identify opportunities and events to support Taiwan's participation so that the international community can benefit from its contributions on this important issue.

Question. On May 23, 2021, Ryanair flight FR4978 was forcibly diverted by the government of Belarus and a passenger was arrested. ICAO has taken up an investigation of this event.

- Can you commit to ensuring that the fact-finding investigation into Ryanair Flight FR4978 is completed with transparency?

Answer. The forced diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 by Belarus and subsequent arrest of an opposition journalist and a colleague showed flagrant disregard for international norms of aviation security and safety and undermined the critical trust between pilots and air traffic control. ICAO, as the U.N. organization responsible for setting global standards for the safety and security of international civil aviation, must work to ensure those standards are upheld.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure our partners and allies, and all related parties fully participate in the ICAO investigation by sharing all information relevant to the

incident with ICAO's investigative team and to push for substantive findings, including a chronology of events, to be presented to the ICAO Council in November.

Question. How will you work to combat malign Chinese influence at ICAO?

Answer. Standard-setting bodies are essential to the national security and economic security of the United States and our partners, friends, and allies. Organizations such as ICAO must remain transparent and accountable to membership, focused on mandates and core competencies, and led by independent, qualified individuals. If confirmed, I will prioritize working with allies and partners to strengthen ICAO's governance and its ability to fulfil its mandate: the safety, security, and sustainability of civil aviation. If confirmed, I will oppose efforts by states, including the PRC, that seek to make ICAO and other international organizations less transparent and accountable or to use the organizations to advance their own interests. If confirmed, I will also continue to support greater U.S. representation at ICAO, including by advocating for qualified and independent candidates.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CAPT. C.B. SULLENBERGER III BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. What leadership role, if any, do you think ICAO could and should take in lifting travel restrictions and restoring post-pandemic international air travel?

Answer. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on civil aviation is unprecedented. ICAO moved quickly to establish the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) to provide guidance to governments and industry operators to restart the international air transport sector safely and promote recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 on a coordinated global basis.

While it is up to member states to lift restrictions on travel across borders, ICAO can continue to play an important role in identifying the tools and resources necessary to do so. In the long run, ICAO must continue to work with member states and the World Health Organization to ensure a more robust disease surveillance and contact tracing capability in the civil aviation domain, as well as to facilitate the efficient and secure flow of limited health information among air passengers and states to prevent and mitigate the effects of future pandemics on air transport. If confirmed, this will be a top priority of mine at ICAO.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DR. ATUL A. GAWANDE BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

COVID-19

Question. Nearly two years into the COVID-19 pandemic access to the COVID-19 vaccine in poor and developing nations remains a challenge. For example, Africa has vaccinated only 3 percent of its population due to lack of supply.

- What are the major challenges to increasing the global supply of COVID-19 vaccines produced in the United States and Europe and what role if any will you play relative to helping overcome those challenges?

Answer. While there have been significant improvements and scale-up in global manufacturing, there remain constraints in the supply of some key input materials, as well as constrained capacity to "fill and finish" vaccines into vials. I understand that USAID is working closely with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and other partners to expand global vaccine manufacturing, including by supporting efforts to build human resource capacity for vaccine production and enabling the regulatory environment to review the safety and quality of vaccines before sale and use. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the U.S. Government to spur innovative solutions to these challenges.

- What is your understanding of the efficacy of vaccines produced in China and Russia, and if confirmed what messages, if any, should you deliver to countries about the safety and efficacy of these vaccines?

Answer. While Sinopharm and Sinovac have been shown in certain studies to be less effective than several other COVID-19 vaccines, studies against prior prevailing SARS-CoV-2 strains have shown Sinopharm and Sinovac have a favorable protective impact against critical illness and both have received Emergency Use Listing from the World Health Organization (WHO). Russia's Sputnik V vaccine produced by Gamaleya Research Institute has not yet received Emergency Use Listing from the

WHO or a stringent regulatory authority. I note that the Biden-Harris administration is dedicated to increasing U.S. vaccine sharing efforts and ensuring broad availability of safe and effective vaccines to more countries in need, through COVAX and bilaterally, and continues to call on others to do the same.

- Assuming availability of supply comes on line, what will be the most significant challenges to what is commonly referred to as “putting shots in arms” in countries with weak health systems, and what role will you play if confirmed to ensure those challenges have been addressed prior to COVID-19 vaccination doses become available?

Answer. Accelerating worldwide vaccine administration is an even bigger challenge than increasing supply. If confirmed, I will support USAID’s efforts in this area as a top priority. Bolstering country readiness is critical to the success of the U.S. donation of Pfizer doses and other vaccines, in particular. I understand that the President has announced that USAID plans to allocate additional American Rescue Plan funds for vaccine readiness. This builds on previous investments to support partner countries to strengthen their vaccination programs, including setting up vaccination sites, training vaccinators, providing logistics support to the “last mile,” fighting vaccine misinformation, and securing cold chain equipment.

- If confirmed, what actions would you plan to take, related to implementing the objectives of the September 2021 U.S. COVID-19 Summit?

Answer. At the September COVID-19 Summit, the President announced that USAID plans to provide \$195 million in support for country vaccine readiness efforts in support of the “Vaccinate the World” target and \$50 million to expand access to oxygen in support of the “Save Lives Now” target. I understand that USAID will provide an additional \$100 million for rapid response interventions, including addressing needs in COVID-19 hot spots and will also play a key role supporting the administration of an additional 500 million Pfizer vaccines to be donated by the United States. If confirmed, I commit to supporting these efforts as well as working with our partners, the private sector, and other countries to support reaching the Summit targets.

- What is your view of the role the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) can play in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, and future pandemics, and what level of funding should USAID provide to the organization?

Answer. I understand that USAID currently provides support to CEPI’s core vaccine development program. If confirmed, I intend to consider all possible avenues where USAID can improve country COVID-19 vaccine capacity. CEPI has been an effective innovator. If I am fortunate enough to lead the Bureau for Global Health, I will explore how CEPI’s work aligns with the U.S. funding portfolio for efforts to expand use of existing vaccines and prepare for new variants.

Health Systems Strengthening

Question. If confirmed, how will you prioritize Health Systems Strengthening? Will you commit to consulting with my staff on your plans in this area, if confirmed?

Answer. Health systems strengthening has been a major focus of my career, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with USAID colleagues, and your staff, to prioritize this work. I understand that USAID recently released a new Vision for Health Systems Strengthening, and I plan to ensure that USAID’s approach described in the Vision is implemented across the Agency’s programs. In particular, I will prioritize support for local organizations and locally-derived solutions and work with countries and partners to leverage health resources across public, private, and community sectors. This includes supporting USAID’s efforts to optimize the impact of those resources to advance equity and quality of healthcare.

Tuberculosis

Question. If confirmed, how will you prioritize tuberculosis control efforts, in particular case finding, equitable and high quality treatment, and research and development of innovative diagnostics, therapies, and vaccines?

Answer. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the global tuberculosis (TB) response. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues its TB recovery efforts in the highest impacted countries, focusing on expanding access to TB detection, such as with TB and COVID-19 bi-directional testing and community-based contact investigations. If confirmed, I look forward to overseeing efforts to improve the quality of TB and drug resistant TB treatment through, for example, innovative digital technology, and supporting research for new and better treatment and diagnostic

tools. I will also support coordination with other partners, leveraging their additional resources for late-stage development and uptake of new TB vaccines.

Global Women's Health

Question. As the world continues to confront COVID-19, women's health services must be part of any comprehensive response to the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased incidences of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence as well as decreased access to reproductive and maternal health care. In March 2021, the United Nations Population Fund reported that an estimated 12 million women experienced disruptions in access to family planning due to the pandemic, leading to 1.4 million unintended pregnancies. These impacts have been especially devastating for women and girls already in the grip of humanitarian crises, from Afghanistan to Venezuela. Already, women's progress over the past 25 years has begun to be reversed.

- How will USAID meet the expanding health needs of women and girls impacted by the secondary effects of COVID-19, including gender-based violence? What steps will USAID's Bureau of Global Health take to halt the reversal of progress in women's health and rights?

Answer. U.S. investments in reproductive and maternal health, and gender-based violence prevention and response, are vital to women's health, gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls. They also support the Biden-Harris administration's health and development priorities. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to reach those most vulnerable, especially women and girls; ensure continued and equitable access to life-saving voluntary family planning and maternal health care; support countries to develop enabling environments for healthy behaviors; and increase the health sector's capacity to prevent and address gender-based violence.

- How will USAID seek to ensure that women in humanitarian emergencies—who have been disproportionately impacted by the secondary impacts of COVID-19—receive access to critical health care services?

Answer. I understand USAID's humanitarian programming in the context of COVID-19 takes an integrated health and protection approach to ensure women and girls in humanitarian emergencies have access to critical healthcare services, including antenatal care, safe delivery at birth, postnatal care, and voluntary family planning. Programs also address myths, misconceptions, and misinformation. In light of the dramatic increase in gender-based violence (GBV) resulting from the pandemic, I understand that USAID partners are expanding services to directly address pandemic-related GBV needs. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID's longer term global health investments build on the important work of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance in countries where the Agency works.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DR. ATUL A. GAWANDE BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

In General

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to upholding the statutory structure and organizational principals of the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID), whereby the agency operates as an independent agency under the foreign policy direction of the U.S. Secretary of State?

Answer. Yes, I will uphold the statutory structure and organizational principles by which USAID formulates and executes U.S. foreign economic and development assistance policies and programs, subject to the foreign policy guidance of the President, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Council.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working in a bipartisan manner with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including by providing timely, accurate, and complete information on relevant U.S. global health strategies, initiatives, and funding?

Answer. Yes.

Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Question. A recent report by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) Anti-Corruption and Governance Center suggests that an estimated five to ten percent of annual humanitarian aid is lost to corruption, while an estimated seven percent of global spending on public health is lost to waste, fraud, and abuse.

The United States is, by far, the single most generous donor of both humanitarian and global health assistance.

- If confirmed, will you commit to upholding a zero tolerance policy for waste, fraud, and abuse in the programs under your purview?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, will you also uphold a zero tolerance policy for USAID staff and implementing partners who engage in the sexual exploitation and abuse of the vulnerable communities they are meant to serve?

Answer. Yes.

Management

Question. USAID has a diverse workforce, supported by 22 different hiring mechanisms, that has been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to persistent management challenges, budget uncertainty, and COVID-19 and its associated stresses. To further complicate matters, if confirmed, you will be charged with managing an operational bureau that consumes roughly one third of the USAID budget and programs that cut across nearly every development sector. With the perceived importance of bureaus and initiatives all-to-often measured by the resources they manage, competition can be fierce and cooperation difficult.

- What is your understanding of morale within the Bureau for Global Health?

Answer. I understand that the COVID pandemic has created challenges for the entire Federal workforce, and USAID has the relatively unique additional challenges of a substantial overseas workforce. More broadly, I understand that USAID has been asked to take on expanding duties, and the staff at the Bureau have been under tremendous pressure for the past 18 months as the Agency has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across the bureau?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to addressing morale and strengthening community at USAID. Among my top, early priorities will be to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues affecting morale, as well as the agency's personnel structure and human resources and management mechanisms that can be used to address the most critical issues. Through two decades of management experience, I have come to understand the value of listening to my teams, creating opportunities for personal and professional growth at all levels, and ensuring that the often incredibly difficult work undertaken by my staff or organization is publicly and privately acknowledged.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across the bureau, while also accounting for the areas of overlap with other agencies, bureaus, offices, and initiatives?

Answer. I understand that the size and scope of the Global Health Bureau can create coordination challenges within the Agency, and across other departments and agencies. At the same time, I see tremendous opportunity in leveraging the expertise and experience of the Global Health Bureau in coordination with the State Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services, and others, at a policy level and on specific public health issues. If confirmed, I commit to building constructive relationships with my colleagues and counterparts at USAID and across the interagency to further U.S. foreign policy interests and strengthen global health.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I work hard to be an effective leader of leaders. That means, in managing organizations small and large, I've worked to establish, communicate, and win support for clear priorities; to secure the leaders and resources to achieve them; and to build the transparency and relationships that enable people to pull together in the same direction. When these come together, extraordinary things happen.

Question. In your view, how would your management style translate in a USAID setting, where your workforce is composed of career foreign and civil servants, as well as a dizzying array of political appointees, Foreign Service Limited appointments, Participating Agency Service Agreements, contractors, and grantees?

Answer. Establishing clear priorities, the needed talent and resources, and the strong relationships required for execution is particularly challenging in federal government. But these principles of effective leadership apply equally in the public sector as the private sector.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career foreign or civil servant, do you believe it is incumbent upon Agency leaders to integrate themselves into bureau operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. Yes. I believe that USAID is made stronger as an Agency by combining the talents and skill sets of all its staff, regardless of their hiring mechanism. If I am confirmed, I will seek to integrate myself into that ecosystem, both to understand how the Global Health Bureau works and to add my perspective as a physician and public health leader. If confirmed, I will do this by holding listening sessions to understand the challenges facing current staff and solicit advice on how we can create a workforce that is more diverse and inclusive.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or in private?

Answer. No.

Question. In order to incentivize and ensure employee excellence at USAID, accurate performance reviews for all categories of employees are critical, though often lacking.

- Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performance in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes, I do. I understand that USAID has five performance management systems which emphasize ongoing, constructive feedback and require formal conversations during the annual performance cycle. USAID also has a robust awards and recognition program that includes annual performance bonuses and incentive awards. If confirmed, I commit to working within these systems to encourage employees to achieve success both within and on behalf of USAID.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage the managers in your bureau to provide clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes. I would encourage managers to continue providing clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees on a regular basis and as part of their annual performance appraisals. Constructive feedback is critical to helping employees be successful and to ensure that underperforming employees get back on track. It also allows managers to recognize and reward individuals and groups for contributions to the accomplishment of USAID's mission, goals, and objectives.

Global Health Security

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

Answer. I do not support USAID conducting research that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible in cooperation with such countries. Furthermore, it is my understanding that USAID does not fund gain-of-function research, and that USAID has not funded or conducted any studies or experiments anywhere in the world that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure USAID's research and development grants are fully vetted and do not flow to partners, including through sub-grants, engaged in such research, particularly in countries with lax biosecurity standards?

Answer. I understand that USAID provides clear guidance in all Global Health Security (GHS) programming to implementing partners on compliance and adherence to rigorous biosafety and security protocols and that USAID does not fund any gain-of-function research through prime or sub-partners. USAID requires regular reporting on implementing partners' activities supported with its funding, which must adhere to the criteria laid out in the award. This reporting is closely monitored by USAID staff to ensure compliance with U.S. Government regulations pertaining to GHS research. If confirmed, I will continue to implement this guidance and will not fund any gain-of-function research with USAID funds.

Question. If confirmed, how would you enhance USAID's monitoring and evaluation of sub-grants related to life sciences research?

Answer. It is my understanding that for all awards, USAID requires regular reporting on partners' activities supported with Agency funding, which must adhere

to the parameters of each award. If confirmed, I will work to ensure USAID continues to provide robust oversight of awards to monitor activities and the appropriate use of funds, and that award-level safeguards related to monitoring sub-awards are included in each applicable award.

Question. In your private capacity, you have asserted that the “lab leak” theory—i.e. that the COVID-19 pandemic may have its origins in an accidental exposure or leak from a lab in Wuhan, China—is plausible and merits further investigation.

- If confirmed, will you commit to conducting a comprehensive review, to include lessons learned, of all USAID grant funding to entities in the People’s Republic of China for the previous 10 years and sharing the results of such review with this committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with the committee regarding USAID-funded global health activities in the People’s Republic of China. Lessons learned from past programming can and should help shape the Agency’s future approaches. I supported the President’s decision to direct the Intelligence Community to conduct a full investigation into the origins of COVID-19, as well as administration efforts with partners and allies to seek a second phase study by the WHO. We also know getting to the bottom of the origin of this pandemic will help us understand how to prepare for the next pandemic.

Question. If confirmed, will you also commit to providing this committee with all requested information on USAID funding to EcoHealth Alliance?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to responding to the committee’s requests for information on USAID’s prior funding for EcoHealth Alliance which, I understand, has concluded.

Question. In your testimony, you indicate that your top three priorities as USAID Assistant Administrator for Global Health would be to accelerate the global response to COVID-19, prepare for the next pandemic, and strengthen health systems. In July, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed S. 2297, the International Pandemic Preparedness and COVID-19 Response Act, with overwhelming bipartisan support. The top three priorities you have outlined align with this bill.

- Are you familiar with S. 2297, the International Pandemic Preparedness and COVID-19 Response Act?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree with the legislation’s basic principles that: (1) U.S. global health security and diplomacy are inextricably linked; (2) enhanced leadership by the Department of State will be required to advance an effective U.S. global health security and diplomacy strategy overseas; (3) while a competent entity at the Department of State should align and coordinate U.S. foreign assistance efforts, the technical experts at USAID and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should be trusted to lead in design and implementation of programs under such strategy; (4) international early warning systems are lacking and must be strengthened; and (5) an international financing mechanism that incentivizes countries to identify and close measurable gaps in health security, including through enhanced early warning, will be required to help us get ahead of the next pandemic.

Answer. I support the idea of improving our pandemic preparedness and global health security activities, and I agree that diplomacy and assistance are both critical tools in these efforts. I know that USAID works closely with the Department of State, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others to ensure the U.S. is best positioned to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. If confirmed, I commit to working with you on all efforts to advance global health security.

Question. USAID missions have the authority to make cross-cutting investments in health systems strengthening while implementing disease- and sector-specific initiatives, yet often fail to do so. S. 2297 thus seeks to incentivize USAID investments in health system strengthening through the creation of a pilot program.

- If confirmed, which countries and investments would you prioritize under such a pilot program?

Answer. Health systems strengthening (HSS) has been a major focus of my career, and if confirmed, I look forward to working within the Agency to ensure this work is prioritized, including by identifying opportunities for future investments in specific partner countries. I understand USAID recently released a Vision for Health System Strengthening, which outlines a clear approach for designing, implementing and monitoring HSS activities. If confirmed, and if such a pilot program is created,

I will seek to partner with countries interested in fully implementing USAID's HSS approach.

Question. Where are the greatest opportunities for success, and where are the greatest obstacles?

Answer. Since programs have the opportunity to make efficiency gains by addressing common health system challenges, I think the countries that implement a range of global health programs offer the greatest opportunity for success. I also understand that this same dynamic can be an obstacle to integrated programming because different programs operate under their own unique sets of objectives. If confirmed, I will work to better integrate global health programming to overcome this obstacle.

Question. The President's FY 2022 budget request for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs proposes a substantial increase for global health security.

- If confirmed, which partners and investments would you prioritize?

Answer. I understand that the President's FY 2022 budget request would increase global health security funding with a significant portion focused on USAID. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the National Security Council staff and relevant Departments, and colleagues at the Agency on potential plans to scale up bilateral country programs as well as support multilateral organizations working to develop tools to end the COVID-19 pandemic and more effectively prevent and respond to future ones. I will also work to ensure that USAID's Global Health Security programming continues to build resilience for future epidemics and pandemics by supporting partner countries scale up the core public health capacities that are needed to prevent avoidable epidemics, detect threats early, and respond rapidly and effectively to disease outbreaks to stop them from becoming national or global emergencies. Moreover, I will ensure that global health security investments complement the broader approach to health systems strengthening so that USAID's investments help countries withstand future shocks.

COVID-19

Question. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provided USAID with \$905,000,000 to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, to include support "for a multilateral vaccine development partnership to support epidemic preparedness." Though there was virtually no consultation on the authorizing language, the authors reportedly intended to require USAID to dedicate a substantial portion of this amount for a substantial contribution to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). More than six months later, the substantial contribution envisioned in the ARP has yet to materialize. This has raised questions about the level of confidence USAID has in CEPI's model and operations.

- If confirmed, will you commit to provide to this committee a complete, detailed spending plan for the funds received through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) for the international COVID-19 response, to include all aspects of the response, from vaccine sharing to second order impacts?

Answer. I understand that the State Department and USAID provide Congressionally-mandated reporting on COVID-19 funding, including obligations and disbursements by country and partner, every 60 days. If confirmed, I will ensure consultations with the committee continue and that USAID provides regular briefings on the use of American Rescue Plan funding.

Question. If confirmed, would it be your intention to engage with CEPI for the research and development of COVID-19 vaccines, including vaccines to combat COVID-19 variants, as well as vaccines to disrupt transmission of new and emerging infectious diseases with pandemic potential?

Answer. I understand that USAID currently provides support to CEPI's core vaccine development program. While I am not privy to administration discussions on the use of American Rescue Plan funding, if confirmed, I intend to consider all possible avenues where USAID can improve COVID-19 vaccine capacity. CEPI has been an effective innovator. If I am fortunate enough to lead the Bureau for Global Health, I will explore how CEPI's work aligns with the U.S. funding portfolio for efforts to expand use of existing vaccines and prepare for new variants.

Question. What is your assessment of CEPI's performance to date? For what reason might USAID be hesitating to make contributions?

Answer. While I am not privy to administration discussions on the use of American Rescue Plan funding, if confirmed, I will assess how CEPI's capabilities would

advance the administration's efforts to support a multilateral vaccine development partnership to enhance epidemic preparedness and look forward to consulting with you on those efforts.

Question. USAID, in coordination with the U.S. Department of State, currently is managing United States contributions to COVAX.

- How would you assess the performance of COVAX to date?

Answer. I understand that COVAX has performed well in the context of unforeseen and ongoing constraints to the global vaccine supply, including the restricted export of vaccines from India. While it appears that COVAX is below its original delivery projections, vaccine donations from the United States and other donors continue to increase the immediate supply to low and lower-middle income countries. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts to expand the availability of safe and effective vaccines globally to bring this pandemic to an end.

Question. How can USAID ensure that COVAX is working expeditiously to get shots in arms while guarding against waste, fraud, and abuse?

Answer. It is my understanding that USAID's \$4 billion in contributions to Gavi/COVAX in 2021 was provided in tranches, allowing USAID to ensure Gavi/COVAX obtained the funding needed from other donors to scale up global vaccine access, while closely monitoring COVAX's performance. USAID also participates in Gavi's Audit and Finance Committee, and has the opportunity to regularly review risks involved in procuring and delivering COVID-19 vaccines. It is my understanding that Gavi/COVAX has established methods for receiving reports of fraud, and that all allegations are overseen by Gavi's Investigation Managing Director and Whistleblower Compliance Officer. If confirmed, I will support efforts by USAID to strengthen and reinforce existing systems to mitigate these threats to multilateral and bilateral vaccine campaigns and strengthen fraud awareness and reporting.

Question. How can USAID ensure that U.S. financial contributions to COVAX are not used to underwrite the purchase and distribution of substandard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines, particularly following the announcement that COVAX would, in fact, begin making major purchases of Chinese vaccines?

Answer. My understanding is that Gavi allocated the \$4 billion contribution from the U.S. prior to the decision to purchase Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, and that no U.S. funds were used for those purchases. If confirmed, I look forward to working within the administration and with Congress to make certain that the U.S. continues to engage constructively with Gavi to ensure a robust supply of safe, effective, and high-quality vaccines to COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) countries.

Question. Under what circumstances would U.S. bilateral vaccine contributions be more appropriate than contributions via COVAX?

Answer. Donating doses through the multilateral COVAX initiative is, in most cases, generally more cost-effective and efficient than a bilateral donation, as it allows the U.S. Government to utilize COVAX's existing legal agreements with manufacturers and countries, and ensures that countries have access to necessary ancillary materials (e.g. syringes) and logistics support. Bilateral donations, in contrast, require the U.S. Government to arrange logistic support directly with recipient countries and develop new legal agreements. In some specific instances, particularly with high-income countries, bilateral donations offer a faster and more direct route for sharing vaccines.

Question. The Biden administration has identified critical shortages in COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccine readiness, particularly in developing countries. Within the Access to COVID-19 Tools (Act) Accelerator, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's COVID-19 Response Mechanism is responsible for the diagnostics and health systems strengthening pillars. The United States has committed \$3.5 billion to the Global Fund for this purpose.

- Given your own private sector experience in expanding access to COVID-19 diagnostics, what is your assessment of the Global Fund's performance to date? What is the Global Fund getting right, and what would you do differently?

Answer. The Global Fund (GF), a valued U.S. Government partner, moved quickly to announce COVID-19 funding that allowed countries to respond to the escalating crisis. I understand that GF has leveraged volume commitments to reduce the cost of rapid antigen based test kits by 40 percent and is expected to supply more than 110 million tests during 2021. If confirmed, I will work with the GF to provide robust assistance to countries to support the achievement of GF grant targets, while acknowledging that adjustments may be necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If confirmed, I will also work with the Global Fund to ensure their core mission remains fulfilled, given the increased needs globally to address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

Question. USAID overseas missions have a long history of stretching the boundaries when it comes to permissible uses of PEPFAR funds, including when using PEPFAR funds to finance the construction of schools in Malawi despite the availability of education funds earmarked by appropriators annually for this purpose, or when using PEPFAR funds statutorily set aside to support children who have been made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS for activities with no discernable connection to HIV/AIDS.

- If confirmed, will you commit to working closely with the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (OGAC) at the U.S. Department of State to ensure that USAID's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS are efficient, effective, aligned and complementary to the work of OGAC?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to working with OGAC to ensure USAID's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS are efficient, effective, aligned, and complementary to the work of OGAC. I understand that USAID has established planning, monitoring, and oversight procedures and has dedicated personnel for monitoring activities to foster greater accountability for the use of resources toward epidemic control and the attainment of PEPFAR goals. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that USAID employs the core principles that have been paramount in realizing programmatic success to date, including: demonstrating clear outcomes and impact of U.S. Government investments through robust data and analytics, finding efficiencies to increase impact, and managing for results and accountability.

Question. Will you work to ensure that USAID missions meaningfully contribute to, but also adhere to, PEPFAR's Country Operating Plan (COP) process?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID Missions continue to contribute and adhere to PEPFAR's COP process. It is my understanding that USAID Mission teams engage actively in strategic planning discussions with their interagency team, USAID Global Health Bureau counterparts, and local stakeholders -- including the host government and implementing partners -- to analyze new data, discuss prior performance, and reach consensus on the new COP's direction to ensure full accountability and ownership.

Multilateral and Bilateral Global Health Programs

Question. There has been strong focus over the last year and a half on multilateral institutions to address global health challenges, including but not limited to the U.S. international response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Recognizing that multilateral and bilateral programs work collaboratively, and that each have their own unique strengths and challenges, what would you consider to be the appropriate balance between multilateral and U.S. bilateral global health assistance and programs to address existing and emerging global health challenges?

Answer. Multilateral institutions bring together bilateral donors, foundations, and other entities and support global alignment around common objectives. I think it is critical that USAID engage with global institutions to influence and support policy and practice worldwide. At the same time, USAID's bilateral programs work directly with country institutions on implementation. USAID's comparative advantage is its collaboration globally and at the country level with multilateral and bilateral partners. That collaboration is the catalyst for sustainability and the achievement of U.S. foreign policy and development goals.

Family Planning and Reproductive Health

Question. The President's FY2022 budget request for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs proposes a substantial increase for Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH), through both bilateral aid programs and contributions to the U.N. Population Fund.

- If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring full and complete USAID compliance with current law, which prohibits the use of U.S. foreign assistance to perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning, support involuntary sterilizations, or lobby for or against the legalization of abortion overseas?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you recognize the fungibility of U.S. foreign assistance? If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that U.S. foreign assistance does not enable implementing partners to perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning, perform involuntary sterilizations, or lobby for or against the legalization of abortion?

Answer. USAID funding does not support abortions or involuntary sterilizations. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to comply with all applicable laws, including the Helms and Siljander amendments, in implementing the Agency's programs.

Question. To your knowledge, is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-led government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) deploying coercive abortion, forced sterilization, or other involuntary population control measures in Xinjiang Province?

Answer. While I do not have direct knowledge nor have I studied the documentation on this issue, I do know that the People's Republic of China is committing atrocities against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang Province.

Question. You have written extensively about the correlation between increased access to contraception and reduced demand for abortion. If confirmed, will you ensure that information on family planning is locally sensitive and includes options for natural family planning?

Answer. Yes.

Preventable Maternal and Child Deaths

Question. Thanks in large part to commitments under the 2012 global Call to Action, and subsequent U.S. leadership and investment through USAID's Acting on the Call strategy, significant gains have been made in reducing preventable maternal and child deaths around the globe. Unfortunately, much of this progress is now at risk.

- USAID's Acting on the Call strategy expired in 2020. If confirmed, how would you renew and reinvigorate the strategy to reflect the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, ensure local input, and galvanize other donors to join the fight to end preventable child and maternal deaths by 2030?

Answer. I understand that USAID is finalizing a new strategy to guide its child and maternal programming, and will prioritize proven interventions and support countries in their efforts to end preventable child and maternal deaths by 2030. If confirmed, I commit to working with the global health community to continue focusing on building healthier, stronger, and more self-sufficient partner countries, and to leverage other donor, private sector, and host country resources towards addressing this shared goal.

Question. How important is restoring access to routine vaccinations to this effort, particularly in areas plagued by insecurity and conflict?

Answer. Restoring access to routine vaccinations is critical to USAID's efforts to prevent child and maternal deaths. WHO-UNICEF global immunization estimates indicate 23 million children missed out on basic vaccines through routine immunization services in 2020—3.7 million more than in 2019. Most of these children live in communities affected by conflict, in under-served remote places, or in informal or slum settings with limited access to basic health and key social services. If I am confirmed, restoring and shoring up immunization services will be an urgent priority in order to stop a wave of preventable outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, and backsliding in child mortality gains made over the past two decades.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Question. Access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in healthcare facilities is critical to: establishing and sustaining strong health systems; preventing the spread of infectious diseases; addressing the growing challenge of antimicrobial resistance; and to ensuring quality care and the safety of patients and health workers. Yet, a recent WHO/UNICEF report cited that globally, 1-in-3 healthcare facilities does not have access to safe drinking water, soap, and hand sanitizers, and every year 17 million women give birth in facilities without adequate WASH.

- If confirmed, would incorporating WASH into the bureau's health systems strengthening programs, and particularly those led by the Office of Health Systems, be a priority?

Answer. As a medical professional, I understand that access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in healthcare facilities is essential to providing quality healthcare and protecting healthcare workers and patients from infections, such as

COVID-19. I have also seen firsthand how the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of WASH in disease prevention and infection control. If confirmed, I commit to working with public and private development partners to strengthen WASH in healthcare facilities to improve quality of care.

Question. Will you commit to working with the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security and the USAID Global Water Coordinator to prioritize WASH across each of the bureau's health programs, ensure alignment of effort, and eliminate duplication and waste?

Answer. Health is one of the most critical and well demonstrated WASH benefits. My understanding is that there is strong coordination between the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) and the Global Water Coordinator. This includes intra-agency coordinating groups and the integrated management of programs and Mission support by the RFS Center for Water, Security, Sanitation, and Hygiene; GH Office of Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition; and Regional Bureaus. If confirmed, I commit to continue to ensure effective collaboration through existing platforms and to work with colleagues to improve internal USAID WASH program alignment.

Polio

Question. USAID has long worked with U.N. agencies and private sector partners, including Rotary International and the Gates Foundation, to eradicate polio. These efforts have achieved notable success. Since the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, more than 2.5 billion children have been immunized, two of the three known strains of wild poliovirus have been eradicated, and global cases have been reduced by 99 percent. Today, wild poliovirus remains endemic in just two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan. Still, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan threaten to reverse these gains.

- If confirmed, will you prioritize efforts to eradicate polio globally, including through the reinvigoration of public-private partnerships and utilization of innovative approaches to track infections and expand access to vaccinations in vulnerable, hard to reach communities?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to continuing USAID's 25-year history of collaborating with public and private partners to eradicate polio, including through the use of international and local non-governmental organizations, and community and faith-based organizations, to reach the hardest-to-reach communities through gender-inclusive and equity-focused approaches.

