

## NOMINATIONS

---

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Ricketts, McCormick, Daines, Hagerty, Lee, Cruz, Scott, Curtis, Shaheen, Kaine, Merkley, Booker, Van Hollen, Duckworth, and Rosen.

Also present: Senator Boozman.

Senator RISCH. As usual, I am going to remind everyone that you are all welcome here. We love having you here. However, this is a meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee to do America's business.

For those of you in the audience, there will be no audience participation of any kind, and that includes with signals, with signs, or obviously standing up or speaking. If you do that you will be removed, arrested, and processed as usual, and banned from the committee for a year.

So with that, we are glad to have you here and glad you came to watch. But this is America's business here.

We have some Senators who have to get on their way but want to make introductions, so I am going to start.

Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, it is a real honor to sit before you today to introduce my friend and fellow Floridian, Kevin Marino Cabrera, to this committee.

Also, I would like to recognize Kevin's mother, Gisele, who is here today. You must be very proud.

In nominating another Floridian to his Administration, President Trump made an excellent choice in Kevin to serve as Ambassador to Panama. Born in Miami to Cuban exiles, Kevin understands firsthand the importance of democracy, free enterprise, and strong international alliances.

Kevin currently serves as a county commissioner in Miami-Dade County and vice chair of the Miami-Dade International Trade Consortium, and many of these are here supporting him today.

During his term in office he has successfully led trade missions to key global markets including France, Africa, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Ireland.

Kevin understands the need for good trade partners in the Western Hemisphere and the impact it has in preventing Communist China and other adversaries from gaining any grip in the region, all while doing everything we can to bring a new day of freedom and democracy to our neighbors in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and all around the Western Hemisphere.

President Trump chose a leader who can deliver for Americans and for the great men and women of our diplomatic service who are stationed in Panama.

Panama was one of the countries I had—I visited there a couple times when I was Governor. I also visited as my first CODEL when I was a Senator in 2019.

I met some of the wonderful team at the embassy there on the ground working to represent our best interests, just as Kevin will do. With his and Secretary of State Marco Rubio's leadership our diplomatic mission in Panama will be very, very, very successful.

Panama plays a serious role in America's international trade mission. This is why we need strong leadership like Kevin at the helm. I am confident that his skills, his character, his expertise, will make him an effective Ambassador to Panama.

I look forward to hearing from him today on his vision for U.S.-Panama relations and how he plans to advance President Trump's agenda.

Together with President Trump and Secretary Rubio, I am confident you will help—Kevin will help restore peace through strength and stand for America's best interests. He has my full support.

I urge my colleagues to advance his nomination quickly.

Thank you, Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Scott. We appreciate that.

Senator Cruz, I understand you also are on a short chain so we are going to record recognize you to introduce Mr. Rubinstein.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is an honor to introduce Reed Rubinstein today before the committee.

I first met Reed back in 2014 when he was the attorney representing the victims of the 2009 Fort Hood terrorist attack carried out by jihadist Nidal Hasan.

I worked closely with Reed on one of my very first pieces of legislation that was passed into law which addressed the Fort Hood attack and the Obama administration's refusal to award Purple Hearts to the victims.

You will recall they called it workplace violence instead of terrorism, and on the Senate Armed Services Committee I introduced an amendment to mandate that the Purple Heart be awarded.

That amendment got bipartisan support, passed into law, and I was proud to be there at Fort Hood when those Purple Hearts were finally awarded, although, sadly, years after that horrific attack.

Reed is an experienced lawyer with more than 30 years in private practice litigating constitutional, administrative, and complex commercial trial and appellate cases.

He has also counseled publicly traded and closely held corporations on regulatory compliance, M&A, and transactional matters while handling executive branch and congressional oversight, in-

vestigations, and enforcement issues. He is exceptionally well qualified to serve as legal advisor to the State Department.

With his strong legal background and previous experience as a deputy associate attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice and as general counsel to the U.S. Department of Education during President Trump's first term, I have no doubt that Reed will serve our nation with the utmost integrity.

I have full confidence in Reed. I support his nomination, and I look forward to seeing him confirmed. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Senator Cruz. We appreciate that. I know you have got another commitment that you have got to make, and so we will excuse you.

Next, I am going to move to Senator Boozman, and most importantly, Cathy is with you today. Is that right, Senator Boozman?

Senator BOOZMAN. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is good to see you and Ranking Member Shaheen and the rest of my distinguished colleagues. It is an honor to be here today to introduce my friend and fellow Arkansan Governor Mike Huckabee, President Trump's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

I know Senator Cotton would have liked to be here, too. In fact, it was the first call I received very early this morning reminding me to tell everybody how much he supported this and what a great ambassador he thinks that Governor Huckabee would make.

I would also like to say hi to Governor Huckabee's family and friends here in attendance and how glad we are that they are supporting him. We all know these are family affairs, whether it is us or people that serve in other aspects of government.

This is a pivotal moment in our history, not just for our country but for Israel and the special relationship between our nations.

I have had the privilege of knowing the Governor for many years, and I can say without hesitation he is the right person to be our representative to Israel at this critical moment, and I am thankful to President Trump for selecting such a staunch and passionate advocate for the Jewish state.

Mike was raised in Hope, Arkansas, and went on to graduate from Ouachita Baptist University where he majored in religion.

He then attended Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth in preparation for a lifetime of ministry, and it included pasturing in Emmanuel Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and later at Beach Street Baptist Church in Texarkana, Arkansas.

He went on to serve as president of the Arkansas Baptist State convention where his leadership and communication skills intersected at the cornerstone of his life, spreading the gospel and shepherding fellow Christians in their faith, and foreshadowed his calling into public service.

Mike served as the 44th Governor of Arkansas for over a decade. With his time as their State's chief executive marked by his tireless pursuit of pragmatic solutions, a tireless work ethic, and innate ability to forge relationships across political divides, he brought transformational change to Arkansas, leaving a legacy of lower taxes, job creation, improvement of State infrastructure, K through 16 education reform, and his enactment of the nationally recognized health initiative focused on disease prevention.

Mike is not only qualified to serve as our Ambassador to Israel but he is uniquely suited for this role given the way he has championed Israel throughout his entire life, including as a steadfast supporter of Israel's right to exist and defend itself.

He has had an intimate familiarity with Israel's people and its leaders, having frequently visit for over 50 years, leading groups to the region since 1981.

He also understands the importance of diplomacy and has profound respect and appreciation for it. He has worked persistently throughout his life to advocate for strengthening and furthering the distinctly profound ties between our two countries.

As United States Ambassador to Israel he will bring thoughtful, principled approach to our relationship as his extensive experience already shows.

He believes, like many of us, that the United States and Israel share a sacred bond that transcends politics both in terms of shared values and mutual security in an increasingly dangerous world where Israel is under constant attack from Iran and its terrorist proxies.

The United States needs a representative in Israel who not only understands the complex Middle East geopolitics but can navigate them with conviction, strength, and tact.

Governor Huckabee's background, character, and experience all uniquely qualify him to be that figure at this moment for this purpose. His deep understanding and love for Israel and its people will undoubtedly make him an exceptional ambassador.

I know that he will represent the United States with honor, integrity, and an ironclad commitment to the enduring partnership between our two nations.

I look forward to seeing all the great things he will do as the United States Ambassador to Israel. I strongly support his nomination and urge my colleagues to do the same, as does my colleague Senator Cotton from Arkansas.

Thank you very much.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you very much, Senator Boozman.

I know you have got other things you have to do too, so we will excuse you. But thank you very much, and I am sure Mr. Huckabee very much appreciates your kind words for him, and I know I talked to Tom Cotton, too.

He wishes he could be here but he has got some things biting him right now that, like we all do from time to time. But he likewise would have had a strong introduction and support for you. So thank you, Senator Boozman.

So where we are going to go today is I am going to make an opening statement. I am going to yield to my distinguished colleague for her opening statement.

Then we will hear from the nominees, and then we are going to do a round of questions, and possibly a second if there is interest.

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

So with that, today we have—we are going to hear from three more of President Trump's national security nominees.



These positions are key to advancing President Trump's America first foreign policy priorities and helping America's friends while pushing back against our enemies.

Governor Huckabee, as U.S. Ambassador to Israel you would represent us at one of the most important postings in the world.

Israel is one of America's greatest allies, a bastion of freedom in the Middle East and our closest partner in countering Iran's destabilizing efforts in the region.

For years the previous Administration withheld American support that was necessary for Israel, not all of it but some of it, and in the wake of the horrendous attacks on October 7.

And despite that, Israel had the courage to confront Iran and its proxies, and it decimated them. Now, thanks to President Trump's tough negotiations and Israel's courage, Iran is at its weakest point in decades and hostages are returning home.

And the Middle East now has an opportunity to free itself from Iran's grip, and America will be safer for it. To promote stability in the region and protect our national security we need to continue to support Israel's efforts however we can.

This includes providing Israel the weapons it needs to defend itself and working with Israel to ensure both American and Israeli hostages are brought home from the clutches of Hamas.

Governor Huckabee, I look forward to hearing how you will support our ally and help support and facilitate peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Cabrera, Panama is a strategic ally, and our long historic partnership is anchored in shared economic and security interests. The United States is Panama's largest foreign direct investor with a total of \$3.8 billion invested in a range of sectors.

But as you know, China seeks to undermine our work in Panama, particularly when it comes to the Panama Canal. The President is right to focus on China's involvement in this critical infrastructure.

The fact is China will continue to use its footholds in Latin America to threaten the U.S. and our economic interests. We need to counter its presence in Panama and make sure China cannot control shipping through the canal like a pawn in its malign chess game.

Additionally, more must be done to counter transnational criminal organizations that profit from illegal migration and the trafficking of illicit narcotics that kill Americans.

President Trump is leading the charge on a generational shift in American politics and American foreign policy. The President meant business when he told the American people that he would put their interests first, and he has taken extraordinary action in his first weeks in office to make this happen.

Mr. Rubinstein, as legal advisor you will be charged with providing Secretary Rubio sound legal advice as he executes President Trump's foreign policy agenda.

Your background in complex litigation and prior experience in the executive branch will serve you well in this challenging role.

Just like all the nominees who have testified before us this year you will have a big job. We you will be tasked with defending the

interests of this great nation in the history during a very turbulent time.

Americans are counting on your leadership.

I look forward to a productive conversation today and for all of your swift confirmations.

Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN,  
RANKING MEMBER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I get to my prepared remarks—opening remarks—I would like to express concern about the sharing of classified information that has been such a big story on the news in the last 24 hours, and I hope that this committee will express our concern about sharing classified information with the Department of State, as Secretary Rubio was on that call, and also with making sure that we are safeguarding critical information as the Records Act requires.

So I would—as a member of the Intelligence Committee I know you know better than most how important this is and I hope you will join me in making sure that we send that message to the Department of State.

Now I would like to welcome our nominees, your families and supporters who are here with you today. From representing the United States at our embassies in Israel and Panama to serving as the legal advisor for the entire Department of State, the posts you have been nominated to fill are incredibly consequential.

In the wake of the Hamas attacks and Israel's campaign in Gaza, we have been working to avoid escalation and a wider regional war, a war that would not only threaten all our allies in the region but would be dangerous for the United States.

I believe the cease fire the Trump administration helped implement between Israel and Hamas was a good first step. However, I do not agree with the idea of the U.S. owning Gaza or forcibly displacing Gazans, as the President has suggested.

Getting drawn into this conflict and putting American troops on the ground in Gaza I think would be a disaster. But the cease fire began an important process of getting Israeli hostages returned home. It opened up opportunities for humanitarian aid to reach Palestinians.

Sadly, with Israel resuming the attacks in Gaza violence has returned and the entire region is threatened again. Instead of moving to a second phase we are standing by and watching as the cease fire agreement comes undone.

I think it is important for us to get the parties back to the negotiating table to focus on phase two, and to get all of the hostages released to achieve long term peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians.

Mr. Huckabee, I know you have supported Israeli annexation of the West Bank and advocated for total Israeli control of Palestinian territory, as we discussed yesterday when you were kind enough to meet with me.

This rhetoric is highly incendiary across the Middle East and the entire Muslim world, and so I hope that you will think about how to advance long term peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Cabrera, I am also concerned about the threats from this Administration toward a friendly government in our own hemisphere, and that is Panama.

I take the risk of China's influence very seriously, both along the Panama Canal and across the region, and I am concerned that escalating threats about the U.S. reclaiming the canal, even if they are only meant as a start for negotiations or to extract concessions, could have dangerous unintended consequences.

If confirmed you will be leading the American Embassy in Panama at a time when sound judgment and experience are needed.

I hope you will speak to your plan to ensure that threats and saber rattling do not lead Panama and other countries to hedge their bets with the United States, to drive them to explore closer, rather than more distant, relationships with China in the long term.

Finally, Mr. Rubinstein, if confirmed you will hold one of the most significant positions at the State Department as the legal advisor.

You would be providing legal advice on areas that are not only critical to our national security but in many cases these are areas that have been the focus of a relentless attack by this Administration and Elon Musk.

Your advice would cover visa operations and border security, hiring and firing decisions for personnel, sexual discrimination in the workplace, the security of sensitive data, the payment of foreign assistance and operating funds.

Many of these issues have been the bedrock of six decades of investment that have made the United States more respected and influential than any other nation.

I have always supported reforming government and making sure our tax dollars are spent wisely. But across America's foreign policy and national security agencies the Administration has acted without regard for U.S. laws enacted by Congress to establish agencies and how funds should be spent.

So I hope you will address in your remarks what role you believe Congress plays in these questions, or whether the president, using the theory of the unitary executive, has the right to unilaterally override congressional authorizations and appropriations.

I look forward to hearing each of your thoughts and insights. Thank you all.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

I should respond briefly to the comments regarding the leakage on the intelligence matter.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. I spoke with Secretary Rubio about this at length yesterday, and he sat next to me on the Intelligence Committee for 15 years.

He is really aware of these kinds of things. We have leakage that happens from time to time. I can assure you that his knowledge is such, and his commitment is such that he had no knowledge of

there being the tap on that that there was when he was communicating.

So this is a matter that is going to be investigated, obviously. We are going to know a lot more about it as the facts roll out.

But from the State Department's standpoint I can assure you there was nobody at the State Department that was aware at all that there was the leakage that was going on. So I appreciate your concern. I do not think there is anybody that would not be concerned about a serious leak like this.

So we will move on as best we can.

So with that, we are going to do a round of questions.

I want to start with Mr. Cabrera on regarding the Panama—oh, I am sorry. Go ahead. Let us see.

Let us start with Mr. Huckabee.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE HUCKABEE, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE  
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

Mr. HUCKABEE. Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished members of the committee, I want to say thank you very, very much for giving me the privilege of coming—

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Senator RISCH. Sorry about that. The committee will come back to order, and Mr. Huckabee, please proceed.

Mr. HUCKABEE. I will mark them down undecided, Senator.

I want to thank you for the privilege of coming before you today as you conduct the constitutional obligation of advise and consent of those who have been nominated by the President to serve as an ambassador to our beloved nation.

The Founders recognized that Senate approval was not necessarily Senate agreement with the president, his policies, or even with those he selected to represent him.

But the Senate affirms that those nominated be thoroughly examined to determine moral and legal fitness to serve. I am aware that not everyone on this committee will agree with the President's policies or his personnel choices in his Administration.

I am not here to articulate or even defend my own views or policies but rather to present myself as one who will respect and represent the overwhelmingly elected President.

President Trump's historic first term success with the Abraham Accords I believe gives us real hope of what will happen over the next 4 years, and I am grateful that President Trump has charged me with the extraordinary privilege to serve as Ambassador to the state of Israel, if confirmed.

I am blessed to have a wonderful and supportive family, especially my wife of almost 51 years, Janet, who is with me today.

I am sure some of you are thinking we look quite young to have been married 51 years, but we got married when we were 18, and in Arkansas we were considered late bloomers.

My three adult children and my seven grandchildren are watching, and I am grateful for them.

I grew up in a small, orange brick shotgun rent house in a little town called Hope, Arkansas.

No male upstream from me—not one in my entire family lineage—had ever graduated from high school. The very notion that I would one day be Governor of my State or be nominated to serve as an ambassador would have been laughable in my childhood.

I stand here today grateful to God for His grace and goodness, and it is the only explanation for my being here. I would say the same for the nation that I have been nominated to deploy to.

Israel is a tiny nation the size of New Jersey, and it is the only rational explanation for its existence in various forms for the past 3,500 years would be the grace——

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. HUCKABEE. Well, the good news is they are not members of my family which might be the case protesting me sometimes.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HUCKABEE. I first visited Israel almost 52 years ago. It was the summer of 1973. It was just 3 months before the Yom Kippur War.

I was 17 years old right out of high school. It was a month before my 18th birthday, and despite my growing up in poverty my soon to be college roommate came from an affluent family.

We really were the prince and the pauper. My friend wanted to take a senior trip to the Middle East and his father was willing to let him go but only if I went along, and the father offered to pay my way to make it possible.

In that summer we went to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Israel. All of them were fascinating, but it was Israel that had an impact on me that 52 years later I still find hard to explain.

I started taking groups of people to visit there in 1981. I have led tens of thousands of people to visit the Bible lands.

The number of trips that I have made there probably approximates a hundred. I have made deep and lasting friendships among Jewish and Arab populations.

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. HUCKABEE. Thank you, Senator.

I still believe it is the Promised Land. It is holy ground to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Since 1948 when Israel was finally recognized as an independent Jewish state it has always been under attack. The first nation to officially recognize Israel was the United States when our President Harry S. Truman did so within minutes of it being constituted as an independent state.

Israel faced an immediate war in 1948 from the nations that surrounded it. It had another one in 1956, 1967, 1973, and yet others in 1982, 1990, and 2014.

The terrorist group Hamas launched an attack October 7 of 2023 against innocent civilians including pregnant women, elderly people, and even tiny and helpless babies.

The impact of that massacre continues to this very day. The ongoing war and the situation with the hostages, including American citizens, makes this assignment urgent.

This body acted with bipartisanship and great dispatch as a result of the October 7 massacre of Israeli citizens when our most re-

cent Ambassador, Jack Lew, was nominated by President Biden, and that sense of urgency has not dimmed.

That war still continues, and for that reason I respectfully ask your thoughtful consideration for confirmation to become our nation's Ambassador to the state of Israel.

Thank you.

#### NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

*Question.* Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from the Department of State available to the Committee and designated staff when invited?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you commit to keep this Committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff?

Answer. Yes.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Huckabee follows:]

#### Prepared Statement of Mike Huckabee

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the privilege of coming before you today as you conduct your Constitutional obligation of "advise and consent" of those nominated by the President to serve as an ambassador of our beloved nation. I am mindful that the Founders recognized that Senate approval was not Senate agreement with the President, his policies, or with those he selected to represent him. But it was decreed that the Senate in its solemn duty, would make sure that those nominated for Federal duty would be thoroughly examined to determine moral and legal fitness to serve. I have no illusion that everyone on this committee agrees with President Trump's policies or his choices for roles in his administration. It is simply my hope that we will be able to engage in a meaningful discussion. I am not here to articulate or defend my own views or policies, but to present myself as one who will respect and represent the President whose overwhelming election by the people will hopefully give me the honor of serving as Ambassador to the state of Israel. I'm indeed grateful to President Trump for being asked to serve and will do so willingly and joyfully if confirmed.

I am blessed to have a wonderful and supportive family, most especially my wife of almost 51 years, Janet who is with me here today; and my children John Mark Huckabee, David Huckabee and his wife Lauren, and my daughter Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and her husband, First Gentleman of Arkansas Bryan Sanders along with our 7 grandchildren who are watching. Their prayers surround me, and their presence sustains me. Perhaps I should be suspicious of how eager they seem to be for me to post halfway around the world, but I surmise that it is genuine support as they realize what an honor and challenge I've been tasked by President Trump to fulfill.

For me to even be here is a bit overwhelming. I grew up in a small, orange brick shotgun rent house in a little town called Hope, Arkansas that few people had ever heard of until Bill Clinton ran to become the 42nd President of the United States. When he was President and I was Governor of Arkansas, it was the first time in American history that a sitting President and a sitting Governor of any State were both from the same hometown, in our case a small town of 8000 people tucked away in the far southwest corner of a small southern State.

Many people say they are the first in their family to attend or graduate college. No male upstream from me in my entire family lineage ever graduated high school. The very notion I would one day be Governor of my State, run twice for President, or be nominated to serve as an ambassador would have been laughable in my childhood. I stand grateful to God for His grace and goodness. It's the only explanation for my being here.

In many ways, I would say the same for the Nation I have been nominated to deploy to in service of my country. Israel is a tiny nation the size of New Jersey and the only rational explanation for its existence in various forms for the past 3500 years and its resilience through repeated attacks and attempts to annihilate it are the grace and goodness of God.

I first visited Israel almost 52 years ago in the summer of 1973, just 3 months before the Yom Kippur War. I was 17 years old, freshly graduated from high school and a month before my 18th birthday and entering Ouachita Baptist University as a freshman. Despite growing up in poverty, my soon to be college roommate came from an affluent family. We truly were the “Prince and the Pauper” but have remained close friends as now have our children and even our grandchildren. My friend wanted to take a senior trip to the Middle East. His father was only willing to let him go if I went along and offered to pay my way to make it possible.

We went to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Israel. All were fascinating to a boy who never thought he’d travel more than 100 miles from where he grew up or fly in an airplane. I will never forget the absolute splendor of Beirut with its dazzling architecture and antiquities, or the ruins of Ephesus in Turkey or the tranquility of the beaches of Cyprus, but it was Israel that had an impact on me that 52 years later I still find hard to explain. I started taking groups of people to visit there in 1981 and have led tens of thousands to visit the Bible Lands leading them from Dan to Beersheba. I’ve lost count of the number of trips I’ve made there but it probably approximates 100. I’ve made deep and lasting friendships there among Jewish and Arab populations. After all these years and trips I still believe it is the Promised Land—holy ground to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

It’s certainly a complicated part of the world, and the tiny sliver of real estate carved out of the British Mandate from the Ottoman Empire in 1917 to again be “a national home for the Jewish people” remains the most contested bit of land on the planet.

Since 1948 when Israel was finally recognized as an independent Jewish state, it has been under attack for its existence. It is noteworthy that the first nation to recognize Israel was the United States, when our President Harry S. Truman did so within minutes of its being constituted as an independent state. President Truman had been taught in his Independence, Missouri church the lessons of Genesis 12 that those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed. President Truman would later say that he believed the teaching of his mother and grandmother and desired for America to be blessed. And we have been.

Israel faced an immediate war in 1948 from the nations that surrounded it. Another one in 1956, another in 1967, another in 1973, and yet others in 1982, 1990, 2014, and most recently the most vicious one launched on October 7 of 2023 which continues to this very day.

President Trump’s first term was the most consequential for Israel and the Middle East ever with his historic Abraham Accords, and finally moving our Embassy to Jerusalem, the ancient, indigenous, and Biblical eternal Capital of the Jewish people. He recognized the Golan Heights as sovereign territory of Israel, and his leadership throughout the Middle East brought major diplomatic breakthroughs in large measure by not continuing to push failed policies but looking at entirely new ways to bring lasting peace to the region.

The challenges facing Israel and the United States in this part of the world are enormous. The ongoing war and situation with hostages, including American citizens makes this assignment urgent. This body acted with bi-partisanship and great dispatch when our most recent Ambassador Jack Lew was nominated by President Biden because of the October 7 massacre and vicious rape of Israeli civilians by the savages of the terror group Hamas. That sense of urgency has not dimmed. And for that reason, I respectfully ask your thoughtful consideration for confirmation as expeditiously as possible. Whether you vote to confirm me or not, I will stand ready to work with you in your role on this important Constitutional role you have as members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I further pledge to serve the President and the people of the United States with my whole heart and soul, and above all, I pledge to be mindful of the grace of God to afford me this privilege.

Senator RISC. Thank you very much, Mr. Huckabee.  
Mr. Cabrera.

**STATEMENT OF HON. KEVIN CABRERA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE  
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF  
PANAMA**

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished committee members, it is an honor to be here with you today.

I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, and Secretary Rubio for his support throughout the process.

With your concurrence and approval, I look forward to beginning my work in Panama and serving the people of the United States of America.

I appreciate the opportunities I have had to meet with many of you and discuss our bilateral relationship with Panama. I take this opportunity to serve as ambassador with great seriousness, humility, and clarity of purpose.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our dialogue on national politics and ensuring our country's strengths and partnerships with Panama.

As a proud first generation American and son of Cuban exiles, I carry a deep appreciation for the opportunities this country has given me and my family.

My family's journey from hardship and oppression to freedom and success has shaped my values and reinforced my commitment to the ideals of liberty and democracy.

This personal history instills in me a profound sense of duty to uphold these principles and work for our nation's interest.

From day one President Trump has made it clear that U.S. foreign policy must always prioritize the interests of America and its citizens.

His America first policy directive reaffirmed our commitment to achieving peace through strength while ensuring that our diplomacy reflects U.S. values, sovereignty, and security.

As I sit here before you today I recall Secretary Rubio's confirmation hearing where he outlined a clear and principled vision for U.S. foreign policy, one rooted in strength, purpose, and accountability.

He framed it around three fundamental questions: Does this make America stronger, does this make America safer, and does this make America more prosperous?

These questions reflect a core mission of American diplomacy. They serve as a guiding framework that I fully embrace. I take this charge seriously, knowing that representing the United States abroad is both a privilege and a solemn duty.

My mother, a woman of faith, who is with us today, always reminded me that to whom much is given much is expected. Her wisdom and resilience have shaped my approach to service. She has taught me that faith and hard work can overcome even the greatest obstacles and a lesson I always carry forward.

The U.S.-Panama bilateral relationship is of paramount importance rooted in shared values and mutual interest. Our partnership spans a wide range of areas including shared security concerns, immigration cooperation, and economic engagement.



This relationship is vital to the stability and prosperity of the Western Hemisphere. One of the key aspects of our cooperation is ensuring the security of the Panama Canal, a critical international waterway that facilitates global trade and economic growth.

Our collaborative efforts with Panama to maintain the canal's neutrality and security are essential for safeguarding this strategic asset.

Recent actions such as Panama's decision to exit the Belt and Road Initiative and audit the port concessions demonstrate their commitment to the shared goal.

Immigration cooperation is another cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. Both nations face challenges related to illegal immigration and transnational criminal activity.

By working together we can effective strategies to manage immigration flows, combat human trafficking, and enhance border security while contributing to long term regional stability.

Economic engagement between the United States and Panama is also a critical component of this partnership. The U.S. investments in Panama support energy production, infrastructure development, and foster economic resilience and growth while working to enhance supply chain resiliency and further strengthening our economic ties and benefiting both nations.

Throughout my career I have worked across party lines to advance policies that benefit our community. As an elected official I have worked with and today have the support of Democrat leaders including the mayor of Miami-Dade County Daniella Levine Cava, former minority leader of the Florida House of Representatives Kionne McGhee, who is with us here today, and former minority leader of the Florida Senate Oscar Braynon.

These partnerships demonstrate my ability to build consensus and to work in the best interests of the people we serve.

I would bring this same spirit of collaboration to my role as ambassador, ensuring that our foreign policy remains a unifying force for American interests.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of this committee, our relationship with Panama has a direct impact on our safety, security, and the prosperity of American people.

As ambassador it would be my honor to protect American citizens and promote U.S. economic interest. I recognize the obligation of implementing these strategies and the policies of the United States, and I recognize the responsibilities that I have to the Constitution of the United States, the President, Secretary Rubio, and to Congress members of the United States.

Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.

#### NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

*Question.* Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from the Department of State available to the Committee and designated staff when invited?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you commit to keep this Committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff?

Answer. Yes.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cabrera follows:]

#### **Prepared Statement of Kevin Cabrera**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Committee Members, it is an honor to be here with you today.

I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, and to Secretary of State Rubio for his support throughout this process. With your concurrence and approval, I look forward to beginning my work in Panama and serving the people of the United States of America.

I appreciate the opportunities I've had to meet with many of you and discuss our bilateral relationship with Panama. I take this opportunity to serve as Ambassador with great seriousness, humility, and clarity of purpose. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our dialogue on national priorities and ensuring our country strengthens its partnership with Panama.

As a proud first-generation American and the son of Cuban exiles, I carry a deep appreciation for the opportunities this country has given me.

My family's journey—from hardship and oppression to freedom and success—has shaped my values and reinforced my commitment to the ideals of liberty and democracy.

This personal history instills in me a profound sense of duty to uphold these principles and to work for our nation's interests.

From day one, President Trump made it clear that U.S. foreign policy must always prioritize the interests of America and its citizens. His "America First Policy Directive" reaffirmed our commitment to achieving peace through strength while ensuring that our diplomacy reflects U.S. values, sovereignty, and security.

As I sit before you today, I recall Secretary Rubio's confirmation hearing, where he outlined a clear, principled vision for U.S. foreign policy—one rooted in strength, purpose, and accountability. He framed it around three fundamental questions:

- Does it make America safer?
- Does it make America stronger?
- Does it make America more prosperous?

These questions reflect the core mission of American diplomacy. They serve as a guiding framework that I fully embrace.

I take this charge seriously, knowing that representing the United States abroad is both a privilege and a solemn duty.

My mother, a woman of faith, always reminded me that to whom much is given, much is expected. Her wisdom and resilience have shaped my approach to service. She taught me that faith and hard work can overcome even the greatest obstacles—a lesson I carry with me always.

The U.S.-Panama bilateral relationship is of paramount importance, rooted in shared values and mutual interests. Our partnership spans a wide range of areas, including shared security concerns, immigration cooperation, and economic engagement. This relationship is vital for the stability and prosperity of the Western Hemisphere.

One of the key aspects of our cooperation is ensuring the security of the Panama Canal, a critical international waterway that facilitates global trade and economic growth. Our collaborative efforts with Panama to maintain the Canal's neutrality and security are essential for safeguarding this strategic asset. Recent actions, such as Panama's decision to exit China's Belt and Road Initiative and audit port concessions, demonstrate their commitment to this shared goal.

Immigration cooperation is another cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. Both nations face challenges related to illegal immigration and transnational criminal activity. By working together, we can develop effective strategies to manage immigration flows, combat human trafficking, and enhance border security, contributing to long-term regional stability.

Economic engagement between the United States and Panama is also a critical component of our partnership. U.S. investments in Panama support energy production and infrastructure development, fostering economic growth and resilience, while

working to enhance supply chain resiliency will further strengthens our economic ties and benefit both nations.

Throughout my career, I have worked across party lines to advance policies that benefit our communities. As an elected official, I have worked with and had the support of Democratic leaders, including the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, the former Minority Leader of the Florida House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the Florida Senate. These partnerships demonstrate my ability to build consensus and work in the best interest of the people we serve. I would bring this same spirit of collaboration to my role as Ambassador, ensuring that our foreign policy remains a unifying force for American interests.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of this committee, our relationship with Panama has a direct impact on the safety, security, and prosperity of the American people. As Ambassador, it would be my honor to protect American citizens and promote U.S. economic interests. I recognize the obligation of implementing the strategies and policies of the United States. I recognize the responsibilities that I have to the Constitution of the United States, President Trump, Secretary of State Rubio, and to Congressmembers of the United States. Thank you very much for your time today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Cabrera.  
Mr. Rubinstein.

**STATEMENT OF REED RUBINSTEIN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE  
LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, members of the committee.

It is an honor of a lifetime to appear before you here today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee to serve as legal advisor of the Department of State.

I am humbled and grateful for the confidence and the trust that the President and Secretary of State Rubio have shown in me. I will work relentlessly to help them make America safe, strong, and prosperous again.

Thank you as well to the members and staff of this committee. I deeply appreciate the time you have made available to me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you.

Over the course of my career I have had the great good fortune to work with and learn from accomplished men and women of great moral strength, high character, and a deep commitment to our nation, our citizens, and our Constitution. Some of them are here with us today from America First Legal Foundation.

To my many friends, colleagues and teachers, I thank you.

Finally, thank you to my dear family, my wife, Betsy, who is here with us today; our children, three sons and three daughters-in-law, our seven—God willing soon to be eight, grandchildren—my siblings, and their spouses.

I wish to especially acknowledge my mother. She and her twin sister, natives of Flint, Michigan—they just turned 89 3 days ago. Both are still going strong.

They prove that Flint, for decades an American manufacturing powerhouse, once knew how to make great things that last.

I am incredibly blessed to be here before you. If confirmed, it would be my privilege to lead more than 300 lawyers and staff in the Office of the Legal Adviser. These great professionals are widely acknowledged to be the best international lawyers in the world.

Edwin D. Williamson, who served with great distinction as the legal advisor for Secretary of State James Baker, has opined that the legal adviser's responsibility and role should be to use the best

legal skills to reach correct legal decisions that give the client the most legal options for reaching the client's desired goal.

I share Mr. Williamson's opinion. President Trump and Secretary Rubio's policies, orders, and directives are crystal clear. The department must champion core American interests and always put America and American citizens first.

To that end, it has been tasked with defending American sovereignty and protecting the rule of law. This means, among other things, excluding or removing aliens, including student visa holders, who violate our laws, who preach or call for sectarian violence, for overthrowing or replacing the culture in which our constitutional republic stands or provide advocacy, aid, or support for foreign terrorists such as the bestial perpetrators of the October 7 atrocities.

The department has also been charged with securing better national and economic security results for our citizens by restoring commercial statecraft as a foreign policy priority.

If confirmed as the legal advisor I will work with my career and political colleagues to provide the best possible legal advice and counsel to get these things done.

If confirmed, this would be the second time that I have served as the Cabinet agency's general counsel. During the first Trump administration, after stints at the Departments of the Treasury, Agriculture and Justice, I was the acting general counsel of the Department of Education.

There, among other things, I worked closely and collaboratively with career and political attorneys, Department of Justice colleagues, other Federal agency partners, and congressional members and staff to expose and combat malign foreign influence in the U.S. higher education industry.

We uncovered approximately 20,000 previously unreported foreign transactions totaling over \$17 billion. We facilitated multiple law enforcement actions, and we amplified congressional oversight.

Our work was lawful and effective, and it put America and American citizens first. If confirmed, I will bring that same energy, commitment, and collaborative ethos to my work at the Department of State.

In January, Secretary Rubio appeared before you and affirmed that we need a strong and confident America that engages in the world while putting our core national interests above all else.

President Trump was elected to keep a promise of a strong America that promotes peace abroad and security and prosperity here at home.

Therefore, Secretary Rubio has pledged that every dollar we spend, every program we fund, and every policy we pursue must make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

If confirmed, under my leadership the Office of the Legal Advisor will provide the advice and counsel that the Secretary needs to help the department honor this pledge.