Question. How can USAID and its partners expand the reach of polio vaccines in Pakistan and Afghanistan while ensuring the protection of vaccinators?

Answer. The threat to polio workers continues to be grave; in this year alone, more than 10 people have been killed while supporting polio eradication efforts. I understand that USAID's polio work in Pakistan and Afghanistan has focused on funding a network of staff to detect, track, and report wild and vaccine-derived polio cases. This surveillance data is essential for WHO, UNICEF, and others to plan polio campaigns and to implement timely outbreak response measures. USAID collaborates with multilateral organizations and other partners to mitigate risks to healthcare workers that support polio eradication. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure USAID and its partners maintain and expand access to polio vaccines, while prioritizing the safety and security of all polio program staff.

Localization

Question. Successive administrations—both Democrat and Republican—have launched initiatives to “localize” U.S. foreign assistance, including by building the capacity of local partners to design programs and manage U.S. funds directly, rather than working as sub-awardees to large, U.S.-based development contractors and non-governmental organizations. Each of these initiatives has had mixed results.

- What is your view of “localization”?

Answer. In my view, localization can increase the input, ownership, and decision-making of the people who live development challenges daily in their communities. If confirmed, I will support Bureau approaches to localization efforts that reinforce implementation of global health activities that are guided by the people and institutions who drive change in their own countries and communities. I understand this is a key feature of USAID's Vision for Health System Strengthening that guides the work of the Office of Health Systems.

Question. How can the Bureau for Global Health more effectively empower local partners through its program consultation, design, and implementation processes?

Answer. Local capacity for development program design and management often requires development itself. I agree it is important that USAID work to support and grow a diverse set of partners who understand specific development needs and challenges, and continue to ease their access to Agency grant and contracting opportunities. If confirmed, I will work with USAID's global health programs and broader Agency efforts that I understand to be underway, to better enable local actors to define priorities and lead their communities' and countries' development agendas.

Question. Is it appropriate to set targets for "localization" and, if so, what would you consider to be reasonable and appropriate?

Answer. I do not believe that localization can be solely based on providing increased numbers of grants to local organizations or management targets that emphasize inputs over impact. If confirmed, I will work with USAID's global health programs and broader Agency efforts that I understand to be underway, to better enable local actors to define priorities and lead their communities' and countries' development agendas.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DR. ATUL A. GAWANDE BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In 1998, you wrote an article titled, "The Human Cost of Crippling Castro" where you criticized the longstanding U.S. policy of withholding financing and support for the Castro and Diaz-Canel regimes. For years, I have sought to clarify that the U.S. does not sanction Cuba, or sanction the Cuban people, but on a regime that is the number one reason why Cuba is the only country in the world where Cubans cannot succeed. For proof, we just need to look at the most recent protests in July, where Cubans across the island took to the streets against the regime's long history of economic mismanagement and violation of Cuban's basic rights.

- Understanding that you wrote this article more than two decades ago, do you oppose U.S. efforts to deny funding to the Castro-Diaz-Canel regime in Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will abide by existing restrictions concerning Cuba, including the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996. As you rightly note, the Cuban regime's violent crackdown on dissent both preceding and in response to the July 11 protests demonstrates the Government's blatant disregard for its people and economic mismanagement. I agree that no funding for Cuba should go to the regime. I understand that current funding only benefits the Cuban people, carried out by independent organizations and strictly adheres to the relevant U.S. laws governing the provision of assistance in Cuba.

Question. In that same article, you praise the high quality of Cuba's medical sector, which the regime uses to promote its international medical missions. However, the U.S. State Department, in its most recent Trafficking in Persons Report, found that these missions are only possible through forcing Cuban doctors to work.

- In your opinion, is a health care system that relies on the forced labor of its doctors and nurses really something to admire?

Answer. Based on these findings and evidence that has emerged in recent years, I believe this system ultimately is exploitative and coercive to its participants. Any system that relies on systematic and deliberate violations of people's human rights should be publicly denounced. As stated in the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report with regard to participants in Cuba's international medical missions, "The Government failed to inform participants of the terms of their contracts, which varied from country to country, confiscated their documents and salaries, and threatened medical professionals and their family members if participants left the program."

Question. You have written significantly on the subject of abortion. Some of this writing indicates a seemingly nonchalant attitude to abortion as a method of family planning, which raises grave concerns for your role, if confirmed, of overseeing all USAID assistance for global health programs.

- Do you support abortion as a tool of family planning?
- Do you believe the United States should no longer prohibit the use of U.S. Government funds for the performance of abortion?
- Do you support the use of partial-birth abortions?

Answer. I am clear that USAID does not fund abortions and that Congress passes the laws governing the use of U.S. Government funds. Since 1973, the Helms Amendment has prohibited the use of U.S. foreign assistance funds to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning, or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions. I take this and other restrictions, including other restrictions related to abortion, very seriously. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that USAID continues to comply with the law, including the Helms and Siljander amendments, in implementing the Agency's programs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CLAIRE D. CRONIN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. On September 13, the British Government unilaterally announced that customs checks on EU imports were delayed from October 2021 until January 2022. The checks were part of the Brexit deal that kept Northern Ireland within the EU single market and avoids the need for a hard border with Ireland. Will you convey to the Irish government your staunch support for the Northern Ireland Protocol in the Brexit withdrawal agreement? How will you make clear that many in Congress do not support a U.S.-UK FTA without full implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol?

Answer. If confirmed, I will protect the hard-fought gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. I will encourage all parties to prioritize political and economic stability and to negotiate when differences arise. I would emphasize the need to ensure any Brexit outcomes do not undermine the progress made since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Question. The British Government has proposed an across-the-board amnesty for all criminal prosecutions related to the Troubles. This amnesty would be wider than more than 300 other post-conflict amnesties, including the one issued by Pinochet in Chile, according to a study from Queen's University Belfast. This proposed amnesty is incompatible with the human rights-related commitments of the GFA. What steps should the U.S. take to ensure that victims of Troubles-era violence and their families receive proper justice and accountability?

Answer. There are many complexities surrounding the past in Northern Ireland and addressing these issues in a constructive way is essential. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Irish government and colleagues at Embassy London and our Consulate General in Belfast to urge Northern Ireland's political parties to negotiate when differences arise in order to build a peaceful and prosperous shared future in Northern Ireland.

Question. Ireland was elected to the United Nations Security Council for 2021–2022. During its Presidency in September, Ireland focused on the UN-led peace process in Libya, the Middle East Peace Process, and the situations in Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and South Sudan. Given Ireland's leadership on peacekeeping, climate, and security, how will you work with Irish partners to build coalitions that address our mutual priorities?

Answer. Ireland is already a strong advocate for many shared priorities. If confirmed, I will ensure U.S. priorities remain top agenda issues for my engagement with Irish officials. I will seek the most effective ways to work with Ireland to advance key U.S. policy objectives, including expanding the bilateral business and economic relationship, combatting the global pandemic, countering the destructive influence of bad actors, strengthening transatlantic ties, and providing a safe and business-friendly environment for American citizens and companies working in Ireland.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CLAIRE D. CRONIN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Despite generally good relations between the two countries, one of the sticking points in our relationship is the rather high level of illegal immigration of Irish citizens into the U.S. While this issue tends to fly under the radar, there are an estimated 10,000-50,000 Irish citizens residing illegally in the United States.

- Do you believe that illegal Irish immigrants should be lumped together in immigration reform bills with other groups of illegal immigrants?

Answer. The history of Irish immigration to the United States is as old as our country and contributes to our strong bonds of friendship and history. During President Biden's March meeting with Taoiseach Micheál Martin, the leaders expressed their support for an earned path to citizenship for immigrants to the United States, as proposed in the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021. If confirmed, I will work to implement the applicable U.S. immigration laws and policies for Irish immigrants, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security and other Administration partners and in support of the Administration's commitment to the humane enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

Question. Do you commit to working to find a legal remedy for this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the Administration's efforts to create a humane and effective immigration system, recognizing both that strong borders are fundamental to our national security and that welcoming immigrants is core to our national identity. I will support and defend any legal remedies to this issue, if I am confirmed.

Question. Many in the U.S. Congress have vocally told London that they will not ratify any U.S.-UK trade deal if the Good Friday agreements are seen to be undermined in any final post-Brexit agreements that the UK may make with the European Union.

- Do you agree with this stance? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I will protect the hard-fought gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. I will encourage all parties to prioritize political and economic stability and to negotiate when differences arise. I would emphasize the need to ensure any Brexit outcomes do not undermine the progress made since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Question. Ireland has signed on to the Paris Climate Agreement, however it has continued to lag behind its emissions reduction goals.

- How do you plan on engaging with Irish government and organizations to encourage them to reach their emissions goals under the Paris Agreement?

Answer. Ireland is eager to work with the United States to raise the profile of the issue. In July, Ireland passed a Climate Action Bill committing to halving carbon emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. As member of the European Union (EU), Ireland has no country-specific Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement—they are currently working to meet the bloc's collective target. However, with agriculture constituting the biggest share of carbon emissions, Ireland is now in the process of setting ambitious legally-binding targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. and Irish Government officials and scientific experts to ensure that ambitious climate goals are met.

Question. In May 2021, the regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka forced down a Ryan Air flight that was in Belarusian airspace on its way from Athens, Greece, to Vilnius, Lithuania. Once on the ground, the Lukashenka regime forcibly removed Belarusian opposition journalist Raman Pratasevich and his girlfriend from the flight. Mr. Pratasevich has since been seen to be forced to make confessions of his sins against the regime on Belarusian television. Ryan Air is an Irish airline, and after the hijacking, many questions were raised about the airline's role in allowing the plane to be escorted to the ground.

- Now, after several months of EU-forced routing around Belarusian airspace, airlines are beginning to question when the restrictions will disappear. The stance of Ryan Air is particularly important. If confirmed, will you commit to working to maintain this overfly ban over Belarus?

Answer. Belarus's forced diversion of a commercial Ryanair flight under apparently false pretenses and the subsequent removal and arrest of Raman Pratasevich, a Belarusian journalist, and his traveling companion, was a direct affront to international norms. The United States strongly condemned these actions and has since taken measures, including issuing a Level 4 travel warning against travel to Belarus, and imposed sanctions and air travel restrictions. The United States has also strongly supported the investigation of the incident by the International Civil Aviation Organization, which is slated to present its findings in November. If confirmed, I would work with the Irish government to support the Belarusian people in their aspirations for a free, democratic, and prosperous future and support their call for the regime to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. According to the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, Ireland was listed on Tier 2 Watch List for the second year in a row. Tier 2 Watch List, by definition, states:

Countries and territories whose governments do not fully comply with the Act's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and: The estimated number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing and the country is not taking proportional concrete actions; or There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year.

- Ireland seems to be in both categories. If confirmed, what steps would you take to engage with the host government on this critical issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with U.S. and Irish authorities to encourage cooperation and regularly raise trafficking in persons at the highest levels of the Irish government. While the government recently convicted two traffickers for the first time under its trafficking law, I will continue to urge the Irish government to take concrete actions in addressing the recommendations from this year's Trafficking in Persons Report. Specifically, I will encourage the government of Ireland to vigorously investigate, prosecute suspects, and convict traffickers using the human trafficking law as well as improve systemic deficiencies in their victim identification, referral, and assistance.

Question. If confirmed, how would you engage with the office of the Ambassador at Large for Trafficking in Persons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with U.S. authorities, including a confirmed U.S. Ambassador at Large for Trafficking in Persons, and the relevant Irish authorities, to encourage cooperation to make progress in combating trafficking in persons.

Question. Do you believe that progress is possible in Ireland? Is there sufficient political will to tackle this growing problem?

Answer. The Irish government continues to work with the U.S. government to address these issues. As noted in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, the government made some significant efforts to combat trafficking during the reporting period, including designating an independent human trafficking national rapporteur and increasing funding for victim assistance, awareness campaigns, and training. In June 2021, Ireland convicted two Irish citizens—the first convictions under the anti-trafficking law since it was amended in 2013. In September, courts sentenced the traffickers to over five years' imprisonment. If confirmed, I will engage with U.S. and Irish authorities to encourage cooperation and progress in combating trafficking in persons. In addition, I believe that progress can be made by effectively using public diplomacy tools to increase awareness and victim identification.

Question. There are certain statutory limitations on how long a country can be consistently listed on the Tier 2 Watch List. After a certain amount of time, they must improve to Tier 2 or be moved to Tier 3. What do you believe are some concrete steps that the United States and the government of Ireland can take together to prevent further slipping to Tier 3?

Answer. For the second consecutive year, Ireland remained on the Tier 2 Watch List in the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons report. If confirmed, I will urge the Irish government to take concrete actions in addressing the prioritized recommendations the Department highlighted in this year's Trafficking in Persons Report, especially with regard to increased prosecutions and victim identification and assistance. While the government has made some progress in recently convicting two traffickers for the first time under its trafficking law, if confirmed, I will encourage the government of Ireland to vigorously investigate, prosecute suspects, and convict traffickers of both sex and labor trafficking.

Question. Embassy Dublin has been under enormous stress over the past few years dealing with COVID and the local lockdowns it caused.

- What is your understanding of morale in Embassy Dublin?

Answer. Ireland has enforced three strict national lockdowns. The Foreign Service Officers and Locally Employed Staff at Embassy Dublin have dealt with significant challenges posed by COVID-19. I am grateful for their service, despite the difficulties. If confirmed, I will prioritize meeting with Embassy employees, including the Deputy Chief of Mission, to understand the impact of the pandemic on the mission.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across the Embassy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure everyone on my team is treated professionally, their rights are respected, they are safe and secure, and they have the resources necessary to perform their jobs. I believe that all members of U.S. Embassy Dublin are one team working for the good of the U.S.-Ireland relationship, and the interests of the United States and the American people.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Embassy Dublin?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure everyone on my team is treated professionally, their rights are respected, they are safe and secure, and they have the resources necessary to perform their jobs. My commitment will be to ensure we use our available resources as effectively as possible to advance our top policy priorities. I believe that all members of U.S. Embassy Dublin are one team working for the good of the U.S.-Ireland relationship and the interests of the United States and the American people.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. My career is rooted in public service and my experience as a mediator shaped my ability to work with colleagues of all backgrounds in a constructive manner. My management style is also shaped by my service as the first woman House Majority Leader in Massachusetts. My leadership style is collaborative and team oriented. I regularly engage with members of my team and always seek to create a space for open dialogue and diversity of thought. Despite the team approach, I recognize that decision making authority rests with me and that I am responsible for the outcome of the decision. If confirmed, I will work hard to foster an environment of respect as the Embassy carries out important work on behalf of the American people.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

Answer. As I understand it, the State Department continuously reviews its priorities, organization, and staffing relevant to the needs of each mission. If confirmed, my commitment will be to ensure we use our available resources as effectively as possible to advance our top policy priorities. If necessary, I would advocate for additional resources to carry out our mission.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, one of my first actions as ambassador will be to meet the entire team at our Embassy in Dublin, including the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Deputy Chief of Mission to advance U.S. priorities in Ireland, including: protecting the safety and security of Americans, growing our economic relationship, and advancing shared political priorities. I expect to have a positive working relationship and to work together closely.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my first actions as ambassador will be to meet the entire team at our Embassy in Dublin, including the Deputy Chief of Mission. I will consult closely with the Deputy Chief of Mission on a range of issues and value the institutional knowledge provided.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Ireland? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. The deep cultural, familial, and economic U.S.-Ireland connections provide a strong foundation on which Embassy Dublin promotes U.S. policy goals, such as recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, responding to the climate crisis, and standing up for our shared democratic values. With a sophisticated knowledge of American history, customs, and politics, many Irish enjoy positive experiences in the

United States as tourists, students, or professionals. If confirmed, I will use public diplomacy tools including cultural programming, exchanges like the Fulbright program, and traditional and social media to bolster people-to-people ties across the country and expand the pool of key influencers who advocate for U.S. interests.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. The State Department's foreign policy goals—whether in Washington, DC or Ireland—are the same. The public diplomacy team at Embassy Dublin presents information to their local audience using their understanding of that audience and the local environment. The Embassy blends rapid reposting or amplification of Department or administration messaging with post-generated content directly tailored to contextualize the material to achieve the greatest impact with local audiences. If confirmed, I will continue to deploy public diplomacy staff and resources to analyze, engage, inform, and influence Irish audiences in support of U.S. foreign policy goals.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CLAIRE D. CRONIN BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Recently, the COVID pandemic and the post-Brexit Northern Ireland Protocol have posed challenges to further implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Political turmoil over the issue has again given rise to public unrest, including outbreaks of violence from loyalists in Northern Ireland in April 2021. As Ambassador, how can you use your role to facilitate dialogue and de-escalation around Northern Irish sectarian issues, from the Irish side of the border?

Answer. Recent unrest in Northern Ireland underscores the importance of safeguarding the gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. If confirmed, I would work with colleagues in London and Belfast, and with the Irish government, to encourage political and community engagement to ensure the gains of the hard-won peace are protected.

Question. Ireland has recently been downgraded to the Tier 2 Watch List in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons report. Ireland has only rarely prosecuted anyone for human trafficking. As Ambassador, what will you do to raise the profile of this issue of concern?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with U.S. and Irish authorities to encourage cooperation and regularly raise trafficking in persons at the highest levels of the Irish government. While the Government has made some progress in recently convicting two traffickers for the first time under its trafficking law, I will urge the Irish government to take further concrete actions to address the recommendations from this year's Trafficking in Persons Report. Specifically, I will encourage the government of Ireland to vigorously investigate, prosecute suspects, and convict traffickers using the human trafficking law as well as improve systemic deficiencies in their victim identification, referral, and assistance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KENT DOYLE LOGSDON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In November 2017 and December 2018, parties to the OSCE's 5+2 format reached agreements on elements of the Berlin-plus Protocol. If confirmed, how will you leverage the United States' status as an observer to the format to continue to make progress towards full implementation of the protocol?

Answer. If confirmed, I pledge to continue our close and collaborative engagement with the OSCE and likeminded allies and partners to ensure productive, results-oriented discussions under the 5+2 format. The United States hopes to see continued progress on remaining confidence-building measures, underlying political and security issues, and maintaining a focus on advancing human rights. If confirmed, I am ready to work with the Government of Moldova and international partners under the OSCE framework to support full implementation of the protocol, including: enhanced movement through the Nistru River security zone, registration and facilitation of international traffic, and resolution of criminal cases.

Question. In a recent address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Sandu called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria and the destruction

or removal of weapons caches in the region. How would you engage parties in the 5+2 format to ensure that Moldovan independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity are recognized?

Answer. The United States fully supports President Sandu's and the Government of Moldova's call on Russia to honor its Istanbul Summit commitments and withdraw its troops and munitions from Moldovan territory. If confirmed, I will actively continue this support through direct dialogue with our partners in the OSCE and with the parties to and mediators of the OSCE-led 5+2 process. I will uphold the U.S. commitment to the 5+2 process and its goal to achieve a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement that upholds Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, with a special status for Transnistria within Moldova's internationally recognized borders.

Question. President Sandu and Prime Minister Gavrilita have embarked on an ambitious reform agenda since Moldova's parliamentary elections in July 2021. The reforms aim to root out corruption at all levels of the Moldovan Government and have been welcomed by the international community. However, an August 2021 open letter signed by Moldovan civil society groups called for increased transparency with regard to reform efforts. How will you work to support the Moldovan Government's anti-corruption efforts while also encouraging appropriate public consultation?

Answer. The United States is committed to supporting President Sandu and the Moldovan Government as they pursue reforms to strengthen democratic institutions and combat corruption. Engagement with Moldovan civil society is a key component of U.S. support. Civil society plays an important role in promoting accountability of elected leaders, driving meaningful reform, promoting access to justice for vulnerable communities, and strengthening independent media. If confirmed, I will support an open and consultative reform process that incorporates a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society and international experts. I will also ensure that the U.S. Embassy amplifies successes of the Moldovan Government's anticorruption efforts.

Question. LGBTI individuals in Moldova continue to be victims of discrimination, hate crimes, and verbal and physical assaults. What will be your strategy for supporting civil society groups that work with the LGBTI community?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with civil society organizations and likeminded international partners to urge the Moldovan Government to adopt policies to protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons and to address impunity for hate-based crimes against all vulnerable communities and minority groups. I will ensure the United States continues to support improving accountability for perpetrators of hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ persons and protecting the rights of victims of these crimes. If confirmed, I also will focus on building the capacity of civil society to advocate for all individuals to fully exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms and to support investigations of hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ persons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KENT DOYLE LOGSDON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What areas in the U.S.-Moldova relationship do you see as most ripe for improvement?

Answer. The United States has two key priorities for our bilateral relations. The first is to promote the development of strong government institutions that advance accountability, democracy, and human rights, and that work for the Moldovan people. The second is to strengthen Moldova's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity to counter Russian malign influence and empower Moldovans to pursue their chosen European path. The United States, in coordination with our European partners, is focused on providing the political and technical support needed to advance the new government's reform agenda. The United States is also ready to assist Moldova's economic recovery through market-oriented reforms and increased transparency.

Question. Moldova's forward progress has at times been hampered by their inability to fulfil the conditions required by the IMF to receive much needed funds. As many neighboring states have moved forward economically, Moldova's economy has remained stagnant and dependent on remittances.

- As one of the major contributors to the IMF, what role do you believe the United States should play in helping rebuild ties between Moldova and the IMF?

Answer. The United States is committed to assisting Moldova in building a robust, diversified, and export-oriented economy with stronger links to Western trade partners. IMF assistance and associated reforms have helped Moldova make important progress in strengthening transparency and oversight in its financial sector. If confirmed, I will support ongoing dialogue between Moldova and the IMF on reaching agreement on future assistance packages that will encourage the strengthening of the rule of law in Moldova and deliver both important governance reforms and much-needed financial assistance as Moldova builds back its economy in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Question. Moldova remains completely dependent on Russia for its gas supplies. If confirmed, do you commit to helping Moldova explore and develop other, non-Russian sources of power, and to helping push the country to implement programs that will make it more energy efficient and thus use less Russian gas?

Answer. If confirmed, I would focus on supporting Moldova's energy security and diversification by leveraging U.S. technical assistance to promote renewable energy and alternative sources of gas supply and encourage reforms to better link Moldova to European energy markets. Collectively, these efforts can help to reduce Moldova's dependence on Russian gas imports. In addition, linking Moldova's energy infrastructure to its neighbors, such as Ukraine and Romania, will support further diversification.

Question. Moldova's struggle with Russian-backed and institutionalized corruption are well-chronicled. In 2014, for instance, \$1 billion disappeared from Moldovan banks and has not been retrieved.

- Do you believe that the United States should assist the Government of Moldova in their fight against corruption by providing them with intelligence on the whereabouts of certain individuals or their financial accounts who are suspected of having stolen from or defrauded the Moldovan people?

Answer. We support the Moldovan Government's efforts to implement anti-corruption reforms and to investigate and prosecute those involved in corruption, including those who participated in the 2014 billion-dollar bank fraud. Corruption continues to slow economic development and threatens Moldova's European trajectory. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Moldova to promote and ensure accountability for corrupt actors and assist the Moldovan Government's investigations to hold those complicit in the 2014 billion-dollar bank fraud to account in whatever way we can.

Question. Do you believe that visa or financial sanctions should be utilized by the United States against the aforementioned individuals? Why or why not?

Answer. The United States stands with the Moldovan people in their fight against corruption. If confirmed, I will seek to use all available tools, as appropriate, to promote accountability for corrupt actors undermining the integrity of democratic institutions and rule of law in Moldova, regionally, and globally.

Question. A new anti-corruption-focused government has recently come to power in Moldova. But time is short for them to make progress, and the entrenched interests working to maintain their grip on Moldova's politics and economy are strong.

- What role do you think the United States should play in helping Moldova fight corruption?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make the fight against corruption one of my top priorities. Moldovan voters chose a new government with a clear anticorruption mandate. U.S. assistance to Moldova is focused on promoting the development of strong, independent, and democratic justice sector institutions. As the new Moldovan Government seeks to implement its ambitious reform agenda, the United States can help Moldova build capacity within key anticorruption institutions, promote global best practices, and increase the effectiveness of its justice sector.

Question. What tools does the new government have to begin the fight to corruption, and what new anti-corruption tools could they develop to enhance reform efforts.

Answer. Moldova's fight against corruption has benefited from an increasingly independent judiciary, the development of specialized anticorruption and integrity bodies, and robust exchanges with the United States and our European partners to implement international best practices. To achieve its anticorruption goals, the new

government can continue to strengthen accountability and transparency within judicial and prosecutorial oversight bodies. In the financial sector, Moldova is working to improve financial transparency and develop its financial intelligence capabilities. If confirmed, I would support Moldova's push to expand its anticorruption agenda, in consultation with independent experts and civil society.

Question. In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Moldova was identified as remaining on Tier 2 due to lack of prosecutorial efforts and systemic corruption in law enforcement.

- How will you work with the Moldovan authorities to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage the Moldovan Government to strengthen its investigative and prosecutorial capacity to combat human trafficking, as well as press for improved government support, services, and justice for trafficking victims. U.S. support in the fight against human trafficking in Moldova is centered on victims and includes programs to increase access to services. Rooting out corruption in law enforcement and the judiciary, as well as building capacity within Moldovan law enforcement agencies, will improve Moldova's ability to prosecute and prevent trafficking.

Question. In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Moldova was identified as partially tolerant of religious freedom, with noted anti-Semitic incidents.

- What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. While Moldova's constitution and laws provide for religious freedom, discrimination against members of religious minority groups persists, particularly anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred. If confirmed, I will work closely with the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, civil society, the Moldovan Government, and religious communities to combat religiously motivated hatred and to promote respect for all religious groups. Efforts to strengthen Moldova's anti-discrimination body will support accountability for perpetrators of religiously motivated hate crimes. If confirmed, I will also work to advance freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression within the Transnistria region.

Question. In the 2021 Human Rights Report, Moldova was identified as having serious human rights concerns, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the freedom of expression, assembly, and movement.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. The United States welcomes the commitment of the new government to advance human rights as a policy priority. The United States remains concerned about pervasive human rights issues, including discrimination and impunity for hate crimes against members of minority groups and vulnerable communities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Moldovan Government to improve the human rights situation in the country. The United States remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Transnistria, including the prosecution of individuals for exercising their human right and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will press for improved protection of vulnerable communities in Transnistria.

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 work closely with civil society organizations to help us assess human rights issues, develop programs, and advocate for stronger policies and reforms. The U.S. Embassy in Chisinau enjoys strong and longstanding relationships with civil society on human rights and democracy issues. Civil society has played an important role in promoting accountability of elected leaders, driving meaningful reform, supporting the rights of members of minority groups and access to justice for vulnerable communities, and strengthening independent media.

Question. Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Embassy Chisinau?

Answer. Embassy Chisinau continues to attract a talented and diverse group of foreign service professionals and their families. The COVID pandemic, as well as movement restrictions and strain on Moldova's healthcare system, presented new challenges for the Embassy in Chisinau. However, access to vaccinations for all staff and U.S. family members, as well as continued U.S. assistance to support Moldova's

recovery from the pandemic, have contributed to improved resiliency and health and safety. In addition, the team in Chisinau has been energized through engagement with the new pro-reform, Western-oriented government. If confirmed, I would fully support Embassy staff and continually seek ways to promote good morale at post.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Embassy Chisinau?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my deputy chief of mission to ensure that we create an atmosphere in which our staff knows that they can bring serious issues to us and know that they are being heard at the highest level. I will ensure that everyone in the mission understands that my highest priority is the safety and security of the team. If confirmed, I will promote training and professional development, and ensure that all staff members are aware of the employee and family support resources that the Department offers to assist employees.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Embassy Chisinau?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to establish a strong team with a clear understanding of our goals and objectives, maintain open and transparent communications throughout the mission by sharing information, and seek ways to support and ensure the safety and community of the mission the community—both American and local staff.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission.

- How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I have a collaborative management style. I believe in sharing information and empowering my team, being open to ideas and suggestions from throughout the mission, and providing clear guidance and decisions as needed to lead.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. I do not believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private.

Question. What lessons did you learn from your tenure as deputy chief of mission in Berlin?

Answer. As Deputy Chief of Mission in Berlin, I learned it is important to build a strong team and to provide the guidance needed to empower the members of your team to lead their own sections and agencies in support of overall mission goals and objectives. As Deputy Chief of Mission, I focused on increasing diversity throughout the mission, but especially within the senior team. I also learned it is important to take care of your team, including their families, especially in difficult and uncertain times.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. I have been a deputy chief of mission (DCM) twice—in Tbilisi, Georgia, and in Berlin, Germany. To be successful, a DCM must be the Chief of Mission's alter ego, confidante, and partner in managing and leading the mission. If confirmed, I fully expect to have that kind of positive relationship with my DCM in Chisinau.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I anticipate entrusting my deputy chief of mission to manage the day-to-day operations of the mission, and to be fully engaged on and informed about all aspects of policy and mission management should the deputy need to step in to lead.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking.

- Given your time as chief of staff to the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources, do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. I believe it is critical to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles. I will hold accountable those who have performance or conduct issues. This is what I have done throughout my career.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers. I will hold accountable those who have performance or conduct issues.

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and fellow foreign diplomats stationed in Moldova.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. In my experience, U.S. diplomats have gotten outside of our embassy walls sufficiently to accomplish our mission, and if confirmed I would stress the importance of getting outside of our Embassy by example. Access to and engagement with local contacts and populations is an important part of our work overseas. Throughout my career, I have participated in public outreach to all parts of society—from students to non-governmental organizations to the media—and will continue to do so.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage embassy staff to spend time engaging with local populations and developing contacts. I will also lead by example to demonstrate to my team that it is important to engage with our local counterparts and to participate in public outreach to provide information about our goals in a country and to learn from our hosts about local conditions.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Moldova? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. The United States enjoys dynamic people-to-people ties with Moldovans through many U.S.-sponsored exchange programs, and Moldovan alumni of U.S. programs have become key leaders in government and civil society. Moldovans are eager to engage with U.S. diplomats and the Embassy has a robust program of public outreach. The media environment remains challenging, as consolidated ownership and disinformation create a narrow space for independent media. The United States has consistently supported the development of independent media and resiliency against disinformation. If confirmed, I would engage in public outreach and work to improve the ability of Moldovan citizens to get their news from reputable media outlets.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. If confirmed, I will focus on closely coordinating the efforts of Washington- and Chisinau-based public affairs teams to ensure there is a unified approach to highlighting key messages and U.S. policies in Moldova. The small size of the Moldovan media market and the great public interest in the U.S.-Moldova relationship enables the mission to take advantage of the local media platform to convey U.S. priorities and build cross-cultural ties. In addition, the embassy has focused on expanding outreach to amplify U.S. messages for a wider range of audiences outside Chisinau.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO SHARON L. CROMER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. President Adama Barrow has reneged on his promise to serve a three-year term, declaring his intention to stand for reelection in a presidential poll scheduled for December 4 of this year. In addition, his party has blocked the approval of a new constitution, which would have established presidential term limits, and he reportedly formed a political alliance with the party of his predecessor, Yahya Jammeh, whose term in office was characterized by severe political repression and human rights abuses.

- What are the prospects for credible elections in the face of what appears to be Barrow's backsliding relative to democracy?

Answer. Presidential elections in December 2021 will be a critical benchmark. The Government is encouraging free, fair, and transparent election campaigns in what could be the first election without government interference and intimidation in a generation. Credible ballot counting will be essential. Both the ruling party and main opposition party were responsible for blocking the constitutional referendum. That said, President Barrow's recent comments about closing down space for the opposition to operate are troubling. For the December 2021 presidential election, I understand the U.S. election observation mission will work in concert with our like-minded partners to ensure that electoral authorities are accountable to the public and that any attempt to improperly alter the election's outcome will be detected and publicized.

Question. What are the most significant actions the U.S. can do in support of a sustainable democratic transition?