To do so, we will carefully study the facts of each issue before us and rigorously test, analyze, and apply the applicable law. We will be faithful to the Constitution and to the controlling Supreme Court precedents, and we will do our work with excellence, with honor, and with integrity.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

#### NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

*Question.* Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from the Department of State available to the Committee and designated staff when invited?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I commit to appearing before this Committee when requested, in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. While I cannot speak for other Department officials, I have the utmost respect for the role of Congress and this Committee and if confirmed, I commit to working with you and your staff on any such requests, again, in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

*Question.* Do you commit to keep this Committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I commit to keeping the Committee informed, consistent with the need to protect executive branch confidentiality interests, including attorney-client privilege, in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. I have the utmost respect for the role of Congress and this Committee and if confirmed, I commit to engaging cooperatively with you and your staff.

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

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I commit to engaging in meaningful consultation with the Committee, consistent with the need to protect executive branch confidentiality interests and in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. I have the utmost respect for the role of Congress and this Committee and if confirmed, I commit to engaging cooperatively with you and your staff.

*Question.* Do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I commit to engaging with the Department's Office of Legislative Affairs to respond promptly to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff, consistent with the need to protect executive branch confidentiality interests and in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rubinstein follows:]

#### **Prepared Statement of Reed Rubinstein**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the Committee:

It is an honor of a lifetime to appear before you as President Donald J. Trump's nominee to serve as Legal Adviser of the Department of State. I am humbled and grateful for the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary of State Rubio have shown me. I will work relentlessly to help them make America safe, strong, and prosperous again. Thank you as well to the Members and staff of this Committee. I deeply appreciate the time you have made available to me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you.

Throughout my career, I have had the great good fortune to work with and learn from accomplished men and women of great moral strength, high character, and a deep commitment to our Nation, our citizens, and our Constitution. Thank you to my many friends, colleagues, and teachers.

Finally, thank you to my dear family—my wife, our children, three sons and three daughters-in-law, our seven grandchildren, and my siblings and their spouses. I wish to especially acknowledge my mother; she and her twin sister, natives of Flint, Michigan, just turned 89 3 days ago, and both are still going strong. They prove that Flint, an American manufacturing powerhouse for decades, knew how to make extraordinary things that last.

I am incredibly blessed.

If confirmed, I would be privileged to lead more than 300 lawyers and staff in the Office of the Legal Adviser. These great professionals are widely acknowledged as the best international lawyers in the world.

Edwin D. Williamson, who served with great distinction as the Legal Adviser for Secretary of State James Baker, has opined that the Legal Adviser's responsibility should be "to use [the] best legal skills to reach correct legal decisions that [give

the client] the most legal options” for reaching the client’s desired goal. I share Mr. Williamson’s opinion.

President Trump and Secretary Rubio’s policies, orders, and directives are crystal clear. The Department must champion core American interests and always put America and American citizens first. To that end, it has been tasked with defending American sovereignty and protecting the rule of law by enforcing our immigration laws. This means, among other things, excluding or removing aliens, including student visa holders, who violate our laws, who preach or call for sectarian violence, for overthrowing or replacing the culture on which our constitutional Republic stands, or who provide advocacy, aid, or support for foreign terrorists such as the bestial perpetrators of the October 7 atrocities. The Department has also been charged with securing better national and economic security results for our citizens by restoring commercial statecraft as a foreign policy priority. If confirmed as the Legal Adviser, I will work with my career and political colleagues to provide the best legal advice and counsel to get these things done.

If confirmed, this would be the second time I have served as a cabinet agency’s general counsel. During the first Trump Administration, after stints at the Departments of the Treasury, Agriculture, and Justice, I was the acting General Counsel of the Department of Education. There, among other things, I worked closely and collaboratively with career and political attorneys, Department of Justice colleagues, other Federal agency partners, and congressional Members and staff to expose and combat malign foreign influence in the U.S. higher education industry. We uncovered approximately 20,000 previously unreported foreign transactions totaling over \$17 billion, facilitated multiple law enforcement actions, and amplified congressional oversight. Our work was lawful and effective and put America and American citizens first. If confirmed, I will bring that same energy, commitment, and collaborative ethos to my work at the Department of State.

In January, Secretary Rubio appeared before you and affirmed that we need a strong and confident America that engages in the world while putting our core national interests above all else. President Trump was elected to keep a promise of a strong America that promotes peace abroad and security and prosperity here at home; therefore, Secretary Rubio has pledged that every dollar we spend, every program we fund, and every policy we pursue must make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. If confirmed, under my leadership, the Office of the Legal Adviser will provide the advice and counsel that the Secretary needs to help the Department honor this pledge. To do so, we will carefully study the facts of each case and rigorously test and apply the applicable law. We will be faithful to the Constitution and the controlling Supreme Court precedent. And we will do our work with excellence, honor, and integrity.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Rubinstein. We appreciate that.

We will now go to a round of 5 minute questions, and I want to start with you, Mr. Cabrera.

I am embarrassed to say that one of my predecessors from Idaho was sitting on this committee when the Panama Canal was given away. He collaborated with the President, and the result was that we lost the Panama Canal.

I disagreed with him vehemently at that time as did the people of the State of Idaho, which had obviously drastic consequences for him in the next election.

But nonetheless, he got it done before he left, and now we are in a position where that particular piece of real estate is incredibly important to the United States from a national security standpoint, and fortunately there were some provisions in the treaty that was negotiated at that time that would give us a foothold.

Could you give us your thoughts on how we are going to reverse this situation?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the question.

I think President Trump and Secretary Rubio as—per Secretary Rubio in his trip to Panama—his first trip abroad, which I think goes to show the importance of this issue to both Secretary Rubio

and to the department, he articulated that he felt that the neutrality portion of the treaty Article 4 might be in violation, and I think he has made great strides is what I will say during these past 60 days in which we have seen Panama be the first country to enter the Belt and Road Initiative and be the first country to exit in Central America.

We have seen them also, the potential sale that is moving forward with CK Hutchison to American companies. Again, I think we have made great strides in these first 60 days, and I am optimistic that we can continue this. I look forward to, if confirmed, working with this committee, working with Secretary Rubio, working with President Trump, to continue to make those strides.

But one thing I will add is it is not just the Chinese influence in the canal. You know, we have seen it in all sorts of facets of their society, right?

You look at the city of Colon that has received, you know, traffic cameras and street light cameras from the Chinese government. Where is the cloud being stored? Who has access to this, right?

You look at some of the cranes in Manzanilla port which, again, are Chinese—you know, do they have access to the technology behind these cranes?

As a county commissioner we have oversight over the port and the airport, and I will tell you we face similar questions. When we put out to bid cranes at our ports, you know, as to what security issues might come with—many times they underbid.

You know, a lot of these companies are—you know, they are government owned in China, and they will underbid, you know, 20, 30 percent to make sure that you buy their crane and that sometimes could be an issue because who has access to the information that these cranes might have? Can they stop them at a certain point?

Again, it raises all sorts of concerns. But I will say that what I am optimistic is to the great progress that Secretary Rubio has made along with President Trump in these first 60 days.

But it is a real concern that they articulate regarding the Chinese influence in the canal. But I would say that, again, it does not just extend to the canal but society and I think also the Western Hemisphere.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I wish you well in your endeavors in that regard and see if we cannot get our hands back on what I guess was the largest undertaking outside of the United States of the Federal Government in a construction lane.

Mr. Rubinstein, one of the real issues we had with the last Administration—and it was a bipartisan concern, it was not just myself, myself and the former—well, at that time chairman of the committee did our best to try to extricate information regarding the Rob Malley matter, and we got stiff armed by the by the Administration and by the State Department.

We still do not have a full accounting of that. I am very much interested in that. I suspect the Ranking Member is also interested in that. I think I know what happened, but only because of rumors.

So will you commit to give us a full briefing on that factually so we can have an understanding of what happened and what we need to do about it?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am also interested in Mr. Malley. I can commit that if confirmed I will consult with my colleagues, get read into the facts because, obviously, now I am not, and communicate with Congress appropriately and lawfully.

In my—as I mentioned in my last go around as a general counsel I worked very closely with Congress. I am a big believer in keeping the lines of communication as open as possible, and I fully intend to do the same thing here on this issue and others as appropriate.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Mr. HUCKABEE, to me the Middle East is changing and has changed dramatically over the last decade or so, and I think people will look back in history and say the Abraham Accords were one of the pivotal points where that change took place.

Do you agree with me that normalization between Israel and Saudi is a paramount goal for all of us to engage in to finish out what the Abraham Accords have started?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Mr. Chairman, without a doubt that has got to be one of the most urgent things to happen. There is no reason that there is not a build upon the Abraham Accords.

They were historic, significant in so many ways, and brought the reality that whether it is trade or tourism or the sharing of military intelligence for everyone's safety and security in that region are all benefited.

Everyone there has pretty much the common adversary—enemy, if you will—and that is Iran, who seem hell bent on wreaking havoc throughout the entire world, starting in the Middle East.

So I believe the President is in an incredible position to build upon what he did in his first term, expanding the Abraham Accords to include not only the Saudis but other Gulf state nations, and I would look forward very much, if confirmed, to working with all of you to cede that to fruition.

Senator RISCH. Thank you so much.

Appreciate those remarks.

And with that, I will turn to Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am going to start with you, Mr. Rubinstein.

Your job at the State Department, as I understand, is not to form policy but to provide legal advice to Secretary Rubio and President Trump on their proposed policies.

In your opening statement you talked about working in a way that was lawful, about your faithful commitment to the Constitution.

So can I just ask do you commit to following the law, to advising against any policy or action that would violate Federal law if confirmed?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. I am sorry. Any action that would violate Federal law?

Senator SHAHEEN. Any policy or action that would violate Federal law. Does not seem like a difficult question.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you for that question, Ranking Member Shaheen.

I commit to applying the law, working with my colleagues internally at the Department of State. On more complex issues the way that we did it before was to reach outside and consult with the De-



partment of Justice and the Office of Legal Counsel and providing our client with the best possible legal advice, outlining various options and potential consequences of different courses of action.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, again, let me ask if you can give me a yes or no question. Do you commit to following the law and to advising against policies or actions that would violate current Federal law?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Well, so I am not sure it lends necessarily a yes or no answer, Senator. The law is a conversation. It is one of the great things about it. It is why it has been so interesting to me these 40 years.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am married to an attorney for 56 years. I understand what you are saying. But that is——

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. So when you say—when you say is there a——

Senator SHAHEEN. But what I am asking you is a yes or no question.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. But it—again, I mean, yes, the job of the Federal Government, writ broadly, is to follow the law. That is not a controversial proposition at all.

Kind of where the rubber hits the road, though, is when you are looking in at the margins and particularly, I know this is of interest in talking with staff, talking with your staff.

There are questions about the relative legalities, for example, of certain separation of powers issues on matters that are likely to come up before the department.

And there it gets into a gray area. You end up into discussions about what the relative balance is between Congress, say, and the executive with respect to various powers, and often there is not an absolutely clear answer. So I am not trying—yes, the Federal Government——

Senator SHAHEEN. I will take that as a no, actually, based on what you have just said, and I have to say that that makes me concerned, and given some of your past online postings—for example, last year, you posted alleging that the Biden administration was engaged in a massive program to overthrow the Israeli government in the middle of a multi-front war. Do you really believe that?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Well, I do not have the checks that were written. I do believe that there are sufficient facts to support that statement. We know that in 2015, actually, a committee of this Senate did a report on an outfit called One Voice.

During the Obama administration the State Department was running money to fund an anti-government operation inside of Israel. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations did this work.

The report was not acknowledged much in the United States, but it sure made an impact in Israel when it was issued. Many of the same people who were involved in the Obama administration State Department came back under President Biden, and it appears to us based—appears to me, based on emails that I obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and that we read that the same playbook was being run.

We have emails, for example, from an American NGO—and all of this is public record, Senator. I invite you to read it. I can provide it. We have emails from an American NGO——

Senator SHAHEEN. I have heard these conspiracy theories before—

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Respectfully—

Senator SHAHEEN [continuing]. But I have been here through the Obama administration, through the first Trump administration, through the Biden administration, and I can tell you that I never heard anybody in any of those Administrations talking about a multi-front war trying to overthrow the Israeli government. I do not believe it—

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. In—

Senator SHAHEEN [continuing]. And I hear you are saying that and trying to justify that as a conspiracy theory. And so I guess what confidence can you give me, can you give this committee, that you can provide impartial, unbiased legal advice that is grounded in facts and the law? And so far, you are not convincing me.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Well, Senator, with respect to the Senate report from the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations that was not—I did not write that. That came out of this body.

With respect to the emails that I read between these NGOs and Barbara Leaf, I did not write those either. Just read them, and they say what they say. And perhaps they lend themselves to different interpretations.

I am willing to concede that. But I believe there was a good faith basis for what I said.

Now, with respect to my legal advice, there is a difference between advocacy and providing careful—you said you are married to a lawyer for 56 years. There is a difference between advocacy and providing a client with careful, proper legal advice.

The way that I have worked in private practice, the way that I worked in my last stint in government, the way that I would work here is to, as I said, rigorously review the facts.

Learn as much as you can about the situation. Apply the relevant authorities. Consult with your colleagues. Look for the subject matter experts.

At the Department of State we are blessed, as I said, with some of the best international law experts in the world to be able to draw on that knowledge, to consult with my colleagues at the Office of the Legal Counsel and the Department of Justice, and then provide the decisionmakers with the best possible legal advice. That is what I will do.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator RICKETTS.

Senator RICKETTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all of our nominees for your past public service and also for your willingness to continue to serve our great nation, and for your families who also have sacrificed and served along with you. So thank you.

The Popular Resistance Committees is the third largest terrorist organization in Gaza and also a puppet of Iran. After decades of attacks, including the October 7 attack, it has both American and Israeli blood on its hands.

Despite this, the PRC has yet to be properly designated and sanctioned. Later today Senator Schiff and I will be introducing the

Accountability for Terrorist Perpetrators of October 7th Act which among other things will cut off the People's Resistance Committees from the global financial markets.

Governor Huckabee, do you agree that the U.S. should hold all terrorist groups who played a role on October 7 accountable for the atrocities?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, a wonderful question because I feel like that this is one that everyone—Democrat, Republican—and the fact that you have bipartisan support to introduce that bill is very significant.

I cannot imagine under any circumstances that any right minded person would find it acceptable to support or to even acknowledge that there was justification in any way for the massacre of innocent civilians on October 7.

If I am confirmed I will be absolutely clear to carry the President's policies. They have been clear that Hamas will have no future in Gaza. It cannot.

This was not simply a cold blooded murder in which people came across the borders and shot innocent people. They massacred them, and they did it in the way that was most physically painful and in the way that was most personally humiliating, and worse, they videotaped themselves doing it because they were proud of it, and they published it with pride, and they announced repeatedly that they would do it again.

Hamas is not a government. It is not a standing army. It is a terrorist organization, and they acted like it, and they must be treated as such.

And if confirmed I would hope that this unfortunate, horrific war that has resulted in many, many deaths, including Americans, the taking of hostages for a longer period of time than even the hostages in 1979 were taken during the Iranian takeover, that all of that could come to an end, and there could be accountability for what was done to Jewish people on October 7 of 2023.

Senator RICKETTS. So I take by your answer I can have your commitment to work with me on this piece of legislation that will properly hold the People's Resistance Committees accountable and properly sanctioned and designated. Is that fair?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, unflinchingly I commit to you to do that very thing.

Senator RICKETTS. Great. Thank you.

Let us move on to the head of the snake, Iran. Right now the Ayatollah is reeling. Hamas and Hezbollah have been decimated. Iran has been kicked out of Syria, at least for the time being, after the fall of Assad.

Tehran's air defenses have been wiped out by the IDF, and thanks to President Trump reimposing maximum pressure including sanctioning communist China's teapot refineries, its economy is in freefall.

However, it remains to be seen if out of desperation Iran will come to the table or sprint to build a nuclear weapon. President Trump has reportedly given Tehran 2 months to deal or risk severe consequences.

Needless to say, Iran being closer than ever to having a nuclear weapon is not just a threat to Israel. It is a threat to the United

States and global security in general. It cannot be allowed to happen.

Do you agree with President Trump that Iran cannot be allowed to have a nuclear weapon?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I appreciate the question because it gives me the opportunity to let you know that I absolutely believe that the President is taking the right course of action.

He did it in his first term. The maximum pressure bankrupted the Iranians. It made it impossible to fund the Houthis, Hezbollah, Hamas. They did not have the money.

When his term ended and President Biden took office, unfortunately, they relaxed some of those pressures, and the result was Iran had money again. They did not use it to help their people. They used it to murder people in Israel through the Houthis, through Hezbollah, and through Hamas.

I am grateful to serve a President who recognizes that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon and that it is better to bankrupt them than it is to bomb them.

Senator RICKETTS. And Governor, I believe you are exactly right. The Trump administration took Iran's foreign reserves down from \$122.5 billion dollars down to under \$14 billion.

That prevented them from funding groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. So you are exactly right, and this policy of sanctioning them and trying to bankrupt Iran is exactly the right course. So thank you very much.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Ricketts.

Senator BOOKER.

Senator BOOKER. Governor, it is good to see you here.

My office lives with this fierce urgency. There is an American being held right now in Gaza named Edan Alexander, and knowing every day that he is being tortured, his suffering and that of his family back in New Jersey is one of the central urgencies of my staff and my team.

We know that we have seen a lot of the hostage releases happen during cease fires, and during those times the pathways to peace are open that would relieve the suffering of innocent Palestinians as well.

We know that Hamas cannot remain in control, that they must release hostages and surrender so we can start the reconstruction and secure the safety and security of not just Palestinians but the Israeli state as well.

But again, the grief hanging over many of those who know the families involved makes central clarity to getting this done.

I think that one of your most important missions should you be confirmed is getting the release of the hostages and aiding to the end of this nightmare that is fueling the suffering of Israelis and Palestinians.

And so tactically I am curious of your thoughts, especially given the cease fires that have enabled moments where hostages have been released.

You know, during the first cease fire we saw releases of numerous hostages and commitments being made. I am wondering if you

can comment on what your thoughts are about how your role could help us get Edan home and an end to this nightmare.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I appreciate your question, and let me say emphatically that it would not be one of the most important things that I would consider on my duty list if confirmed. It would be the most important thing.

That American citizen from New Jersey that you care deeply about and you have worked so diligently with—and I am deeply grateful for the efforts you have made with that family—that has to be the first item of business before anything else.

Every hostage should have already been home. The only reason they are not is because of Hamas. Hamas who has used them as bargaining chips, Hamas who has used them to torture, Hamas who, when they do release often only because they feel compelled and absolutely obligated to give them one more day of survival, they do so in the most horrific way by humiliating the hostages.

Senator BOOKER. And I am going to interrupt because I have one more question I want to get done.

Mr. HUCKABEE. OK.

Senator BOOKER. And I interrupt you because I do not disagree with anything that you are saying. I was there on October 7. The viciousness and brutality of that attack that triggered this whole thing lies at the feet of this terrorist organization. So you and I are in complete agreement.

What I am asking and I am hoping I can get in writing because I really would like to get to my next question is that we still have strategic and tactical decisions to make, and you will be one of the players at the table.

Your affirmation and confirmation that this will be the most important thing, getting a United States citizen home—I hear that—and I would like to be able to discuss that with you more.

The second question I have is that the *Jerusalem Post* reported that the Trump administration's pivot to Russia is making our allies including Israel wary of sharing intelligence, fearing that doing so could expose their assets. There is precedent for this concern.

On May 10, 2017, while meeting with Russia's foreign minister and Ambassador to Washington in the Oval Office Trump shared intelligence about an Islamic State threat with specifics that came from a spy embedded in the terrorist group on behalf of Israel.

The Israel press reported that Trump's leak had placed that person's life at risk and cut off Israel from his intel.

Now, fast forward, yesterday, we learned that the highest ranking national security officials in the Trump administration, including the national security advisor, the head of the CIA, the director of national intelligence, the Secretary of State, and others, discussed sensitive and imminent military operations in a commercial, unclassified messaging app and accidentally included a reporter in that chat.

This seems to be a pattern and practice of the Administration to be using unclassified platforms for these kind of communications.

So I deeply value our relationship with Israel. I know you do. Does it concern you that our close ally is now hesitant to share intelligence because they fear the Trump administration and his top

intelligence officials cannot be trusted and are continuing to give evidence to that effect?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, with appreciation for the question, I can only tell you that I have seen some news reports but not detailed, and I have no knowledge of what has actually happened.

If confirmed, I will work diligently with the President and all of my colleagues to ensure that there is integrity in all that is done, and I have confidence the President will charge me with that responsibility.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Governor Huckabee, and I hope we can talk soon about Edan and his horrific reality and getting him home.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Let us see.

Senator Daines.

Senator DAINES. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Governor Huckabee, it is good to see you here this morning, as well as Janet. Good to see you here as well. And our other nominees, thank you for being before this committee.

Governor Huckabee, I want to jump into the issue with Israel. I think this is perhaps the single most important relationship we have on the earth is the relationship of the United States of America and Israel.

If confirmed, you are going to be a terrific ambassador and a very important ambassador who looks at the priorities. I am grateful for this President and the team he has assembled in terms of the moral clarity they are bringing back to Israel and the Middle East. The world will be a lot safer with this strong leadership coming from the Trump administration.

Governor, I was in Israel a month before the October 7 attack. We did not know that was coming. I was there, went to the north, went down in those Hezbollah terror tunnels that do not get a lot of attention, descending some 80 feet down in the ground, extensive tunnel networks.

Spray painted inside the tunnel it says "On our way to Jerusalem." Hezbollah was using that as a way to infiltrate Israel for an organized attack from the north. There is no question that terrorists and state sponsors like Iran continue to plot for the annihilation of Israel.

My question is how important do you think it is for Israel to normalize relations with U.S. partners like Saudi Arabia.

I remember my meeting with Bibi. It was late August. There was great optimism about what is happening with Israel and Saudi Arabia, of renormalized relationships.

I think we had a breakthrough moment in the Middle East, of course, shattered with what happened on October 7, and I hope and pray that we will be back to working with the Saudis and seeing Israel and Saudi Arabia normalize their relationship.

But how important do you think it is, that link between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and what should our role as the United States be in that regard?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I appreciate the question. I think the President has made it very clear that it is——

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Senator RISCH. All right. Suspend.

Continue.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the President has made it very clear that it is one of his highest priorities to bring that level of cooperation——

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Senator RISCH. All right. Out.

Mr. Huckabee.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you again.

The third time is the charm. So let me see if I can do it.

Senator RISCH. All right.

Mr. HUCKABEE. The President has made it very clear that his goal is to see a real and lasting peace in the entire Middle East, and part of that would have to include the Saudi Arabia government, other governments of the Gulf states, and all those who really do wish to recognize that there is not a threat from Israel toward them.

This is a remarkable change in the geopolitical structure, and it is an incredible opportunity.

I have used the term that I think that it is possible that this President could achieve something in the Middle East that would have—and I use the term deliberately—biblical proportion.

By that I mean that it would be astonishing and incredible to see former enemies, enemies who have fought wars from 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and on to become partners in peace, to share trade, to share economic development, to share tourism and free movement between the nations.

It is not easy. It is not going to necessarily be quick. But Senator, what you have mentioned is exactly what I believe this President is committed to.

He has already achieved extraordinary success in his first term, and if confirmed I look forward to being a part of seeing the next phase of what we know to be the Abraham Accords.

Senator DAINES. Governor, I cannot help but reflect exactly what you said around the optimism we had toward the end of President Trump's first term with the Abraham Accords, the Iranians weakened by the strong sanctions, weakening the bad guys, strengthening the good guys.

And then we went through the Biden years where that was absolutely turned on its head, and I am grateful we will return back to that trajectory that we were on to bring peace back to the Middle East.

Governor, I have got significant concerns about the status of foreign military sales sitting in purgatory at the State Department waiting to be fulfilled.

Could this committee get your commitment to work toward the completion of the sales that the United States has made to Israel?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, if confirmed it would be a delight and privilege to work with the Secretary, the President, and the Department of Defense to ensure that we continue the commitment that we have already made.

It is not a new commitment. It is a longstanding commitment to the state of Israel, and yes, I would commit to that.

Senator DAINES. Governor, thank you.

Mr. Cabrera, the Colon Free Zone is the second largest free trade zone in the world, also well known for money laundering and narcotics trafficking.

My question—how does this illicit finance in Panama benefit everyone from Hezbollah to Hamas to transnational criminal organizations?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you for the question, Senator.

And what I will say is while I am not an expert necessarily in that—and as a private citizen I look forward to, if confirmed, being briefed—I can say that Panama was recently—they have been working with the FBI for some time now, and they were removed from the gray list by the action—financial action task force.

They still remain on the black list by the European Union. But if confirmed I look forward to working with you and with the different agencies that we have to make sure they implement the proper safeguards in their financial systems to make sure they are not being used for those sorts of things that you are articulating, because it would be very risky for us, for our soldiers abroad, and for our allies as well if their financial agencies are being used for these sorts of things.

Senator DAINES. Mr. Cabrera, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of you for putting yourselves forward to serve in important positions.

And Governor Huckabee, I wanted to touch on a couple points. There are concerns to me, and I do not know if there are concerns of yours but I thought I would just ask. One of the things that has bothered me a lot is the use of the 2,000 pound bombs in Gaza because they are by their very nature indiscriminate.

Even if they are called in to take on a identified Hamas target the impact is often dozens of people and tens of dozens injured from a single bomb because the blast crater is so large, and the blast radius is huge.

Have you had any concerns at all about the use of the 2,000 pound bombs in the areas of Gaza?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I am not confirmed, therefore, I do not have access to the level of information that you would certainly possess.

I would hope that one of the commitments that we could keep to the state of Israel is to ensure that the weapon we provide includes the smart weaponry that can be more accurate—

Senator MERKLEY. OK. That is a different question. I would really appreciate if you would just address—you are basically saying based on the publicly available information, you currently have no concerns?

Mr. HUCKABEE. I would want to discuss with the President because an ambassador does not get to have—

Senator MERKLEY. OK. Thank you. We will move on. I am just—I am trying to give you an opportunity to actually answer questions.



Mr. HUCKABEE. Sure, and I am trying to answer, Senator, but all I can do is——

Senator MERKLEY. OK.

Another concern that I have had is the use of humanitarian supplies as leverage in which they have been restricted time and again.

Under international law, this is generally considered an illegitimate strategy of war. Have you had any concerns at all about Israel restricting the supplies of food to Gaza?

Mr. HUCKABEE. They provided 700 trucks a day.

Senator MERKLEY. Have you had concerns? If the answer is no, just tell me no.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Well, I am doing my best to tell you, Senator, that there have been massive supplies.

Senator MERKLEY. OK. Thank you.

I am going to move on because that is just not true under the facts. There have been extended periods where very few trucks at all have gotten in, and certainly we did have relief during the cease fire but we are now in a new phase of extremely restricted supplies.

There have been many, many international organizations that have reported on this. So I know you are not unaware of it.

The President has a plan in which he has talked about having Palestinians all forced out of Gaza and into some other set of countries. Do you support that strategy?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, the President has never said that he would force displacement. That has not been his statements nor his policy, but rather to make sure that there is a safe and secure place for people to live during the process of cleaning out what is a disastrous mess thanks to Hamas——

Senator MERKLEY. Which he has said would be outside of Gaza. That safe and secure place, he said, would be outside of Gaza.

So are you comfortable with Palestinians, whether they are invited, incentivized, whatever, do you think that they should be moved out of Gaza?

Mr. HUCKABEE. They should not be forced displacement unless for their own security, but there are 30,000 unexploded ordnances——

Senator MERKLEY. Except for their own security. So for their own security, they could be forced out of Gaza, then?

Mr. HUCKABEE. I am sorry, sir.

Senator MERKLEY. You said if it is for their own security they could be forced out of Gaza?

Mr. HUCKABEE. I did not say they could be forced, and the President has never said that. He has never spoken about forced displacement, but providing for them——

Senator MERKLEY. OK. Thank you.

Mr. HUCKABEE [continuing]. To find safe haven away from the unexploded ordnances and——

Senator MERKLEY. So another issue that has arisen is certainly the idea of greater Israel, Judea and Samaria.

Was that a gavel? I do not think I am over time yet.

Senator RISCH. No.

Senator MERKLEY. All right. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. It was accidental.

Senator MERKLEY. I am trying to get as many questions I can in these very few minutes.

The greater Israel—Judea and Samaria—includes the West Bank and Gaza. Do you support the idea, as many Israelis do, of having a greater Israel?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, if confirmed it will be my duty to carry out the President's policies, not mine. One of the things that I will recognize an ambassador does not create the policy. He carries the policy of his country and his President.

Senator MERKLEY. But you have expressed support before for the West Bank being Israeli territory. So do you—have you previously supported the idea of annexation of the West Bank?

Mr. HUCKABEE. I have previously supported it, yes, sir—Judea and Samaria.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Mr. HUCKABEE. But it would not be my prerogative to make that the policy of the President.

Senator MERKLEY. Do you support the annexation of Gaza as well?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, once again, it would be the prerogative of the President.

Senator MERKLEY. But you have had previous positions. Have you previously supported the greater Judea-Samaria vision?

Mr. HUCKABEE. I do not recall having spoken about——

Senator MERKLEY. A final question. I have 15 seconds.

Mr. HUCKABEE. OK.

Senator MERKLEY. Leahy Law allows for us to sanction individual units in a foreign military that have been violating human rights. There has been a series of cases involving certain individual IDF units.

Should units of IDF that carry out attacks on West Bank villages—Palestinian villages—should they be subject to full examination under the Leahy Law, or should Israel be exempted?

Mr. HUCKABEE. I think the President will instruct Secretary Rubio, and frankly, Mr. Rubinstein to my left to make sure that the law is followed, and I think often accusations——

Senator MERKLEY. It has never been followed yet. It has never been applied to Israel. But you think——

Mr. HUCKABEE. Let me just say that I think that there are often accusations that Israel is doing things that, as it turns out, they are not. They do not have many friends.

Senator MERKLEY. But if they were doing it, you would support the Leahy Law being applied as an American standard for supporting human rights?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I would think that the United States always wants to follow what is right, what is legal, and it would be the President's decision and the Secretary's decision to negotiate with the Israelis on what that means.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Governor. My time is up.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Curtis.

Senator CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. It is a delight to be with all of you.

Mr. Huckabee, I cannot imagine on one hand a more rewarding, and on the other hand, a more challenging assignment than what you have been given, and I am actually very jealous.

Utah has a very special relationship with Israel. I like to tease my friends with ties to Israel that until I was 18 I thought I grew up in Zion in Utah. We have a Zion Park. We have a Jordan River. There is just lots of ties.

One of those ties is Brigham Young University sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints that has a campus there, and when I was 18 years old in 1979 I spent 6 months on that campus.

At the time the campus was not built. We lived in a kibbutz. I had the opportunity to be there the day Jimmy Carter signed the peace accord with Israel and Egypt, and I bring that up—I actually have a picture of the *Jerusalem Post* hanging in my office from that day to show that we can have peace.

It is hard. Some gave their lives for that accord, and likewise, President Trump's attempt on the Abraham Accords is equally noteworthy and is important. And so it is clear that Utah, that myself, Brigham Young University, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, has this tie.

And I do not need to go into the past, but this might be a good opportunity to send a message to Utah about how you feel about our dominant faith. I just did not know if you would have me carry anything back to Utahens.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Nothing, Senator. Let me be very clear, and I appreciate the question and the opportunity. The respect that I have for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is extraordinary because I respect very much the commitment to family, to moral righteousness, to a sense of right and wrong.

It is part of what has drawn me to an understanding that Israel in many ways is a reflection of our own heritage and history.

It is the Judeo-Christian law that there is a right and that there is a wrong upon which all of Western civilization is built but certainly our system of government.

There is no country across the globe that more mirrors our own struggle and our own level of democracy than does the state of Israel, and it is one of the reasons that it is a natural ally.

The spiritual connections between your church, mine, many churches in America, Jewish congregations, to the state of Israel is because we ultimately are people of the book.

We believe the Bible, and therefore that connection is not geopolitical. It is also spiritual, and to ignore that, to deny that, would be to make it very difficult for us to ever understand how to go forward in a relationship with them.

Senator CURTIS. Thank you. I will certainly carry that message back to Utah, and I agree. I cannot imagine doing what I am doing now without that spiritual opportunity that I had to understand both Arab, Jew, and Christian in that period of my life.

Brigham Young University has a center over there so on the Mount of Olives. I would like to invite you to meet there on the campus as you get your feet underneath you, and if you are OK I

will help broker that agreement. I think they would love to have you there and see what they are doing there in Jerusalem.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, just for the record I have been there.

Senator CURTIS. Excellent. Good.

Mr. HUCKABEE. And it is a beautiful, beautiful facility on the Mount of Olives and has one of the most spectacular views of the old city in all of Israel.

Senator CURTIS. Yes, and we will make sure there is an organ recital on your next visit back there, as you do that. Thank you.

Mr. HUCKABEE. As long as I am not required to play it.

Senator CURTIS. Yes. All right.

Now, switching to the Panama Canal, Mr. Cabrera, Panama has announced they are leaving the BRI and Hong Kong companies with assets on both sides are being divested, addressing some of our serious security concerns.

What remaining issues need to be addressed regarding the PRC's influence in the region?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate the question.

And as you mentioned, in the last 60 days we have made significant inroads with Secretary Rubio and President Trump in them leaving the Belt and Road Initiative and these two concessions being sold as well, which prior to that the Panamanian government had started an audit on both.

But what I will say is there—it does not just stop there, the influence that the China has had within Panama. I think you have seen it as well in cities like Colon where in the cybersecurity grants that they have given for cameras in the area.

You do not know where that cloud's information might be stored, who has access to it. And again, in some of their ports where they have some cranes that have been given to them by the Chinese government as well.

Again, as a county commissioner, we have seen it where many times they will underbid these sorts of things to try to get their cranes in there by a significant amount because a lot of these companies are partially government.

Senator CURTIS. And I am going to, only because I am out of time—

Mr. CABRERA. Yes.

Senator CURTIS [continuing]. I am going to stop you. But I would also like to put a plug in any influence we can have in getting them to reverse their position to the PRC and be more accommodating for Taiwan, particularly their position on the "One China" principle. And I regret that you do not have time to answer that but I would just like to lay that marker with you.

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, and if confirmed I look forward to working with you and your office.

Senator CURTIS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Curtis.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations to the nominees for your nominations. I especially want to say hello to Governor Huckabee. We served together—he was the chair of the National Governors Association my first year in office and then

also of the Southern Governors Association. My wife Anne and Janet and Mike did some good work together then.

Really quickly, Governor, you know, what I am looking for in an ambassador to Israel and a policy about the U.S.-Israel relationship is strong support for Israel, condemnation of Hamas, but also a recognition that Palestinians have a right to live, and they have a right to the state that they were promised by the U.N. in 1947, at a time when the U.S. exercised great leadership under President Truman to promote both a state for Jews in Israel and a state for Arabs in Palestine.

One promise has been met. One promise has not been. There are a million reasons for that, but you know, I think you have some personal points of view that would differ from mine on this.