Answer. Gambian democracy is still in its infancy and its steps forward are still unsteady. It will take the country significant time to put in place the institutions needed to create a vibrant democracy. The amended Constitution should be put to a referendum, the National Assembly needs to fulfill its legislative role, and the courts must address the backlog of cases which delays prisoners from getting a fair trial. If given the opportunity to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia, I will use my experience as a Mission Director and senior leadership positions at USAID headquarters to help Gambians build a truly democratic state and to advance country owned, led and sustained development that improves the lives and well-being of Gambians.

Question. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to support a lasting transition to democracy?

Answer. The courageous decision of Gambians to vote out of office the increasingly authoritarian and dictatorial former president was successful in large part due to an intervention led by the democracies of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Global democracy and governance indicators show that The Gambia is making modest progress but is still a fledgling democracy emerging from 22 years of under-investment in democratic governance and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will advocate for reforms to create a firm foundation for a transparent, democratic, and accountable system of governance. Presidential elections in December 2021 will be a critical benchmark for the democratic trajectory of the West Africa region.

The Gambia is on the Tier 2 Watch List according to the State Department's 2020 annual Trafficking in Person's Report. According to the report, "the government did not convict a trafficker for the third consecutive year, victim services remained inadequate overall, and some law enforcement officers allegedly requested bribes to register trafficking complaints."

Question. What programs and activities is the U.S. supporting to help the Gambia improve the conviction rate for traffickers and support trafficking victims?

Answer. The State Department continues to engage diplomatically and programmatically on combating human trafficking in The Gambia. In 2019, the TIP Office awarded \$750,000 to the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to work with three existing One Stop Centers for victims of gender-based violence and train staff to screen for and provide comprehensive services to victims of trafficking. The project also aims to strengthen the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force to coordinate the Government's anti-trafficking response. Additionally, IOM provides training to criminal justice practitioners on conducting proactive investigations and identifying trafficking. If confirmed, I will continue to support this important work.

Question. What U.S. assistance programs and activities help combat police corruption?

Answer. Corruption is a significant and growing problem in The Gambia. Police commonly proposition citizens for bribes at checkpoints. Unfortunately, the Department of State does not have any programming that directly addresses police corruption in The Gambia. However, the Department is aware of the harmful effect of corruption in the public sector, including in the criminal justice sector, and is considering opportunities to work with police, special investigators, and judicial actors to reduce corruption. If confirmed, I will increase engagement with my Gambian counterparts and anticorruption leaders to fight against corruption in all of its forms. I will also enlist the full resources of the Department of State's anticorruption teams and other USG resources to support these efforts.

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. While I was USAID Mission Director in Tanzania in 2016, the Government raided the offices of a USAID implementing partner, broke into a USAID financed warehouse, confiscated commodities, arrested Implementing Partner employees who were providing HIV services, and demanded the confidential names of beneficiaries perceived to be homosexual. The beneficiaries feared for their lives and went into hiding, suspending provision of their life-saving HIV/AIDS care and treatment. We resolved the matter by addressing it as a public health and human rights issue. I deployed staff to meet secretly with beneficiaries to ensure their safety and collect evidence from their experiences to inform security and programmatic actions. I made the difficult decision to temporarily close outreach services for the safety of our implementing partners and beneficiaries. I engaged in quiet diplomacy with champions in the Ministry of Health who influenced decisions behind the scenes. Through these efforts, my USAID/Tanzania staff and I protected the safety of Tanzanians, reinstated needed HIV/AIDS services, and upheld American values.

As Mission Director in Ghana, I guided my democracy staff to make an award to a local partner to conduct a pre-election survey of Ghanaians' impressions of the upcoming December 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections. The survey showed that Ghanaians had considerable confidence in the upcoming election process and youth were positively engaged in the political process. The widely disseminated survey results were used to counter heated political rhetoric about the lack of confidence in elections and Ghana's security forces. In meetings arranged by the U.S. Ambassador with the top political party representatives, I advocated for party leaders to publicly commit to nonviolence by signing a Peace Accord brokered by civil society. The leading Presidential candidates agreed to do so, and the December 2020 elections were free and fair, and held peacefully.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Republic of the Gambia? 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. The Gambia transitioned to democracy in 2017 after 22 years of dictatorship. As a fledgling democracy The Gambia faces challenges in implementing a democratic system, but global democracy and governance indicators show that The Gambia is making modest progress rather than backsliding. Presidential elections in December 2021 will be a critical benchmark. The Government is encouraging free, fair, and transparent election campaigns in what will be the first election without government interference and intimidation in a generation. Credible ballot counting will be essential. President Barrow has made troubling comments about closing down space for the opposition to operate. The Truth, Reconciliation, Reparations Commission (TRCC) has set the stage for accountability and transitional justice, but the Government must take the necessary action to implement those recommendations and hold accountable those most responsible for violations and abuses of human rights.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Republic of the Gambia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, advancing democratic governance and principles in The Gambia will be a key priority. I will call on political parties across the spectrum to respect the results of the presidential election. I will work to ensure that opposition activities are not unlawfully curtailed.

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. If confirmed, supporting democracy and governance will be my top priority. USAID just launched a multi-year Promoting Rights and Justice initiative to support justice sector reform with a current value of over \$7 million, and the MCC Board just approved a Threshold Program valued at \$25 million. If confirmed, I will prioritize assistance for capacity building in the legislature and the justice sector and for electoral system reform.

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 Republic of the Gambia? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Throughout the course of my career, I have worked tirelessly to promote respect for human rights and achieved goals through partnership with civil society groups and NGOs. If confirmed, I will strengthen and build on our existing relationships and look to form new relationships with worthy organizations. I will engage closely with civil society organizations and NGOs to strengthen their capacity and will call on the Government to work together with these groups to build a better, fairer, and more just country.

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 strengthening 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 protect the inclusive political environment in The Gambia, including their efforts to advance electoral reform and put the draft constitution to a referendum. I will urge the Government to respect the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly of all political actors, even those who do not agree with the Government. Through public statements, small grants and other programming, and direct engagement, I will advocate for a political environment that is inclusive of women, youth, minorities, and those who might otherwise be marginalized.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Republic of the Gambia 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 Republic of the Gambia?

Answer. The power of a free press to hold government to account, to expose corruption and malfeasance, and to investigate allegations of violations and abuses of human rights cannot be understated. Fortunately, the Government of The Gambia is not currently engaged in undermining the Gambian press, but we must remain vigilant. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will meet regularly with independent, local press and engage with the Gambian Government on issues of press freedom.

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. After 22 years of dictatorship, democracy and the democratic process are still developing in The Gambia and the country is particularly vulnerable to the destructive effects of disinformation and propaganda. If confirmed, I will continue current engagement and promote new engagement with government and opposition groups, the press, and civil society organizations to counter disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in The Gambia, including through public statements and Embassy social media platforms.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Republic of the Gambia on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Organized labor groups, including unions, are an important element of protecting and promoting the welfare of workers. If confirmed, I will commit to actively engage with the Government of The Gambia on the right of workers to exercise freedom of association, including to form and join independent trade unions, and speak out against incidents when this freedom is restricted.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Republic of the Gambia, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Throughout my career, protection and promotion of respect for human rights has been one of my top priorities. If confirmed, I fully commit to using all available methods to promote and defend the human rights and dignity of all Gambians, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Republic of the Gambia?

Answer. A large majority of Gambian citizens view same-sex conduct as contradictory to their values. Faith organizations and media are unsupportive of members of the LGBTQI+ community and oppose any measure to recognize members of the LGBTQI+ community as legitimate or worthy of protection. Same-sex sexual conduct is criminalized in The Gambia. Both the Barrow administration and those campaigning for president have stated that “homosexuality is a non-issue in The Gambia” and decriminalization is neither needed nor a possibility. Due to the cultural and political environment, LGBTQI+ persons are significantly marginalized in The Gambia. The LGBTQI+ community has specifically requested that Western diplomatic missions not make their situation a highly visible aspect of our engagement specifically because it puts them at risk and undermines their own quiet efforts to change minds and attitudes among their fellow Gambians.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Republic of the Gambia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to lead the U.S. Government’s efforts to encourage change—especially decriminalization—while ensuring our efforts do not put at risk those we seek to help. I will ensure that members of the LGBTQI+ community are aware of our strong support for their dignity, for their human rights, and for their full inclusion in Gambian society and look for ways to support steps to realize this important goal.

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 the Gambia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work together with the State Department’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs to respond promptly to all appropriate requests for information and briefings for members of Congress and their staff and to offer such briefings whenever I am in Washington or remotely from Post.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO SHARON L. CROMER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Given recent challenges to democracy in West Africa, including 4 coups in the last year, what are the regional implications for The Gambia’s continued democratic development?

Answer. The courageous decision of Gambians to vote out of office the increasingly authoritarian and dictatorial former president was successful in large part due to an intervention led by the democracies of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Global democracy and governance indicators show that The Gambia is making modest progress but is still a fledgling democracy emerging from 22 years of under-investment in democratic governance and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will advocate for reforms to create a firm foundation for a transparent, democratic, and accountable system of governance. Presidential elections in December 2021 will be a critical benchmark for the democratic trajectory of the West Africa region.

Question. Do you believe it is the sign of a healthy democracy when a duly elected government, in consultation with its citizens, extends the term of office of the presidency even if that means it would extend the term of the current President in power? If confirmed, how would you respond to the Gambia doing something like this?

Answer. While every country retains the right to make constitutional changes, the United States government has long opposed any constitutional changes designed to favor incumbent elected leaders or the extension of an incumbent’s term in office. I believe that regular, democratic, and peaceful transitions of power yield more accountability, help build and maintain stronger institutions, and engender less corruption. According to a recent Afrobarometer survey, an overwhelming majority of Gambian citizens strongly favor term limits on the office of the President. If confirmed, I will speak out publicly against any attempt to alter the constitution or extend term limits against the will of The Gambian people.

Question. From your perspective, what should be the top priorities for US policy toward The Gambia?

Answer. Beyond serving and protecting American citizens, our key policy priorities include strengthening The Gambia's democratic institutions, encouraging good governance including supporting The Gambia's own justice sector reform initiatives and efforts to hold accountable those most responsible for the widespread violations of human rights during the Jammeh era, strengthening the capacity of Civil Society and The Gambian legislature to constructively exercise their constitutional authorities, and encouraging economic growth. If confirmed, I will continue to promote inclusive country-led development and enhance U.S. influence in the face of strategic competition. Each of these priorities furthers U.S. interests by promoting regional stability, limiting our strategic competitors' expansion, and creating new markets for U.S. goods.

Question. In your opinion, is The Gambia a good target for increased U.S. investment? If yes, how will you support increased U.S. trade and investment with The Gambia as ambassador, if confirmed?

Answer. Investors in The Gambia face multiple challenges: a small market, weak institutions, poor infrastructure, inadequate electrical supply, high tax burden on formal enterprises, corruption, and bureaucratic hurdles. Despite these challenges, U.S. companies are market leaders in telecommunications, agriculture, and health care in The Gambia, and other opportunities exist. If confirmed, I will ensure the Mission maintains close contact with the small number of U.S. businesses in The Gambia, advises firms in the United States seeking to enter the Gambian market, and coordinates with the Foreign Commercial Service to publicize public tenders of interest to American companies.

Question. In November 2020, I published a Senate Foreign Relations Committee majority report entitled "The United States and Europe: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China." The report gave several recommendations on increased transatlantic cooperation, including in Africa, to counter Chinese malign influence more effectively. In what ways should the United States partner with European countries to build on likeminded interests in the Gambia and counter the malign influence of China?

Answer. The Gambia's relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC) is defined by transactional and opaque decision making, with The Gambia providing access to natural resources in exchange for Beijing's provision of infrastructure development. PRC companies and labor are generally utilized, undermining Gambian companies and the Gambian labor force. The country's interaction with most international partners is based on financial assistance: the government often acts in direct response to requirements set forth as conditions for continued or increased aid. The EU's regular infusion of millions of Euros in direct budgetary support gives it significant leverage in The Gambia. The recent signing of a Development Objective Agreement to expand USAID operations in country and the unanimous approval of a MCC Threshold Program can help to cement the United States as a partner of choice.

Question. How will you work to attract U.S. investment opportunities to the Gambia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will maintain close contact with the small number of U.S. businesses in The Gambia, regularly advise firms in the United States seeking to enter the Gambian market, work with the American Chamber of Commerce in The Gambia, and coordinate with the Foreign Commercial Service to publicize public tenders of interest to American companies.

Question. What particular insights and areas of expertise do you envision bringing to the role of US Ambassador to The Gambia given your significant experience with USAID, including having served as USAID Mission Director four times in Africa?

Answer. My experience working in fragile democracies, such as Indonesia after the downfall of President Suharto, leads me to believe that after 22 years of authoritarian rule which ended in January 2017, the Gambian government is still in its infancy and its steps toward democracy are unsteady. It will take the country significant time to put in place the infrastructure needed to create a vibrant democracy. The Constitution should be amended, the National Assembly needs to fulfill its legislative role, and the courts must address the backlog of cases which delays prisoners from getting a fair trial. If given the opportunity to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia, I will use my experience as a Mission Director and senior leadership positions at USAID headquarters to help Gambians build a truly democratic state, advance country owned, led and sustained development that improves the lives and well-being of Gambians, and promote an invest-

ment climate where both U.S. and Gambian enterprises thrive and two-way trade between our countries create good jobs and economic prosperity.

Question. How will you prioritize U.S. democracy and governance assistance to support the Gambia's ongoing democratic transition?

Answer. USAID just launched a multi-year Promoting Rights and Justice initiative to support justice sector reform with a current value of over \$7 million, and the MCC Board just approved a Threshold Program valued at \$25 million. If confirmed, I will prioritize assistance for capacity building in the legislature and the justice sector and for electoral system reform.

Question. What are the most urgent priorities for the Gambia in its effort to build a sustainable democracy?

Answer. While the Barrow government has shown admirable support for democratic norms leading to remarkable increases in rankings in press freedoms and human rights, essential reforms remain incomplete. Many core promises of Barrow's 2016 campaign remain unfulfilled. The statutory framework exploited by former president Jammeh remains in place, and The Gambian government must renew its focus on eliminating the mechanisms that supported his abuses. Key pieces of legislation, especially anticorruption measures and reforms of the criminal code, remain pending. Corruption is a particularly potent threat to democratic reform. Gambians perceive the Barrow government as increasingly plagued by both high-level and small-scale corruption, a problem that requires both urgent attention and a robust statutory framework. The Presidential election scheduled for December 2021 must be free and fair, electoral processes must be transparent, and all parties must abide by the results. If confirmed, I will advocate for a respect for human rights, the rule of law, accountability, access to justice, adherence to constitutionally-mandated term limits, and strong democratic institutions as fundamental to a country's peace and prosperity.

Question. How can the United States best use the tools it has to hold corrupt Gambian officials accountable for corrupt behavior? If confirmed, what would be your approach in using those tools?

Answer. There are no quick fixes to corruption in The Gambia, but passing comprehensive anti-corruption legislation is a necessary first step. Surveys of the Gambian public show their steadily worsening view of the government's handling of corruption, and urgent action is needed. Existing laws requiring government officials to disclose their assets are weak, unenforced, and insufficient. If confirmed, I will aggressively push the Gambian government to pass this legislation, work with civil society organizations shining a light the problem, and support the Gambians who are tirelessly working to root out corruption. I will also enlist the full resources of the Department of State's anticorruption teams and other U.S. government resources to supports these efforts.

Question. Can you provide your view on supporting U.S. funded, independent international election observation missions?

Answer. Independent monitoring efforts are essential to the U.S. objective of supporting free and fair elections, and transparent election processes in The Gambia. For the December 2021 presidential election, I understand the U.S. observation mission will work in concert with our like-minded partners to make clear to Gambian authorities that they are accountable to the public and that attempts to improperly alter the election's outcome will be detected and publicized.

Question. Would you support a U.S. funded, independent international election observation mission for Gambia's next general election?

Answer. If confirmed, I would carefully consider how U.S. support to observation efforts can contribute to free and fair electoral processes in The Gambia. For the December 2021 elections, U.S. diplomats will be on the ground to determine if the government follows through on their obligations to conduct a free and fair election that reflects the will of the people. In addition, recipients of U.S. grant funds will dispatch local observers to every polling place in the country to observe the voting process and provide regular reports. Taken together, the effort will give the United States a comprehensive view of this critical juncture in The Gambia's democratic development.

Question. Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID. What is your understanding of morale throughout Embassy Banjul?

Answer. Respecting this nomination process, I have not engaged directly with Embassy/Banjul staff. However, I understand morale is high despite the enormous workload.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Embassy Banjul?

Answer. Embassy Banjul is a small mission. There are only 12 U.S. Direct Hires which often means that staff must assume multiple roles and cover for colleagues who are on leave or away from Post, or when there are staffing gaps due to the assignment process. I understand that staff members, American and Gambian alike, are knowledgeable, collegial, and enthusiastic about their work. If confirmed, I intend to nurture that enthusiasm by identifying the talent in each individual and growing that talent, ensuring the well-being of staff members and their families, and creating a work environment that promotes respect for everyone and celebrates our teamwork and achievements large and small.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Embassy Banjul?

Answer. If confirmed, I will create a unified “one team” approach in Embassy Banjul which draws on the expertise and talents of staff assigned to Embassy Banjul and also includes officers from USAID, Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture and other agencies who support Banjul from Embassies in Dakar and Accra, as well as Washington. Everyone who supports the mission’s integrated country strategy must feel welcomed and supported as vital member of Banjul’s team. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. As a senior leader, I have always believed that it is my duty and responsibility to mentor and sponsor staff to make sure they grow professionally, feel appreciated and supported, and are given opportunities to take on new responsibilities and contribute to U.S. goals. For the past eight years, I have devoted each Friday to mentoring staff. I mentor staff by delegating tasks, encouraging questions and brainstorming, providing guidance, as needed, and welcoming new ideas. I never assume that I have all the answers. I communicate regularly and consult broadly, seeking out different perspectives. I lead quarterly town halls and regularly communicate via email to the entire staff on current topics. When the time comes to make a decision, I don’t hesitate to do so. When problems arise, I expect to be notified promptly so we can resolve them together rather than let them fester. I place staff wellbeing and creating a respectful working environment above all else. To accomplish this, family must come first. It is important to me to pause, acknowledge and celebrate successes both big and small and reward exceptional performance.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. It is never acceptable to berate subordinates in public or private. Such action is not only unkind and disrespectful, but also abusive and ineffective.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The relationship between the chief of mission (COM) and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) is extremely important. The DCM serves as a trusted advisor to the COM. In this respect, trust must be built and maintained between the two for the smooth operation of the mission and the well-being of the entire staff. I intend to include the DCM in all internal meetings and keep him/her abreast of all external affairs.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The deputy chief of mission is the chief of staff, responsible for the day-to-day management of the mission. All State Department section heads will report to the DCM. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative.

Question. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. It is extremely important for managers to provide accurate and constructive performance feedback to employees on a regular basis. I check in with staff frequently and offer mentoring sessions if they have any concerns about their performance or careers. I conduct formal performance feedback with direct reports on a

quarterly basis. When performance appears to be lacking, I provide immediate feedback in private and work with the employee to find ways to improve their performance. I recognize accomplishments through awards and public recognition.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes. I believe that it is the responsibility of leaders to create leaders, not followers. Nurturing leadership requires clear, accurate, and direct feedback tailored to the individual's needs. I am rewarded when staffs grow and take on new roles and responsibilities that advance their careers.

Question. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and fellow foreign diplomats stationed in the Gambia. To properly execute our jobs, we must travel beyond the boundaries of the capital and engage with stakeholders throughout the country. I understand the Embassy Banjul team leaves the building to meet with local contacts, develop connections in the community, and spread America's message. There is no substitute for in-person connections, and our team relies on those links to accomplish our mission goals. Face-to-face conversations not only supply the information key to the U.S. government's decision-making process, they also provide opportunities to inform and persuade the Gambians who make the country's most important decisions. Developing those relationships consistent with appropriate security measures is a core component of our work, and the reason diplomats are stationed abroad.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. The Gambia is a diverse democracy comprised of countless social, tribal, economic, and cultural groups. If confirmed, I endeavor to meet with representatives of all of them on a regular basis. I will target outreach efforts to broaden and strengthen the country's representative democracy while also developing links to marginalized communities. Public Diplomacy programs are an essential tool to expanding this outreach effort. Exchange programs give the Embassy an unapparelled tool to influence key members of diverse communities. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure that no group is overlooked, and that the rights of members of Gambian minority groups are respected. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in The Gambia?

Answer. In general, the Gambian people view the United States positively, based on connections with the Gambian diaspora in the United States; their appreciation for U.S. assistance, and U.S. popular culture; and a belief in our shared values of democracy, security, prosperity, and respect for human rights. If confirmed I will use public diplomacy resources to promote a favorable view of the United States and its foreign policy, advance democratic values, and encourage inclusive economic growth. I will focus the Public Affairs Section on youth and emerging voices, furnishing them with the tools needed to become entrepreneurs, civil society leaders, and advocates for democracy and good governance.

Question. What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. Payment for positive press is rampant in the Gambia, causing a reduced level of trust in the media. Capacity among journalists is low. If confirmed, I will support efforts to build a free, professional, and independent press.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. In my experience, Posts have latitude to tailor our public messaging to local issues and concerns. If confirmed, our message at Post will be the same as our messaging from Washington: that Americans and Gambians share the same ideals of democracy, religious and social tolerance, good governance, security, and economic prosperity. I will ensure that our public diplomacy posture continues to play a key role in promoting our many shared values and America's generous financial assistance and support across the range of issues.

Question. In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, The Gambia was identified again as Tier 2 Watch List due to lack of resources and ongoing failure to prosecute

traffickers. How will you work with the Gambian authorities to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. Although The Gambia did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it is making efforts to do so. Gambian courts have some recent success in convicting trafficking cases, but remain challenged by lack of resources, inadequate space for remanded prisoners, defendants absconding while on bail, and victims reluctant to testify or provide evidence due to a cultural emphasis on forgiveness or fear of retaliation. While the government is making progress towards identifying victims among vulnerable populations, such as through the adoption of a new national referral mechanism, additional improvements are needed. If confirmed, I will work with the Gambian government to address the prioritized recommendations in the 2021 TIP Report.

Question. In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, The Gambia was identified as generally tolerant of religious freedom. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Religious freedom is a key U.S. foreign policy priority, and the Department continues to closely monitor the religious freedom situation in The Gambia. The Gambia is generally tolerant of religious freedom and members of the majority Muslim population are largely accepting of members of the Christian minority. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and Congress to emphasize the importance of continued religious tolerance and to address religious freedom concerns in The Gambia.

Question. As Ambassador, how would you advocate for former Gambian president Yahya Jammeh to personally face justice for the gross violations of human rights and corruption committed while president?

Answer. The Truth, Reconciliation, Reparations Commission (TRRC), established to investigate and publicize the wrongs committed during Jammeh's rule, has concluded and should issue its final report soon. A newly created National Human Rights Commission is operating with significant and notable independence. Yahya Jammeh should face justice for the crimes he allegedly committed. The United States can help through building capacity in the judiciary and publicly supporting the efforts of the TRRC, but it is up to the Gambian people and courts to decide the fate of the former dictator.

Question. How do you envision the United States supporting the implementation of Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) report once it is released to the public? If confirmed as ambassador, how would you personally prioritize the report's implementation?

Answer. The TRRC is essential to The Gambia's national healing process after decades of nondemocratic rule characterized by allegations of human rights violations and abuses and lack of respect for human rights. The Commission has set the stage for accountability and transitional justice, but much hard work remains. The country has to make hard choices to hold former officials accountable and obtain justice for victims. If confirmed, I will press the government to hold accountable those responsible for the egregious crimes, violations and abuses of human rights, and affronts to dignity testified to at the Commission. In the 2021 Human Rights Report, The Gambia was identified as having some serious human rights concerns, like the use of forced disappearances, attacks on freedom of expression, and a climate of impunity.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. After the election of President Adama Barrow in 2016, the new government quickly recognized and moved to respect Gambians' human rights. This included an end to arbitrary detention, political persecution, and censorship. The Gambia is moving in the right direction, but there is still work to be done. If confirmed, I will press the Government of The Gambia to investigate allegations of human rights violations and abuses thoroughly and transparently, and to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. Throughout the course of my career, I have worked tirelessly to promote respect for human rights and achieved goals through partnership with civil society groups and NGOs. If confirmed, I will strengthen and build on our existing relationships and look to form new relationships with worthy organizations. I will engage

closely with civil society organizations and NGOs to strengthen their capacity and will call on the Government to work together with these groups to build a better, fairer, and more just Gambia that respects the rights of all.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. VIRGINIA E. PALMER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. According to the State Department 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices “Impunity remained a significant problem in the Ghana Police Service. Corruption, brutality, poor training, lack of oversight, and an overburdened judicial system contributed to impunity. Police often failed to respond to reports of abuses and, in many instances, did not act unless complainants paid for police transportation and other operating expenses.” What is your understanding of the level of police corruption in Ghana?

Answer. My understanding of the level of police corruption in Ghana is that it remains a significant problem and is fueled by impunity, poor training, lack of oversight, and an overburdened judicial system.

Question. Are there U.S. funded programs aimed at addressing police corruption?

Answer. The Department of State does not have any programming that directly addresses police corruption in Ghana. However, the Department is aware of the harmful effect of corruption in the public sector, including in the criminal justice sector, and is considering opportunities to work with police, special investigators, and judicial actors to reduce corruption.

Question. How, if confirmed, will you engage on the issue of police corruption?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize working with our like-minded partners and the Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics Law Enforcement to identify opportunities to create programming that can address police corruption while empowering Ghana’s professional police officers.

Question. The Committee to Protect Journalists has reported on a number of worrying cases of the detention, harassment and abuse of a number of journalists in 2021, and a call from a ruling party politician that a journalist to be targeted for attack. Are media freedoms in jeopardy in Ghana?

Answer. Ghana enjoys a vibrant and free media, with over 350 radio stations, more than 120 television operators on air, and approximately 250 newspaper and magazine publications, plus active and growing internet use and social media presence. Freedom of speech and expression are enshrined in Ghana’s constitution. There have been a few high-profile cases of violence and threats of violence against journalists. The Government often responds appropriately to protect freedom of the press, but some of these threats have come after stories alleging official corruption. Exchange and training programs for journalists, such as fact-checking, data journalism, and even journalism ethics, are welcomed and in demand across Ghana. If confirmed, I commit to doing all I can to ensure these freedoms are protected and enhanced in Ghana.

Question. Are attacks on the media indicative of broader threats to the right of individuals to criticize the Government?

Answer. Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly, and other fundamental freedoms are enshrined in Ghana’s constitution. Although there are some reports of violence and threats of violence, or unjustified arrests or prosecution against journalists, they are generally free to be critical of the Government without fear of reprisal.

Question. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to support media freedoms in Ghana?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support media freedom by encouraging the Ghanaian Government to appropriately protect freedom of the press by thoroughly investigating cases of violence, threats of violence, unjustified arrests, and prosecution of journalists. I will also continue programs to enhance the professionalism and expertise of Ghana’s journalists.

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 had the honor to work on democracy and governance issues for much of my 35-year career. I served as the Labor Officer in the PRC immediately after the Tian An Men massacres in 1989, for example, and drafted the first reporting on exports made from Chinese prison labor. I was the first Western diplomat granted access to several Chinese prisons, providing important information for human rights reporting and U.S. customs actions to ensure U.S. workers were not disadvantaged. For this work, I received a Meritorious Honor Award and runner up for the Department's 1991 Labor Officer of the Year.

In Zimbabwe from 1993-1997, I ran the Democracy and Human Rights Fund that provided project financing to ZimRights and the Legal Resources Foundation and seed money to establish the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Southern African Human Rights Research, and Documentation Trust and other groups. These groups formed the core of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network which challenged Robert Mugabe's human rights and electoral abuses from 2000-2016. I established the first Human Rights Donor Coordination Group to leverage U.S. democracy and human rights resources and avoid duplication. To address rampant child abuse and rape, I brought together officials from the Zimbabwe police, Attorney General's office, and human rights organizations, which had not previously cooperated, to draft legislation and change arrest procedures to establish the first child-friendly courts, receiving Meritorious and Superior Honor Awards for this work.

In Hong Kong, I drafted Human Rights Reports for Hong Kong and Macau and helped acquire Public Interest Benefit Parole for Chinese Christians persecuted for their beliefs but unable to apply for refugee status because they could not leave the PRC. That work contributed to better U.S. understanding of the House Church movement in the PRC.

In Vietnam, I was the Front Office's principal interlocutor with the Ministry of Public Security on human rights issues and met regularly with dissidents under house arrest or in prison. After one such visit (and lots of work from Washington and Embassy teams) Tran Khai Thanh was released from prison and allowed to travel to the United States.

In Malawi, I represented the United States on the U.N.-led Election Support Network and oversaw U.S. Government support for national elections, including an NDI-run Parallel Voter Tabulation, support for Malawi police and military providing security for the election, and U.S. participation in international election monitoring efforts. I spoke out frequently on the need for Malawi to respect the human rights of all, including LGBTQ persons. I hosted multiple gatherings of faith leaders to promote religious tolerance and respect for the human rights of all, including women and girls and LGBTQ persons.

If confirmed, I pledge to continue work to advance democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights in Ghana.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Republic of Ghana? 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. Ghana is widely considered to be one of the leading democracies on the African continent and generally respects human rights. Continuing problems include reports of arbitrary or unlawful killings by the Government or its agents; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; violence and threats of violence, or unjustified arrests or prosecutions against journalists; serious acts of corruption; violence against women; and existence of the worst forms of child labor. Although the Ghanaian Government has taken steps to prosecute and punish officials who commit human rights violations or abuses, whether in the security forces or elsewhere in the Government, impunity remains a problem.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Republic of Ghana? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Our close partnership with Ghana spans more than 60 years and is rooted in our shared commitment to democracy and human rights for all, peace and security, and economic opportunity and prosperity. Ghana's long democratic tradition, robust media, religious tolerance, and strong civil society make it a leader in West Africa and a model for the continent. With democratic backsliding in the region, Ghana's example and leadership is ever more important.

Strengthening democracy and governance institutions are essential to regional stability and inclusive economic growth. Potential impediments include the culture

of corruption, slow bureaucratic processes, and a lack of resources. If confirmed, I will continue aggressive programs to strengthen Ghana's anti-corruption and electoral institutions and increase Ghanaian women's participation in political life.

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. If confirmed, combatting corruption and addressing issues related to adherence to contractual commitments will be among my top priorities. Integration of U.S. Government programs, particularly those dealing with inclusive economic growth, accountability and proper delivery of government services to Ghanaian citizens, is key to success of these efforts. I will also aggressively pursue programs to end trafficking and child labor.

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 Republic of Ghana? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. I will. The promotion of respect for human rights is a central pillar of our relations with Ghana. If confirmed, I will strengthen relationships with civil society leaders and human rights advocates in Ghana, the United States and internationally. I will work, where possible in partnership with diplomatic counterparts, to proactively counter any efforts to close the space for NGOs and civil society to operate, including via 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. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties and to advocating for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties. To encourage genuine political competition, I will work to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones across the political spectrum.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Republic of Ghana 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 Republic of Ghana?

Answer. Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly, and other fundamental freedoms are enshrined in Ghana's constitution. Ghana has over 350 radio stations, more than 120 television operators on air, and approximately 250 newspaper and magazine publications. If confirmed, I will lead Embassy engagement to expand Ghana's vibrant and free media. I also commit to meeting regularly with independent and local press in Ghana.

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 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 Republic of Ghana on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to actively engage with Ghana on the right of workers to exercise freedom of association, including to form and join 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 Republic of Ghana, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to using my position to defend human rights and the dignity of all Ghanaians, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Republic of Ghana?

Answer. In Ghana, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer face increasing anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and actions that threaten the human rights of members of that community. Ghana's Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, and freedom of assembly to all Ghanaians, not just to certain groups. These freedoms are foundational to our two democracies and must be vigorously defended. Failure to do so creates serious public order and public health problems.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Republic of Ghana?

Answer. I am deeply concerned about the evolving situation around the LGBTQI+ community in Ghana. In his video address to the AU, President Biden affirmed the United States policy to promote respect for the human rights of all individuals, including women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and persons of every ethnic background, faith, and heritage.

If confirmed, I will urge national leaders in Ghana to uphold protections provide in Ghana's constitution for all individuals, consistent with its human rights obligations and commitments. I will work with diplomatic counterparts and allies in civil society and the LGBTQI+ community to address the uptick in hateful rhetoric and intimidation tactics.

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 Ghana?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. VIRGINIA E. PALMER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In your opinion, what are the most significant domestic and external threats Ghana faces?

Answer. Ghana and its neighbors confront significant threats from violent extremists from the north, and piracy and illegal fishing in the Gulf of Guinea. Domestically, the COVID pandemic, corruption, unemployment, burdensome fiscal deficits and debt, an uptick in hateful rhetoric and actions against members of the LGBTQI+ community pose threats to Ghana's development goals and role as democratic model.

Question. In your opinion, how should we strengthen our partnership with Ghana on counterterrorism operations in the region?

Answer. Ghana is well-respected for its proactive involvement and positive leadership on security issues throughout West Africa. If confirmed, I will support Ghana's regional leadership role and will strengthen our partnership with Ghana to counter violent extremism by continuing integrated U.S. programs on inclusive economic development, rule of law strengthening, and security and law enforcement cooperation.

Question. Where are the opportunities to do more with Ghana to counter threats in littoral West Africa?

Answer. Ghana is internationally recognized for its commitment to advancing peace on the continent, and around the world, through participation in U.N. and AU peacekeeping missions. Ghana ranks among the top ten countries worldwide for its contributions to peacekeeping operations. Currently, Ghana is supporting U.N. peacekeeping missions in South Sudan, Lebanon, and Mali.

Opportunities to do more with Ghana to counter threats in littoral West Africa include encouraging Ghana to support additional U.N. missions in the region as those environments evolve, as well as fortifying the Department of State's security assistance provided to Ghana's military and police forces through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) accounts. The Accra Initiative provides an important opportunity for locally-developed regional cooperation to counter violent extremism and bolster regional security. Ghana also plays an important role, as a model of democratic practice and through its leadership of ECOWAS, to counter democratic backsliding in the region.

Question. If confirmed as ambassador, how can you, and the U.S. more broadly, continue to build Ghana's role as an active and constructive actor in West African regional affairs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Ghana as it chairs the Economic Community of West African States, serves on the U.N. Security Council, and hosts the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement—roles that build Ghana's profile as an active and constructive actor in West African regional affairs. In addition, I will prioritize programs like the International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support program, through which the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) provides training and assistance to the Ghana Police Service to improve the capacity of Formed Police Units and individual police officers deployed to U.N. peacekeeping missions.

Question. Do you believe the United States should support robust democracy and governance assistance programs in comparatively stronger African democracies like Ghana? If so, what should be the strategic focus for these efforts?

Answer. Yes. Ghana's long democratic tradition, robust media, religious tolerance, and strong civil society make it a leader in West Africa and a model for the continent. Supporting anti-corruption efforts, promoting respect for human rights and strengthening the rule of law are important to achieving all of our security and economic goals in Ghana. With democratic backsliding in the region, strategically supporting Ghana's leadership and example of robust democracy and governance is ever more important and, if I am confirmed, will remain the focus of assistance programming efforts.

Question. Do you believe it is the sign of a healthy democracy when a duly elected government, in consultation with its citizens, extends the term of office of the presidency even if that means it would extend the term of the current President in power? If confirmed, how would you respond to Ghana doing something like this?

Answer. Every country has the right to make constitutional changes as long as they are made through a consultative and broad process that includes all stakeholders, including civil society and opposition parties. However, constitutional changes designed to favor incumbents or extend terms erode democratic principles. If confirmed, I will advocate for regular, democratic transitions of power, which yield more accountability, stronger institutions, and less corruption.

Question. Can you provide your view on supporting U.S. funded, independent international election observation missions?

Answer. Promoting democracy and human rights has long served as the basis of American foreign policy. Election observation can promote public participation, encourage transparency and public confidence in the electoral process, and mitigate the potential for electoral violence. Both U.S. Mission observers and independent observation missions help deter fraud at polling stations and facilitate the collection of critical information on conditions. To ensure real democratic gains, it is important that our elections work not focus solely on Election Day, but also address institutional or conduct problems in the lead up to elections.

Question. Would you support a U.S. funded, independent international election observation mission for Ghana's next general election?

Answer. If confirmed, I would carefully consider how U.S. support to observation efforts can contribute to free and fair elections, and transparent electoral processes in Ghana.

Question. Ghana made a modest improvement from previous years in Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index. How can the United States best support Ghana in its fight to curb corruption in government and the private sector?

Answer. Changing the culture of corruption in Ghana is essential for attracting more foreign investment, promoting sustainable, inclusive economic growth, and eliminate Ghana's dependence on foreign assistance. The United States can best support Ghana in its fight to curb corruption in government and the private sector by encouraging the Ghanaian Government to reinforce existing anti-corruption institutions like the Office of the Special Prosecutor, promote transparency, and enforce anti-corruption laws. If confirmed, I will utilize all available tools and programs, including visa restrictions, to support Ghanaian efforts to combat corruption.

Question. How can the United States best use the tools it has to hold Ghanaian officials accountable for corrupt behavior? If confirmed, what would be your approach in using those tools?

Answer. Driven by a combination of corrupt interest and political expediency, Ghana's adherence to contractual commitments has been inadequate and is concerning for U.S. and other foreign companies. If confirmed, I utilize all available tools and programs, including visa restrictions, to support Ghanaian efforts to combat corruption. I will work to strengthen Ghana's accountability institutions, including the Office of the Special Prosecutor.

Question. How can the United States best support Ghana in curbing the corrupt behavior of those companies and government officials of malign foreign actors like China that feed on corrupt governments and business environments?

Answer. Improving anti-corruption institutions, laws and regulations and their implementation is critical to improving Ghana's business environment, achieving Ghana's development goals and curbing the corrupt behavior of malign actors. If confirmed, I will push back on corrupt or coercive practices that damage our interests and those of our Ghanaian partners, including impingement on state sovereignty, economic coercion, and the abusive use of new security technologies.

Question. How is the United States working with Ghana's Government to curb efforts by malign foreign actors seeking to use their country as a hub for propagating disinformation campaigns in the U.S. and other countries? As Ambassador, how will you prioritize this issue with the Ghanaian Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize this issue with the Ghanaian Government by supporting a central part of this effort: exposing malign foreign actors' tactics so that partner and allied governments, civil society organizations, academia, the press, and the international public can conduct further analysis of their own and thereby increase collective resilience to disinformation and propaganda.

Question. How should the United States build on its existing defense and security cooperation with Ghana? Where are the opportunities and the risks?

Answer. The United States should build on its existing defense and security cooperation to help Ghana and its neighbors counter violent extremism, combat transnational crime and strengthen the rule of law. These efforts are most effect when our security and law enforcement cooperation, inclusive economic growth and the rule of law (including anti-corruption) efforts are integrated. Ghana's military is known for its professionalism and is critical to our ability to counter global threats in the sub-region. Fortifying this cooperation poses significant opportunities and few risks.

Question. The instability in the Sahel is now bleeding over into the Littoral states in the Gulf of Guinea. Because of this concern, these coastal countries, led by Ghana, have established the Accra Initiative to build capacity and support a more integrated approach to intelligence gathering and crisis response. Does the U.S. plan to support the Initiative with technical and material assistance. Is it considering bilateral assistance to Ghana to establish the Secretariat?

Answer. The United States has provided bilateral assistance to Ghana to support the Accra Initiative since September 2020 through Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). Those efforts help prevent further spread of violence in West Africa. If confirmed, I will engage relevant stakeholders to explore ways the United States can support Ghana and the Accra Initiative address this threat.

Question. Would Ghana be a strong candidate for a bilateral free trade agreement with the United States? If not, why not? If so, why?

Answer. Yes. Bilateral trade exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2020 and with the U.S. recording a trade surplus of \$112 million.

In addition, Ghana hosts the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which will modernize and streamline the continent's overall trade and economic systems and create a trading block of 1.3 billion people, creating opportunities for greater commercial ties between the United States and all of Africa.

Question. What is your view on the role of the U.S. Prosper Africa initiative in driving increased trade and investment between the U.S. and Ghana? Do you believe the U.S. should focus more of its efforts vis-a-vis Prosper Africa toward large African U.S. economic partners like Ghana?

Answer. The U.S. Prosper Africa Initiative drives increased trade and investment between the United States and Ghana by bringing together services and resources from across the U.S. Government to empower businesses with market insights, deal support, and solutions to strengthen business climates. Prosper Africa will advance opportunities to build new markets for American products, drive billions of dollars

of investment in Africa, and support thousands of new jobs for both African and American workers.

China and the Indo-Pacific

Question. China is keen to secure the affections of Africa's next generation of leaders. The Chinese Government claimed in 2019 that Ghana had the highest number of African students studying in China. How do you view such educational exchanges and opportunities playing in projecting "soft power"?

Answer. African countries are our partners in pursuing our shared interests—from security, global health, climate change, democracy, and economic growth. African publics continue to prefer the United States to the PRC, and democratic values to authoritarianism. If confirmed, I will capitalize on this soft power—engaging with youth, promoting exchanges and study in the United States, and promoting American business.

Question. Do you agree or disagree that an increased proportion of Ghanaians attending U.S. colleges and universities would more closely tie the current and future relationship of the country to the U.S.?

Answer. I agree that an increased proportion of Ghanaians attending U.S. colleges and universities would more closely tie the current and future relationship of the country to the United States.

Question. If you agree, what can and should the U.S. do to boost opportunities for Ghanaians to study in the U.S.?

Answer. With a population of 1.3 billion people whose median age is 19 years old, African youth are one of the continent's most important resources. Expanding existing links and promoting new partnerships at the university level will strengthen Ghana's educational institutions as instruments of national development—enhancing regional prosperity, security, and stability. Such cooperation also promotes the U.S. value of academic freedom, which is under increasing threat across the world as global competitors expand their own educational programs targeting the continent's scholars and students. If confirmed, I commit to promoting this important American export and to strengthening academic ties between the U.S. and Ghana.

Question. China is one of, if not Ghana's biggest, trading partner and foreign investment source. While the United States enjoys long-standing and consistently strong relations with Ghana, the country is a leading African buyer of U.S. goods, and there is typically a large U.S. trade surplus with Ghana. Despite this, the U.S. trade and investment relationship lags in comparison to the country's bilateral trade and investment relationship with China. What should the United States prioritize to improve its bilateral trade and investment relationship generally with Ghana, and in what ways can the U.S. improve American businesses interest and competitiveness to drive greater U.S. investment in Ghana?

Answer. If confirmed, the Embassy team and I will meet the challenge the PRC presents by ensuring that American companies can compete on an even playing field, providing a meaningful alternative to the PRC's economic approach, and promoting entrepreneurship, and fair practices. I will be a vigorous advocate for American companies and innovation and will ensure U.S. public and private investments continue to support pandemic recovery efforts and Ghana's journey to self-reliance. If confirmed, I will continue to help Ghana create an enabling environment for inclusive private sector-led growth by facilitating regional trade, improving access to credit, improving agricultural production and market access, enhancing domestic resource mobilization, and improving health and education outcomes.

Question. In November 2020, I published a Senate Foreign Relations Committee majority report entitled "The United States and Europe: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China." The report gave several recommendations on increased transatlantic cooperation, including in Africa, to counter Chinese malign influence more effectively. In what ways should the United States partner with European countries to build on likeminded interests in Ghana and counter the malign influence of China?

Answer. The United States should partner with likeminded countries to counter negative actions and influence of the PRC by calling out and confronting nondemocratic behavior and insisting that all economic actors on the continent adhere to the highest standards of transparency, anti-corruption, debt sustainability, environmental protection, and respect human rights, including labor rights. In addition, Ghana recently expressed an interest in establishing a partnership with NATO. If confirmed, I will encourage Ghana and our NATO allies to advance this partnership, which provides security benefits for NATO and Ghana.

State Department Management and Oversight

Question. Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Ghana?

Answer. My understanding is that morale throughout the Mission is strong, motivated by staff's commitment to the important mission of bolstering regional security and countering violent extremism, promoting inclusive economic growth and improving health outcomes. However, staff, particularly Locally Employed (LE) Staff whose families have not been vaccinated, remain very concerned about the risks associated with Ghana's very low vaccination rates and concerned about a full return to in-office work. COVID-19-related travel restrictions limiting opportunities for rest and recuperation and even regional change of scene also have a negative effect on morale.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Ghana?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Ghanaian Government to increase vaccination levels of the Ghanaian public. This will both help us achieve our broader public health goals and allow us to increase in person diplomacy since "diplomacy is a contact sport." I will work to fill vacancies in a timely manner, recruiting diverse staff and ensuring they enjoy opportunities to do fulfilling work and provide policy input. I will also work hard to ensure that Locally Employed Staff salaries (currently negatively affected by rising inflation) remain competitive.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Ghana?

Answer. In general, the best way to create a unified mission is to communicate broadly about what our goals are and successes and lessons learned as we work toward them. That is even more important with COVID-19-induced teleworking inhibiting in person meetings where brainstorming and spontaneous exchanges of information are more free flowing. If confirmed, I will also rely heavily on "thematic" working groups, such as the Law Enforcement Working Group and the Countering Violent Extremism Working Group. These working groups will include law enforcement and security agencies as well as USAID, DoD, and the Embassy Deal Teams, to create synergies and ensure all elements of U.S. national power are used to advance U.S. interests in Ghana and the region.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I am direct and decisive. I welcome collaboration and demand information sharing and respect for others. I am fast and not particularly linear. I believe diplomacy is personal and that my contacts need to believe that I am a credible interlocutor, honest, forthright, and, where possible, helpful.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. It is never acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private.

Question. What lessons have you learned from your tenure leading Embassy Lilongwe?

Answer. I came to have a stronger belief that our development assistance programs are more effective when they are integrated. For example, production enhancements have little effect if they are not accompanied by improved market access (i.e., it does not help me to produce more tomatoes if I cannot get them to market) and assistance aimed to improve the health and education outcomes of girls and young women pays huge dividends in achieving all our other development goals. I am pleased that Ghana's Integrated Country Development Strategy integrates the Mission's security, inclusive economic growth and rule of law programs.

When Malawi was slow to implement much needed reform of the agriculture sector despite looming famine, I learned that "we cannot want it (reform, good programs, etc.) more than they do;" policy change and development and other programs will be more effective when there is strong local/indigenous demand for them.

I learned very positive lessons about how good, bold ideas can come from unexpected agencies/personnel. For example, our \$90 million project to keep girls in school and break the cycle of HIV transmission from older men to younger girls to boys arose from Peace Corps at an Embassy Adolescent Girls and Young Women Task Force meeting.

Question. How will your management style and approach differ from Embassy Lilongwe?

Answer. With Ghana serving as host to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement Secretariat, Chair of ECOWAS, and member of the U.N. Security Council, if confirmed, I will focus more attention on regional and international issues than I did in Lilongwe.

I will continue to rely on interagency working groups for policy development and operational coordination. Embassy Accra's Country Team is larger and more senior than Lilongwe's. I hope that agency and section heads will have more experience establishing and maintaining accountability measures; I will nonetheless remain attentive to these issues.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with deputy chief of mission?

Answer. I have served twice as Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and know that there is no more important relationship in the Mission. If confirmed, my DCM will be my alter ego. Through regular meetings, scheduled and ad hoc, I will ensure that we are in sync and that the DCM has full input into policy formulation and decision making. Where possible we will divide responsibilities, ensuring that important conclusions or insights from meetings are always shared.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ask the DCM to chair the Emergency Action Committee, Law Enforcement Working Group, and other Interagency Working Groups as required, participating myself when requested/required. I will ensure that the entire Mission understands that the DCM enjoys my full faith and confidence and speaks for me, but that my door is always open if there are issues they do not feel comfortable raising with him/her.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. I believe it is important to provide employees with timely, accurate, constructive feedback on their performance to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeed in their roles.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in to improve performance and reward high achievers.

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and fellow foreign diplomats stationed in Ghana. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. I agree that it is essential for diplomats to get outside of the Embassy to meet with host country officials, thought leaders and the public as well as diplomatic counterparts. This is an essential part of representing the United States and ensuring proper "branding" of our programs, initiatives, and companies. This is even more challenging with COVID-induced telework requirements, but in my experience, U.S. diplomats get outside of the embassy walls enough to fully accomplish their mission.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will utilize all available public diplomacy tools for in-person, virtual and media engagement. I will encourage in-country travel and representation outside of the capital. I would be remiss if I did not note the importance of local staff in shaping and articulating our mission and programs and their important role as interface between American diplomats and local communities.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Ghana?

Answer. Ghana enjoys a vibrant and free media, with over 350 radio stations, more than 120 television operators on air, and approximately 250 newspaper and

magazine publications, plus active and growing internet use and social media presence. Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly and other fundamental freedoms are enshrined in Ghana's constitution. Although there are some reports of violence and threats of violence, or unjustified arrests or prosecution against journalists, they are generally free to be critical of the Government without fear of reprisal. Ghanaians generally have a positive impression of the United States.

Question. What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. U.S. diplomats face limited public diplomacy challenges in Ghana. Public Diplomacy exchange programs, like the Mandela Washington Fellowship and Fulbright exchanges are enormously popular and help to create a robust alumni network across the country in various areas of interest.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. Post has latitude to tailor our public messaging to local issues and concerns. If confirmed, I will ensure that our public diplomacy posture continues to play a key role in promoting our many shared values and America's generous financial assistance and support across the range of issues.

Human Rights

Question. In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Ghana was identified as Tier 2 due to lack of adequate resourcing for law enforcement as well as a lack of prosecutions of traffickers. How will you work with Ghana authorities to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. Ghana has maintained a Tier 2 ranking in the Trafficking in Persons Report since in 2018, indicating significant efforts to combat trafficking. Trafficking within the country is more prevalent than transnational trafficking, and the majority of victims are children subjected to forced labor. Children can fall prey to economic hardships in Ghana, and some are subjected to forced child labor within Ghana in the fishing, cocoa, artisanal gold mining, and agriculture sectors as well as in domestic service, street hawking, begging, potting, and quarrying. Ghanaian girls, and to a lesser extent boys, are also subjected to sex trafficking within Ghana, including in the Central, Volta, and Greater Accra regions.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Government to increase its resources to better train and equip the police force to investigate trafficking cases. I will also encourage the Government to provide appropriate shelters for trafficking victims. I will encourage assistance be provided to organizations working on the front lines to combat human trafficking.

Question. In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Ghana is described as having religious freedom enshrined in the constitution but does lack general understanding of respective religions in civil society. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Religious freedom is a U.S. foreign policy priority, and the Department continues to closely monitor the religious freedom situation in Ghana. Religious freedom and interfaith communication are among Ghana's greatest strengths. Muslim and Christian leaders emphasize the importance of religious freedom and tolerance and report communication and coordination among themselves as well as with those from smaller minority faiths on a wide array of matters. If confirmed, I commit to work with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and Congress to emphasize the importance of religious freedom, addressing any religious freedom concerns, and further strengthen tolerance and respect among and for religious communities in Ghana.

Question. In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Ghana was identified as having serious human rights concerns, including arbitrary or unlawful killings by the Government, cruel treatment or punishment by the Government, corruption, the worst forms of child labor, and more. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. The Ghanaian Government generally respects human rights. Continuing problems include reports of arbitrary or unlawful killings by the Government or its agents; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; violence and threats of violence, or unjustified arrests or prosecutions, against journalists; serious acts of corruption; violence against women; and existence of the worst forms of child labor. Although the Ghanaian Government has taken steps to prosecute and punish officials who commit human rights violations or abuses, whether in the security forces or

elsewhere in the Government, impunity remains a problem. If confirmed, I will encourage the Ghanaian Government to address impunity and hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. Ghana's Constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression and freedom of assembly for all Ghanaians, not just to certain groups. These freedoms are foundational to our two democracies and must be vigorously defended. If confirmed, I will direct the Embassy team to work closely with our like-minded partners and allies in civil society to ensure these rights are respect for all Ghanaians; support PEPFAR's anti-stigma and anti-discrimination support to members of the LGBTQI+ community and people living with HIV; and stand up against injustice toward women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, members of religious minority groups, and people of all races and ethnicities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. VIRGINIA E. PALMER BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Gaddafi was deposed in Libya in October 2011. Tens of thousands of Malians who had been working in Libya for a better living returned home. Many of these ethnic Tuaregs (TWAHH-regs) had even served in Gaddafi's military and returned to Mali with guns and artillery. Shortly thereafter, in January 2012, Tuareg rebels destabilized Mali, which paved the way for violent extremist groups to gain a foothold. Since then, the march of violent extremism has continued southward, destabilizing Burkina Faso and now threatening Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin. What effect, if any, did Libya's destabilization have on security in sub-Saharan Africa? Also, given this worrying trend, how can we strengthen our partnership with Ghana to counter violent extremism and terrorism in the region?

Answer. Smuggled arms looted from Gaddafi's armories have impacted security in sub-Saharan Africa. The region's porous borders and the vast ungoverned regions of the Sahel have always complicated monitoring the movement of people and goods, including armaments from Libya, that have constituted the economy of the Sahel for hundreds of years.

Ghana is well-respected for its proactive involvement and positive leadership in security issues throughout West Africa. Ghana is also internationally recognized for its commitment to advancing peace on the continent, and around the world, through participation in U.N. and AU peacekeeping missions. Ghana ranks among the top dozen countries worldwide for its contributions to peacekeeping operations with missions in South Sudan, Lebanon, and Mali. If confirmed, I will support Ghana's regional leadership role and will strengthen our partnership with Ghana to counter violent extremism by continuing integrated U.S. programs on inclusive economic development, rule of law strengthening, and security and law enforcement cooperation.

Question. Many of Africa's biggest challenges—trade, migration, violent extremism—are transnational in nature. However, embassies are understandably focused on bilateral relations. Do you think a regional focus on Western Africa might be effective and what might you do as ambassador to develop a more regional view?

Answer. Yes. A too narrow focus on bilateral issues allows our adversaries to exploit seams in policy and along national boundaries. For example, if customs and border security are improved and anti-corruption measures enforced on one side of a border but not another, terrorists and criminals will still be able to take advantage of weak borders to move materiel and personnel. If confirmed, I will work to support the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership and the Accra Initiative, a Ghanaian-led effort to strengthen the capabilities of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo to combat violent extremism. These efforts will require close coordination with my fellow Ambassadors in the region, AFRICOM, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. agencies in Washington, and Congress. It is also important that these regional efforts integrate security sector support (maritime and border security, military, and law enforcement cooperation) and programs to strengthen the rule of law and combat corruption, improve cyber security, and spur inclusive economic growth.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HOWARD A. VAN VRANKEN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Despite Botswana's solid democratic reputation, some observers have suggested that press freedom has declined in recent years, pointing to the draconian media regulations, self-censorship by journalists, and the disturbing use of Cellebrite technology to unlock a journalist's phone to access their sources.

- Do you agree that Botswana has experienced a decline in freedom of the press? What will you do, if confirmed, to pressure the Government of Botswana to roll back its restrictions on press freedom?

Answer. Botswana's constitution and laws provide for freedom of expression. Media contacts reported 10 years of self-censorship and dwindling advertising revenues under former President Khama. Upon taking office in 2018, President Masisi initially demonstrated a welcoming approach to the media and press freedom. However, this has largely stalled and the promised Freedom of Information bill has not yet materialized. State-owned media generally feature uncritical reporting on the Government and are sometimes susceptible to political interference. Opposition political parties claim that state media coverage heavily favors the ruling party.

If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Embassy work to support media professionalization through exchanges, trainings, and other initiatives, such as assisting the Office of the Presidency to set up a Presidential Press Office. Helping the Government of Botswana create a press office which is proactive, responsive, and a source for useful and credible information for the press and the public directly supports our Mission Goal 1: Botswana has institutions, policies, and practices which respond to the needs and improve equitably the lives of its inhabitants by addressing the need to strengthen institutions to promote accountable, transparent, and democratic governance.

Question. If confirmed as Ambassador to Botswana, you would also represent the United States at the Southern African Development Community. Southern Africa faces myriad challenges to the stability of the sub-region, including the insurgency in Mozambique.

- Do you believe that SADC is an effective organization to promote security, democracy, and prosperity in Southern Africa? Would deeper engagement with SADC advance U.S. interests?

Answer. SADC's goals of promoting regional cooperation and integration, economic growth, socio-economic development, and durable peace and security among its member states have never been more important. SADC has achieved notable successes promoting regional peace and security and economic development for the betterment of the SADC region's most important resource—its people. SADC's enduring support helped Lesotho negotiate vital government reforms and undertake a peaceful transition of political power, and in Mozambique the organization's deployment of a Standby Force is helping combat the ISIS-linked terrorist threat. SADC continues to promote regional peace and security as demonstrated by its positive role in helping Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo resolve a longstanding border disagreement. And through its Southern African Power Pool, SADC is mobilizing resources to address energy shortages that threaten regional development and economic integration.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen our engagement with SADC, including by advocating for the organization to play a proactive role in promoting good governance, respect for human rights, and democratic values, and in holding its members accountable when they fall short. By insisting that all its members respect human rights and the rule of law, SADC can send a powerful message that it intends to be a force for positive change for all citizens across southern Africa.

Question. What are the major barriers to improving conditions and protections for women, sexual minorities, and indigenous people in Botswana? What will you do to promote equality for groups that face discrimination if confirmed?

Answer. Botswana generally has a good human rights record and laws have been enacted to protect vulnerable populations. However, some problems remain. I am concerned about societal problems that threaten respect for human rights including high rates of gender-based violence; discrimination against women and children, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; and trafficking in persons.

There are also growing concerns among Botswana's public that COVID-19 related movement restrictions and the Government's stated need to take on extra-legislative responsibilities as a response could impinge on some of their human rights, such as the freedom of peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely

with the Government of Botswana and civil society organizations to address these concerns and promote equality for all. If confirmed, I will encourage them to focus their attention on the most pressing human rights concerns in Botswana and will look for synergistic opportunities to cooperate with these groups to advocate for reform, accountability, and respect for human rights.

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. While serving in Iraq in 2008-2009, I worked directly with local government leaders and NGOs to build democratic processes and to strengthen civil society organizations in support of representative and responsive local government. Working through implementing partners, we facilitated training for local leaders, established a free and independent radio station, and identified local youth leaders to participate in national training programs. Our goal, in part, was to decentralize decision-making and implementation authority from the central and provincial governments to empower and hold accountable leaders at the local government level for activities which directly impacted their constituents.

During my second tour in Iraq in 2011-2012, I spearheaded our efforts to resettle exiled Iranian nationals from Iraq to third countries. Those individuals, who were wanted by the Iranian Government, were under direct threat because of their perceived political affiliation. Together with others in the U.S. Government and UNHCR, we worked to safeguard the individuals' human rights and to promote the protection of refugees and the rule of law. In part as a result of my work, dozens of individuals were relocated legally to the safety of third countries.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Botswana? 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. Botswana has a long track record as one of Africa's enduring democracies. The people of Botswana are justifiably proud of this democratic track record. However, there remain issues to address. Concerns detailed in the 2020 Human Rights Report include undue restrictions on freedom of expression, the press, and the internet, including the existence of criminal slander and libel laws; interference with freedom of association; acts of corruption; and the existence of the worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced labor.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Botswana? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to partner with governmental and non-governmental organizations in Botswana, where we are involved in political party strengthening and a number of democracy building activities, including youth outreach, promoting women's participation in the political process, supporting the development of women candidates for public office, and advocacy for independent parliamentary debates.

Botswana's Parliament has only seven women members; three were elected in 2019, and the remainder appointed to specially elected seats by President Masisi. Gender based violence (GBV) also remains a major problem. Government figures from 2018 indicate that 37 percent of women in Botswana experience some form of GBV during their lives. This trend was exacerbated by lengthy COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. The Government embarked on an anti-GBV campaign in late 2020, which included public awareness, dedicated GBV courts, and new operating procedures for police handling GBV cases and victims. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Botswana and civil society to combat this serious social scourge.

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. The U.S. Embassy has focused on improving the participation of women in politics and political life through public awareness campaigns, bilateral engagement with the political parties and government leadership, and a \$250,000 African

Regional Democracy Fund grant to provide political training to women interest in politics. We also supported women and youth through a series of COVID-19 relief grants offering youth training and entrepreneurial skills development through mask making clinics, and through a grant to a women's GBV clinic to create an automated 24-hour help hotline via WhatsApp.

USAID's Democracy and Governance programming strengthens the capacity of governmental institutions, civil society groups, and regional organizations to promote democratic practices. This work is accomplished by better linking political parties to their constituents and develop platforms based on citizen needs; fostering land rights for indigenous populations; and promoting gender-equality and human rights. USAID is also assisting workers and communities impacted by mining to understand and assert their rights. If confirmed, I will continue to support this important work through USAID and other U.S. Mission programs and initiatives.

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 Botswana? 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 Botswana. If confirmed, I will continue and strengthen the relationships built by the U.S. Government and our partners with Botswana, U.S., and international civil society members working in this space. I will also engage with labor unions and workers. 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 Botswana, 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 to strengthen the relationships our U.S. 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 throughout Botswana. If confirmed, I will advocate for the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly for all political actors, even those who do not agree with the Government. If confirmed, I will advocate through public statements, targeted small grants and other programming, and direct engagement with a diverse spectrum of Botswana leaders and community members for a political environment that is inclusive of women, youth, minorities, and Botswana who might otherwise be marginalized.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Botswana 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 Botswana?

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. If confirmed, I will seek resources to continue support to both Botswana's private and state-run media, including professional exchanges, targeted training programs, and seminars to educate journalists and media stakeholders about their rights. Botswana journalists have consistently 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, and I will continue to prioritize these exchanges and training opportunities.

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 counterparts on countering disinformation and malign propaganda by foreign state and non-state actors. If confirmed, I also commit to working with like-minded partners in Botswana to counter disinformation and malign propaganda campaigns.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Botswana on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. The United States has a long and strong tradition of supporting the rights of workers to exercise freedom of association, including to form and join independent trade unions. If confirmed, I will commit to engage with unions, relevant government offices, and the private sector to support labor rights. If confirmed, I will mobilize U.S. Government policies, programs and trade agreements to empower workers in all sectors to organize, successfully bargain with their employers, and improve working conditions.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Botswana, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Protecting human rights and democracy is a priority for the U.S. Mission in Botswana. If confirmed, I will strive to defend the human rights and dignity of all persons in Botswana, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Botswana?

Answer. Botswana is a generally tolerant country, and there are no recent reports of attacks against the LGBTQI+ community by authorities. However, there were reported societal incidents of violence, societal harassment, and discrimination. Lingering societal problems can threaten respect for human rights, including the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and increase vulnerabilities faced by these populations. Botswana's legal statutes are mixed on the issue. The High Court struck down penal code section 164 criminalizing consensual same-sex activity in 2019; the Botswana Court of Appeal has set a date for the appeal on October 12, 2021. If confirmed, I will strive to defend the human rights and dignity of all persons in Botswana, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Botswana?

Answer. Protecting human rights and democracy is a priority for our mission in Botswana. The U.S. Mission has strong ties with LGBTQI+ civil society groups and relies on the 2019 landmark legal case to deepen social acceptance of LGBTQI+ persons in Botswana. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts with the goal that Botswana can become a model for other nations in Africa and show that decriminalization is possible.

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 Botswana?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to respond promptly to all appropriate requests for briefings and for information by this committee.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HOWARD A. VAN VRANKEN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Botswana is one of four Sub-Saharan African countries identified as "free" in Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2021 report. The State Department characterizes Botswana as "an excellent democratic partner." Underlying a democratic system that has produced democratic elections, strong tolerance of the political opposition, and effective governance practices, is one that also often undermines democratic pluralism—one that ensures the ruling party remains firmly in power.