But the point you make is right, you are going to be executing the President's policy, and I know you will do that. I just look for some evidence of a recognition by the Administration that just as Israel has a right to survive, Palestinians have a right to live, and Palestinians have a right to what was promised to them in 1947.

Just kind of a message from this side of the dais, the President's suggestion that there might be a Gaza solution that involves either U.S. military presence or sort of U.S. commercial development, to me, seems the height of folly.

It reminds me of the United States deciding to take over the failed French colonial project in Indochina in 1954. We never should have taken it over. It was disastrous.

I think the U.S. will be needed for the very complex task of finding a solution in Gaza. The West Bank and the region, of course, will be needing our resources, our leadership, et cetera.

But for us to step into any kind of a takeover role I think would only court disaster, and I just want to offer that.

Mr. Cabrera, I want to ask you a question. You marched with the Proud Boys at an event in Coral Gables, Florida, in 2018. And in your conversations with committee staff you said that you were not really aware of who they were, and you described that march really motivated by your strong support for Cuban democracy.

Recognizing that statement that you made to committee staff, will you condemn the Proud Boys and their ideology here before the committee?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I will say that I condemn anybody that espouses any sort of hate—I have said it before in my editorial in front of the *Miami Herald*—not just here in the United States but anywhere in the world. I think there is no place for that and I think we have to work together, and I think it would make for a better world.

Senator KAINE. Can you say you condemn the Proud Boys and mention them by name, sitting here before this committee?

Mr. CABRERA. I condemn them and any other group that might espouse any sort of hate around the world.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for stating that.

Mr. Rubinstein, in March 2024 you posted on LinkedIn that, quote, "K-12 teachers are almost all products of extreme left teachers training programs in the colleges. Then the same leftist anti-Semitic professors provide summer training on MENA and other issues. The system is not fixable."

A lot of us on the committee have parents, spouses, kids, who are K-12 teachers, who work in education programs training K-12 teachers. A lot of us, like me, were Governors, appointing boards of universities with intimate knowledge of teacher training programs.

There can be a bad apple in any organization, but I got to say I read a comment like that about K-12 teachers are almost all products of extreme left wing teacher training programs, and it strikes me along the lines of what Senator Shaheen was asking—as kind of a political fantasy or a conspiracy that does not really seem like the kind of thing that a careful lawyer offering narrow advice would say.

You know, I think lawyers usually have narrow brushes in the paint kit and not only big broad brushes to smear everyone. How could I—how can I square a comment like that with your suggestion that you are going to provide careful and narrow legal advice should you be confirmed?

Your microphone, sir.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you for that question, Senator.

As it happens I, too, am a product of a public school teacher. My mom, who I mentioned, taught in the Detroit public school system for almost five decades.

The post that you are referring to, again, is advocacy, not legal advice. There is a difference, number one.

Number two, when I went to the Department of Education—this has nothing to do with the Department of State, but I am addressing your question—it gave me a real window into what is happening in the state of U.S. education.

I was not an education lawyer. I was sent there to run the office, which I did, and to take care of some other things that we also did related primarily to China and whatnot.

And in talking to the people there and observing kind of the flow of things coming into the office of the general counsel we began to see issues arising, and the way it was expressed both by career—mostly by political but also by some of the careers, is that the way that we train teachers in this country has some real issues and that often teacher colleges in public education are very ideological.

Senator KAINE. I am over my time, so let me just conclude and say this. Now you are giving a careful answer. There are some issues. There are some circumstances. Not virtually everybody is a victim of left wing indoctrination.

And I will just conclude by saying what you hear within the Department of Education here might look very different, spending time around the country and in the schools that actually train our K-12 teachers, and that would not be your future job, but I would encourage you to spend some time outside of Washington.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Senator, I would agree with you that our teachers, you know, have a very hard job and they do the best that they can.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Senator Kaine.

Next up is Senator Hagerty.

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

And first, I want to congratulate all three of you on your nominations, and I want to thank you for your willingness to serve our great nation.

If you are confirmed, each of you are going to play critically important roles in advancing our nation's and our President's foreign policy, and that policy will make a marked difference at a point in time where I think we are literally at a turning point as a nation and a world.

First, Mr. Cabrera, I would like to start with you to talk about drug trafficking in the Panama region. Transnational criminal organizations from countries like Colombia and Mexico have long used Panama to smuggle illicit drugs, and they have done it to the tune of billions of dollars.

Last year alone, the State Department estimates that up to 40 percent of cocaine that was produced in Colombia had transited through the exclusive economic zones of Panama, and for far too long these transnational criminal organizations have acted with impunity.

They have been able to make billions of profits, and they have done this bringing these drugs into our own borders.

Panama can play an outsized role in cooperating with the United States in seizing these illicit drugs, and they can also cooperate with us to dramatically scale down these organizations, these transnational criminal organizations' operations.

If you are confirmed, Mr. Cabrera, do you commit to use all of the tools at your disposal to ensure that the Panamanian government continues to collaborate with the United States in taking strong actions against these criminal organizations and stopping the flow of illicit drugs into America?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I will say this issue is another one we have had great success in these past 60 days.

Since Secretary Rubio visited in January and February we have seen 95 percent less crossings in the Darien Gap. And why do I mention the Darien Gap? A lot of these drugs that are coming in go through the Darien Gap.

This is an area where you had over 2 years ago where 500,000 folks crossing. When we talk about the southern border those 500,000 people are crossing on their way to our southern border.

So in these past 2 months we have had significant inroads where 95 percent decreases, as you mentioned, 40 percent of the cocaine in this country comes through Panama.

But Panama, I will say, is a great ally in this. They have been our number one in seizing drugs, over 100 metric tons the last 4 years in a row. They have been number one in Central America.

We have been a good ally in helping them get helicopters and boats and so on so they can compete with some of these traffickers.

But again, there is always room for improvement but they have been a great ally in this, and I look forward to continuing that and using all the tools that are at our disposal to continue to making sure that we stop as many metric tons of drugs coming through that border, through the Darien Gap, and again, it goes hand in hand with migration is what I would say.

Senator HAGERTY. Kevin, I hope you are confirmed, and I want you to know that the resources of my office will be available to you once you are ambassador to the extent we can help you at all because this is a critical mission that we have got to deal with.

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, Senator. I look forward to working with you at your office, if confirmed.

Senator HAGERTY. Certainly.

Governor Huckabee, it is wonderful to see you here. You are somebody I have long admired. I appreciate our friendship.

I must say you are one of the best communicators that I have ever had a chance to work with, and what a beautiful skill set to bring to such a critical role as being our next Ambassador to Israel.

In President Trump's first term he stood by Israel in a way that was unprecedented, and he did it in a way that weakened our mutual enemies, and he did it all while avoiding a costly war.

If you think about what happened, he moved our embassy to Jerusalem. He acknowledged Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, and he acknowledged and negotiated the historic Abraham Accords.

He did all of this, despite the pearl clutching in Washington, without a single war. We also withdrew from the disastrous JCPOA, and we implemented maximum pressure on Iran at a time that was absolutely critical.

I participated in that, getting the Japanese government to stop buying Iranian crude oil that happened around the world. Guess what happened? Iran was broke. Then something changed. The Administration changed.

The Biden administration came in, waived the sanctions. Stopped enforcing the sanctions on Iran. Iran became rich again. They began to talk in ways that created distance and daylight between America and its ally Israel, and I think that had a great deal to do with emboldening Hamas, emboldening Iran, and leading up to the October 7, 2023, attacks.

I would just like to hear your viewpoint, Governor Huckabee, in the event that you are confirmed, how important it is to you that the United States stand arm in arm with Israel and not show any daylight between ourselves and our ally.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, thank you. A wonderful question and an opportunity for me to remind everyone that it was during President Trump's first term that there really was peace.

There was peace in the Middle East. He did extraordinary things to show our relationship to Israel in recognizing Jerusalem as the eternal indigenous capital of the Jewish people.

When he moved the embassy, basically, the entire world told him not to do it—that the world would blow up if he did it. He did it.

I happened to be with him one on one about 2 weeks after he made that decision and announced it. I will never forget, Senator, what he said to me, because I asked him, why did you do it?

Everyone told you not to—the world leaders, people in government positions. They all said do not do it. You did it. Why?

I will never forget. He looked at me very simply and said, because I said I would, and it was the right thing to do.

And Senator, that is why I am honored and privileged to be able to be named by this President to serve in this capacity because I



like his sense of clarity when it comes to the moral issue of standing with an ally, and right now Israel needs an ally.

And frankly, let me add, the Jewish people need to know they have friends. There is a long line of enemies that the Jewish people experience across this globe, and sadly, on some of our own university campuses.

It is going to be a privilege to be able to be one of those people—not Jewish, Christian, in fact—but to say to our Jewish friends you will never go through what you have gone through alone. We will stand not behind you. We will stand with you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator McCORMICK [presiding]. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, and welcome everybody.

I want to associate myself with the remarks of Senator Shaheen, her opening remarks.

Governor Huckabee, it was good to get together with you yesterday. I have only got 5 minutes in this forum so if you could keep your answers short.

I am just going to ask your views on certain principles. And it is absolutely true that the Jewish state needs a friend.

I think you also recognize that there are many in the Jewish community here in the United States who disagree with the views that you have expressed with respect to certain issues in Israel, and I do want to ask you about some of those because you are seen as a big hero of the Jewish settler movement on the West Bank.

You supported the idea of Israeli annexation of the West Bank, as you have confirmed here today. So I want to know where you draw the line.

I recognize that you will be the President's emissary, but you have made a lot of comments on this so I am interested in your thoughts.

Do you agree with me that it would be wrong for a Jewish settler to push a Palestinian family off land on the West Bank that was owned by that Palestinian family?

Do you agree with that?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, thanks for the question.

I think there are a lot of things attributed to me that are not necessarily 100 percent accurate. I am sure you have experienced that a time or two in your career.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. That is why I am trying to clarify. I am asking some very simple questions. I hope to get very direct answers.

Mr. HUCKABEE. I will give you a very simple answer. I believe that there has to be always the law being followed and there has to be clarity.

I also believe that it will not be my policy that will be implemented in the Middle East. It will be that of the President.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So this was a very simple question, Governor.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Yes, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So we have a Palestinian family on the West Bank today. They own the land they are on. My question to

you is do you agree that it will be wrong for a Jewish settler to push that family off their land? Yes or no.

Mr. HUCKABEE. If we are talking about stealing the land, taking it away from them?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Their land, yes, for example. OK.

Mr. HUCKABEE. That is a problem. If you are talking about purchasing the land that is a legitimate transaction that—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. OK. So when you said in 2017, and I quote, “Israel has title deed to Judea and Samaria,” unquote, you did not mean it gave Israel the right to kick Palestinians off their lands in the West Bank. Am I right about that?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I have never indicated that that was a part of that. I simply referenced the biblical mandate that goes all the way back to the time of Abraham 3,500 years ago, and that is what I was referencing.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, I understand you have that view, but I am trying to understand the consequences of that view. So in your view, if Israel were to annex the West Bank what rights would Palestinians have?

Because when I asked you that question yesterday you focused on the right to work, economic opportunities. So my question today is would those Palestinian individuals in an annexed West Bank have the same legal and democratic rights as Israeli Jews living in the West Bank?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Annexation does not mean displacement of people.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, I am not asking about displacement right now. I am asking—

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I am—

Senator VAN HOLLEN [continuing]. If they remained there would they have equal rights to Israeli Jews living on the West Bank?

Mr. HUCKABEE. There would be security. There would be opportunity.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. That is not what I am asking—

Mr. HUCKABEE. OK.

Senator VAN HOLLEN [continuing]. And you know that.

Mr. HUCKABEE. No, I am trying to understand.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I am asking whether they would have legal rights—whether they would have the same legal rights as a Israeli Jew who settled on the West Bank living side by side. Would they have the same legal and political rights?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, if you mean would they be able to live freely, they already do.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. How about voting? You are suggesting that the West Bank become part of Israel. Are you suggesting that Palestinians living in the West Bank should have the right then to vote in elections in Israel?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, let me correct and say I am not suggesting because I will carry out the policies of the President.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Let me move on.

I do want to ask you about the situation in Gaza because I think you would agree that it would be wrong to hold any innocent Palestinian civilian accountable for the evils of Hamas, right? I mean,

that is just a simple principle. You do not believe in collective punishment, do you?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I do not believe in collective punishment. If the Palestinians in Gaza have participated in the holding of hostages and in the torture then they have got culpability.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes. Yes, but there are 2 million people right there, and Senator Merkley asked you earlier about withholding food because for 23 days there has been a ban on humanitarian assistance into Gaza.

Finance Minister Smotrich suggested, and I am quoting, "it might be justified and moral to starve 2 million Palestinians in Gaza as part of a strategy to free the hostages."

Simple question—do you disagree with Finance Minister Smotrich?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, as you know, an ambassador does not get to argue with the people of the country he goes to represent the United States in.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Right but—

Mr. HUCKABEE. My job is to represent the President and his policies, and he has not given those to me because I have not been confirmed.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I understand.

You are aware, are you not, Governor, that when he was asked whether the Palestinians who would leave Gaza under the President's plan could return, he said no. That does not sound like a voluntary program, does it?

Mr. HUCKABEE. What I have heard the President say is he does not push for forced displacement. I have also heard him say he wants a better life for the Palestinian people. He wants them to have security. He does not want their children to be put in front of the munitions of Hamas as they have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Nobody does, Governor, but that is not the question. I see the time is up.

Mr. HUCKABEE. But that is what the President has said.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. We did have a good—we did have, I thought, an important conversation yesterday about the situation of some of the churches in Jerusalem and Israel who are feeling a lot of financial pressure because of actions being taken by municipalities in Israel as well as a concern they have about a bill in the Knesset. Do you remember that conversation?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Yes, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And you think we should work together on that issue, right?

Senator MCCORMICK. Senator, you are over on your time.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Yes, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Senator MCCORMICK. Thank you, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Senator MCCORMICK. To our—I am up, so to our nominees, congratulations. We are glad to have you here, and I will start with you, Governor Huckabee. It was good to have a chance to meet with you and a couple weeks ago Dina and I, as you did, went to Israel soon after October 7.

We saw firsthand the horrific brutality that occurred there, and I think we also share with you an optimism that in this second term of President Trump's presidency that we will be able to pick up some of the wonderful progress of the Abraham Accords and move forward.

But recently we have seen the decisive action of President Trump directed against the Houthis which terrorize Israel, are terrorizing the shipping lanes, directly attacking U.S. flagged vessels.

And I wondered if you could speak for a minute about how you would imagine working hand in hand with the Administration but also Israel to confront that threat.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, thank you, and it is great to see you.

What the President has made clear is that the United States is not going to be played for a chump. We are not going to allow the Houthis to bombard our naval capacity, stop shipping lanes.

The President has made it very clear that America has every right to defend our interest and to stand by our allies, and it is one of the reasons that I feel so extraordinarily grateful to this President for the opportunity to serve in the capacity to which he has nominated me, and if confirmed I want to be able to take the clarity of his voice and moral understanding of what should happen in the Middle East in dealing with terrorism and being able to be part of something historic, to stop that which has murdered and destroyed the lives and livelihoods not only of soldiers but of civilians.

Senator MCCORMICK. Thank you, Governor.

Also to follow up on the progress of the Abraham Accords, as you know that peace treaty was really the most significant in 40 years. It laid the predicate for an expansion of peace throughout the region which was, sadly, disrupted by the vicious attack by Hamas.

How do you imagine working with other countries in the region and with Israel, of course, to expand the Abraham Accords over the next 4 years of President Trump's presidency?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, it is a great question, because everyone—all the region has everything to gain and nothing to lose by working cooperatively.

If one looks at the agricultural advances that Israel has made and their willingness to share them with all of these other nations that are basically deserts, in my 52 years of traveling to Israel I have literally seen the verses of the Bible come to life.

The dry bones have come to live again, and the desert has bloomed because of Israeli advancement in hydrology, being able to use water in a way that literally turned deserts into vast array of vegetation, which now exports fruits and vegetables everywhere.

Look at the technology that could be shared which creates a greater level of security, and of course, whether it is trade, tourism, no one loses then. Everyone wins.

Nobody is looking at taking somebody else's territory and moving into their sovereignty. At that point, it becomes an opportunity to bring a real sense of peace for all of the people of the Middle East, whether they are of Jewish or Arab descent, and that would be something that I believe this President could uniquely bring about.

Senator MCCORMICK. Thank you.

Mr. Cabrera, welcome. Just following up on the enormous attention and focus that this Administration, Secretary Rubio, and the

President has put on Panama and the canal, for too long I think it is clear to all that Beijing has strengthened its presence throughout the world, throughout Latin America, but particularly in Panama, and that is to the detriment of our economic security and international security.

But thanks to this Administration and the Panamanian government's withdrawing from the Belt and Road Initiative we now see a path toward U.S. investors owning port concessions in the Panama Canal and a controlling interest.

If confirmed, how do you expect to work and how do you plan to work with this Administration to deepen those gains of pushing China back but also strengthening our ties with Panama, which is such a key and important ally?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you for your question, Senator.

And I think, you know, this is part of economic diplomacy. I think it is important—while we are already number one in foreign directive investment into Panama, it is important that we continue to expand that.

You know, work with the Panamanian government who are great allies in migration, in stopping drugs through the Darien Gap, and make sure we expand that relationship to make sure that we have a level playing field for American companies to come in, be able to compete fairly, and when they compete they win, and it is because we have a better product to offer.

And I think, again, we can continue on the gains that we have had these past 60 days with President Trump and Secretary Rubio. But again, I think that the Chinese influence is not just in the canal.