- What is your assessment of the resilience of Botswana's democracy?

Answer. Botswana has a long track record as one of Africa's most successful and enduring democracies. Botswana is a constitutional, multiparty, republican democracy. Its constitution provides for the indirect election of a president and the popular election of a National Assembly. If confirmed, I will promote democratic values and seek to strengthen democratic institutions.

Question. Are there any areas where you, as U.S. Ambassador if confirmed, will engage Botswana on issues related to freedom and democracy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely in partnership with government and non-governmental organizations in Botswana on U.S. Government initia-

tives. These include political party strengthening and a number of democracy building activities, including youth outreach, promoting women's participation in the political process, supporting the development of women candidates for public office, and advocacy for independent parliamentary debates.

Question. In Botswana's 2019 parliamentary elections, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) received 406,561 votes (52.65 percent of total votes). What role does Botswana's first-past-the-post electoral system play in limiting power sharing with a growing proportion of votes by the political opposition in the country? What reforms does Botswana's electoral system need to ensure greater equity among the country's main political parties and actors?

Answer. Botswana's Parliamentary system of elections is like those used in many countries across the world. However, critics in countries where first-past-the-post voting is applied, including in Botswana, argue that this system is unfair to smaller political parties and groups that are underrepresented in the political process, such as women and ethnic minorities. Opposition parties argue that this system gives the ruling party a voting majority in parliament which enables it to implement its own policy objectives even if they do not have popular support. Botswana plans a constitutional reform process in the near future. If confirmed, I would work with all stakeholders on ways to advocate this process encompasses a broad set of issues, including the electoral system.

Following the 2019 elections, international observer missions made several recommendations for improvement of electoral processes, including related to funding of political parties, representation of women and youth in political parties, standardization of polling station procedures, improving registration and voter education procedures, among other legal and procedures reforms. Enacting such reforms will ensure that elections in Botswana produce results that enjoy broad support, including through representation of opposition and equity among political parties. If confirmed, I will seek to engage the Government and political parties on these issues in advance of the next elections.

Question. What is your view on a democratic system like Botswana that has never undergone a partisan transition of power and has seen an unbroken parliamentary majority by the same ruling party and control over the executive since independence?

Answer. Botswana's electoral system provides opportunities for changes in political power. In recent elections, opposition parties have made inroads in increasing parliamentary representation, particularly in 2014. However, factors such as opposition party cohesiveness, political financing, and incumbency have all helped the Botswana Democratic Party maintain its majority. If confirmed, I would continue our work with all stakeholders in ensuring that Botswana's political system remains fair and transparent.

If confirmed, I will promote democratic values and seek to strengthen democratic institutions, including through electoral processes that have credibility and integrity in representing the will of the people of Botswana.

Question. Do you believe the United States should support robust democracy and governance assistance programs in comparatively stronger African democracies like Botswana? If so, what should be the strategic focus for these efforts?

Answer. Botswana has been a strong proponent of democracy and respect for human rights within Africa. If confirmed, I will earnestly work to continue U.S. Embassy programming that strengthens the capacity of governmental institutions, civil society groups, and regional organizations to promote democratic practices.

Question. Do you believe it is the sign of a healthy democracy when a duly elected government, in consultation with its citizens, extends the term of office of the presidency even if that means it would extend the term of the current President in power? If confirmed, how would you respond to Botswana doing something like this?

Answer. Botswana's strong democratic tradition includes term-limits that are respected by presidents, the political parties, and the electorate. I expect this respect for constitutional limits will continue. If confirmed, I will promote democratic values and seek to strengthen democratic institutions.

Question. Can you provide your view on supporting U.S. funded, independent international election observation missions? Would you support such a mission for Botswana's next general election?

Answer. The U.S. Government supports efforts to ensure transparency in elections in all nations. Botswana's elections are regularly observed by external teams from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union. Bot-

swana welcomes and supports these missions and would likely be amenable to additional electoral observation if the conditions warrant such a mission.

Question. In the area of conservation, Botswana is a critical partner. The Okavango River Delta in northwest Botswana is one of the world's largest inland river deltas, and serves as a critical source of biodiversity and home to Africa's largest remaining elephant population. However in Botswana, as in other countries across the continent, wildlife trafficking and human animal conflict are persistent challenges that have become more acute during the COVID pandemic.

- As U.S. Ambassador to Botswana, if confirmed, how will you engage with our Botswanan partners on issues related to conservation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work earnestly to continue the U.S. Government engagement with the Government of Botswana and civil society to protect the country's valuable natural resources, including its wildlife and endangered ecosystems, such as the Okavango Delta, inscribed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites (WHS) in 2014.

Question. How will you as U.S. Ambassador engage the Government of Botswana to ensure the country's elephant population is ethically controlled and the Government follows adequate measures to ensure long-term conservation of their native elephant population?

Answer. Sustainable management of Botswana's natural resources, including the Okavango Delta and the country's wildlife, is not only a critical conservation goal, but also vital for Botswana's long-term economic health. Tourism, primarily ecotourism, accounted for 10 percent of Botswana's GDP and 10 percent of its total employment pre-pandemic.

If confirmed, I will encourage community-based natural resource management efforts that can make an important contribution to conservation and growth of the tourism sector, as well as to rural development and poverty eradication. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. agencies to promote best practices on wildlife conservation and management, including for Botswana's elephant population.

Question. What more should the Government of Botswana do to curb poaching and wildlife trafficking? How can the United States build on existing efforts to support Botswana in its fight against both poaching and trafficking of wildlife? What more can the United States do to help enforce existing national and international anti-wildlife trafficking laws in Botswana?

Answer. Botswana is committed to wildlife protection, and we appreciate the Government of Botswana's ongoing efforts on this issue. If confirmed, I pledge to continue supporting important wildlife trafficking assistance to Botswana, including training and building capacity in law enforcement personnel, both in country and regionally.

Trends across the continent indicate better organized, more lethal, and sophisticated poaching and wildlife trafficking criminal organizations. Botswana considers these organizations a national security threat. If I am confirmed, I will commit to working with my government counterparts to deter and dismantle these criminal organizations in Botswana.

Question. What additional tools can the U.S. draw on to provide support to Botswana in both preserving biodiversity and improving livelihoods for the Botswanan people

Answer. Botswana has unique biodiversity and remains highly vulnerable to climate change, especially with regard to access to water for drinking, irrigation, and climate change's effects on complex biospheres such as the Okavango Delta. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with our partners including government, commercial, and civil society groups in support of the conservation goals of the DELTA Act.

Question. What opportunities exist for the United States to build on its defense cooperation with Botswana?

Answer. There are opportunities to strengthen our already robust defense partnerships through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) and the National Guard State Partnership Program. There are opportunities for PEPFAR and the Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (DHAPP) to implement HIV prevention programs to combat HIV/AIDS within the defense forces. Botswana would also welcome participation in additional regional military exercises.

Question. In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Botswana was identified as Tier 2 due to a "lack of formal procedures to identify and refer victims to care and devoted substantially less funding for victim care than in the previous reporting pe-

riod.” How will you work with the Government or appropriate entities to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. The Government of Botswana does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making efforts to do so. Botswana remained a Tier 2 country in the 2021 TIP Report and has publicly reiterated its commitment to reaching Tier 1. In the 2021 reporting period, the Government of Botswana referred all identified victims to NGOs, funded and implemented the anti-trafficking national action plan, and provided additional services to victims who participated in trials against their traffickers. However, the Government did not convict any traffickers and identified significantly fewer victims than in the 2020 reporting period.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Botswana to create and institutionalize procedures to identify trafficking victims and train stakeholders on such procedures, increase funding for NGOs to which the Government refers trafficking victims for shelter and services, and significantly increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers through continued engagement with the Government, civil society, and international partners.

Question. In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Botswana was identified as tolerant of religious freedom. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to continue to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Religious freedom is a U.S. foreign policy priority, and the Department continues to closely monitor religious freedom in Botswana. As noted, Botswana provides for freedom of thought and religion, with certain exceptions, protects against governmental discrimination, and has a high degree of religious tolerance and robust interfaith relations. If confirmed, I commit to work with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and Congress to emphasize the importance of religious freedom, addressing any religious freedom concerns, and further strengthening tolerance and respect among and for religious communities in Botswana.

Question. In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Botswana was identified as having serious human rights concerns, including infringement or suppression of freedom of expression, press, the internet, association, as well as corruption and child labor.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. Botswana generally has a good human rights record. However, some problems remain. These include occasional allegations of excessive use of force and abuse by security personnel, police corruption, and shortcomings in the judicial process, including lengthy delays and failure to inform defendants of their pretrial rights.

I am concerned about societal problems that threaten respect for human rights including high rates of gender-based violence; discrimination against women and children, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; and trafficking in persons.

There are also growing concerns among Botswana’s public that COVID-19 related movement restrictions and the Government’s stated need to take on extra-legislative responsibility as a response could impinge on some of their human rights, such as their freedom of peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts as I engage the Government of Botswana 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 Botswana’s major civil society organizations. These organizations rely on us to act as a voice of conscience both in the public sphere and in our engagement with the Government. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with Botswana’s community of civil society organizations and will encourage them to focus their attention on the most pressing human rights concerns in Botswana and will look for synergistic opportunities to cooperate with these groups to advocate for reform, accountability, and respect for human rights.

Question. Government resettlement schemes, policies that undermine aboriginal minorities’ cultural practices and identities, and economic disenfranchisement are all areas where the Government has increasingly marginalized the aboriginal San and Basarwa people. In what ways should the United States work with the Govern-

ment of Botswana to improve the rights and economic survival of these aboriginal people?

Answer. The U.S. Government continues to follow the situation of the San in Botswana, including the legal dispute between some San communities and the Botswana Government over their families' rights to reside within Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). The Botswana Government has agreed to abide by all relevant court rulings regarding the San rights to live within the CKGR, but it has interpreted these rulings narrowly. If confirmed, I will continue to support the ongoing dialogue between the Botswana Government and San representatives regarding community welfare and living conditions.

Question. In March this year, Botswana became the 46th African country to sign on to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI cooperation agreement will undoubtedly boost relations between the two countries and focus on infrastructure construction and other projects traditionally supporting the BRI. How will you ensure the United States interests and relationship with Botswana is not undermined by these deepening ties with China?

Answer. The Government of Botswana sees China as an important partner and investor, but there has been unhappiness within Botswana about PRC business practices, after problems with several high-profile PRC construction projects. If confirmed, I will work to build upon our decades-long investment in African human capital (health and education) in order to strengthen our ties with Botswana, including through initiatives like the Power Africa Mega Solar program.

Question. In November 2020, I published a Senate Foreign Relations Committee Majority Report entitled "The United States and Europe: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China." The report gave several recommendations on increased transatlantic cooperation, including in Africa, to counter Chinese malign influence more effectively. In what ways should the United States partner with European countries to build on likeminded interests in Botswana and counter the malign influence of China?

Answer. The United States and our European partners share an interest in supporting Botswana's efforts for financial transparency, respect for human rights, respect for freedom of expression, and efforts to counter corruption. We are concerned about the PRC's influence on these areas in Botswana. If confirmed, I would continue to work with European nations and the Government of Botswana to strengthen Botswana's resilience to malign external influence. If confirmed, I will work with European and other likeminded partners to speak up against China's malign actions and attempts to undermine the international rules-based system, including through advancing U.S. economic interests, countering China's aggressive and coercive actions, sustaining our military engagement, and engaging on U.S. positions in the U.N. system.

Question. According to Reporters sans frontiers (RSF), press freedom declined significantly under President Ian Khama. While violations of press freedom have declined under President Masisi, there remain significant obstacles to freedom of the press in Botswana, including a legal framework that has no law on access to information and draconian laws such as the 2008 Media Practitioners Act. As U.S. Ambassador to Botswana, if confirmed, how will you engage the Botswanan Government on issues of freedom of information and freedom of the press?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Embassy work to support media professionalization through exchanges, trainings, and other initiatives, such as assisting the Office of the Presidency to set up a Presidential Press Office. Helping the Government of Botswana create a press office which is proactive, responsive, and a source for useful and credible information for the press and the public directly supports our Mission Goal 1: Botswana has institutions, policies, and practices which respond to the needs and improve equitably the lives of its inhabitants by addressing the need to strengthen institutions to promote accountable, transparent, and democratic governance.

Question. Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Botswana?

Answer. COVID-19 has exacted a heavy toll on U.S. Mission Botswana, as many members of our community have lost loved ones. While there is currently a downward trend in cases across the region, Botswana's COVID-19 case count remains the highest in the Southern African region.

COVID-19 exacerbated some of Botswana's infrastructural weaknesses like telecommunications, healthcare, and food availability. The Mission has adapted to this new environment, with staff building stronger ties with each other as they rely on one another more than they did prior to the pandemic. The U.S. Mission continues to prioritize Embassy morale through tools such as regular town halls, which provide a platform for staff to connect with leadership and for speakers to discuss resilience and coping mechanisms.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Botswana?

Answer. If confirmed, the safety and security of the official community will be of primary importance. I will seek to support employees and their families to create an inclusive and welcoming culture where individuals are safe and can achieve professional and personal goals. As I expect one of my sons (who is 15 years old) and my wife, Rebecca, will accompany me (and my other children will spend significant time with me in Botswana), I will focus on schooling and educational needs for children and work with U.S. and Botswana officials to expand U.S.-accredited education where possible.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Botswana?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead regular discussions with all agencies to establish and review goals and develop strategies and tactics to achieve common objectives. If confirmed, I will engage all employees and stakeholders to conceive and articulate clearly what we will do, and how we will do it. If confirmed, I will create a culture of inclusion in which all employees' contributions are valued.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission.

- How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I aspire to create a leadership culture in which all are encouraged to contribute, create, and grow. My ideal is a workplace in which people achieve shared objectives while respecting and valuing everyone's contributions. This requires from leadership and employees a recognition of individuals' strengths and areas of development, and a respect for shared values, inclusion, and our institutions.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. There is no acceptable place for 'berating' subordinates, either in public or in private.

Question. What lessons have you learned from your tenure as the director of NEA-SCA/EX?

Answer. While Executive Director of NEA-SCA/EX, I learned quickly the limits of my own ability to achieve goals without delegating responsibility and authority when appropriate. My experience leading that organization affirmed to me that subordinates need space to learn and grow, and that results which fall short of full success represent valuable opportunities to adjust styles and inculcate a culture of continual learning and improvement. I refined the ability to delegate and build a spirit of inclusion during my time as Executive Director.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I expect to collaborate closely with the Deputy Chief of Mission to conceive goals, then implement and oversee tactics and activities to achieve those goals. If confirmed, I will work with the Deputy Chief of Mission to articulate and maintain high ethical standards and create a culture of inclusion and respect. If confirmed, I will lean on the Deputy Chief of Mission's deep area expertise and seek her counsel before developing or implementing policy. I believe Deputy Chiefs of Mission are most effective, productive, and valued when they are permitted to work with independence, while understanding that the Chief of Mission is ultimately responsible in all ways for the work of the Mission.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ask the Deputy Chief of Mission to lead our internal effort to address the COVID pandemic. I will also ask her to lead recruitment efforts for Foreign Service and other agencies' diplomatic personnel. If confirmed, I will collaborate with her closely on policy implementation, engagement with the Government of Botswana, and outreach to key groups-particularly youth-through traditional and social media.

In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking.

Question. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes.

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and fellow foreign diplomats stationed in Botswana.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. The most effective U.S. diplomats are those who actively engage broadly with people throughout all parts of society in the country to which they are assigned.

The safety and well-being of our U.S. Mission staff is paramount. Thus, during COVID-19, especially during the recent third wave, we have limited our external engagement and official travel to mission critical. However, during normal times our U.S. Mission community is actively involved in external engagement with our government, civil society, and media partners and members of the international community throughout the country. In the meantime, we have been actively involved in external engagement on virtual platforms and in small group settings to maximize safety.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, and as health and safety conditions permit, I will encourage U.S. diplomats to engage actively, broadly and in-person with local populations. Until then, we will maintain active engagement through virtual media. If confirmed, I intend to regularly visit people in each district of Botswana and use those visits to facilitate contacts for other U.S. diplomats.

COVID-19 limited physical interactions and poor telecommunications infrastructure made virtual interactions difficult. However, nearly all Mission personnel have been vaccinated and the number of vaccinated Botswana is also increasing. This should improve our ability to access more people locally as in-person interactions will remain the preferred form of engagement in Botswana.

Once the COVID-19 situation improves we intend to fully re-engage with all our stakeholders throughout the country in-person. I will prioritize our Embassy's travel and site visits to our partners and beneficiaries in the field, on priority issues including our HIV/AIDS response and wildlife trafficking, to improve our collective understanding of the myriad issues at stake, underscore U.S. leadership on these issues, and to monitor U.S. Government funds.

Once we achieve a healthy threshold of vaccinated people, we plan to return to hosting more representational events as they have historically been well received, especially our Fourth of July celebrations. A resumption in issuing tourist and business visas will also increase our interaction as it will raise interest in the United States.

Question. In recent years, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental standards-setting body on anti-money laundering matters (AML), of which the United States is a member, identified Botswana as strategically deficient on AML. How is the United States supporting AML compliance efforts in Botswana and what steps will you take as ambassador to ensure the country continues to make improvements in this area?

Answer. The United States supports Botswana's efforts to strengthen its compliance with international AML standards, including through U.S. Department of Treasury technical assistance. If confirmed, I will work diligently to ensure the U.S. Embassy continues to support Botswana's efforts to bolster its anti-money laundering capacity.

Question. Do you think the Department should require chiefs of mission have experience in the region to which they are nominated?

Answer. The Department of State looks for officers who exemplify the six Core Values (accountability, character, community, diversity, loyalty, service) and the Department's Leadership and Management Principles (model integrity, plan strategically, be decisive and take responsibility, communicate, learn and innovate constantly, be self-aware, collaborate, value and develop people, manage conflict, and foster resilience) when selecting Chiefs of Mission. Candidates for COM positions must possess: outstanding interpersonal skills; deep regional and functional professional experience; demonstrated effectiveness in leading people, policies, and programs; proven skills in public diplomacy, navigating the interagency process, leading and motivating teams; talent for advocating U.S. foreign policy interests, including promoting democracy and good governance, rule of law, and economic interests; and the ability to operate at the senior U.S. national security policy level. The Department also seeks COM candidates who have championed diversity and will continue to foster diverse and inclusive teams and hold people accountable for performance and conduct. COM nominees are able to apply these values and principles in any geographic region to advance U.S. interests.

Question. With little experience in the sub-Saharan Africa, how are you approaching this assignment?

Answer. Mission Botswana has a strong team which I am looking forward to meeting and leading. I am confident that our respective experiences will complement each other.

I have engaged in an accelerated program to learn as much as possible as quickly as possible about the region through the Foreign Service Institute and consultations with regional experts. If confirmed, I will broaden that engagement to include regional experts throughout and outside the U.S. Government.

Question. Do you consider your lack of experience in the region a handicap in starting your position as COM?

Answer. I come to this assignment with a long history of success in leading people and managing programs and resources to achieve goals. Those experiences are directly applicable to this challenging assignment. I also approach this assignment cognizant that the region is richly complex, and I will need to seek advice, counsel, and recommendations from a range of experts from throughout and outside the U.S. Government in order to succeed.

The State Department prides itself in developing adaptable generalists who bring the breadth of their experience to every assignment. There are naturally strong arguments for having regional experts, but I am confident that I can bring new approaches to bear based on my experience at other posts. My work in the Department's Executive Secretariat also gave me a unique perspective on how Africa fits into our overall foreign policy, experience which I believe make me a strong advocate for the needs of Mission Botswana.

Question. If confirmed, would you consider your lack of experience in Africa in identifying a deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The Department of State provides a list of suitable Deputy Chief of Mission candidates for a Chief of Mission to select when those positions become open. If confirmed, I will select a DCM who compliments my skills, experience, and knowledge to ensure the U.S. Mission in Botswana is best placed to advance U.S. interests.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Botswana? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. The strong U.S.-Botswana bilateral relationship facilitates a positive public diplomacy environment. The Botswana public is generally receptive to U.S. Government programs and messaging on our policy priorities. The challenges that do exist include capacity issues like an organization's ability to maintain and implement grants on behalf of the U.S. Government; the lack of a flourishing civil society which limits our ability to offer diverse programming; and the poorly developed press corps. However, journalists are eager to gain additional training and experiences through USG media exchange programs. COVID-19 has severely impacted the Mission's ability to conduct in person exchanges and outreach, and poor internet connectivity and availability make virtual programming challenging.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. The Embassy's Public Affairs Office does a good job balancing these occasionally differing objectives. The Mission's strategic planning working group meets

monthly to discuss important policy objectives and to decide how to best deliver messaging to the public. Due to our strong bilateral relationship, the Botswana public is largely receptive to our messaging. As a Mission, we focus most of our messaging on our priority policy goals and objectives including our health partnerships under PEPFAR, women's empowerment, democracy and governance, environmental issues, regional security, and strengthening the economy. However, we also deliver messaging on Washington's policy priorities. The Botswana public is also receptive to these messages. Most public messaging is delivered via our influential social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, but also via traditional media including radio, television, and newspaper interviews, which is dominated by state media.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HOWARD A. VAN VRANKEN BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Botswana's HIV prevalence rate is improving but remains the fourth highest in the world, with 19.9 percent of adults HIV-positive in 2020. What is your assessment of the importance and effectiveness of U.S. support to combatting HIV/AIDs and other public health emergencies in Botswana, including the COVID pandemic?

Answer. U.S. support through PEPFAR has played and will need to continue to play an important role in supporting Botswana's HIV/AIDS response. While Botswana is a high HIV-burdened country, it has been making significant progress toward controlling its HIV epidemic and that control must be sustained. The health systems and capacities that have been strengthened for the HIV/AIDS response have also been instrumental in helping to respond to other health threats, including COVID-19. Botswana funds approximately 60 percent of its national response to HIV/AIDS and PEPFAR has strategically filled service delivery gaps and provided technical support to scale up and strengthen services.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m., via Video-conference, Hon. Brian Schatz presiding.

Present: Senators Schatz [presiding], Cardin, Murphy, Booker, Van Hollen, and Hagerty.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BRIAN SCHATZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII

Senator SCHATZ. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We are here to consider four important nominees—Ambassador Laura Holgate to be the U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the U.N. and the U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency; Caryn McClelland to be the U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam; David Young to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi; and Claire Pierangelo to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and to the Union of the Comoros.

Congratulations to the four of you on your nominations. Our thanks for your willingness to serve and to the members of your families because this is a family sacrifice as well.

I understand that our distinguished former colleague Senator Nunn is here to introduce Ambassador Holgate this morning. So we will turn to him first before any opening statements.

Senator Nunn?

STATEMENT OF HON. SAM NUNN, FORMER U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator NUNN. Thank you very much, Chairman Schatz. Can you hear me okay? I am not—

Senator SCHATZ. We can hear you fine.

Senator NUNN. Great. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hagerty, Senator Cardin, and others on the Foreign Relations Committee.

I am honored to present Laura Holgate to this committee, and I strongly recommend that she be confirmed as our Nation's Ambassador to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Chairman, our Nation is fortunate to have a nominee with the experience, the knowledge, and the diplomatic skills that Laura would bring to this important role if confirmed by the Senate.

Laura has served more than 30 years in critical national security positions, both inside and outside government. She has broad experience. She has skilled leadership. Laura has sound judgment, and she has an international reputation as a very capable diplomat and persuasive advocate of U.S. priorities.

She also brings a background and spirit of nonpartisanship. I know that firsthand, Mr. Chairman, because I have worked closely with her, and she has worked so closely with Senators and staff over the years.

So, Mr. Chairman and Senator Hagerty, I have known Laura for almost all of her professional career. She was part of the Ash Carter Harvard University team that worked closely with my partner Senator Dick Lugar and with me to persuade Congress to create what became known as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.

Laura later led this program at the Pentagon and was part of the team that achieved one of the most significant global security steps of our era—Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine getting rid of all of their nuclear weapons and joining the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. So Laura has been at the forefront of policy innovation as well as implementation to reduce nuclear, biological, and chemical threats for really her entire career.

When the Nuclear Threat Initiative was created in the year 2001 by Ted Turner and by me, I knew Laura was one of the most capable people that we could ever find. So I persuaded her to become one of the first employees of NTI. Laura's strong relationships with colleagues in the U.S. departments and agencies on Capitol Hill and really around the world helped her work with others to improve nuclear security and keep weapons and weapons-usable material, most important, out of the hands of terrorists globally.

At NTI, Laura led a number of international threat reduction projects that helped make the world safer, and I am just going to mention a couple. In 2001, she directed NTI's important role in the removal of two bombs' worth of highly enriched uranium from a poorly secured facility in Serbia. This project, led by the U.S. Government with cooperation from Serbia, Russia, and the IAEA, laid the foundation for the U.S. Government's program known as the Global Threat Reduction Initiative.

Most recently, she helped produce our NTI's Nuclear Security Index, which is recognized globally, I believe, as the premier open source resource and tool for tracking and improving the security of some of the deadliest materials in the world.

Importantly, Mr. Chairman and Senator Hagerty, Laura has continued her lifelong commitment to broadening the number of talented women in the nuclear security field, enhancing our national and our global security. Laura knows that giving women a fair shake strengthens our national security and also strengthens our Nation.

Laura served from 2009 to 2016 at the National Security Council, where she exhibited strong leadership in coordinating U.S. Government efforts to reduce weapon of mass destruction threats and prevent catastrophic terrorism. In particular, she led preparations for the four nuclear security summits under President Obama,

which made significant progress in securing nuclear materials globally.

We do not get much encouraging news, but Mr. Chairman, over the last 20 or so years under both parties, both Presidents, Republicans and Democrats, we have moved from 50 nations with nuclear material known as highly enriched uranium to 23 nations. Still a lot of challenges, but Laura has played a huge role in all of that.

In conclusion, Chairman Schatz and Senator Hagerty and members of the committee, I am confident that Laura is fully prepared to serve in this critical role. I strongly support her nomination by President Biden, and I urge the committee's support. And of course, I urge strongly her confirmation by the full Senate.

So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much, Senator Nunn, and thank you for your public service and leadership over many, many years.

We will now turn to my opening remarks, followed by Senator Hagerty.

Ambassador Holgate previously served as the U.S. Representative to the IAEA and Vienna Office of the U.N. in 2016. She also served as Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism, and Threat Reduction on the NSC, where she led the preparation of four nuclear security summits. The IAEA is facing a number of challenges to one of its core missions, ensuring that states comply with their nonproliferation treaty commitments to maintain only peaceful nuclear programs.

Iran is currently blocking IAEA access to many of its nuclear facilities, and North Korea moves ahead with its nuclear capabilities. Ambassador Holgate brings a wealth of experience to this important role, and we look forward to hearing about how she plans to engage the IAEA on nonproliferation matters and the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology to solve today's challenges, including climate change.

Pleased to see Caryn McClelland, a career Foreign Service officer, nominated as our next Ambassador to Brunei. In her distinguished career at State, she has served in senior-level positions in the Indo-Pacific and Europe as well as on oceans and international environmental issues and commercial and business affairs, all of which position her well for this assignment.

In particular, her background working energy issues, as we seek to work with Brunei to transition its economy to a zero-carbon future, is invaluable. I look forward to hearing her thoughts on that issue today.

I am also interested in her views on Brunei's approach to trafficking in persons and LGBTQ issues under Sharia law, issues this committee continues to monitor closely.

Next, we have David Young. David Young is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He currently serves as the charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia, and previously served as the charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria. His extensive experience in Southern Africa will serve him well if confirmed as our next Ambassador to Malawi.

At a time when many African countries are experiencing democratic backsliding, Malawi stands out as having achieved a democratic transition, thanks to the vigilance of its citizens and the independence of its institutions. Still, Malawi faces serious challenges, including widespread poverty, corruption, and the threat of climate change and natural disasters, such as Cyclone Idai in 2019.

And despite meeting its goals to control HIV/AIDS, Malawi still has one of the world's 10 highest HIV prevalence rates. I look forward to hearing how, with sufficient engagement and assistance, the United States can help Malawi turn its recent democratic success into long-term stability and prosperity.

Lastly, Claire Pierangelo is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. She currently serves as Principal Officer at the Consulate General in Lagos, Nigeria. Madagascar is facing difficult circumstances, and our Embassy urgently needs an experienced diplomat like Claire Pierangelo. High-stakes competition between political elites has dangerously destabilized Madagascar, with alleged coup and assassination plots pushing the country to the brink of a political crisis.

Even more alarming is Madagascar's vulnerability to climate change. Southern Madagascar is on the edge of a deadly famine, one of the first to be caused by climate change rather than man-made conflict, according to the U.N.

The Union of the Comoros, where Ms. Pierangelo would also represent the United States, if confirmed, faces governance challenges such as corruption and authoritarianism. It is becoming vulnerable to climate change, which is spurring irregular migration and affecting access to food and to water. I hope to hear how the United States can help these two countries to confront these challenges.

So while the four of you have a number of challenges ahead, I am confident that your knowledge and experience will serve you well as you take them upon confirmation.

I now turn to the ranking member, Senator Hagerty, for his opening comments.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BILL HAGERTY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator HAGERTY. It is an honor to be with both of you. Mr. Chairman, I also want to thank the nominees for being here today. As you said, it is a great commitment, and it is a family commitment, and I appreciate and congratulate all of you for your nomination.

I would like to start with the nominee for Representative of the United States to the International Energy Agency. This position has a unique responsibility in advancing the security of the United States by promoting the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

I would like to share just a little bit of my own background from this perspective. Not long after my arrival in Tokyo as the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, North Korea tested a thermonuclear weapon, highlighting for me the continued challenges and threats that we face from nuclear proliferation around the world.

The United States and our allies need to work very closely together on this, and I look forward to hearing from the nominee

about how best to prevent states from diverting their civil nuclear energy programs to military purposes as we approach the 21st century.

Next, I would like to turn to the nomination to be the Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam. The United States and Brunei work closely together on a bilateral and regional agenda to tackle some of the most pressing issues, particularly in light of Brunei's role in ASEAN. I look forward to hearing from Caryn on ways to advance the U.S.-Brunei relationship. I have had the opportunity to work with Caryn in the past. I look forward to hearing from her today.

I would also like to turn to the nominee to be Ambassador to Malawi. The United States continues to partner with Malawi in order to advance accountable democratic governance, to foster private sector growth, and to advance health, education, energy, and environmental sectors in Malawi. I am interested in hearing from the nominee on these subjects when we get to them.

Last, I would like to focus on the nominee to be the Ambassador to Madagascar. And as Madagascar continues to play—transition toward a free democracy, the United States will play a critical role as one of the largest providers of assistance to Madagascar. I look forward to hearing from our nominee about ways to bolster the partnership between the United States and Madagascar.

Mr. Chairman, I yield my time back to you. Thank you.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much, Senator Hagerty.

All of our nominees will be provided an opportunity to give their testimony. We asked them to be as brief as possible. We are about to enter into a series of five votes to keep the Government open. So that if we can do this expeditiously, we will not have to hand the gavel back and forth.

So we will start our testimony from our nominees. We ask you to summarize your statement in 5 minutes or even less. All of your full statements will be included in the record without objection, and we will proceed in the order that you appear on the hearing notice, beginning with Ambassador Holgate.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE OF VIRGINIA,
NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC EN-
ERGY AGENCY, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, AND TO
BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE VIENNA OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH
THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR**

Ambassador HOLGATE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hagerty, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today to serve—as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other international organizations in Vienna.

I am grateful to President Biden and to Secretary Blinken for their confidence that they have placed in me, and I am especially grateful to Senator Nunn for his mentorship over the years and for his generous remarks this morning.

This is a critical moment for the United States' interests in the IAEA and other U.N. offices in Vienna. Iran, nuclear energy, space,

cyber crime, climate change, the opioid epidemic—none of these challenges can be adequately met by the United States acting alone. We helped create the U.N. system to align the interests and combine the strengths of multiple nations to address global challenges, and I firmly believe that these institutions are more necessary today than ever.