It is also in other areas. I know that they have memorandums of understanding with all five public universities in Panama for Confucius Centers, and they also have a relationship with the local government owned TV Sertv where they provide information which many times is put in—it definitely never criticizes China what goes on, the information they pass along.

So, again, I think much progress has been made and looking forward to, if confirmed, working with you, working with the members of this committee, Secretary Rubio and the President, to continue to diminish Chinese influence while providing opportunities for American companies to invest in Panama.

Senator McCORMICK. Indeed. We have a lot of work to do. Thank you.

Thank you all.

Senator ROSEN.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the Chair and Ranking Member for holding this important hearing today, and I want to thank the nominees and their families for their willingness to serve.

Governor Huckabee, I know from our conversation earlier like me you care deeply about the bonds between the United States and Israel.

I have no doubt that if confirmed you will work tirelessly to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship, meet Israel's defense needs, and free all of the remaining hostages held by Hamas.

What I do have concerns about, however, is how you will work to maintain a bipartisan U.S. support for Israel and whether you will encourage steps that could one day lead to a durable, lasting peace in the region that finally provides Israel with long term security.

So, Governor Huckabee, to have any chance of achieving what I just laid out Israel cannot turn into a partisan football here on Capitol Hill. We have already had this discussion.

Do you agree with that, and if so, will you commit to maintaining an ongoing equal communication with both Republican and Democratic offices if confirmed?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, thank you, and it is a very important and valid question to which I can say emphatically that I affirm a commitment that if I am confirmed I would have a responsibility.

It is not just that I would do it because it would be a nice thing to do. It is a responsibility of an ambassador to serve the entire country, certainly, to serve the president who appoints me, the policies of this President and the Secretary.

But it is also a duty to communicate, and it is a conversation that I also had with Ranking Member Shaheen yesterday and committed to her that there would be no difference in the manner in which I would receive a call from someone who is a Democrat or Republican.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I have another——

Mr. HUCKABEE. Quite frankly, if I could add one thing.

Senator ROSEN. Yes, and I have another question.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Just real quickly, that I can remember the day when the Democrats were the most reliable supporters of Israel in this——

Senator ROSEN. And they still are, sir.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Well, I hope they all will be.

Senator ROSEN. I am going to move to my next question.

Based on your previous statements I do think it is fair to say you are opposed to a two state solution. So why we both agree that two states living side by side in peace is not possible today, particularly with Hamas still in power in Gaza.

But I firmly believe this should remain the ultimate goal and inform the U.S. approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially after the war in Gaza ends.

It is in Israel's best—it is in both Israel's best security interest to reach such an agreement and the only way to maintain Israel as a Jewish democratic state for the long term. We are in it for the long run.

And so given this, do you believe that the U.S. should continue advocating for a future two state solution, and if not, what is your alternative?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, it is a good question, and quite frankly, I think the question is not is there a need for people who are Palestinian to be able to live and have a future. The question is where and when? Where will that be?

Will it be on top of the Israeli Jewish state or will it be somewhere that is decided upon that would be completely different only for those who wish to locate there.

And here is my point. Senator, Israel is a tiny little strip of land. You know that. We all do. It is the size of New Jersey.

But Muslim countries control 644 times the amount of land that Israel has. They have been surrounded by those who have sought to destroy it, annihilate it. Those who chant “from the river to the sea” are not bringing about peace.

The Palestinians were given the opportunity in the year 2000 when Ehud Barak from Israel put everything on the table, virtually said 100 percent here it is—you get it all—and the Palestinian Liberation Organization walked away from it.

The other thing that has to happen is a cultural shift. There can be no peace in two state solution if there continues to be education from the time a child is 5 and 6 years old, living under the Palestinian Authority, that says it is OK—in fact, it is desirable to murder Jews and to reward them for it.

Senator ROSEN. I want to build on what we talked about. You spoke earlier about the Abraham Accords, how important that is, because a cultural shift.

Abraham Accords and other kinds of diplomacy can help lead to that cultural shift. And you and I both agree that Iran presents a major threat to Israel existence, and the growth of the Abraham Accords is one of the best ways to counter Iranian aggression and start that cultural shift, if you will.

So given that, a two state solution central to the Saudis and other Arab partners, and in this broader conversation—I am running out of time so maybe you will let him answer, Chairwoman.

How do you propose we expand the Abraham Accords absent the support for a two state solution?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Through the long process of seeing the culture change. There has to be an admission that Israel has a right to exist. There has to be some recognition that there will be a change in the policy of educating children to hate Jews.

That does not lead toward a peaceful coexistence anywhere at any time, and we are seeing the results of that anti-Semitism here in our homeland, which is very distressing to me—I am sure to you too, Senator—to see people who are raised up with an irrational hatred toward Jewish people, and that cannot lead to any level of peaceful coexistence whether it is here, there, or anywhere else on the planet.

Senator ROSEN. Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Rubinstein, we talked about this a little bit. Here is the issue that bothered me a few years ago. I could not get the—through the Secretary of State to make sure we got rid of immunity for suing PAHO.

As you probably know, PAHO is, I guess, some sort of sister organization to WHO, and what was happening is Cuban doctors and Cuban nurses are being sent around the world, and then they were paid a certain amount of money to the Cuban government, and then the doctors and nurses got a pittance of that. To me, I think that is human trafficking.

I never could get—under the Trump administration I never could get the waiver of immunity, and so I do not know if you have had

any time to think about that and what do you—what you think about that and whether that is right.

But I think human trafficking is wrong, and I think anything to help the Cuban regime is not good for the United States.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. I do not think your mic is on.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. That is twice.

Thank you, Senator, and thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I very much appreciate and enjoyed our conversation.

Yes, I agree with you, human trafficking is wrong. I further understand your frustration. As I explained, over the course of my career I have done, perhaps, more than kind of the normal amount of victim of terrorism representation. So I feel these issues very strongly.

I do not know the circumstances of what occurred and what was going on when you requested the information. I have not been read into the facts. I would want to take a look and understand what the institutional position was and what was going on.

But I pledged to you then, and I pledge to you now that I will always communicate with you or any other member of the committee and provide as much information as lawfully I am able to provide.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. At least for me the most frustrating thing is just a black hole. A lot of my time up here is you ask people information from the executive branch, and it just goes—we are working, you know. It is, like—but all right.

Governor Huckabee, can you tell us why is the defense of Israel—the support of Israel—important to America?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, a great question.

The truth is it has been very clear, as expressed by the Iranian government, that Israel is the appetizer, and we are the entree.

They do not want to stop at Israel. They, certainly, want to annihilate them. They have said it over and over, and there is an old saying that when people are saying again and again they are going to kill you, you might want to take them seriously.

But they have also gone beyond saying they want to annihilate Israel and wipe it off the face of the earth. They have said that their ultimate goal is to first take care of the little Satan they identify as Israel and then come after the great Satan.

Senator, that is us. And whatever is happening to Israel it is the canary in the coal mine. These governments, Iran being the most notable, who want to develop a nuclear weapon and who have the audacity to wish to use it to destroy a sovereign Jewish state so that they ultimately could destroy Western civilization. That is why it matters, Senator, and I appreciate your question because I hope people will understand this is not just about Israel.

It is about us, and if we do not stand with them, they stand alone, and if they fall alone, we fall next.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you.

Commissioner Cabrera, the—as we have seen—I know you put a lot of effort into freedom and liberty into Latin America—as we have seen in Panama the Communist Party has tried to infiltrate all the politics—you know, the port and all those things.



So how important is Panama to America, to our trade, to our defense, to our success?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you for the question, Senator. I will say that Panama is a very important ally because we talk a lot about the southern border, but when you talk about the southern border you cannot really talk about it without Panama because through the Darien Gap a few—just a year ago you had over 500,000 folks crossing.

Right now, we, under the success of President Trump and Secretary Rubio, we have been able to lower those numbers in January and February of this year 95 percent.

Again, that is not just migration, but that is drugs as well. Panama is a huge ally in drug seizing as well. They have been number one 4 years in a row in Central America, over a hundred metric tons, and 40 percent of the cocaine that enters America enters through Panama.

So, again, if we have a strong ally in Panama, we have a strong border in the Darien Gap, and making sure that we stop the drugs, we stop the migration, that helps us at the southern border and helps America make sure these drugs are not infiltrating.

But again, that Chinese influence that you mentioned is also a problem, and it is about making sure we continue to make great strides, like Secretary Rubio and President Trump have done, with the concessions being sold at the port, with them exiting Belt and Road—being the first country to enter Belt and Road and being the first country to exit it in Central America—and making sure we provide opportunities for American companies to be treated fairly in Panama so they can continue to be the largest foreign direct investment.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you.

Thank you, Chairman.

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

Governor Huckabee, congratulations on your nomination. You are going to do a fantastic job, and I am very happy to see you named for this position.

As you know, you are stepping into a role that is not just incredibly important, but it is also incredibly influential. In addition to implementing President Trump's policy you will oversee what information gets sent back to Washington, DC.

Those assessments get sent to Administration officials and members of this committee. Indeed, this committee requires the State Department to submit a range of regular reports and relies on those reports to advance our oversight of the department and American foreign policy.

And as you know, you are going to have your work cut out for you. During the Biden administration such reports were often withheld, and when they were sent they were systematically politicized to promote the Administration's misguided Middle East policy, which boosted America's enemies and punished our allies. Officials in the Trump administration are just beginning to clear the shelves of what was left over.

I am holding right now a report produced mostly during the Biden administration. It covers Palestinian Authority incitement of

violence against Israelis for the period of February 2023 to May 2024, which includes the aftermath of the October 7 terrorist attacks.

It was deliberately withheld from Congress and only sent to this committee this month. It is unclassified, but it has not been made public. It is a deeply disturbing example of the challenge you will face and the thinking inside parts of the State Department.

This report says that Palestinian President Abbas—quote, “President Abbas maintained a public position against incitement of violence and terrorism and reiterated his commitment to nonviolence. He condemned the killing of Israel civilians by Hamas on October 7th because it had given Israel the pretext to attack Gaza.”

Let us put aside the disgusting claim that Israel’s campaign against Hamas was done on a pretext. The claim that Abbas has not incited violence is staggering. In reality, in relation to October 7 he and other Palestinian officials blamed Israel and used rhetoric about Palestinians’ self-defense.

A month after the attack a top Abbas advisor even bragged that the Palestinian Authority had not uttered a single word condemning Hamas.

I would like to ask you, Governor, talk a little bit about your own assessment regarding Palestinian incitement and what that should mean to American foreign policy toward Israel and the region.

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, I think the question is very relevant to what is happening right now.

The great tragedy is that it is hard to have a peaceful solution that involves a future for the Palestinians when they quench any hope of real democracy for their people.

Abbas is now in the twentieth year of his 4 year term. As we think about that, one has to ask how many years does a person get for a 4 year term without an election, without some transfer of power, without empowering the people to speak for themselves.

That is part of the real challenge that is faced in the Middle East with the ongoing doctrine where compensation is given to those who murder Jews, parks and streets are named for those who do it, pensions are given to the families of those who are killed in the line of killing Jews.

Senator, that is a difficult pathway to peace. I would further just mention that if in fact there is going to be a peaceful direction we have to accept that something is not working, and the two state solution—the notion that everyone is going to live together, toast marshmallows around the campfire singing Kumbaya, and it is going to happen in our lifetime is not going to happen if one of the sides does not believe the other one has a right to exist and continues to say “from the river to the sea.”

And so that is why it becomes a challenge. I have every confidence that Secretary Rubio and especially every confidence that President Trump wants to see a genuine, long lasting peace for everyone in the Middle East, and it will be a privilege to serve the President to try to work toward that.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Governor. I agree with that.

I would note, Mr. Rubinstein, this was not the only report that the Biden administration failed to turn over. I also have a report that I had drafted language requiring the State Department to

send this committee a report on, quote, “any Iranian person that has attacked a United States citizen using a drone.” They sat on that report. We just got that as well.

And so I will say in your role as a legal advisor you are likewise going to have challenges getting the State Department to comply with the requirements Congress has placed upon them.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you, Senator, and I want to thank you for the introduction. And if I could for just 15 seconds I want to thank and be sure you are properly recognized for what you did for the victims of Fort Hood. I spent years on that case.

I know more about it, frankly, than anybody would ever want to. It is one of the more shameful episodes in the history of our military, and you led the fight to make it right, and God bless you for what you did.

With respect to the reports that you mentioned, again, I am not in there. I cannot tell you exactly what is going in, but I can promise we will take a look at it.

Senator CRUZ. Terrific.

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator Cruz, I would just say I appreciate you raising those reports. I have not seen them so I hope you will share them with the rest of the——

Senator CRUZ. I will happily share them with you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thanks to all of you for being here and for your willingness to serve.

Mr. Rubinstein, I would like to start with you if that is OK. The legal advisor to the State Department is a very important position, and it is unique in the sense that it deals, of course, with the unique interaction between domestic law and also with the tangled web that we sometimes refer to as international law.

It has long been my view that international law and any associated agreements are made legitimate or made binding if and only if they have been enacted into law in some way or another, either through ratification of a treaty with two-thirds of the Senate assenting to such an arrangement or through some other form of legislation which requires bicameral passage followed by presentment to the President.

But in the absence of this, in the absence of domestic implementing legislation either in the form of treaty ratification or the enactment of a statute, do you share the view that international agreements are not otherwise binding on the United States?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you, Senator.

That is a very interesting question. You are absolutely right, the legal adviser’s position is one of the great lawyer jobs in the Federal Government if not in the world precisely because it raises the sort of issues that you are touching upon.

I cannot tell you as I sit here today what the institutional view is with respect to your question, and I would certainly, before I committed to anything, want to understand where—you know, where that the institution’s view is. The truth——

Senator LEE. As you read the Constitution is there any way around it?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. So as I read the Constitution—so, for example, under the Constitution the treaty power, the authorities case—I believe that Senator Cruz played a role in the Medellin case—there is a very complex and deep discussion of the difference between self-executing and nonself-executing treaties which have different effect and historically, as I understand it, going back to the time of the founding there was an understanding and a discussion about precisely what those mean and how they fit under the Constitution.

My friend Steve Engel did a tremendous analysis of the executive's authority to unilaterally withdraw from treaties, a question which I know is of interest to the minority.

He issued an opinion in 2020 with respect to the Open Skies agreement that does his usual good work in analyzing the issues and exploring the history and so forth.

All of this to say I have my own views, which are in some cases well informed, in some cases not so much, and I think that there is an ongoing conversation about this. Congress has its view of, for example, its authority to terminate treaties, and Mr. Engel had his, and I would have to take up the specific facts or specific enactment—

Senator LEE. Yes, let us get a little bit more specific then.

If I am right, and I think I am because I think it is what the Constitution says, then that would suggest that United States is bound to the United Nations only insofar as domestic law says so, domestic law meaning ratified treaty or otherwise enacted legislation.

If that is the case our domestic law clearly has delineated how we interact with U.N. agencies, U.N. entities, that grant entrants to the Palestinian state. We do not fund them.

But in the past people in the position to which you have been nominated—legal advisers to the State Department—have circumvented this prohibition, this prohibition that is mandated by our domestic law by calling the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change a treaty rather than a U.N. affiliated body, for example.

Now, if domestic law supersedes international law is this a distinction with any relevance?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Well, I think manifestly under the Constitution domestic law transcends international law. The United States historically acknowledges and recognizes, for example, customary international law.

The Department of Defense and the Department of State during the Trump administration before did lengthy analyses of, for example, the law of war and a variety of the different issues that come up in that frame.

But again, how any given set of circumstances—and I can talk a little bit about the Palestinian funding, perhaps, more than folks want to know.

Senator LEE. Right. My time is about to elapse, and Madam Chair, if I may just ask one quick follow up on this. I want to make sure I understand the point you made a minute ago about how the United States recognizes customary international law.

This is a—it is an important statement. It is an important statement to understand because in so far as we are willing to say we

recognize customary international law, whatever that might say, we are it. We have granted it.

Separate and apart from the fundamental constitutional problem of whether customary international law has evolved in a way that domestic law has never countenanced, I would also be worried about that for the additional reason if there is no single universal arbiter of what customary international law is——

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. That is correct.

Senator LEE [continuing]. Changes by its very nature.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. I agree with you 100 percent.

But I do know—as I said, there is a long institutional history. The lawyers there are careful and thoughtful. I would want to be able to examine it and discuss it with my colleagues and kick it.

On important issues I like to take the OLC's temperature because they provide a wonderful pressure test for analysis and ideas and are very good at saying, Hey, you did not really think about this issue, or you know, maybe have you thought about it from this frame.

I will say this. The President has made it very clear that the department is and quite rightly so, in my view—the President has made it crystal clear that we are to pursue an America first foreign policy.

He has issued executive orders dealing very specifically with international—the U.S. relationship with the international organizations. My role is to execute on those, and we will.

He has—as I believe Mr. Landau was before you, and he testified that international agreements, international organizations, can advance U.S. interests and often do stipulate to that.

But the test, right—they are not ends in and of themselves. They are tools to an end, which is making America—to use the Secretary's phrase, making America safer, stronger, more prosperous, and the legal issues you raise I look forward to a conversation.

I had the great privilege to read, actually, a brief written in the 1970s relative to impoundment written by your father.

Senator LEE. Was it any good?

[Laughter.]

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. You are a senator and you are voting on my potential nomination, so I am going to say it was excellent, but it was excellent. It was—it was outstanding.

Senator CRUZ. That was the right answer.

[Laughter.]

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you.

It was outstanding, and I look forward—I hope we are able to have these conversations. I find them educational, exciting, and that helps us get to the right outcome for the American people, which is the most important thing.

Senator LEE. Wonderful. I will go back and read that brief and look forward to future.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. I highly recommend it.

Senator LEE. Thank you, sir.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Rubinstein, I am glad you were as oblique with Senator Lee as you were with me. Nice to know it is bipartisan.

I have another couple of questions before we close. The first is for you, Governor Huckabee. And again, we discussed this a little bit yesterday when we met.

But as you know, what happens in Israel does not just affect Israel. It also affects the region, and in neighboring Syria, as we discussed, I think there is an historic opportunity to build a stable, hopefully democratic but certainly prosperous future that is very different from the Assad regime of the last 50-plus years.

But I am very concerned that there are reports that there are ongoing communications between Russia and Syria, also between Iran and Syria but particularly Russia, that if we do not seize this moment Russia may, again, embed itself with the new authorities in a way that is not going to be in the long term best interest either of Syria or the United States or the region, I would assert.

So can you talk a little bit about how you think we can work with Israel to achieve a Syria that is no longer subject to Russian influence?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, an excellent question and quite timely.

As I said to you yesterday, there are people who want a stable Syria more than anyone in the world—the Israelis—particularly the mothers and the fathers of those 18 year old men and women who have just been drafted into the military and who, God forbid, are going to have to go to yet another theater of war on their border.

It is in the world's best interest to see there is stability there, but it is in Israel's immediate interest to see that happen, and I am confident that the President will do everything in his power to see that to fruition.

Senator SHAHEEN. And can I assume from that that you would encourage that direction and encourage the President to think about the opportunities that we have right now in Syria?

Mr. HUCKABEE. Senator, it is my view that the President would encourage me to think in that direction. Generally, it is hard to get in front of him. It is usually necessary to get behind what he has already thought, and I am convinced and confident—again, I do not have a conversation.

Until I am confirmed I will not be able to have that kind of conversation. But it would not surprise me at all if that is already on his agenda to make happen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I would certainly agree with you with respect to actions in Israel. However, the President does seem to be falling prey to the manipulation of Vladimir Putin and reciting the Russian talking points, and if Russia is interested in getting back into Syria I would hope that we would not pay attention to what Russia wants and would pay attention to what the United States wants.

Mr. Cabrera, I appreciate your calling up the importance of Panama withdrawing from the Belt and Road Initiative. I agree that has been a huge accomplishment in the first few months of this Administration.

But I am also concerned about the comments—the inflammatory rhetoric, as I said in my opening statement, that the President has used in talking about reclaiming the Panama Canal.

So can I just ask, if confirmed as Ambassador to Panama do you commit to respecting the sovereignty of Panama and to advising the President to do the same?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate the question, and what I will say is it is an honor to be nominated to be the Ambassador to Panama, and if confirmed with your consent we would serve at the President's pleasure.

And he has said as our commander in chief his job is to make sure the security and safety of our country and our national security interests, and he said all the options are on the table, right, regarding the Chinese influence in Panama.

But what I will say is part of all of the options includes diplomacy, which I think is where we have seen gains in these first 60 days, and if confirmed, again, I look forward to working with President Trump and Secretary Rubio and the Panamanian government to continue to make these gains, to diminish that Chinese influence.

I am going to be working with your office as well and with the members of this committee and having an open dialogue and continuing forward.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I appreciate that and the importance of focusing on diplomacy, and that is why it is hard for me to understand exactly what the President means when he talks about reclaiming the Panama Canal and how those actions would be consistent with our treaty obligations.

Can you shed any light on that? What is he talking about when he says—are we talking about sending boots on the ground and the military into Panama to take back the canal?

Are we talking about buying it back again? Are we talking about coercing the Panamanians to give it back to us? What do you think? What have your conversations been about what the intent is with respect to the Panama Canal?

Mr. CABRERA. Thank you, Senator, and I appreciate the question.

My conversations have been limited as a private citizen. Obviously, I am not as privy to whatever intel or information they might have regarding the extent of Chinese influence.

But President Trump has articulated pretty clearly, and Secretary Rubio in his first trip, it is my understanding, based on the readouts on the State Department website, that he said there was a preliminary interpretation that they might be in violation of the neutrality of the treaty of the canal.

So, again, President Trump is our commander in chief. He has said that all options are on the table. You know, if confirmed I would serve at his pleasure.

And again, part of all of those options is diplomacy. But ultimately, President Trump is our commander in chief, and I stand behind him and his policies.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I understand that as his nominee you would do that. Let me just register my opposition to sending the military in to take back the canal by force and also my opposition to buying it back and to coercing the Panamanians in ways that would force them to give it back.

So I appreciate your focus on diplomacy.

Before I end my remarks let me ask unanimous consent that materials relating to Mr. Rubinstein's and Mr. Huckabee's nomination be submitted for the record.

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

Senator SHAHEEN. And I will also note for the information of members that the record will remain open until close of business tomorrow, March 26, for members to submit questions for the record.

I would hope that any questions that you all receive you would try and get back to us as soon as possible.

With that, and thanks to the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

### Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MIKE HUCKABEE BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

#### Gaza

*Several weeks ago, President Trump announced a new vision for Gaza that spurred our Arab partners to think "out of the box" on potential Gaza scenarios. Unfortunately, the Arab League responded with a proposal that does not recognize the realities on the ground—Gaza is destroyed, there is no one suitable to govern, and Hamas remains a military entity.*

*Question.* How do we reconcile the gap between the different plans?

*Answer.* I have only read press reports about the plans and look forward to getting fully briefed on the key differences if confirmed. The Trump Administration has made clear Hamas has no future in Gaza and America stands with Israel.

*Question.* Should we reconcile the gap between the different plans?

*Answer.* Building upon my answer in Question 1, I would add that the Trump Administration has also stated support for Israel's military operations to destroy Hamas and help ensure Gaza never again poses as a security threat to Israel.

*Question.* What kind of role, if any, can Hamas have in the future governance of Gaza?

*Answer.* The Trump Administration has said there is no future for Hamas in Gaza.

*Question.* What kind of role, if any, can the Palestinian Authority have in the future governance of Gaza?

*Answer.* I have not been briefed on the Trump Administration position. But as I said in my testimony—the Palestinian Authority is corrupt, indoctrinates children to hate and murder Jews, and compensates and rewards terrorism.

#### Pay-for-Slay

*Several weeks ago, President Trump announced a new vision for Gaza that spurred our Arab partners to think "out of the box" on potential Gaza scenarios. Unfortunately, the Arab League responded with a proposal that does not recognize the realities on the ground—Gaza is destroyed, there is no one suitable to govern, and Hamas remains a military entity.*

*Question.* If confirmed, will you closely monitor the new PA payment mechanism and ensure it no longer provides an incentive or reward to terrorists?

*Answer.* Yes. It is long past time the PA's reprehensible "pay-for-slay" system comes to an end.

*Question.* Will you ensure the requirements of the Taylor Force Act are strictly met before any American aid goes to directly benefit the PA?

*Answer.* Yes. We will fully enforce the Taylor Force Act.



*Lebanon*

*Question.* Iran is at its weakest point in decades because of Israel's decisive military operations. Our partner Israel did all of this despite the Biden Administration, not because of it. In Lebanon, after years of Hezbollah threats against Israel, we now see a partner in the new government. What are your thoughts on the opportunities in Lebanon that will safeguard Israel's security and allow its citizens to return home?

*Answer.* The Trump Administration has said that Lebanon under the new leadership has a once-in-a generation opportunity to lead Lebanon away from the stranglehold of Iran and Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Unlike the Biden Administration, the Trump Administration has said it will not be grading on a curve.

*Israel-Saudi Normalization*

*Question.* Israel-Saudi normalization has the ability to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and reaffirm the Abraham Accords. How do you envision your role in achieving this goal?

*Answer.* I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Trump Administration to build upon and expand the Abraham Accords following the same principles that were successful in creating the historic agreements in President Trump's first term.

*Congressional Travel*

*Congressional Delegations (CODELs) and Staff Delegations (STAFFDELS) serve a critical oversight mission. However, the Department has repeatedly denied or pushed-back on CODELs and STAFFDELS.*

*Question.* Do you pledge to support fully CODELs and STAFFDELS that seek to travel to U.S. missions?

*Answer.* I look forward to warmly welcoming and supporting CODELs and STAFFDELS on their visits.

*Question.* Do you agree to support fully any CODEL or STAFFDEL, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?

*Answer.* Yes.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MIKE HUCKABEE BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*Lebanon*

*Question.* With the weakening of Hezbollah following Israel's campaign last year, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have the opportunity to secure the southern border with Israel and further stabilize the country. Do you believe we should support the LAF so it can provide Lebanese security over southern Lebanon?

*Answer.* The Trump Administration has said that Lebanon under the new leadership has a once-in-a generation opportunity to lead Lebanon away from the stranglehold of Iran and Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Unlike the Biden Administration, the Trump Administration has said it will not be grading on a curve.

*Jordan*

*Question.* How do you view events in the West Bank, including settlement activity and violence against civilians, as impacting Jordanian stability, and what can the U.S. do to ensure that the political situation in the West Bank does not adversely affect Israel and Jordan's security?

*Answer.* One of the biggest drivers of instability is the growing threat from Iranian-backed terrorism that has implications for the security of Israel and Jordan. I look forward to getting further briefed on this matter and working together with Israel and Jordan to counter terrorism.

*Israel-Gaza-West Bank*

*Question.* The Office of the Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority was established under the President George W. Bush Administration in 2005 and is widely regarded by the IDF Central Command as crucial to preventing terrorist threats against Israelis. What is your view on the U.S. role in ensuring successful security coordination between the IDF and Palestinian Authority Security Forces to safeguard Israeli lives?

Answer. I have not been briefed on the Trump Administration's position but in general terms—successful security coordination can play an important role to counterterrorism and saving lives.

*Question.* What do you view as the U.S. role once the fighting in Gaza concludes? How should the U.S. work with our allies and partners to ensure Israeli security, support the stabilization and reconstruction of Gaza, and provide Palestinian civilians with non-violent alternatives that would root out extremism and prioritize Palestinian well-being and peaceful existence alongside Israel?

Answer. One of the most important roles for the United States is to help ensure that Gaza never poses a security threat to Israel in the future. I look forward to working with Israel and our Gulf Arab partners how we can bring lasting peace and security for Israel and a better life for Palestinians.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MIKE HUCKABEE BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

*Sanctions Against Israeli Jews in Judea and Samaria*

*In February 2024 the Biden administration issued Executive Order (EO) 14115, imposing crippling sanctions “on persons undermining peace, security, and stability in the West Bank.” The administration utilized that EO to impose crippling sanctions on Israeli Jews living in Judea and Samaria. Biden administration officials refused to make public the basis for those sanctions, though critics have linked many of the public allegations leveled by the Biden administration to anti-Israel NGO’s.*

*Question.* Can you commit to providing the Committee with transparency into the basis for those sanctions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to working with the Committee on providing transparency into the basis of those sanctions.

*Question.* Are you aware of any NGO’s that provided material used by the Biden administration to sanction Jews in Judea and Samaria?

Answer. The Trump Administration rescinded this Executive Order before I was able to begin my consultations with the Department. If confirmed, I will review U.S. sanctions under the prior administration and to ensure our sanctions policy supports the objectives of this administration.

*Office of Palestinian Affairs/Palestinian Consulate*

*The Trump administration consolidated America’s diplomatic presence in Israel by moving what was then the Palestinian Affairs Unit (PAU) under the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, so that the unit reported to the U.S. Ambassador to Israel. The Biden admin changed that structure, created a new Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA), and broke out the unit so that it reported directly to the State Department’s Near Eastern Affairs Bureau. OPA generated significant geopolitical controversy, including on the morning of the October 7 terrorist attacks, in which the office posted online that Israel should not retaliate to the terrorist attack.*

*Separately, the Biden administration also indicated and repeatedly reiterated its intention to open an official Palestinian-facing consulate in Israel’s capital Jerusalem.*

*Question.* Do you intend to bring the OPA or its successor organization under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador to Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring the U.S. presence in Jerusalem continues to promote U.S. interests.

*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?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* If not, why not?

Answer. N/A

*Israeli Sovereignty*

*If confirmed, you would be responsible for implementing American policy regarding the territories Israel took control of in June 1967. In 2015 the*

*Obama Administration maneuvered the United Nations Security Council to pass Resolution 2334, which called on member states “to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.” The phrase “territories occupied since 1967” refers to the Golan Heights and Judea and Samaria, including parts of Jerusalem. The first 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.*

*Question.* Do you understand the policy of the United States to be that Israel has sovereignty over the Western Wall?

*Answer.* I understand the policy of the United States is to call for maintaining the status quo at Jerusalem’s holy sites, including the Western Wall.

*Question.* Do you understand the policy of the United States to be that Israel has sovereignty over the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem?

*Answer.* The United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and its seat of government. Israel presently has sovereignty over the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. Given that Israel is the Jewish state, it should maintain sovereignty over the Jewish Quarter.

*Question.* Do you understand the policy of the United States to be that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

*Answer.* The United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and its seat of government and Israel has controlled the Old City of Jerusalem since 1967.

*Question.* Do you understand the policy of the United States to be that Israel has sovereignty over the entire Israeli Golan Heights, including the Sheba Farms?

*Answer.* President Trump issued a Presidential Proclamation on March 25, 2019, declaring the United States recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel’s territory. The State Department’s website, publicly available maps and data, and the geographic Guidance Bulletin show the Golan Heights as part of Israel. There has been no change in the Administration’s policies with respect to Lebanon, or the Israel-Lebanon border.

#### *Hamas and Human Shields*

*Hamas launched repeated wars against Israel during the Biden administration, injuring, kidnapping, and murdering thousands of people, including dozens of Americans. They know they cannot defeat Israel militarily, so their fundamental strategy is to use Palestinian human shields to generate civilian casualties, and therefore international outrage that stops Israel. To counter that strategy, in 2018 I authored and secured into law congressionally mandatory sanctions against Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists for using human shields, which were renewed in the 2024 supplemental (P.L. 118–50, Division O, Sec. 4). The Biden administration did not submit those required reports or imposed the required sanctions. Hamas relied on using human shields when they launched the October 7 atrocities. The sanctions I authored were meant to counter and deter them from using that tactic. They were mandatory. Hamas had used human shields in 2021.*

*Question.* Do you assess that Hamas uses human shields?

*Answer.* Yes, and it is abhorrent.

*Question.* Will you commit to fully enforcing sanctions against Hamas for the use of human shields?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will be fully committed to supporting the enforcement of sanctions not only against Hamas but also for the terrorist group’s use of human shields.

#### *Palestinian Pay for Slay Programs*

*The Palestinian Authority (PA) provides hundreds of millions of dollars annually in payments, salaries, and benefits to terrorists through its infamous “pay for slay” program. This program is institutionalized through policies, laws, and regulations to ensure that the government offers martyr payments to injured or imprisoned terrorists and the family members of deceased terrorists for attacking Israel and supporting other terrorist activities*

*in the region. The PA continues to prioritize paying terrorists and their families more than ever and even pays civil servants in its own government involved in terrorist acts.*

*In recent years Congress has passed a range of legislation limiting assistance to the PA and for activities that benefit the PA, e.g. the Taylor Force Act (TFA) (Title X of P.L. 115–141), which limits funding for activities that “directly benefit” the PA. TFA included certification language regarding a range of concerns related to PA policies and governance, including “payments for acts of terrorism against Israeli citizens and United States citizens.” Part of the policy rationale for TFA’s restrictions is that money is fungible: any aid that directly benefits the PA indirectly supports the PA’s payments for acts of terrorism.*

*During the Biden administration, officials suggested that regardless of restrictions imposed by Congress the administration intends to pursue projects and increase assistance that “benefit[] . . . ordinary Palestinians,” implicitly in contrast to programs that would directly benefit the PA and therefore be noncompliant with TFA.*

*Question.* Please describe your understanding of restrictions imposed by Congress on aid to the PA, especially your understanding of the distinction between aid that “directly benefits” the PA and other forms of aid.

*Answer.* I understand that there are restrictions on the use of Economic Support Funds (ESF) to provide funds to the Palestinian Authority (PA) or for assistance that directly benefits the PA.

*With respect to the Taylor Force Act (TFA), in place since 2018, ESF that directly benefits the PA is restricted unless the secretary certifies to Congress that certain conditions are met, including regarding payments to Palestinians, or their families, imprisoned for acts of violence or terrorism. If confirmed, I will support the Administration’s efforts to fully implement the TFA and only provide assistance consistent with applicable U.S. law.*

*Question.* Can you commit that, if confirmed, you will ensure that the U.S. will not engage in projects or provide assistance for projects that directly benefit the PA?

*Answer.* If confirmed, consistent with the TFA, I commit to ensuring that the U.S. will neither engage in projects nor provide assistance for projects that directly benefit the PA, except where consistent with the provisions of the TFA.

*Question.* Can you commit that, if confirmed, you will ensure that the U.S. will not engage in projects or provide assistance for projects that are the same as, materially similar to, or successor projects to foreign assistance projects that were suspended pursuant to TFA?

*Answer.* If confirmed, consistent with the TFA, I commit to ensure the U.S. will not engage in projects or provide assistance for projects that are the same as, or materially similar to, or successor projects to foreign assistance projects that were suspended pursuant to the TFA, except where consistent with the provisions of the TFA.