My experience inside and outside the United States Government has prepared me to play this vital role in Vienna. If I am confirmed in this position, I pledge to strengthen and broaden the partnerships with other member states and with the Vienna-based U.N. agencies and further develop the coalitions that we need to achieve U.S. priorities.

Key among these goals is to work to make sure the IAEA has the mandate and the capacity to address evolving challenges and the greater demands being placed upon it. The IAEA must have the technical, human, and financial resources it needs to implement global safeguards, including in critical areas such as Iran and to be prepared to return to North Korea should a monitoring agreement be reached there.

The IAEA's Directorates of Nuclear Energy, Safety and Security, and Safeguards must work better together to guide and monitor the safe and secure expansion of next-generation nuclear energy in a way that helps address climate change without increasing nuclear risk.

If confirmed, I will press international organizations in Vienna to continue to make progress on management reforms, transparency, and accountability. I will encourage intensified efforts towards achieving greater gender and regional diversity and greater representation of U.S. citizens, especially at senior and policymaking levels. And I will revitalize the International Gender Champions chapter, which I helped found during my previous appointment.

The achievement of these and other U.S. priorities will face the growing influence of Russia and China in multilateral organizations, and I believe the U.S. must be even more present, active, and visible at these fora. And if confirmed, I will strengthen the essential relationships with traditional diplomatic partners and work hard to build new connections with countries who are eager to see U.S. leadership on the issues they care about.

Mr. Chairman, I am eager to return to the post I held so briefly and optimistic about the opportunities to re-engage the diplomatic and U.N. community, many of whom I know well. I am grateful to this committee for its attention and to my family, friends, and colleagues observing these proceedings online for their love, support, and inspiration as I pursue a return to public service.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Holgate follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hagerty, and members of the committee: I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations (U.N.), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other International Organizations in Vienna. I am grateful to President Biden and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

This is a critical moment for the United States' interests in the IAEA and the other U.N. offices in Vienna. Establishing confidence that Iran's nuclear activities are solely peaceful and remain so, strengthening the global nuclear architecture that promotes security of nuclear materials and facilities, supporting the safe and secure expansion of nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear technologies, promoting effective efforts to combat transnational crime and corruption, and supporting innovative peaceful applications of space science demand active, focused leadership and engagement by the United States to promote our national interests and advance our contributions towards shared global priorities. Indeed, none of these challenges can be adequately met by the United States acting alone—we helped create the U.N. system to align the interests and combine the strengths of multiple nations to address global challenges, and I firmly believe that these institutions are more necessary today than ever.

My experience inside and outside the United States Government has prepared me to play this vital role in Vienna. I have focused on reducing nuclear, biological, and chemical threats since 1989, when I wrote my MIT masters thesis on chemical weapons destruction. From the Pentagon to the Energy Department to the White House, and—briefly—in Vienna, I have spent over 15 years designing, leading, and coordinating federal programs to reduce and eliminate nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In my 12 years at the nongovernment Nuclear Threat Initiative, I have developed and piloted creative solutions to nuclear challenges, many of which have been adopted by the United States and the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman, it was my distinct honor to have been supported by this committee and confirmed by the Senate in 2016 to the position for which I am now again being considered, and I served for six months in that role, leading UNVIE's talented team of Foreign Service Officers, locally engaged staff, and civil servants from multiple U.S. agencies.

If I am confirmed in this position, I pledge to strengthen and broaden the partnerships with other member states and with the Vienna-based U.N. agencies, and further develop the coalitions that we need to achieve U.S. priorities. Key among these goals is to work to make sure the IAEA has the mandate and the capacity to address evolving challenges and the greater demands being placed on it. The IAEA must have the technical, human, and financial resources it needs to implement global safeguards, including in critical areas such as Iran, and to be prepared to return to North Korea, should a monitoring agreement be reached there. The IAEA's Directorates of Nuclear Energy, Safety and Security, and Safeguards must work better together to guide and monitor the safe and secure expansion of next-generation nuclear energy in a way that helps address climate change without increasing nuclear risks. The IAEA's Directorates of Technical Cooperation and Nuclear Sciences and Applications must strengthen initiatives to safely and securely provide the benefits of nuclear technology to all, including innovations to speed the diagnosis of pandemic health threats.

If confirmed, I will press international organizations in Vienna to continue to make progress in management reforms, transparency, and accountability. I will encourage intensified efforts toward achieving greater gender and regional diversity, especially at the senior and policy-making levels, and revitalize the International Gender Champions chapter, which I helped found during my previous appointment.

The achievement of these and other U.S. priorities will face the growing influence of Russia and China in multilateral organizations. I believe the U.S. must be even more present, active, and visible in these fora and if confirmed, I will strengthen the essential relationships with traditional diplomatic partners and work hard to build new connections with countries who are eager to see U.S. leadership on issues they care about.

Mr. Chairman, I am eager to return to the post I held so briefly, and optimistic about the opportunities to reengage the diplomatic and U.N. community, many of whom I know well. I am grateful to this committee for its attention, and to my family, friends, and colleagues observing these proceedings on-line for their love, support, and inspiration as I pursue a return to public service.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

Ms. McClelland?

**STATEMENT OF CARYN R. MCCLELLAND OF CALIFORNIA, 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 BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

Ms. MCCLELLAND. Thank you very much.

Chairman Schatz, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be here today before you as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance U.S. interests in Brunei.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my family, friends, mentors, and colleagues whose support and guidance has been critical throughout my career. Most importantly, I want to recognize my daughter, Marlowe, who has shared this adventure with me for the last 13 years, and my parents, Robert and Catherine. Without their constant love, support, and encouragement, I would not be here today.

The U.S.-Brunei relationship has flourished over the years as we continuously work together to promote a more stable, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. We have enjoyed more than 170 years of close cooperation since our countries signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation in 1850. The United States was also among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Brunei after it became fully independent from the United Kingdom in 1984.

Our partnership with Brunei and our support for ASEAN centrality remain a cornerstone of our Indo-Pacific policy. The United States works closely with Brunei, especially during its role as the ASEAN chair in 2021. Brunei's time leading ASEAN coincided with the two most acute challenges to face ASEAN since its inception, the coup d'état in Burma and COVID-19.

Brunei has been a steady and constructive partner on both issues. Our shared commitment to addressing some of the region's most pressing challenges will continue to yield cooperation, including on pandemic response, confronting the climate crisis, and resolving the conflict brought on by the coup and violence in Burma.

The robust security, economic, and people-to-people ties between our two countries are at the core of our relationship with Brunei. Our defense relationship is described in our Memorandum of Understanding on Defense Cooperation, and our military-to-military ties have become a cornerstone of the U.S.-Brunei bilateral relationship.

Prior to the pandemic, Brunei conveyed a strong desire to increase participation in military exercise and engagements with the United States, particularly with respect to enhancing maritime domain awareness. While many in-person defense exchanges have either been postponed or canceled due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Brunei remains committed to our defense partnership, as witnessed by its recent purchase of U.S.-origin defense equipment and its continued participation in our bilateral maritime exercises.

We have a shared interest in maintaining peace and stability, unimpeded lawful commerce, and respect for international law, including freedoms of navigation and overflight and other lawful ac-

tivities in the South China Sea. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to strengthen our partnership in these areas with the Bruneian Government and work with Brunei to uphold the rules-based international order that has underpinned the region's security and prosperity.

We have also fostered a positive economic relationship with Brunei and enjoy a robust trade in goods such as aircraft, machinery, technology, iron, steel, and others. U.S. goods and services trade with Brunei totaled an estimated \$262 million in 2020.

We have frequently worked with Brunei and other regional economies to lower barriers to trade and investment across the Indo-Pacific region, leveling the playing field for U.S. companies and supporting job growth at home. If confirmed, I hope to further expand our bilateral trade relationship and advance an economic agenda that promotes shared prosperity, leverages economic potential, and builds inclusive and resilient economies, especially as the entire region works toward pandemic recovery.

If there is one thing the past year and a half has taught us, it is the true value of personal relationships. Our cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties with Brunei are critically important to advance both mutual understanding between our nations and our bilateral relationship. In a country with limited exposure to the United States, engaging the next generation of Bruneian leaders and change-makers is vital.

Prior to the pandemic, approximately 50 Bruneians participated annually in U.S.-sponsored exchange programs, including the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, the International Visitor Leaders Program, and Fulbright Program, and other professional and academic exchanges. The U.S. Embassy in Brunei also maintains a robust network of more than 300 alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs and works regularly with Bruneian civil society to collaborate on addressing issues of mutual concern, such as empowering women, promoting entrepreneurship, and protecting the environment, among other issues. If confirmed, I intend to leverage these exchange programs and other initiatives to broaden our people-to-people ties in the future.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here today, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McClelland follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARYN R. MCCLELLAND

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be here before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for placing their confidence in me to serve the United States in Brunei. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance U.S. interests in Brunei.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my family, friends, mentors, and colleagues, whose support and guidance has been critical throughout my career. Most importantly, I want to recognize my daughter Marlowe, who has shared this adventure with me for the last 13 years, and my parents Robert and Catherine. Without their constant love, support, and encouragement, I would not be here today.

The U.S.-Brunei relationship has flourished over the years as we continuously work together to promote a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. We have enjoyed more than 170 years of close cooperation since our countries signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation in 1850. The

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The robust security, economic, and people-to-people ties between our two countries are at the core of our relationship with Brunei. Our defense relationship is described in our Memorandum of Understanding on Defense Cooperation, and our military-to-military ties have become a cornerstone of the U.S.-Brunei bilateral relationship. Prior to the pandemic, Brunei conveyed a strong desire to increase participation in military exercises and engagements with the United States, particularly with respect to enhancing maritime domain awareness. While many in-person defense exchanges have either been postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, Brunei remains committed to our defense partnership as witnessed by its recent purchase of U.S.-origin defense equipment and its continued participation in our bilateral maritime exercises. We have a shared interest in maintaining peace and stability, unimpeded lawful commerce, and respect for international law, including freedoms of navigation and overflight and other lawful activities in the South China Sea. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to strengthen our partnership in these areas with the Bruneian Government and work with Brunei to uphold the rules-based international order that has underpinned the region's security and prosperity.

We have also fostered a positive economic relationship with Brunei and enjoy a robust trade in goods such as aircraft, machinery, technology, iron, and steel, among others. U.S. goods and services trade with Brunei totaled an estimated \$262 million in 2020. We frequently work with Brunei and other regional economies to lower barriers to trade and investment across the Indo-Pacific region, leveling the playing field for U.S. companies and supporting job growth at home. If confirmed, I hope to further expand our bilateral trade relationship and advance an economic agenda that promotes shared prosperity, leverages economic potential, and builds inclusive and resilient economies—especially as the entire region works toward pandemic recovery.

If there is one thing the past year and a half has taught us, it is the true value of personal relationships. Our cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties with Brunei are critically important to advancing both mutual understanding between our nations and our bilateral relationship. In a country with limited exposure to the United States, engaging the next generation of Bruneian leaders and changemakers is vital. Prior to the pandemic, approximately 50 Bruneians participated annually in U.S. Embassy-sponsored exchange programs, including the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the Fulbright Program and other professional and academic exchanges. The U.S. Embassy in Brunei also maintains a robust network of more than 300 alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs and regularly works with Bruneian civil society to collaborate on addressing issues of mutual concern, such as empowering women, promoting entrepreneurship, and protecting the environment, among other issues. If confirmed, I intend to leverage these exchange programs and other initiatives to broaden our people-to-people ties in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much, Ms. McClelland.
Mr. Young?

STATEMENT OF DAVID JOHN YOUNG 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 REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

Mr. YOUNG. Chairman Schatz, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear

before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi.

I appreciate the confidence the President and my colleagues at the Department of State have shown in me through this nomination, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress and staff to advance U.S. interests in Malawi.

As I appear before you today, I wish to acknowledge the steadfast support I have received throughout my career from my wonderful life partner, my wife, Diane Weisz Young; and our children, Paul and Sarah; as well as my brothers, Keith and Terry; and in-laws Howard, Ann, and Gregg Weisz. The inspiration and love I have received from my family have inspired my public service across 32 years working for the Department of State.

The United States has a wide range of overlapping interests in Malawi, from strengthening democracy and promoting respect for human rights to support for market economics and inclusive growth, from investments in health and education to support for the country's peacekeeping efforts across the African continent. Our assistance programs mirror these interests, and our governance programming bolsters the country's democracy and helps our Malawian partners promote respect for human rights, combat corruption, and promote better performance by government agencies. Our bilateral trade and investment engagements hold promise to help lift Malawians out of poverty and to help American companies interested in investment.

Malawi today stands at a high point in its international profile and regional leadership. Its independent judiciary overturned the flawed 2019 presidential election, and the victory of President Lazarus Chakwera in 2020 marked only the second election re-run on the continent and the first to unseat an incumbent. The peaceful transition of power that followed was a testament to Malawians' commitment to democratic ideals.

A primary responsibility of any Ambassador is the protection of American citizens and American interests. In Malawi, that now includes joining the global fight to combat the spread of COVID-19. And for decades, we have supported Malawi's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. In so doing, we have saved millions of lives, and we have become the partner of choice for health programming. I was pleased to see the recent arrival in Lilongwe of more than 300,000 U.S.-provided Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Malawi's heavy dependence on agriculture offers opportunities for U.S. Government and private sector engagement. American expertise can invest and advance efforts towards crop diversification, generate greater revenue, and fight poverty through improved yields.

Having worked on African issues for the past decade, and with more than 5 years' service in Southern Africa, I am also cognizant of the worker exploitation occurring in this sector. If confirmed, I will work with Malawian, American, and international partners to combat human trafficking and other human rights violations.

The United States has enjoyed decades of close collaboration with the Malawian military, and their defense force's apolitical posture following last year's—the 2019 election had a huge impact on the

transition to democracy. Malawian soldiers contribute to peacekeeping operations in some of the world's most dangerous places, and if confirmed, I hope to find new ways for Malawi to further enshrine itself as a net exporter of security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I would be honored to answer any questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Young follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID J. YOUNG

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. I appreciate the confidence the President and my colleagues at the Department of State have shown in me through this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other members of Congress and staff to advance U.S. interests in Malawi.

As I appear before you today, I wish to acknowledge the steadfast support I have received throughout my career from my wonderful life partner, my wife Diane Weisz Young, and our children Paul and Sarah, as well as my brothers Keith and Terry, and in-laws Howard, Ann, and Gregg Weisz. The inspiration and love I have received from my family have inspired my public service across 32 years working for the Department of State.

The United States has a wide range of overlapping interests in Malawi—from strengthening democracy and promoting respect for human rights to support for market economics and inclusive growth, from investments in health and education to support for the country's peacekeeping efforts across the African continent. Our assistance programs mirror these interests. Our governance programming bolsters the country's democracy and helps our Malawian partners promote respect for human rights, combat corruption, and promote better performance by government agencies. Our bilateral trade and investment engagements hold promise to help lift Malawians out of poverty and to help American companies interested in investment. The U.S. encourages Malawi to move along a sustainable development trajectory that curves toward expanding trade as a means to increase prosperity. Our investments in Malawi's human capital help to build a healthy, educated, and self-reliant population.

Malawi today stands at a high point in its international profile and regional leadership. Its independent judiciary overturned the flawed 2019 presidential election, and the victory of President Lazarus Chakwera in 2020 marked only the second election re-run on the continent and the first to unseat an incumbent. The peaceful transition of power that followed was a testament to Malawians' commitment to democratic ideals. President Chakwera assumed leadership of the 16-member Southern African Development Community in August and in this role is helping contribute to pro-market, good governance reforms in Malawi and across the region. If confirmed, I will work to expand our partnership with President Chakwera's Government to advance these mutual interests.

The primary responsibility of any ambassador is the protection of American citizens and American interests. In Malawi, that now includes joining the global fight to contain the spread of COVID-19. For decades we have supported Malawi's efforts to combat HIV/AIDs. In doing so we have saved millions of lives, and we have become the partner of choice for health programming. I was pleased to see the recent arrival in Lilongwe of more than 300,000 U.S.-provided Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine doses. If confirmed, I will serve as a faithful steward of these investments to ensure and expand the impact of our citizens' unmatched generosity.

Malawi's heavy dependence on agriculture offers opportunities for U.S. Government and private sector engagement. American expertise can advance efforts towards crop diversification, generate greater revenue, and fight poverty through improved yields. Having worked on African issues for the past decade, and with more than five years' service in southern Africa, I am also cognizant of the worker exploitation occurring in the sector. Malawi must do more to combat human trafficking, including protecting vulnerable workers and prosecuting those responsible for forced labor. If confirmed, I will work with Malawian, American, and international partners to support these efforts.

The United States has enjoyed decades of close collaboration with the Malawian military. The Malawian Defense Force's apolitical posture following the annulment of the 2019 elections and the subsequent transfer of power speaks to the strength

of its independence and its unshakeable commitment to democracy. Malawian soldiers contribute to peacekeeping operations in some of the world's most dangerous places. Like others, I mourn the death of a Malawian peacekeeper killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May this year. If confirmed, I hope to find new ways for Malawi to further enshrine itself as a net exporter of security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be honored to respond to any questions.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Young.
Ms. Pierangelo?

STATEMENT OF CLAIRE A. PIERANGELO OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NONMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNION OF THE COMOROS

Ms. PIERANGELO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee as Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and to the Union of the Comoros.

Please let me thank my family and my friends who have supported me throughout my career. My parents, the late Dr. Anthony and Mrs. Rose Cobino Pierangelo. My beloved sons, Luca and Nicholas, who have been my intrepid travel companions and my most avid supporters. And my brothers and their families and my friends, who have always made sure that we had a welcoming home to come home to.

Mr. Chairman, I have served across four continents. I have led teams working on economic reform, public health crises, violent extremism, radicalism, terrorism, and the challenges posed by the lack of democratic institutions and the rule of law. As a San Diego native, I was an avid student of the challenges of wildlife conservation through the work of the San Diego Zoo Global Wildlife Alliance, and I have carried that passion with me throughout my career.

If confirmed to be concurrently Ambassador to Madagascar and Ambassador to the Union of the Comoros, I will safeguard U.S. interests, and I will strengthen our relationship with the peoples and governments in these nations. We enjoy positive relationships with Madagascar and Comoros as we partner with them to address their many domestic, regional, and global challenges.

We have an opportunity in the next few years to support the Malagasy and Comorian people in their upcoming presidential elections in order to reinforce democratic principles, to advocate for full and open political participation, and to press for the protection of human rights. Strong democratic institutions and stability are the precursors to resilient and sustainable development.

If confirmed, my team and I would support the independent democratic aspirations in Madagascar and Comoros and would seek to counter malign influences and disinformation.

These two nations sit at the maritime crossroads between the Indian Ocean, Africa, and the Atlantic, and they deserve our in-

creased strategic attention. The sea lanes linking these regions are an important geostrategic maritime transit route. The region's largest deep-water port is situated at the northern tip of Madagascar. Oil and gas reserves in the area, including potential large reserves off of the coast of Madagascar, have attracted interest and investment from countries who do not always prioritize these nations' long-term security interests.

Stability in the region is also threatened by climate change, creating serious humanitarian, economic, and environmental crises. An extended drought in Southern Madagascar has thrown 1.4 million people into food insecurity and has caused internal migration that threatens unique ecosystems. COVID-19 has brought significant health and economic challenges, and there is an urgent need for additional vaccine doses.

Of course, if confirmed, encouraging U.S. trade, protecting U.S. investment, and promoting greater economic self-sufficiency would be top priorities. We have robust development assistance programs and collaborate closely with other international partners.

If confirmed, I can commit to advancing these efforts, as well as combatting threats to Madagascar's biodiversity. I would look forward to working with the Peace Corps to resume its historically vibrant programs in Madagascar and in Comoros.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today. If confirmed, I would serve proudly as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and to the Union of the Comoros. I welcome advice from you and your staff on United States' interests in this region.

And one of the highlights of my Foreign Service career has always been facilitating the visits of Members of Congress in the countries where I served, and I would hope to host you and/or your staff in the future.

And I welcome any questions. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Pierangelo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CLAIRE PIERANGELO

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee as Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and to the Union of the Comoros.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me throughout my career: My parents, the late Dr. Anthony and Mrs. Rose Pierangelo, who lived their lives helping others and who would have been thrilled to be here today. My beloved sons Luca and Nicholas Pierangelo, who have been my intrepid travel companions and my most avid supporters. My brothers and their families and my friends who always made sure we had a welcoming home upon our return.

Mr. Chairman, I have served across four continents, from Cold War Europe to a newly independent Haiti to a Southeast Asia in transition and now in a challenged West Africa. These were often tough, sometimes dangerous environments. I have led teams working on economic reform, public health crises, violent extremism and terrorism, and the challenges posed by lack of democratic institutions and rule of law. I have worked closely with our Department of Defense colleagues on disaster management, maritime security and as an assistant professor at the National War College. As a San Diego native, I was an avid student of the challenges of wildlife conservation through the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and I have carried that passion throughout my career.

If confirmed to be concurrently Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and Ambassador to the Union of the Comoros, I will safeguard U.S. interests and

strengthen our relationships with the peoples and governments in these nations. We enjoy positive relationships with Madagascar and Comoros as we partner with them to address their many domestic, regional and global challenges.

With the upcoming presidential elections in Madagascar in 2023, and in Comoros in 2024, we have an opportunity to partner with the Malagasy and Comorian people to reinforce democratic principles, to advocate for full and open political participation, and to press for the protection of human rights. Fair and transparent electoral processes would strengthen democracy and support stability, a precursor to fostering resilient and sustainable development. If confirmed, my team would support the independent democratic aspirations in Madagascar and Comoros and would seek to counter malign influence and disinformation.

These two nations sit at the maritime crossroads of the Indian Ocean, Africa and the Atlantic and deserve our increased strategic attention. The sea lanes linking Madagascar, Comoros and East Africa are an important geostrategic transit route for tankers and other maritime traffic. The region's largest deep-water port is situated at the northern tip of Madagascar. Oil and gas reserves in the area, including potential large reserves off western Madagascar itself, are attracting interest and investment from countries who do not always prioritize these nations' long-term security.

Stability in the region is also threatened by climate change, creating serious humanitarian, economic, and environmental crises. Southern Madagascar has suffered an extended drought, throwing more than 1.4 million people into food insecurity and causing internal migration that threatens unique ecosystems. COVID-19 has brought significant health and economic challenges to Madagascar and Comoros and there is an urgent need for additional vaccine doses to protect their populations and combat this threat to the global community.

If confirmed, encouraging U.S. trade, protecting U.S. investment, and promoting greater economic self-sufficiency would be top priorities. The U.S. Mission to Madagascar, largely through USAID, has robust development assistance programs, and collaborates closely with other international partners. Our efforts are focused on providing basic healthcare, primary education, and emergency food aid in the south; combatting wildlife trafficking and corruption; and promoting good governance, and economic development. If confirmed, I commit to advancing these efforts, as well as combatting threats to Madagascar's biodiversity, including illegal fishing, deforestation, and unsustainable harvesting of its unique flora and fauna. I would look forward to working with the Peace Corps to resume its historically vibrant programs in Madagascar and Comoros.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. If confirmed, I would serve proudly as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and the Union of the Comoros. I welcome advice from you and your staff on the United States' interests in Madagascar and Comoros. One of the highlights of my Foreign Service Career has been facilitating the visits of members of Congress to the countries where I served and I hope to host you or your staff in the future. I welcome any questions.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you to all of our testifiers.

Before I start my own questions, I have some general questions that speak to the importance that this committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch. 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?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Yes.

Ms. MCCLELLAND. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. Yes.

Ms. PIERANGELO. Yes.

Senator SCHATZ. Do you commit to keeping the committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Yes.

Ms. MCCLELLAND. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. Yes.

Ms. PIERANGELO. Yes.

Senator SCHATZ. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation when policies are being developed, and not just providing notification after the fact?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Yes.

Ms. MCCLELLAND. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. Yes.

Ms. PIERANGELO. Yes.

Senator SCHATZ. Finally, do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Yes.

Ms. MCCLELLAND. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. Yes.

Ms. PIERANGELO. Yes.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

My first question is for Ambassador Holgate. Ambassador, one of the most difficult issues that the IAEA has to manage is verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear program. The Director General of the IAEA said in a recent report that Iran is stonewalling its investigation into past activities and jeopardizing important monitoring work. Can you talk about how the United States can best support the IAEA's effort to monitor Iran?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I agree that this is a critical requirement and important mission of the U.S. team, both here in Washington and in Vienna. And I know that the team has been working very closely with Director General Grossi to be sure he has everything he needs to do that in the way of political as well as financial and technical support.

I think it is critical, too, for—if I were to be confirmed, for the U.S. Ambassador in Vienna to lead coordination with the other diplomatic community there in Vienna and to provide support and information as requested by the agency to help them do their work. This is obviously a whole-of-government effort that is led here in Washington. I have not been fully briefed on the details of the U.S. policies and decision-making there, but I know what it is like to be the Vienna face of those policies, and if confirmed, I am fully ready to play that role.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

The IAEA's Peaceful Uses Initiative has helped more than 150 countries harness nuclear science to address real world challenges. We have seen radiotracers help track marine plastics, radiolabeled molecules help to improve vaccines against infectious diseases, and climate is another area where there is a lot of potential not just in terms of nuclear energy. Can you talk about how the IAEA can help countries to use nuclear science and technology to combat the climate crisis?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Mr. Chairman, I think that is a really important and fascinating topic. When I was in Vienna before, that was my very first visit offsite was to the U.N.'s—the IAEA laboratory in Seibersdorf outside Vienna, where they are undertaking this research, and the U.S. has been at the forefront of raising funds to update that laboratory. The new so-called renewals lab is now operating and has significantly increased its capability to train member states' representatives in some of the technologies that you

have described, whether sterile insect technique or isotopic tracing or the full range of application of nuclear science.

I am proud that the U.S. Government has been supportive of this effort through the Peaceful Uses Initiative and through its voluntary contributions to the technical cooperation budget. And if confirmed, I would continue to advocate for such contributions and to make sure that those who receive the contributions understand that they come from the United States and that they represent support by the United States of their development ambition.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Chairman Schatz.

And I would like to come back to the first question that you brought up with Ms. Holgate pertaining to Iran and their malign behavior. The Biden administration is seeking to rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. It is an agreement that did not receive the advice and consent of the United States Senate. It is an agreement that I feel is deeply flawed.

Since 2018, the IAEA, which is the world's nuclear watchdog, has continued to investigate new evidence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities in Iran. In 2019 and in 2020, the IAEA found evidence of undeclared uranium particles in three sites in Iran, which could indicate potential covert Iranian nuclear activities.

So far, Iran has stalled the IAEA's investigation, including their access to nuclear science. Iran has removed and covered up evidence, and Iran has provided so-called explanations that the nuclear watchdog deems not technically credible.

Under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Iran is required to declare to IAEA inspectors its use of nuclear material, its sites where it uses such material, and sites where it carries out sensitive nuclear activities. And I want to be clear here, Iran's obligations to the IAEA are completely separate from the nuclear deal, and they endure regardless of what happens with the Iran nuclear deal status.

So, Ambassador Holgate, I would like to come back and just be clear. Do you agree that Iran is actively frustrating, even stonewalling, the IAEA's ongoing investigation of undeclared Iranian nuclear activities?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Ranking Member Hagerty, I do understand that that is the case.

Senator HAGERTY. I am glad you agree. Do you believe that Iran is in compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?

Ambassador HOLGATE. I think the issues that are going on with both current and historical activities create grave concerns about Iran's commitment to safeguards and to peaceful uses, and that is why the United States has been supporting Director General Grossi's efforts to return Iran to a compliance state with its safeguards requirements.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, I certainly think what you are saying is that they are not in compliance. They certainly cannot be in compliance if they are not willing to answer IAEA questions on undeclared nuclear activities. Would you agree with that?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Sir, I have not been briefed on the intelligence details of the current concerns about Iran. So I would hesitate to draw a strong conclusion on that.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, let us move on. The IAEA's Director General has issued several reports on Iran that make it clear that that IAEA has serious outstanding concerns regarding possible undeclared nuclear material and the activities that are taking place in Iran today. Due to Iran's lack of cooperation, the fact that Iran is limiting verification and access by international nuclear inspectors, the IAEA's Director General has reported that the agency is having a difficult time ensuring that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful.

And in a recent development, the IAEA said last Sunday that Iran has failed to honor the terms of a deal struck 2 weeks ago to let international nuclear inspectors into Iran to access and repair equipment for monitoring nuclear materials and activities. Again, activities that likely are being diverted to military purposes.

Iran and the IAEA have made this recent deal as Iran faced the prospect of a formal censure by the IAEA Board of Governors for its obstructionism. So, Ambassador Holgate, if you are confirmed, do you commit to advocating for the United States to use its voice and vote on the 35-nation IAEA Board of Governors in order to hold Iran accountable for its ongoing noncompliance with its nuclear obligations and to censure Iran for repeatedly frustrating the international watchdog's ongoing investigation of Iran's undeclared nuclear activities?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Senator Hagerty, I can certainly say that, if confirmed, I will use the U.S. voice and vote in the Board of Governors to promote a full return of Iran to IAEA safeguards compliance and to make sure the Director General has the tools he needs to do that.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, I appreciate that. I think it is incumbent upon the United States to hold egregious proliferators like Iran accountable. The position that you will be going into will provide that opportunity, and I certainly hope and expect that you will use every bit of United States influence to make certain that we hold actors like Iran and their malign behavior to full account.

Thank you, and I yield my time back, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And to all four of our nominees, thank you for your careers of public service. We very much appreciate your willingness to continue to serve our country. You all are certainly very well experienced and qualified for the positions that you have been nominated to.

Ms. Holgate, I am going to continue with the IAEA for one moment, if I might? In July, I did have an opportunity to be in Vienna, and I did meet with the Director General Grossi. And I must tell you, I am impressed by his leadership at the IAEA. But I want to come at this from a little bit different position.

He made an interesting observation, and I want to get your view on this. That the IAEA itself, you talk about having the capacity to deal with, for example, the JCPOA, and he pointed out that the

IAEA was constructed based upon member countries being friendly or cooperative to how the IAEA would operate, that they would be willing partners.

Well, obviously, Iran is not a willing partner. So my question to you, and this follows up a little bit on Senator Hagerty's point. Do we need to look at some changes at the IAEA, recognizing that Iran is not an honest broker here, that they will never be an honest broker, and that we need to have the authorities within IAEA that would not necessarily be needed in a country that is more cooperative?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Thank you, Senator Cardin. That is a very interesting question and one that I have not yet discussed with the State Department colleagues that I would be working with, if confirmed.

The IAEA is nested within the broader U.N. system, and the responsibilities for actions, mandatory actions are sited with the U.N. Security Council. The IAEA Board of Governors has the opportunity to refer issues to the Security Council when they are not available to be addressed within the mandate of the agency.

I think there are interesting opportunities with the upcoming Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty review conference to consider whether the underlying treaty that governs these issues can be strengthened and accountability tools can be added or improved. And I would look forward to participating in any conversations around those topics, if I am confirmed in this role.

Senator CARDIN. Would you commit to this committee that when you are confirmed, that you will come back to us with your evaluation as to the capacity of the IAEA to be able to enforce agreements in regards to Iran so that we have an honest—it can be done in an open or closed session, but that you would share with us your belief as to how effective the IAEA can be under its arrangement under United Nations in monitoring the activities of Iran?

Ambassador HOLGATE. Senator, if I am confirmed, I would be happy to make that commitment to you and the committee.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Ms. Pierangelo, I want to talk a little bit about Madagascar and also Comoros. Both countries have significant corruption problems. President Biden has indicated that corruption is a core national concern of the United States, a national security interest concern of the United States.

We are asking those missions that are in countries that have significant challenges on corruption to build up their internal capacity within the mission to deal with corruption. So do we have your commitment that this will be a high priority, if you are confirmed, to be able to have the capacity within your mission to understand the challenges in the countries and to be able to provide technical help and assistance for anti-corruption measures?

Ms. PIERANGELO. Senator Cardin, I would look forward to that, if confirmed. You know, fundamentally accountable institutions sustained by a commitment to the rule of law, transparency are essential to creating a climate whether you are talking about political stability or economic stability. We need to have that as a precursor.

So our mission I know is working very diligently on this issues, and sir, we would welcome any additional resources. And I cer-

tainly would commit that once I am on the ground, if confirmed, I will do my own personal assessment with my team to assess what we need and how we would deploy it.

So, thank you, sir. That would be very welcome.

Senator CARDIN. And I will just end on this. There is legislation that our committee has already acted on that would require our missions to rate how well countries are doing in regards to fighting corruption based upon a tier rating system similar to what we use in trafficking in humans. I would ask that you help us and support us in getting that type of legislation to the finish line.

I recognize you will not have a direct role to play in this. Believe me, I understand that. But if we had that in place, then it makes it easier in your bilateral relationship to point out that this is a policy requirement that requires attention in every country that the United States have missions.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back my time.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Senator Cardin. Do we have Senator Van Hollen online?

[No response.]

Senator SCHATZ. Senator Booker?

[No response.]

Senator SCHATZ. Any other members of the Foreign Relations Committee wishing to ask the nominees any questions?

[No response.]

Senator SCHATZ. Ranking Member Hagerty, anything else?

Senator HAGERTY. I would just applaud your chairmanship today, Senator Schatz. I appreciate all the candidates being with us.

I am going to submit a number of additional questions through the QFR process, and I want to congratulate you on a very well-conducted hearing.

Thank you.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much. Pleasure to work with you, and thanks to the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as well as my staff and everybody for being willing to serve, and especially their families.

If there are no more questions for our witnesses, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, October 1 for questions. I would urge the nominees, if you get questions for the record, to answer them fully and expeditiously so that we can consider your nominations at a business meeting and get you marked up and get you confirmed as quickly as possible.

With the thanks of the committee for your willingness to serve, this hearing is adjourned.

Ambassador HOLGATE. Thank you very much.

Ms. PIERANGELO. Thank you, sir, and to all the members of the committee, thank you for your time.

[Whereupon, at 10:46 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Serious concerns have been raised about the ability of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify and monitor Iran's comprehensive safeguard agreement. Iran continues to stonewall the IAEA's investigation into undeclared nuclear materials and activities that were uncovered in 2018 and is refusing to allow the IAEA to access critical monitoring equipment. The Joint Statement between Iran and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi issued on September 12th, 2021 was wholly inadequate in addressing these issues.

- How is Iran's stonewalling of the IAEA, which it has suffered no penalty for, impacting the credibility of the agency?

Answer. I believe the IAEA is highly credible in the implementation of its verification "watchdog" mission and it is in the U.S. interest that it remain so. For that reason, 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.

Question. What impact is Iran's refusal to cooperate with the IAEA having on the global non-proliferation regime?

Answer. IAEA safeguards are implemented for the purpose of providing assurances regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy and are an essential element of maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the global nonproliferation regime. 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 because of both what it suggests for Iran's intentions and its implications for the global non-proliferation regime. Thus, it is vital that Iran provide such responses to the IAEA, and if confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA's ongoing investigation and, along with the rest of the international community, expect full Iranian cooperation with inspectors without delay.

Question. Iran is currently denying IAEA requests for access to nuclear sites and is resisting providing the IAEA with a complete nuclear declaration. Do you think other states will follow Iran's example?

Answer. Article III of the Non-Proliferation Treaty requires all non-nuclear weapons states to accept IAEA safeguards in order to ensure that nuclear material is not diverted for non-peaceful uses. If confirmed, I will continue the United States' long-standing support for the IAEA and its mandate to ensure that all countries, including Iran, adhere to their safeguards obligations.

Question. Why was a resolution criticizing Iran's unwillingness to cooperate with the IAEA withdrawn before the last IAEA Board of Governors meeting?

Answer. As I was outside of government at the time of the last IAEA Board of Governors meeting, I am not in a position to comment on any internal deliberations among Board members regarding potential actions related to the IAEA's ongoing attempts to engage Iran on unresolved questions related to its safeguards agreement. 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.

Question. In your opinion what impact are Iran's limitations on the IAEA having on the agency's ability to monitor and verify Iran's nuclear program?

Answer. I share the concerns reported by IAEA Director General in September that Iran's decision to stop implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, including the Additional Protocol, is seriously undermining the IAEA's verification and monitoring activities. If confirmed, I will work to press Iran to provide the IAEA with full and immediate cooperation as it seeks to both monitor and verify Iran's JCPOA nuclear commitments as well as resolve ongoing questions related to Iran's safeguards agreement.

Question. The IAEA monitors Iranian compliance with the July 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) provisions. Some the provisions of the nuclear

agreement require addition IAEA access beyond those of Iran's comprehensive safeguards agreement. Tehran has stopped complying with many of these provisions while at the same time vastly expanding its nuclear program.

- Do you believe the United States should rejoin the JCPOA if Iran refuses to allow a full IAEA investigation into the undeclared nuclear materials and activities it uncovered in 2018?

Answer. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon, and that the JCPOA is still the best diplomatic option for addressing the threats posed by Iran's nuclear activities. 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.

Question. Is the current gap in IAEA monitoring of Iranian centrifuge activities increasingly the level of uncertainty around how many and what types of centrifuges Iran has produced and assembled this year?

Answer. The IAEA Director General reported in September that lack of access to the IAEA's monitoring equipment is seriously compromising the IAEA's ability to maintain continuity of knowledge over Iran's nuclear-related activities. If confirmed, I will work to press Iran to provide the IAEA with full and immediate cooperation as it seeks to both monitor and verify Iran's JCPOA nuclear commitments as well as resolve ongoing questions related to Iran's safeguards agreement.

Question. Do you agree that Iran over the last 12 months has made significant technical progress in key nuclear areas? If so will this progress require alterations to the JCPOA in order to sustain the original objective of a 12 month breakout time?

Answer. Iran's continued efforts to advance its nuclear program, and in particular its uranium enrichment capabilities, are a cause for serious concern. Although I defer to the intelligence community on questions related to the impact of Iran's nuclear advances on its fissile material breakout timeline, the Biden administration has been clear that such advances make it more difficult to restore the nonproliferation benefits originally achieved by the JCPOA. If confirmed, I will work with Special Envoy Malley and his team to ensure the strongest possible IAEA verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear program.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Iranian officials have recently sexually harassed and intimidated female IAEA inspectors. What should we do if this behavior continues?

Answer. I am very concerned about reports that IAEA inspectors are experiencing inappropriate treatment at the hands of Iranian security personnel. Such behavior and any attempt to intimidate IAEA inspectors is unacceptable and, if confirmed, I will work in close coordination with other members of the IAEA Board of Governors to ensure that the Board takes appropriate action in the event that the Director General reports additional incidents. The IAEA Director General and the Secretariat will have the United States' full support on these matters.

Question. On 9/26/2021, the IAEA said Iran had failed to honor the terms of a deal struck two weeks ago letting IAEA inspectors in to service monitoring equipment in the country. Iran and the IAEA had made this recent deal as Iran faced the prospect of a formal censure by the IAEA Board of Governors.

- Given Iran's failure to abide by this agreement, should the U.S. use its voice and vote to pursue a formal censure by the Board of Governors?
- Why or why not?

Answer. The Biden administration has been clear that Iran must follow through on the commitments it made in the September 12 Joint Statement with the IAEA, including by providing the IAEA with needed access to service its monitoring equipment and inviting the Director General to Tehran for discussions related to unresolved safeguards issues. If confirmed, I will work in close coordination with Special Envoy Malley as well as the IAEA Board of Governors to insist that Iran provides full and immediate cooperation with the IAEA as it seeks to verify both Iran's safeguards agreement as well as its JCPOA nuclear-related activities.

Question. The IAEA said in a September report, “Since 23 February 2021, the Agency’s verification and monitoring of activities have been seriously undermined as a result of Iran’s decision to stop the implementation of its nuclear related commitments.” Given this statement, how much confidence can we have in present Iranian negotiations and statements?

Answer. I share the concerns reported by IAEA Director General in September that Iran’s decision to stop implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, including the Additional Protocol, is seriously undermining the IAEA’s verification and monitoring activities. If confirmed, I will work to press Iran to provide the IAEA with full and immediate cooperation as it seeks to both monitor and verify Iran’s JCPOA nuclear commitments as well as resolve ongoing questions related to Iran’s safeguards agreement.

Question. Will you commit to supporting a thorough IAEA investigation in Iran to ascertain the nature and status of its nuclear program, including necessary requests for access to military sites, personnel, and documentation, to ensure the end of Tehran’s nuclear weapons program and activities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA’s ongoing investigation in Iran into indications of possible undeclared nuclear material, including all requests for information and access deemed necessary by the Director General and the Secretariat. As the IAEA Board of Governors has made clear, Iran must provide full cooperation with the IAEA without further delay.

Question. What would you do to encourage the IAEA to investigate Iran’s potentially ongoing nuclear weaponization work, which the nuclear archive indicates Tehran hid and dispersed at research institutes, universities, and military sites after 2003?

Answer. Iran is obligated under its NPT-required safeguards agreement to declare to the IAEA nuclear material and nuclear activities in Iran. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA’s verification and monitoring activities in Iran, including the IAEA’s ongoing efforts to investigate questions related to undeclared nuclear materials and activities in Iran.

Question. Considering Iran’s failure to address the IAEA’s questions on undeclared nuclear materials and activities, do you believe Iran is in compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?

Answer. I have serious concerns about Iran’s compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in light of the IAEA’s ongoing safeguards investigations and Iran’s failure to provide the IAEA with the cooperation necessary to resolve them. Iran must engage and cooperate fully with the IAEA in a way that leads to credible, concrete progress and toward resolution of these issues. 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. Do you think the Biden administration should commit to not lifting or waving sanctions on Iran until Iran—among other demands—fully and credibly complies with the IAEA’s requests to resolve the outstanding issues on undeclared nuclear materials and activities?

Answer. I share the views of the Biden administration and the IAEA Board of Governors that Iran must provide full cooperation with the IAEA without further delay. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA’s ongoing investigation in Iran into indications of possible undeclared nuclear material and will work closely with our partners and allies as well as the IAEA to ensure that Iran provides the IAEA with the necessary cooperation.

Question. Is it possible for the IAEA Board of Governors to truly hold Iran accountable, if the Board’s main recourse is snapping back all U.N. sanctions on Iran and ending JCPOA—a deal that the Biden administration has said it hopes to revive?

Answer. The IAEA Board of Governors has the ability to hold Iran accountable to its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA and its NPT-related safeguards obligations, including through authorities it has under the IAEA Statute with respect to safeguards compliance and its actions in support of the JCPOA participants. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the IAEA makes full use of its authorities as it works to monitor Iran’s implementation of its JCPOA nuclear-related commitments and continues its investigation of questions related to undeclared nuclear material in Iran.

Question. Doesn't the desire to revive the JCPOA actually create a dynamic that discourages IAEA Member States from taking Iran's safeguards violations to the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. Iran's legal obligations under its safeguards agreement with the IAEA are separate from its JCPOA nuclear-related commitments. Iran is obligated under its NPT-required safeguards agreement to declare to the IAEA nuclear material and nuclear activities in Iran. 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.

Question. What would you do to end Iran's use of extortion—escalating to take threatening and dangerous actions, then demanding concessions from the U.S. to solve and problem it created?

Answer. Iran's nuclear escalations have implications for both its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA and its legal obligations under its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in Iran so that our response to Iran's actions with respect to its nuclear program is informed by timely and detailed reporting from the IAEA.

Question. What is your position on the use of the snapback mechanism at the U.N.? Does the U.S. have the authority to call for its use?

Answer. The snapback mechanism was designed to provide leverage to help ensure Iran performed its commitments under the JCPOA. The Trump 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 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 and partners. On specific questions related to the legal authority available to the United States in connection with the snapback mechanism under U.N. Security Council resolution 2231, I would defer to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations as well as the Department's Office of the Legal Adviser.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. Iran has made a number of breaches of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) after President Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the agreement in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions. In your view, is a diplomatic resolution or the use of military force the most effective and lasting way to prevent a nuclear armed Iran?

Answer. The administration believes that diplomatic efforts to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA are the best path forward at this time to prevent Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Question. On Sept. 15th, the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia announced AUKUS—a trilateral security agreement that will supply Australia with nuclear propelled submarines. As the U.S. Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), will you encourage Australia to adopt the Additional Protocol to its IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and/or take other steps that require strong nonproliferation standards for other non-nuclear weapon countries who may seek a nuclear propulsion program of their own?

Answer. Australia was the first country to bring into force an Additional Protocol to its IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, doing so in December 1997. As President Biden said in announcing this partnership: "Our governments will now launch an 18-month consultation period to determine every element of this program . . . We'll all undertake this effort in a way that reflects the longstanding leadership in global nonproliferation and rigorous verification standards, in partnership and consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency." As announced, over the 18-month consultation period, the shared objective of maintaining the strength of the non-proliferation regime and Australia's exemplary non-proliferation credentials will be central to the three countries' discussions. If confirmed, I will work to reinforce this effort.

Question. I am concerned about press reports that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is moving quickly to master the early stages of the nuclear fuel cycle with coopera-

tion from China and outside IAEA safeguards. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to encourage Saudi Arabia to rescind its Small Quantities Protocol and adopt the Additional Protocol?

Answer. Saudi Arabia is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a strong security partner of the United States. Under the NPT, it is obligated not to acquire nuclear weapons and to accept IAEA safeguards to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material to weapons purposes. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that Saudi Arabia continues to abide by these important nonproliferation obligations and encourage Saudi Arabia to take further steps, including rescinding its Small Quantities Protocol and bringing into force an Additional Protocol.

Question. Given Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's statement in 2018 that "if Iran developed a nuclear bomb, we will follow suit as soon as possible," what concerns, if any, do you have that a maturing Saudi Arabia nuclear program would remain exclusively peaceful?

Answer. Saudi Arabia is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a strong security partner of the United States. Under the NPT, it is obligated not to acquire nuclear weapons and to accept IAEA safeguards to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material to weapons purposes. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that Saudi Arabia continues to abide by these important nonproliferation obligations and encourage Saudi Arabia to take further steps, including rescinding its Small Quantities Protocol and bringing into force an Additional Protocol.

Question. As the Senior Director on the National Security Council in the Obama administration, you served as the "Sherpa" or organizer for the Nuclear Summit process that saw roughly fifty countries eliminate and secure fissile material from their civilian stocks. Given the difficulty to reach consensus in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cutoff treaty, would you support an ad hoc convening of countries, modeled on the Nuclear Security Summit process, to lead countries to make commitments that secure and reduce highly enriched uranium and plutonium, and perhaps weapons, from their non-civilian stocks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to cooperate with countries aimed at securing and eliminating excess weapon-usable nuclear material, including by encouraging additional subscribers and actions under IAEA Information Circular (INFCIRC) 912 "Joint Statement on Minimizing and Eliminating the Use of Highly Enriched Uranium in Civilian Applications" and related INFCIRCs, such as INFCIRC/908 "Joint Statement on Mitigating Insider Threats" and INFCIRC/909 "Joint Statement on Transport Security of Nuclear Materials," that resulted from the Nuclear Security Summit process. I will also support the IAEA's convening additional International Conferences on Nuclear Security and Review Conferences of the Amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, which create opportunities for countries to make pledges regarding their voluntary application of IAEA nuclear security guidelines to non-civilian nuclear materials. Similarly, national reporting under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 offers a platform for national statements regarding non-civilian nuclear materials. If confirmed, I would encourage states to follow the lead of the United States in reporting on their measures for securing and reducing non-civilian nuclear materials.

Question. If confirmed, in what ways will you work to educate Members of Congress and the American public about the technical advances of the International Monitoring Stations (IMS) and the International Data Centre since the U.S. Senate last considered a resolution of ratification of CTBT in 1999? Based on your experience, what degree of confidence does the United States have that it can detect a low-yield nuclear explosion and how would unlocking the on-site inspection provision of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), through entry into force, assist with verification?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to highlight the significant technological advances in both the U.S. National Technical Means (NTM) as well as the capabilities of the International Monitoring System (IMS) that the CTBT establishes. The IMS is now nearly 90 percent complete, composed of more than 300 facilities, employing four separate technologies, that provide data and analytical products to the CTBT signatory States. While no remote monitoring system has the capability to detect nuclear explosions with extremely low yield, once in force the treaty's on-site inspection capability will allow the deployment of inspectors using a broad array of close-in techniques and equipment to look for evidence of a nuclear explosion.

Question. If North Korea has observed a moratorium on nuclear test explosions since 2017 but it remains one of the eight Annex II countries who have yet to ratify

the CTBT required for the treaty to enter into force. Should North Korea's adoption of the CTBT be priority in future U.S. negotiations with North Korea on its nuclear program, and if not, why not?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration believes that a global, legally binding ban on nuclear explosive testing is in the national security interest of the United States. Entry into force of the CTBT will enhance our efforts to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The administration will take all appropriate opportunities to encourage ratification by the remaining Annex 2 states, including North Korea.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. Since 2007, it has nearly always been the position of the United States that Iran is not a member in good standing within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Even pursuant to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran would not have returned to being a member in good standing until the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reached a "Broader Conclusion" (BC) verifying the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. In April 2019, then-nominee to be Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation Jeffrey L. Eberhardt confirmed in writing to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "given Iran's past noncompliance with both its safeguards agreement and its NPT obligations, its failure to fully address IAEA questions related to past activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device, and the emergence of new questions surrounding Iran's motives for retaining and concealing documents, equipment, and personnel related to its past nuclear weapons program, Iran's standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as 'good.'"

- Do you agree with Mr. Eberhardt's assessment? If not, why not?

Answer. The United States has, including in the 2021 Compliance Report, indicated concern with regard to Iran's compliance with Article III of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Given Iran's past non-compliance with its obligations under the NPT and Iran's NPT-required safeguards agreement and its present failure to fully address the IAEA's current questions related to implementation of that safeguards agreement, Iran's standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as "good."

Question. 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 help implement U.S. policy to support the IAEA's work to monitor and assess Iran's compliance with its NPT-required safeguards agreement. 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 prevent Iran from ever obtaining a nuclear weapon.

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. Iran's long history of denial and concealment regarding its past nuclear weapons program is of serious concern. If confirmed, I will fully support the IAEA as it uses its safeguards authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran. I am committed to preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Question. Do you believe that Iran should be entitled to the use of civilian nuclear technology even if they are not a member in good standing of 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 not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons and its NPT-required safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. If confirmed, I will fully support the IAEA as it uses its safeguards authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran.

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 obligation under Article II of the NPT not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons and its NPT-required safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. If confirmed, I will fully support the IAEA as it uses its safeguards authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran.

Question. Do you consider Iran to be specifically entitled to benefit from nuclear technology pursuant to Article IV the NPT? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

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Question. In 2015, you testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. When asked about the issue of Iran's possible military dimensions, you responded: "the JCPOA is focused on the future rather than the past." In 2017, you wrote, "The unusually intrusive verification measures contained in the JCPOA are a specific response to Iran's decades of deception regarding its nuclear activities,"

- Given we do not have a comprehensive accounting of Iran's PMD program, and taking into consideration Iran's decades of deception to the IAEA on its nuclear program, how is it possible to have an accurate appraisal of Iran's activities as they evolve, when the international community lacks a baseline for verification efforts?

Answer. The IAEA has reported significant concerns regarding potential undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and we have full confidence in the Agency to pursue its critical verification and monitoring responsibilities there. It is essential that Iran fully comply with its legally binding obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA to resolve these important matters without further delay. If confirmed, I will support the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in Iran.

Question. Despite the Board of Governor's December 2015 Final Assessment, which closed the chapter on PMDs in order to move forward with implementation of the JCPOA, the issue of Iran's possible military dimension remains outstanding.

- If confirmed, do you plan to reopen the PMD file? If not, why not?

Answer. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in Iran so that the IAEA can provide the strongest possible assurance that all nuclear materials in Iran remain in peaceful uses, and that Iran is not undertaking any undeclared nuclear activities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. Under the new AUKUS partnership, the United States and United Kingdom will help Australia construct and operate nuclear-propelled submarines. This initiative presents an opportunity to set a strong precedent for establishing a system of IAEA safeguards on naval nuclear reactors under the jurisdiction of non-nuclear weapon states party to the NPT. Such a system should balance the need to protect sensitive military technology and facilities with the need to ensure against the diversion and misuse of nuclear materials used in naval propulsion.

- Would the supply of fabricated naval nuclear fuel by the United States or United Kingdom pose less of a proliferation risk than the development by Australia of indigenous enrichment and fuel fabrication capabilities designed to produce its own naval nuclear fuel?

Answer. As President Biden said in announcing the AUKUS partnership: “Our governments will now launch an 18-month consultation period to determine every element of this program . . . We’ll all undertake this effort in a way that reflects the longstanding leadership in global nonproliferation and rigorous verification standards, in partnership and consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.” As announced, over the 18-month consultation period, the shared objective of maintaining the strength of the non-proliferation regime and Australia’s exemplary non-proliferation credentials will be central to the discussions. If confirmed, I will support the United States’ longstanding policy of seeking to limit the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies around the world because of the proliferation risks those technologies pose.

Question. Would the reapplication of IAEA safeguards on spent fuel once discharged from naval nuclear reactors help address proliferation risks?

Answer. As President Biden said in announcing the AUKUS partnership: “We’ll all undertake this effort in a way that reflects the longstanding leadership in global nonproliferation and rigorous verification standards, in partnership and consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.” As the three partners have committed to engage with the IAEA throughout the coming months, and if confirmed, I will be fully committed to setting a high standard for international verification and implementing all obligations to the IAEA under our respective safeguards agreements.

Question. Do you believe the use of seals and other black-box safeguards equipment and techniques would help the IAEA maintain “continuity of knowledge” over the naval nuclear fuel cycle while protecting classified or sensitive military information and facilities?

Answer. As President Biden said in announcing this partnership: “We’ll all undertake this effort in a way that reflects the longstanding leadership in global nonproliferation and rigorous verification standards, in partnership and consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.” As the three partners have committed to engage with the IAEA throughout the coming months, and if confirmed, I will be fully committed to setting a high standard for international verification and implementing all obligations to the IAEA under our respective safeguards agreements.

Question. A longstanding objective of United States nonproliferation policy has been to make universal the adoption of the Additional Protocol (AP) and to establish it as a condition of international nuclear supply. There has been considerable progress on this front, and currently 137 states and Euratom have in force an AP with the IAEA.

Nevertheless, there remain major holdouts who have evinced little interest in bringing into force an AP with the IAEA. Brazil and Argentina possess significant nuclear infrastructures and enrich uranium indigenously, while Egypt and Saudi Arabia are looking to expand their own nuclear programs. Moreover, Russia and China are engaging in nuclear commerce with countries that do not have APs in force.

- What enticements and sticks can we use to encourage these holdouts to bring into force APs with the IAEA?

Answer. Achieving universal adherence to the Additional Protocol (AP) is a high priority for the United States. Zimbabwe recently brought the number of APs in force to 138. The United States raises this objective at all levels, including the Secretary of State, in diplomatic engagement on nonproliferation. In particular, the United States raises it in bilateral engagement with countries that have not yet

brought an AP into force, including those mentioned here. If confirmed, I will continue to stress that implementation of the AP would build confidence and facilitate cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear technology, and I will support the Department of Energy's active program to help states implement comprehensive safeguards agreements and APs. This assistance helps states that have limited technical capacity and helps dispel concerns and misconceptions about the AP.

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Nevertheless, there remain major holdouts who have evinced little interest in bringing into force an AP with the IAEA. Brazil and Argentina possess significant nuclear infrastructures and enrich uranium indigenously, while Egypt and Saudi Arabia are looking to expand their own nuclear programs. Moreover, Russia and China are engaging in nuclear commerce with countries that do not have APs in force.

- How can we make progress on establishing the Additional Protocol as a condition of international nuclear supply?

Answer. The United States is committed to establishing the Additional Protocol (AP) as a condition of nuclear supply and plays a leading global role in stressing the AP as an instrument that facilitates increased peaceful nuclear cooperation. If confirmed, I will continue to work with nuclear suppliers to highlight the importance of the AP as a condition of nuclear supply both bilaterally and multilaterally, including in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LAURA S.H. HOLGATE BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. In 2015, the Iran nuclear deal artificially closed the IAEA's investigation into the "possible military dimensions" of Iran's nuclear program in 2015. But in 2018, the importance of re-opening this investigation became clear and obvious after Israel's revelation to the world that Iran possessed a massive secret archive on its efforts related to making nuclear weapons. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting an in-depth IAEA investigation in Iran to ascertain the nature and status of its nuclear program, including any necessary requests for access to military sites, to nuclear scientists and other personnel, and to documentation, in order to ensure the end of Iran's nuclear weapons program and Iran's activities related to nuclear weapons capability? Please begin your response with a yes or no.

Answer. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in Iran so that the IAEA can provide the strongest possible assurance that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful uses, and that Iran is not undertaking any undeclared nuclear activities.

Question. Many United Nations agencies that deal with international drug trafficking and other international crimes are headquartered in Vienna, including the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the U.N. Transnational Organized Crime Convention Conference of States Parties, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Illegal narcotics, particularly fentanyl and related substances, are taking a dramatic toll on American youth. Much of this can be attributed to China, including fentanyl precursors and expertise to manufacture these substances. When you previously held this position, how did you leverage these organizations to fight this scourge of fentanyl and related substances, including holding China and other nations accountable for their actions in fueling it? If confirmed, how would you use policy, budget, and personnel decisions by these agencies to address the fentanyl crisis and opioid overdose epidemic? Do you commit, if confirmed, to using every possible measure at these organizations to combat the fentanyl production and smuggling that is affecting every state, and to keeping me and other committee members informed of your efforts?

Answer. The United States supports initiatives implemented by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and its associated bodies that provide member states with guidance, resources, and tools to address the challenge of synthetic drugs and reduce global trafficking in synthetics and precursor chemicals. During my previous

tenure, the United States led a successful global effort to place two of the main precursor chemicals used to produce fentanyl under international control and urge countries to take innovative national action against fentanyl and its precursors. If confirmed, I will further cooperate with the Vienna-based organizations and other member states to enhance member state capacity and collective action to counter the threat these substances pose, as well as engage with Congress to keep them informed.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO CARYN R. MCCELLAND BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. If confirmed, one issue that you will immediately confront is China's inroads into Brunei and China's malign influence throughout Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Brunei sits on the South China Sea, much of which China falsely claims. Although Brunei has not been involved in the frequent incidents that some other South China Sea claimants have, it is an active participant in negotiations between ASEAN and China over these issues and over a possible Code of Conduct for parties in the region, especially as this year's chair of ASEAN. How would you characterize Brunei's approach to the disputes in the South China Sea? If confirmed as Ambassador, would you encourage Brunei to play a more active role in diplomacy in the South China Sea? Do you believe Brunei is willing to play such a role?

Answer. Like other South China Sea littoral states, Brunei's maritime claims overlap with the PRC's expansive and unlawful maritime claims. Both the United States and Brunei have a clear national interest in the peaceful resolution of disputes, unimpeded lawful commerce, and compliance with international law, including freedoms of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea. Brunei has been an active participant in ASEAN activities related to the South China Sea, including the ongoing negotiations of an ASEAN-China Code of Conduct. If confirmed, I will support Brunei's efforts to advocate for its rights and those of other Southeast Asian claimants in the South China Sea.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID JOHN YOUNG BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Corruption continues to be a major challenge for Malawi, with recent administrations facing high-profile corruption scandals and with low-level corruption being a daily reality for regular Malawians. What anti-corruption activities is the United States currently supporting in Malawi? Are they adequate in your view? If confirmed, in what areas will you advocate the U.S. focus its anti-corruption investments?

Answer. U.S. Mission programs, including a recently launched program with the Malawian Police Service, work to combat Malawi's endemic corruption. Training programs through the Public Affairs Section and other offices highlight the corrosive effect of corruption on Malawi's investment climate. USAID provides technical assistance to the Malawian Government, including embedded advisors who work hand in hand to combat corruption and pursue asset recovery. USAID works with local governments to put in place more accountable and transparent use of government resources. If confirmed, I plan to seek further avenues to combat corruption and improve governance at all levels.

Question. Like many countries in Africa, Malawi is facing a massive youth bulge. According to some estimates, more than half the population under the age of 18. Are there adequate educational and employment opportunities for Malawi's youth population? What U.S. assistance programs are focused on addressing any gaps in such opportunities? If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that U.S. assistance programs adequately address the potential destabilizing economic and political impacts the youth bulge can have in the face of inadequate economic opportunities?

Answer. Malawi faces major challenges in educating its youth, and illiteracy is widespread. USAID funds a wide variety of education programs benefitting students at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. USAID has helped every primary schoolchild in Malawi have access to a schoolbook for the first time in the country's history. We partner with U.S. universities to expand digital online learning for all Malawi's public universities, particularly focusing on women students and those from marginalized communities. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that U.S. assist-

ance programs address the challenges of the youth bulge, so that young people have path to improved educational and employment opportunities.

Question. What areas of U.S. assistance have been particularly impactful in Malawi with regards to economic diversification and growth? If confirmed, what areas will you recommend for increased U.S. investment?

Answer. Malawi completed a \$350 million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact in 2018 that improved the enabling environment for economic growth through increased capacity to build, operate, and regulate the power sector. USAID is working through a variety of programs to diversify the economy away from subsistence agriculture to more valuable cash crops. USAID works to aggressively engage and strengthen the private sector to create greater economic opportunities, including in aquaculture, fisheries and ecotourism. If confirmed, I will advocate strongly for the introduction and expansion of projects like these that seek to diversify and grow Malawi's economy and raise Malawians out of poverty.

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. While in Zambia as Chargé d'Affaires, I led our Mission's efforts to support a free and fair election in August 2021. This involved major coordination across 20 months, and we played important roles behind the scenes to push back against ruling party harassment, press for a result that reflects the will of the people, and help independent media stay in business. I have played roles in helping obtain prisoner releases of LGBTQI+ individuals in Zambia on two occasions, and while in Hanoi, I helped secure the release of two dozen Vietnamese prisoners who had been detained on political and religious grounds. During my tenure in Abuja, I helped intervene to prevent the arrest of the speaker of the national assembly in Nigeria.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Malawi? 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. Over the past year, the Chakwera administration has made significant gains restoring Malawi's democratic trajectory and implementing good governance reforms. However, endemic corruption, lack of local capacity, and insufficient funds impede the implementation of President Chakwera's anti-corruption agenda. Pre-existing patronage networks now seek to stall ongoing reform efforts, and declining development assistance from the United Kingdom and likeminded missions has imperiled the efforts of independent accountability institutions. Fortunately, the United States remains Malawi's partner of choice on these issues, and if confirmed, I will advocate strongly for further efforts towards democratic reforms and institutionalization.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Malawi? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I hope to press the ruling government to appoint and confirm heads of watchdog agencies including the Financial Intelligence Agency and the Office of the Auditor General. I also hope to expand our efforts to professionalize the institutions that uphold Malawi's democracy, including the Electoral Commission, media outlets, and democracy activists. I have seen firsthand the significant impact of trainings from U.S.-based institutions like the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Solidarity Center, and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and if confirmed I plan to advocate for these organizations' continued engagement in Malawi.

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. If confirmed, I will work to identify and support reputable Malawian and international partners who share our commitment to helping Malawi build an inclusive, responsive, and resilient democracy. As I have done in my other leadership roles, I plan to ensure our Mission has strict accountability measures in place for the disbursement, monitoring, and evaluation of bilateral assistance. I will seek to ensure that all staff are held to the highest possible standards and equipped with the most up to date training and tools. I will also prioritize assistance that bolsters

Malawi's ability to push back against the corrosive forces of corruption and the malign influence of strategic competitors, including the People's Republic of China.

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 Malawi? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes. Nongovernmental and civil society organizations play a critical role in upholding democracy, especially in developing countries. During my decade of work on African issues I have worked closely with NGO counterparts to solicit information, raise awareness, and advance U.S. objectives. We do our best work when we hear from all actors on the ground, so I plan to maintain my open-door policy for Malawian activists and encourage my colleagues at Embassy Lilongwe to do the same. If confirmed, I also hope to find ways to use the wealth of American and international expertise to build capacity for heroes of democracy in Malawi.

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. Inclusivity—both for frequently marginalized groups and opposition parties—is a cornerstone of my personal leadership style and Department policy more broadly. The United States has a vested interest in the promotion of inclusive, resilient democracy in Malawi and across the continent. If confirmed, I will work closely with our State Department, interagency, international, and Malawian partners to advance these efforts. In Malawi, this will mean further U.S. support to key institutions like the Electoral Commission and Malawi's historically independent judiciary. It will also mean advocating for American and international support for the civil society groups and watchdog institutions that uphold government accountability.

Question. Will you and your Embassy team actively engage with Malawi 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 Malawi?

Answer. Yes.

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. Yes.

Question. Will you and your Embassy teams actively engage with Malawi on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Malawi, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Malawi?

Answer. Members of the LGBTQI+ community in Malawi face many of the same pressures felt by their counterparts throughout southern Africa. Societal pressure, stigma, and discrimination create a climate of fear for many members of these communities, and many LGBTQI+ individuals justifiably believe that they cannot freely express their sexual preferences, gender identity, or true selves. There continue to be laws that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity as “unnatural offenses,” even though they are not actively enforced. An ongoing lack of access to justice means that members of this community are unable to adequately seek justice when they become victims of discrimination or persecution.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Malawi?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to meet regularly with members of the LGBTQI+ community in Malawi and learn from them how the U.S. Mission can best be helpful in the local context they face. As I have learned from my work in Zambia and Nigeria, it is critically important to be in touch with LGBTQI+ leaders in a

country to know how to be helpful and not to do harm. If confirmed, I will make inclusive programming a core tenet of the Mission's internal and external ethos, and I will work with interagency, international, and Malawian partners to support LGBTQI+ champions and expand U.S. funded programming that supports members of the community.

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 Malawi?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID JOHN YOUNG BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In November 2020, I published Senate Foreign Relations Committee Majority Report entitled "The United States and Europe: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China." The report gave several recommendations on increased transatlantic cooperation, including in Africa, to counter Chinese malign influence more effectively. In what ways should the United States partner with European countries to build on likeminded interests in Malawi and counter the malign influence of China?

Answer. The U.S. Mission in Lilongwe works closely with likeminded European partners, to support Malawi's democracy through investments in the electoral commission, judiciary, civil society, and accountability institutions. If confirmed, I will work with likeminded partners to counter malign influence, promote free market and democratic values, and support the rule of law and anti-corruption efforts. Further efforts to combat corruption will improve the investment climate and advance our goals of fiscal transparency. If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation to support U.S. private sector opportunities in Malawi and to ensure Malawi has active U.S. alternatives to Beijing-based creditors.

Question. Do you believe it is the sign of a healthy democracy when a duly elected government, in consultation with its citizens, extends the term of office of the presidency even if that means it would extend the term of the current President in power?

Answer. Actions by a President in power to change the laws to allow him or her to remain in office extralegally pose an inherent threat to any democracy's health. A healthy democracy abides both by the will of its people and the underlying legal foundations upon which it rests. This requires the active participation of all citizens to safeguard democracy.

Question. If confirmed, how would you respond to Malawi doing something like this?

Answer. Any effort that might seek to upend the existing democratic order would undermine the legitimacy of Malawi's democracy. If confirmed, in such a scenario I would work with colleagues in Washington and local and international partners to defend democracy and push back against extralegal efforts to thwart the will of the people.

Question. What lessons will you draw from your experience as Chargé d'affaires in Zambia in your role as U.S. Ambassador to Malawi, if confirmed?

Answer. The recent democratic Presidential election in Zambia shows that U.S. Government programming, combined with activist U.S. private and public diplomacy, can help support and safeguard democratic values. These efforts played an important role in the Zambian political transition and the election of President Hakainde Hichilema. Zambia, like Malawi, has a comprehensive program to combat HIV/AIDS through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and there are many similarities between the programs in the two countries. The two U.S. Missions in Zambia and Malawi also work to expand two-way trade and investment and strengthening the private sector in both countries is a key goal.

Question. Do you agree that democracy and governance programming is an essential element of an assistance portfolio? Why?

Answer. Yes. The United States has a vested interest in advancing democracy around the world. As President Biden said in his address before the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, democracy remains the best tool we have

to unleash our full human potential. Democracies value and protect the intellectual, social, and economic contributions of their citizens. Democracies are also inherently more stable and responsive to the demands and expectation of their polities. Investments in democracy programming ensure the longevity and impact of our assistance programs across all sectors.

Question. What opportunities as U.S. Ambassador to Malawi do you envision for yourself, if confirmed, in supporting democratic processes and the development of resilient democratic institutions in Malawi?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press the ruling government to appoint and confirm heads of watchdog agencies including the Financial Intelligence Agency and the Office of the Auditor General. I will also expand our efforts to professionalize the institutions that uphold Malawi's democracy, including the Electoral Commission, media outlets, and democracy activists. I have seen firsthand the significant impact of trainings from U.S.-based institutions like the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Solidarity Center, and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). If confirmed, I will advocate for these organizations' continued engagement in Malawi.

Question. Can you provide your view on supporting U.S. funded, independent international election observation missions?

Answer. Election observer missions play a critical role in our efforts to support democracy, especially in developing countries. Independent observers provide critical quantitative and qualitative insight about the functioning of electoral processes. This data allows the United States and our international partners to determine whether an election is free and fair, and whether electoral results in a country accurately reflect the will of its people. By supporting these efforts, we communicate the centrality of democracy promotion and support in our foreign policy.

Question. Would you support such a mission for Malawi's next general election?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working closely with the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (OGAC) at the U.S. Department of State to ensure that the U.S. country team in Malawi's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS are efficient, effective, aligned and complementary to the work of OGAC?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you work to ensure that each of the agencies operating under Chief of Mission authority—notably USAID and CDC—meaningfully contribute to, but also adhere to, PEPFAR's Country Operating Plan (COP) process?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you also ensure that each of the agencies operating under Chief of Mission authority in Malawi uphold their commitments to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that all future funding for the Secondary Education Expansion for Development (SEED) program will be derived from funds appropriated for basic and secondary education, rather than for PEPFAR?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Malawi?

Answer. The isolation, hardship, and fear caused by COVID-19 have had a particularly adverse effect on our overseas Missions, including in Malawi. The current lull in local infection rates, seasonal rotation of staff, and the lifting of government-imposed lockdowns have improved morale. Nevertheless, remote work in a developing country is a distinctly difficult and isolating experience for American and Malawian staff alike.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Malawi?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to make staff morale a central focus of my tenure. American diplomats and our interagency colleagues in the field make incredible sacrifices to advance our nation's objectives. If confirmed, I will begin by building trust with all levels of the Embassy's staff and soliciting local ideas for how we overcome our shared challenges and more effectively accomplish our mission.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Malawi?

Answer. Throughout my career I have upheld a "One Team" approach that values the contributions, voice, and role of every individual. Effective and responsive management is critical in this effort. American and Malawian managers should be

equipped with the most effective tools and held to the highest standards. The follow-on effects of COVID-19 have accelerated isolation at our overseas missions, and if confirmed, I hope to make interagency relationships a central focus of my tenure.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I believe strongly in a One Mission, One Team approach, and in my leadership roles over the past decade in Missions in Africa, I have sought to put this principle in practice. I have worked to set up cross-cutting interagency teams to advance our shared interagency Mission goals, including working groups that have advanced our democratic and electoral goals in Nigeria and Zambia, and our Northeast Working Group in Nigeria. I believe strongly in 360 communication, empowering and listening to all team members, and working closely with Locally Employed Staff, who provide the continuity and ongoing capacity of our Missions' work.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No.

Question. How do you envision your relationship with deputy chief of mission?

Answer. Having served in leadership roles at multiple Missions in Africa, including three times as a deputy chief of mission, I am deeply committed to empowering and supporting the deputy chief of mission to help improve the work of the Mission. The relationship between the chief of mission and deputy chief of mission is critical to the success and morale of a Mission. If confirmed, I will build a relationship based on honesty, accountability, and collegiality, and I will equip my deputy to act decisively on the wide array of policy, security, and management issues we face.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will sit down immediately with my deputy chief of mission and jointly work with him or her to develop a collaborative plan for how we lead the Mission together. In general, I would seek to have the deputy chief of mission serve as the "chief of operations" of the Mission, ensuring that the Mission implements and executes the goals of our work together as a Mission team. I hope to work with the deputy chief of mission to identify issue areas where the deputy would take lead in policy development, public outreach, and performance management. This could focus on a variety of agency programs, but I believe it important that the two of us jointly assess the particular areas once we are on the ground working together.

Question. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes.

Question. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. In the countries where I have served, I have come to appreciate the importance of in-person relationships. I prioritize such these engagements, and I have been committed throughout my career to wide ranging work in this area. I recognize that diplomats around the world face many challenges to their safety and security, and we must mitigate the risks as we do our jobs outside the embassy walls. Security and health concerns have restricted diplomats' ability to safely move around outside the embassy walls in some countries. I applaud the contributions of the members of Diplomatic Security, the United States Marine Corps, and others who keep us safe overseas.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, the safety of American and locally engaged personnel under my purview will be my top priority. I will lead by example in accessing local populations, and I will encourage my colleagues to expand our in-person access across all of Malawi. That said, we will of course remain cognizant of the particular logistical and security challenges our Mission faces in Malawi. Prioritizing staff

training and the procurement of safe and reliable housing and transportation equipment will advance these efforts.

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Malawi? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. Malawians are eager to learn more about and engage with the United States. Malawi's low internet penetration rate requires a reliance on radio broadcasting and in-person travel. Embassy events receive significant attendance and local coverage. Public diplomacy staff have strong professional relationships with members of public and privately owned media outlets. The advance of high-speed cellular service through Malawi will broaden our reach, especially with Malawi's outsized youth population.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. Effectively conveying our public diplomacy messages requires fluency in both U.S. policy and best practices on the ground. Achieving both takes intentional work at all levels of the Mission. In my previous leadership roles, I have prioritized forging relations with my Washington-based colleagues, and I have encouraged my staff members to do the same. I have also advocated within the Department for the unique role played by Mission staff members, who have unmatched contextual knowledge of what strategies are most effective. These relationships pay dividends as we work to shape and deliver effective messages.

Question. In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Malawi was identified as Tier 2 due to inadequate government efforts to address sex trafficking, reporting, or identifying victims or traffickers by the Government, and more. How will you work with the host government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize our work to combat human trafficking as one of my top policy emphases. I will immediately and frequently communicate the importance of combatting human trafficking through private and public diplomacy. I have worked extensively on human trafficking issues in each leadership position I have held over the past decade, and I have found that offering solutions is a necessary companion to identifying problems. The U.S. Government and U.S.-based institutions offer a wealth of expertise, and if confirmed, I hope to connect Malawian partners with experts who can offer support on how to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers, and protect victims.

Question. In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Malawi was identified as having community tension regarding religious freedom. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Malawi boasts a long history of interreligious tolerance, though within communities there are societal pressures to adopt locally dominant religious practices. If confirmed, I plan to draw upon my experience in previous assignments to advance religious freedom. I served as Director of the Office of International Religious Freedom and deeply value the shared advocacy that Missions and Washington colleagues do on behalf of religious freedom. In Nigeria, we developed programs of Christian-Muslim dialogue and peacebuilding to address widespread farmer-herder violence in the Middle Belt of the country. The support and expertise of Department principals, including the Ambassador-at-Large, are crucial to these efforts.

Question. In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Malawi was identified as having significant human rights abuses including harsh and life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; significant acts of corruption; lack of investigation and accountability for violence against women; and criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. In my prior positions, I have found that offering solutions and support is the most effective approach to advancing our objectives. Malawi faces serious human rights challenges, many of which derive from a lack of local capacity to uphold laws and the enshrined rights of individuals. To address these concerns, if confirmed, I will work to identify the key institutions that warrant our support. The U.S. Mission in Lilongwe has preexisting programming with some of these, including the Malawian Police Service, and if confirmed I hope to expand these programs. Malawi also needs significant legal reform to protect the rights of all citizens, including women and persons in same-sex relationships.

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 lead the U.S. Mission team in continuing to strengthen close relationships with civil society organizations and to maintain an open-door policy for our Malawian partners. These individuals frequently have unparalleled access, relationships, and information, and they can play a key role in advancing human rights and a wide range of our objectives.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID JOHN YOUNG BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. Malawi is among the poorest countries in the world, and our bilateral relationship is heavily focused on development issues. The challenges women and girls face are particularly crucial to address. On September 28, I introduced legislation, along with a group of senators that includes Senators Rubio and Portman from this committee, to formalize the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) initiative. W-GDP—which was established in February 2019 as a groundbreaking, whole-of-government approach to advancing women's economic empowerment—reached 12 million women worldwide during its first year and seeks to reach 50 million women by 2025. This legislation would advance women's economic empowerment by removing educational and skills barriers to female participation in the workforce; promoting women's entrepreneurship and increasing female access to capital and markets; and reforming laws and practices that prevent women's full and free participation in the global economy. What key economic challenges do Malawian women and girls face? Drawing on examples from your past service, how would you seek to work with Malawians to promote women's economic empowerment?

Answer. Women and girls in Malawi face economic challenges, societal discrimination, and limited access to capital, education, and professional opportunities. Insufficient child and health care mean many women and girls carry disproportionate familial duties. As I have done in other assignments in Zambia, Nigeria, and South Africa, if confirmed I will work to use U.S. Mission resources through USAID and through Public Affairs Section training programs to empower women, expand skills training, create mentorship networks, and provide small grants to start-up businesses run by women. If confirmed, I will also work with development partners to expand programs that support female students, entrepreneurs, activists, and civil society leaders.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CLAIRE A. PIERANGELO BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. People in southern Madagascar are experiencing famine-like conditions. What is your assessment of how effective the Malagasy Government has been at organizing a response? Are there actions the U.S. Mission could take to help improve the response? What are the potential second-order impacts of famine on the country as a whole, and what steps would you take, if confirmed, to mitigate them?

Answer. This is not only a difficult challenge, but an existential one as well. The Malagasy Government has limited capacity to address the drought-induced food insecurity facing southern Madagascar. In addition to providing significant financial support, the U.S. Mission has encouraged other donor countries to support this humanitarian crisis and continues to work closely with NGOs and U.N. agencies such as the World Food Program to address the immediate need and develop plans to assist the population adapt to drought conditions. The most significant impact is internal migration, which threatens unique ecosystems.

I would work with the U.N., NGOs, other donor countries, and U.S. agencies like USAID to determine what more we can and should be doing. I would also work with the Malagasy Government to assess their efforts on assisting displaced persons and concurrently protecting endangered environmental resources.

Question. Madagascar was slow to join the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative, (COVAX), and President Andry Rajoelina spent the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic touting an herbal remedy for the disease. He also criticized vaccines. If confirmed, what steps will you take to encourage the Government to take a science based approach to containing and mitigating the COVID-19 pan-

demic, and take steps to plan for the effective procurement and distribution of vaccines once they are available?

Answer. The situation has improved recently. Madagascar received a U.S. Government donation of 302,400 doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine in late July and there has been strong public acceptance of it. I will proactively seek opportunities to encourage the Government of Madagascar to promote vaccines and utilize the mission's excellent connections within the health community and our public diplomacy tools to support this message. I will commit Mission resources to help the Government of Madagascar address the challenge of an underdeveloped health system and poor transportation infrastructure, which inhibit large-scale, rapid distribution of vaccines, particularly to rural areas far from the capital Antananarivo.

Question. Competition between political elites in Madagascar has had violent and destabilizing consequences in the last twelve years, including a coup in 2009. This year, President Rajoelina claimed that security forces foiled a coup plot against him. What is your assessment of the level of political stability in Madagascar—is another coup likely? If confirmed, what steps will you take to reduce tensions between political elites?

Answer. Although the Government of Madagascar claimed there was a coup attempt this summer, the Rajoelina administration appears relatively stable and we assess that a successful coup is not likely in the near term. I commit to building relationships with all political parties in Madagascar and engaging with the diplomatic community to facilitate discussion among the political elites.

Question. Presently, the United States has limited diplomatic engagement with Comoros, and provides little in the way of foreign assistance. Would an expansion of ties be in the interest of the United States? What are potential areas of cooperation? If confirmed, would you increase engagement with the Comorian Government?

Answer. There are excellent opportunities to expand our diplomatic engagement with Comoros to the benefit of U.S. interest, particularly in the arena of maritime security due to its location on the Mozambique Channel, which is a major trafficking artery. Assistance in expanding capacity in maritime security, establishing transparent and accountable institutions, and in basic health and education would be immediate priorities in expanding our bilateral relationship.

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. Early in my career I served in Haiti in the post-“Baby Doc” era where we worked to support its fledgling democracy. Later in my career, in both Vietnam and Indonesia, the issues of democracy and human rights were at the top of our agenda. Whether advocating for human rights for our local staff or for the population at large, this is something I take very seriously and has been a priority in every post that I have served. I realize these issues are front and center in Madagascar and Comoros, so my team and I would have a lot to work to do, if I were confirmed. I commit to prioritizing these issues in both countries.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Madagascar and Comoros? 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. As Senator Cardin has noted, corruption is a significant issue in Madagascar and Comoros. Both countries also face challenges in the electoral process, with disinformation from malign actors in Madagascar, and opposition party boycotts in Comoros. If confirmed, I will use upcoming elections in Madagascar in 2023 and in Comoros in 2024 to support both countries in strengthening their democratic institutions to ensure the elections ultimately reflect the will of their citizens.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Madagascar and Comoros? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. My first step would be to assess the current challenges to democracy in Madagascar and Comoros and develop an action plan to address these challenges. I expect that action plan would include outreach to opposition parties and civil society as well as programs to encourage greater transparency in government.

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. I would review the current allocation of government assistance, gather input from my team and civil society partners, and assess how to prioritize these limited resources. I would look to find a balance between humanitarian assistance on one hand and programs to build the Government of Madagascar's capacity and establish good governance practices on the other.

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 Madagascar and Comoros? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, I would make it a priority to meet with civil society members in Madagascar and Comoros to understand their challenges and to most effectively utilize USG programs that support their work. I will staunchly defend the rights of civil society and take appropriate actions to ensure their ability to operate freely in Madagascar and Comoros.

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, I commit to meeting with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties in both countries. With elections coming up in 2023 and 2024, I would work with my team to create a plan to establish relationships with opposition parties, including diaspora groups. I also commit to advocate for diverse participation in the political process.

Question. Will you and your Embassy team actively engage with Madagascar and Comoros 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 Madagascar and Comoros?

Answer. Yes, I commit to actively engage with the media and staunchly defend freedom of the press. I also commit to regularly meeting with the independent, local press in both Madagascar and Comoros.

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. Yes, I commit to engage with a variety of government and non-government counterparts to counter disinformation, whether disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors.

Question. Will you and your Embassy teams actively engage with Madagascar and Comoros on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes, I commit to actively engage with the Governments of Madagascar and Comoros to support the rights of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Madagascar and Comoros, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Yes, I commit to use my position to defend the human rights of all Malagasy and Comorian people, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Madagascar and Comoros?

Answer. In Madagascar, no law prohibits same-sex sexual conduct for those aged 21 and older. . Nonetheless, members of the LGBTQI community report they face social stigma and discrimination, particularly within their own families. In Comoros, same-sex sexual activity is illegal, although authorities do not actively enforce the law. Due to societal pressure, LGBTQI persons generally do not reveal their sexual orientation.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Madagascar and Comoros?

Answer. I commit to regularly meeting with LGBTQI organizations and advocating for their rights in Madagascar and Comoros.

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 Madagascar and Comoros?

Answer. Yes, I would welcome the opportunity to fully brief members of Congress and/or their staff each time I am in Washington for consultations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO CLAIRE A. PIERANGELO BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Given the administration's redefined Prosper Africa policy, how will you prioritize U.S. investment into Madagascar, and ensure there is a level playing field given the pervasive levels of corruption that exist in Madagascar's institutions and its judiciary? Further, will you focus on the settling of the standing investment disputes with US companies, including Symbion Power?

Answer. Corruption in Madagascar is a significant obstacle for U.S. business, and I recognize that accountable institutions, sustained by a commitment to the rule of law and transparency, are essential to creating a business climate conducive to foreign investment. I commit to working with the Government of Madagascar to reinforce the need for accountable institutions and provide U.S. expertise in developing transparent government. I also commit to support U.S. companies to settle investment disputes.

Question. Do you believe it is the sign of a healthy democracy when a duly elected government, in consultation with its citizens, extends the term of office of the presidency even if that means it would extend the term of the current President in power? If confirmed, how would you respond to Madagascar or Comoros doing something like this?

Answer. Constitutional changes should be made through a consultative process that includes civil society, opposition parties and all other stakeholders. Constitutional changes designed to favor incumbents or extend terms against the will of the people erode democratic principles and undermine stability. If confirmed, I will advocate for regular, democratic transitions of power, which yield more accountability, stronger institutions, and less corruption.

Question. In November 2020, I published Senate Foreign Relations Committee majority report entitled "The United States and Europe: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China." The report gave several recommendations on increased transatlantic cooperation, including in Africa, to counter Chinese malign influence more effectively. In what ways should the United States partner with European countries to build on likeminded interests in Madagascar and Comoros, and counter the malign influence of China?

Answer. The United States should partner with likeminded countries to counter negative actions and influence of the PRC. We need to call out and confront non-democratic behavior and insist that all economic actors on the continent adhere to the highest standards of transparency, anti-corruption, debt sustainability, environmental protection, and respect for human rights, including labor rights.

Question. Can you provide your view on supporting U.S. funded, independent international election observation missions? Would you support such a mission for Madagascar's next national election?

Answer. Promoting democracy and human rights has long been a core task of American foreign policy. Election observation can promote public participation, encourage transparency and public confidence in the electoral process, and mitigate the potential for electoral violence. Both U.S. Mission observers and independent observation missions help deter fraud at polling stations and facilitate the collection of critical information about the conduct of the elections. To ensure real democratic gains, it is important that our elections work not focus solely on Election Day, but also address problems in the lead up to elections that inhibit the ability of all parties to compete on an equal basis.

Question. Many U.S. Missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Madagascar?

Answer. I am impressed with the resiliency of the team in Madagascar in general but in particular during the difficult last 18 months under COVID-19. Morale remains good at post thanks to the efforts of the former Ambassador and the current Deputy Chief of Mission.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Madagascar?

Answer. At every one of my posts, taking care of our teams has been my top priority. First, I would assess where things stand today with both the American and local staff in both Madagascar and Comoros through direct communication and interaction. And then together, we would see what changes, if any, were necessary. The bottom line is always communication and interaction. Even at the height of terrorism in Indonesia and direct attacks in my consular district when I was principal officer in Surabaya, my team and I were united and mutually supportive. That is always my number one goal.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Madagascar?

Answer. I successfully faced this challenge in my last three overseas leadership positions in large and complex, multi-post missions—Indonesia, Vietnam and Nigeria. Creating a true “One Team, One Mission” approach takes a unified strategic approach, time, effort and honesty. The results are always worth the work. I would aim to do the same at Mission Madagascar.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for Chiefs of Mission. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. Whether I was supervising a section of 10 or a Mission of 900, my approach has always been to be as communicative and transparent as possible and to welcome and incorporate the great contributions of my team. I solicit input first and then carefully listen to my staff before making decisions. However, ultimately, I must take responsibility for our decisions and back up my team. I am also fully aware of when I must make the difficult decisions.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No. Any action that does not convey respect or professionalism is not only unacceptable, it is simply counterproductive. This goes not only for supervisors but also for other staff, including our local staff.

Question. How do you envision your relationship with Deputy Chief of Mission?

Answer. The COM-DCM relationship is extremely important because it sets the tone for the Mission. If confirmed, I would create a close partnership with the incumbent, relying on him for both policy and personnel guidance and the critical “truth-to-power” reality checks. The DCM is the eyes and ears of the Mission and I intend listen.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your Deputy Chief of Mission?

Answer. As a former DCM and two-time principal officer, I know what a critical role the DCM should play in both bilateral policy issues and internal Mission management. The DCM should not be chained to their desk but should be representing the Mission outwardly as well. Just as the DCM should lead and mentor our mid-level and more junior staff, they must have the opportunity to lead at the Mission level to prepare themselves for more senior positions.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. This is a topic dear to my heart. As Director of the Office of Performance Evaluation in the then-Bureau of Human Resources, I led the team responsible for major reform of the EER, promotion and awards. I personally introduced the changes with outreach to more than 10,000 foreign service employees over two years. Those reforms were just a first step to creating a more responsive system such as the new Meritorious Service Increase award process and I am happy to say that these efforts are ongoing. Key to all these efforts is the push for supervisors

to be honest, fair, and responsive in their evaluations. The Department continues to prioritize this effort, as do I personally.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes, I believe that is very important. I have not only supported such efforts but have championed them and tried to educate my colleagues on this issue. It is critical not only to the assessment of the rated employee but to the development of supervisors and future Department leaders.

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and local citizens. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our Embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. If you ask my team my overriding motto, they would tell you in unison "If you are sitting behind your desk, you are not doing your job." At every post that I have worked in or led, this has been true. Our best work is done when we are engaged with our host country and its nationals. That is often a challenge, especially in large Missions, where we must respond to the demands of Washington and the interagency 24/7. I believe that the Chief of Mission must set the expectation, provide the resources, and if need be, pick up the slack in order for our staff to get out of the office, interact with the people and support U.S. interests.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. In most cases, it is simply a matter of time and resources. If confirmed, I, along with my DCM, will make sure our team have enough of both.

Question. Do you think the Department should require Chiefs of Mission have experience in the region to which they are nominated?

Answer. In my experience, the overriding qualification for any COM must be proven leadership and management experience. That is not something that can be learned on the job. Secondly, experience in strategic policy making that can be applied to any post or situation should be considered. If one can combine those two skills with regional experience, that would be ideal. However regional experience on its own should not be considered sufficient, in my opinion.

Question. With little experience in the sub-Saharan Africa, how are you approaching this assignment?

Answer. I have served across four continents and led Missions in three postings. That includes senior leadership in arguably our most important partner in Africa, Nigeria, where I run a multi-agency post of 400 American and local staff plus 200 security contractors. Lagos is larger than 80 percent of our sub-Saharan Africa posts, including Madagascar, and is important to our overall Africa policy. If confirmed, I will bring my years of experience in Africa and elsewhere to this challenging assignment.

Question. Do you consider your lack of experience in the region a handicap in starting your position as COM?

Answer. I bring extensive strategic leadership and more specifically, experience in the complex, sometimes dangerous, and always challenging Nigerian environment to the table. In Vietnam, I led a team of more than 900 staff in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, both as Deputy Chief of Mission and as Chargé d'Affaires for more than one year. In Surabaya, I led a team of 120 in two posts (including Bali) through terrorist attacks, pandemics, and natural disasters.

Question. If confirmed, would you consider your lack of experience in identifying a Deputy Chief of Mission?

Answer. Yes, that would be one of many factors I would consider. I have extensive experience in recruiting, hiring, mentoring and supporting my senior staff. Many of my former staff and mentees are now in leadership positions of their own including multiple Deputy Chiefs of Mission and Deputy Assistant Secretaries. I also have an extensive network and knowledge of our next level of leaders through my time in the Human Resources Bureau and as assistant professor and Acting Deputy Commandant at the National War College.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Madagascar? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. Mission Madagascar's public diplomacy program is small but robust. As in many countries, there is always more demand for engagement, training, and exchange programs but the Mission is actively engaged. If confirmed, I will move back to more in-person programs, but virtual programs will continue to be an important tool. Challenges are more physical than philosophical at this point, with poor infrastructure, transportation challenges and distances posing some obstacles to travel and programming.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country Mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. Post has latitude to tailor public messaging to local issues and concerns. If confirmed, I will ensure that our public diplomacy posture continues to play a key role in promoting our many shared values and America's generous financial assistance and support across the range of issues.

Question. As Ambassador, what would be your approach to dividing your time and attention between Madagascar and Comoros?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make this one of my first on-the ground assessments. COVID-19 restrictions hampered the Mission's outreach to Comoros, but two teams have travelled since May, and the current Chargé d'Affaires will be visiting the first week of October. I look forward to her and the DCM's thoughts on the best way forward.

Question. How frequently would you plan to travel to Comoros to meet in-person with partners?

Answer. It would be my goal to visit as often as is feasible. Just as important is making sure that our team at all levels travel regularly, not just the Chief of Mission.

Question. In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Madagascar remained on Tier 2 due to lack of accountability of complicit government officials, as well as failure to end facilitating child sex trafficking, among several other key areas of potential improvement. How will you work with the Government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. I commit to work with the Government of Madagascar to make improvements in preventing trafficking in persons. I would continue to support our efforts to increase transparency of government institutions and to alleviate poverty, which together address the roots of this issue.

Question. In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Madagascar was identified as having religious freedom issues within civil society. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Religious freedom is a U.S. foreign policy priority, and the Department continues to closely monitor the religious freedom situation in Madagascar. I commit to working with civil society and the Malagasy Government to ensure all citizens enjoy freedom of religious thought and expression as provided in the country's constitution. My understanding is that there are several, discrete challenges for specific religious groups in Madagascar and that the country overall is accepting of religious diversity. If confirmed, I will work with the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and Congress to emphasize the importance of religious tolerance and to address religious freedom concerns in Madagascar.

Question. In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Madagascar was identified as having a litany of human rights abuses, including impunity for security forces and within government ranks. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess the situation and develop an action plan to reduce the instances of extrajudicial killings, which would likely include improving training for Malagasy security forces.

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 make it a priority to meet with civil society members in Madagascar and Comoros to understand their challenges and to most effectively utilize USG programs that support their work. I will staunchly defend the rights of civil society and take appropriate actions to ensure their ability to operate freely in Madagascar and Comoros.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO CLAIRE A. PIERANGELO BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. Madagascar is one of the most interesting places in the world, with unique flora and fauna and a very distinct culture and population, but it also remains a very poor country. Trade—and the jobs that it sustains—are key to self-sustaining development. Good jobs solve so many social challenges. In what manner and in what sectors might you seek to increase U.S. trade with and investment in Madagascar? What role do you see for potentially greater trade and investment engagement in Madagascar via U.S. programs like Prosper Africa and Power Africa?

Answer. Commercial engagement is one of the top Mission goals and as an economic officer, I have always put that at the forefront of my professional efforts. I was pleased to learn that the Mission team has put a strong focus on increasing its outreach, including to U.S. businesses. If confirmed, I would work hard to ensure fair treatment by local officials and others to counter weak rule of law and corruption. Sustainable development would be our goal. In Nigeria, my team and I have worked with Prosper Africa and Power Africa programs and I would welcome seeing how we can bring that expertise and opportunity to Madagascar.

Question. The Comoros Islands sit in a strategic location in the Indian Ocean, particularly with respect to combatting piracy and the threat it poses to international sea commerce. What are your views on the programmatic focus and impact of America's International Military Educational Training (IMET) program in Comoros, especially on military professionalization and counter-piracy initiatives in the Indian Ocean?

Answer. The objective of the U.S. IMET training program is to professionalize the Comorian military, especially its maritime forces. This is particularly important due to the country's strategic location in the Mozambique channel, a major piracy artery. The Mission's Department of Defense staff are working hard within the constraints of their finite resources to build cooperative security partnerships with Comoros and with like-minded allies in the region. Our current bilateral partnership with Comoros on maritime security issues is strong, and developing their capacity is a long-term project. If confirmed, I would welcome working with our Department of Defense colleagues on the ground, as I have done in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Nigeria.