#### *USAID Diversion to Hamas*

*For years, USAID has funneled money to Palestinian terrorists, including Hamas. Before and after October 7, hundreds of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars flowed to Hamas, helping to fund the very attack that slaughtered 1,200 innocent Israelis and allowing them to keep waging war. Biden administration lied about the nature of that aid in public records, refused to disclose which groups were receiving the money, and handed out tens of millions in cash with zero American oversight. In one instance in 2022, a grant tracked by USAID’s Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS) was labeled as going to the West Bank to an anonymous grantee. After I inquired about the grant, it turned out that the amount was wrong, the assistance was going to the Gaza Strip, and the group should not have been granted anonymity—and that the group does not operate in the West Bank, only the Gaza Strip. USAID’s Inspector General acknowledged in a November 2023 report that Hamas diverts humanitarian assistance, explicitly calling the Gaza Strip a “high-risk” area for the potential misuse of U.S. funds. Similarly, a 2021 internal memo from the State Department admitted that there was a “high risk” that aid would benefit Hamas, and the Biden administration Treasury Department then had to provide licenses to circumvent anti-terrorism sanctions.*

*Question.* Do you assess that Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups divert international assistance, including U.S. assistance?

Answer. I understand that all U.S. assistance in the West Bank and Gaza is provided in a manner consistent with U.S. law and through experienced, vetted, and trusted independent partners. I am told that along with rigorous risk management measures and monitoring, these procedures protect U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance from being diverted to Hamas or other malign actors.

Since October 7, 2023, individuals and organized criminal gangs have looted international humanitarian assistance in Gaza, which the U.S. Government has reported to Congress consistent with applicable law.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress on protecting U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance from being diverted to Hamas or other malign actors.

#### UNRWA

*The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has for decades provided material support for Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza, including personnel, facilities, and physical materials that have been used to further their terrorist activity. The Biden administration has funneled hundreds of billions of dollars into the Gaza Strip largely through UNRWA. Hamas diverted much of this funding to build the infrastructure necessary for carrying out the October 7 terrorist attacks, and after the war started significantly more evidence emerged linking UNRWA to terrorism. Congress prohibited the Biden administration from funding UNRWA, but administration officials circumvented that prohibition by using UNRWA infrastructure.*

*Question.* Do you assess that UNRWA has provided support for terrorists, including Hamas?

Answer. In the February 4 Executive Order on U.N. organizations, the White House Stated that UNRWA has reportedly been infiltrated by members of groups designated as foreign terrorist organizations, and that UNRWA employees were involved in the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel. In addition, we have seen Hamas cynically weaponize the suffering of Palestinians by using civilian infrastructure, like schools and hospitals, including U.N. facilities, to store caches of weapons, house fighters, and coordinate attacks. If confirmed, I will work to ensure no funding gets into the hands of terrorists, including Hamas.

*Question.* Describe how you intend to approach the relationship between the United States and UNRWA.

Answer. On February 4, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14199 withdrawing the United States from and ending funding to certain U.N. organizations, including UNRWA, while also reviewing U.S. support to all U.N. organizations. If confirmed, I commit to supporting and implementing the President's Executive Order.

*Question.* What will you do to ensure UNRWA plays no part in rebuilding Gaza, and is indeed defunded and terminated?

Answer. UNRWA's work has been tainted, and its credibility questioned, due to the terrorist ties its staff had that were exposed in the wake of Hamas' October 7 attack. On February 4, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14199 withdrawing the United States from and ending funding to certain U.N. organizations, including UNRWA, while also reviewing U.S. support to all U.N. organizations. If confirmed, I commit to supporting and implementing the President's Executive Order.

#### Attempts To Expel Israel From the United Nations General Assembly

*The United States considers the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to be a terrorist organization. Meanwhile the United Nations has steadily elevated the status of the PLO across its organizations and even in the General Assembly. Last September Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas declared that the PLO would seek to expel Israel from the General Assembly. In November 2024, I led a letter joined by several members of this Committee, including the now Secretary of State, saying we would move to fundamentally reevaluate our relationship with the U.N. and the Palestinian Authority if Israel was expelled from the General Assembly. That would include limiting American participation and funding across the U.N. and its bodies, whether the PLO participates in those bodies or not.*

*Question.* Do you assess that the PLO is a terrorist organization?

Answer. I understand the PLO is not a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and is not otherwise designated under any U.S. sanctions program. Additionally, the 1987 Anti-Terrorism Act, which included a "determination" by Congress that the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization, imposes restrictions in-

cluding on the PLO operating an office in Washington, until there is a certification that the PLO, its agents and its constituent groups no longer practice or support terrorist actions.

Certain factions of the PLO remain designated FTOs and/or Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs), including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), PFLP General Command (GC), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

*Question.* Do you assess that enhancing the status of the PLO in international organizations undermines American national security and interests?

*Answer.* Yes. I believe enhancing the status of the PLO in international organizations, outside of direct negotiations with Israel, would be detrimental to U.S. goals. The United States needs to engage with Israel and the Palestinians in the interest of promoting peace and stability. This includes reinforcing American support for compliance by the PLO with respect to certain commitments made by them, including renunciation of the use of terrorism and all other acts of violence.

#### UNESCO

*Congress decided over a decade ago that the U.S. would limit participation in U.N. organizations that admit the Palestinians as a state. Congress was concerned inter alia that Palestinian officials systematically torque the agendas of organizations they join in an anti-Israel direction, politicizing and delegitimizing those organizations while moving them away from their original missions. In 2011, UNESCO admitted the Palestinians as a member state, and the U.S. cut support for the organization. Subsequent actions by UNESCO confirmed the wisdom of that decision and the veracity of congressional concerns, including passage by UNESCO of language denying a Jewish connection to the Temple Mount, Judaism's holiest site. In 2018, the U.S. completely withdrew from UNESCO. In summer 2023, the Biden administration rejoined UNESCO. Then-U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, Richard Verma, submitted to UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay saying that the organization was "decreasing politicized debate, especially on Middle East issues." Administration officials said that engagement with UNESCO would ensure that the organization further reduce its anti-Israel bias and return to its core mission. On September 17, UNESCO listed Ancient Jericho as a site in the "state of Palestine." The resolution stripped any Jewish connection from the history of the site. On October 17, UNESCO's Director-General used his platform to suggest that Israel was targeting journalists. On October 27, UNESCO suggested that Israel was targeting protected educational institutions. On December 2, UNESCO gave a Statement to NPR suggesting that Israel was deliberately targeting protected cultural property.*

*Question.* Do you assess that UNESCO is decreasing politicized debate in general?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Trump administration to better understand the situation. I am aware that on February 4, in Executive Order 14199, the President ordered a review of U.S. membership in UNESCO and whether participation in UNESCO supports U.S. interests.

*Question.* Do you assess that UNESCO is decreasing politicized debate regarding Israel?

*Answer.* If confirmed I will work with the Trump Administration to look into this matter. I am aware that on February 4, in Executive Order 14199, the President ordered a review of U.S. membership in UNESCO and whether participation in UNESCO supports U.S. interests.

*Question.* Do you assess that is in the U.S.'s national interest to participate in UNESCO?

*Answer.* I am aware that on February 4, in Executive Order 14199, the President ordered a review of U.S. membership in UNESCO. The review will include an evaluation of how and whether participation in UNESCO supports U.S. interests.

#### Israel and Territories Administered by Israel

*In June 2021, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) announced the launch of the Joint Investment for Peace Initiative (JIPI), which the Corporation described in a press release as "a new program that will increase cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians by promoting investments and financial tools that advance the development of the Palestinian private sector economy" which "aims to attract private investment that promotes Palestinian economic development; increase economic*

*cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis and between Palestinians and Americans; and contribute to greater integration of the Palestinian economy into the international rules-based business system.” JIPI was created pursuant to the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act of 2020 (MEPPA), which authorized \$250 million for DFC and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement programs over a 5-year period.*

*The Biden administration repeatedly and secretly issued guidelines prohibiting funding for projects involving Israeli individuals and entities in territories that came under Israeli administration in June 1967. For example, recently Department of State issued written guidance prohibiting U.S.-Israel binational foundations from funding joint scientific and technological cooperation with such individuals and entities. DFC officials indicated that DFC was also secretly implementing guidance limiting support for projects involving Israeli individuals and entities in territories that came under Israeli administration after June 1967, and have cited “the applicability of existing U.S. foreign policy and agreements with host and counterpart governments when determining its ability to provide support.”*

*Question.* Can you commit to ending discriminatory policies, including the Biden administration’s secret boycott policies, against Jews in Judea and Samaria?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will commit to addressing and ending any discriminatory policies that would harm our partners in Israel and in the West Bank. I will work with the interagency to execute our trade and investment policies.

I am committed to furthering U.S. efforts to advance the freedom, security, and prosperity of Israelis and of Palestinians, including steps to encourage foreign investment and job creation.

---

RESPONSES TO FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MIKE HUCKABEE BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

*Question.* Do you agree with Congress’s assessment that the PLO is a terrorist organization?

*Answer.* President Trump and I agree with the position of Congress and previous administrations. Of course the PLO is a terrorist organization.

*Question.* Is it your understanding that the policy of the State Department has shifted from what it was under the Biden administration, i.e., that the State Department no longer agrees with the congressional determination that the PLO is a terrorist organization?

*Answer.* The administration’s position has not changed. The PLO is a terrorist organization.

---

NO RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MIKE HUCKABEE BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

*The Office of the Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority: The Office of the Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority was established under the President George W. Bush Administration in 2005 and is widely regarded by the IDF Central Command as crucial to preventing terrorist threats against Israelis. Time and again Israeli security leaders have highlighted the importance of the USSC role in the IDF’s ability to manage threats—particularly those emanating from Iran in an attempt to exploit tensions in the West Bank. Further, the Palestinian Security Forces have been instrumental in dismantling Iran cell activity in the West Bank.*

*Question..* What is your view on the U.S. role in ensuring successful security coordination between the IDF and Palestinian Authority Security Forces to safeguard Israeli lives?

[No response received.]

*Question..* Link between Israel & Jordan Security: The stability of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a critical U.S. interest, and the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan is a cornerstone of regional cooperation and security architecture.

[No response received.]

*Question.* How do you view events in the West Bank, including settlement activity and violence against civilians, as impacting Jordanian stability, and what can the U.S. do to ensure that the political situation in the West Bank does not adversely affect Israel and Jordan's security?

[No response received.]

*Religious Freedom: Throughout your career, you have emphasized the importance of religious freedom, which of course is a foundational value.*

*Question.* Given your commitment to this principle, do you believe Muslims and Christians have a right to worship at their respective holy places in Jerusalem and other sites in Israel and the West Bank?

[No response received.]

*Question.* Do you believe that all Jews should have equal access to worship at the Wailing Wall in the Old City?

[No response received.]

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO KEVIN CABRERA BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Immigration*

*Question.* The current government in Panama is a strong partner against illegal immigration. How would you continue to encourage Panama to strengthen its border security and combat transnational organized crime?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will prioritize with the law enforcement tools and programs we have in Panama through our Embassy to continue strengthening Panama's border security and fight against transnational organized crime. The United States works closely with Panama to halt illegal immigration through the Darien and to counter narcotics trafficking through Panamanian land and maritime routes. I understand we are seeing remarkable decreases in the number of illegal border crossings and increases in illicit narcotics seizures since the end of January. If confirmed, I will continue and build upon this coordination.

*Panama Canal*

*Question.* The United States is the largest foreign investor in Panama, and the main customer of the Panama Canal. What would you suggest we can do to ensure critical infrastructure in Panama is protected from the malign influence of China and others?

*Answer.* It is imperative that the United States and Panama address the malign influence of external actors—particularly the CCP—in the Canal area. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage and support Panama in removing CCP presence from the Canal area and severing ties with CCP companies that threaten it. Our engagement has already yielded results: Panama is the first country in the region to exit the BRI. Further, U.S. investor BlackRock is in the process of purchasing the two CCP-connected CK Hutchison port concessions in the Canal area.

*Question.* Do you agree that the Panama Canal Treaties give the United States the right to act unilaterally to protect the security and neutrality of the Panama Canal?

*Answer.* The President has stated that he is prepared to exercise the full range of his authorities to ensure the Panama Canal's neutrality, consistent with the 1977 bilateral treaty. The United States built the Canal and gave it to Panama, not to the CCP. We have great concerns about the influence the CCP and CCP-connected companies have over the Canal, and if confirmed I am committed to working with Panama to resolve these concerns.

*Congressional Travel*

*Question.* Congressional Delegations (CODELs) and Staff Delegations (STAFFDELS) serve a critical oversight mission. However, the Department has repeatedly denied or pushed-back on CODELs and STAFFDELS. Do you pledge to support fully CODELs and STAFFDELS that seek to travel to U.S. missions?

*Answer.* The State Department supports and encourages congressional travel abroad. I understand the importance of meeting foreign counterparts to gain on-the-ground insights and cross-cultural perspectives. I also understand Congress's role



conducting oversight to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and further America's foreign policy.

*Question.* Do you agree to support fully any CODEL or STAFFDEL, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I pledge to work with the Committee to ensure the Department is supporting travel to the greatest extent possible to help delegations meet their mission objectives and obtain engagements with officials.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO KEVIN CABRERA BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

*Migration*

*Question.* If confirmed, how will you mitigate the impacts of President Trump's threats toward Panama on the critical U.S.-Panama migration partnership?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Panama and use the tools and programs available to address illegal immigration passing through Panama. I understand attempts to cross the Darien Gap and reach the U.S. southwest border are rapidly dropping, with a 99 percent reduction of illegal crossings in February 2025, compared to February 2024. This success is due to President Trump and President Mulino seeing eye-to-eye on the threat that illegal immigration poses to the United States, Panama, and the region.

*Question.* In your view, how has the Trump Administration's rhetoric regarding the Panama Canal made it harder for Panama to continue working with us?

*Answer.* In my view, the President has rightfully expressed firm objections to key, unaddressed, U.S. national security concerns regarding the Canal. As a direct cause of the President's and Secretary Rubio's engagement, we have seen unprecedented actions from Panama to mitigate such concerns. The Canal is vital to the security and prosperity of the U.S. and the region. If confirmed, I will engage productively with the Government of Panama and the Panama Canal Authority to ensure Canal neutrality and excise malign CCP presence from the region.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Office of Sanctions Coordinator*

*In December 2020, President Trump signed into law a provision that I spearheaded which re-established an Office of Sanctions Coordinator within the State Department. This office is intended to coordinate in three main ways: (1) within the Department itself; (2) across the executive branch and the interagency; and (3) for foreign countries for questions concerning U.S. sanctions policy.*

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to provide this office the attention, support, and resources needed to ensure its success and the fulfillment of its statutory mandate?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that the Office of the Legal Adviser provides all necessary legal support to the sanctions work of the Department, including in the fulfillment of the statutory functions assigned to the Office of Sanctions Coordinator.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to work with my office and this committee to ensure that this office succeeds and fulfills its statutory mandate?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the conversation with your office and this Committee on the sanctions work done by the Department of State, including the work of the Office of Sanctions Coordinator, consistent with my professional obligation to protect executive branch confidentiality interests, including attorney-client privilege.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to direct the State Department to brief my office and this committee in a timely fashion with respect to sanctions policy developments as they occur?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with other officials in the Department of State to ensure that your office and this Committee are appropriately informed of sanctions policy developments, consistent with my professional obligation to protect executive branch confidentiality interests, including attorney-client privilege.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*Role of the Legal Adviser*

*Question.* What is your understanding of what it means when Congress “establishes” something in statute?

Answer. The meaning of a particular term in a statute would depend on a variety of considerations, consistent with principles of statutory interpretation. If confirmed, I would need to consider such a question in the context of a particular statute in order to provide appropriate guidance to State Department decisionmakers regarding the meaning of that term in that statute.

*Question.* If Congress passes a law that says “there shall be established” a Federal agency, bureau, or office, what does that mean?

Answer. The meaning of a particular statutory phrase depends on the application of controlling principles of statutory interpretation. If confirmed, I would need to consider this question in the context of the particular statute in question and within the framework of recent Supreme Court decisions regarding the scope of Article II Executive power to provide appropriate guidance to State Department decisionmakers.

*Question.* Can the executive unilaterally terminate an agency, office, or bureau that was established by statute without the approval of Congress?

Answer. This is an important and nuanced legal question. It would need to be addressed within the framework of recent Supreme Court separation of powers authorities and under the relevant statutory framework in the context of a particular proposal. If confirmed, I commit to advise the Secretary on my view of the relevant Constitutional and statutory requirements and other relevant legal issues associated with such a proposal.

*Question.* What is your understanding of what 22 U.S.C. 2706(a) requires?

Answer. My understanding is that section 34(a) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act (22 U.S.C. 2706(a)) requires notification to congressional committees 15 days before the obligation or expenditure of funds through a reprogramming of funds for certain purposes.

*Question.* Do you commit to advising the Department to comply with 22 U.S.C. 2706(a)?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to advise the Department on congressional notifications consistent with applicable statutory requirements, including section 34(a) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act (22 U.S.C. 2706(a)).

*Question.* What is your view on what “prior consultation with Congress” means in statute?

Answer. The meaning of this or any other phrase in a statute depends on the statutory text and context construed consistently with controlling principles of statutory interpretation within the relevant Constitutional framework (here, most likely, Supreme Court decisions on the proper scope of Article II authority would play a role in the analysis). If confirmed, I would need to consider such a question based on the specific text and context of a particular statute to provide appropriate guidance to State Department decisionmakers.

*Question.* What is your understanding of what is required in terms of consultation by Section 7063 of the fiscal year SFOPS Appropriations Act (Division F of P.L. 118–47)?

Answer. Section 7063(a) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. F, P.L. 118–47) calls for “prior consultation with the appropriate congressional committees” before implementing a reorganization, redesign, or other plan described in section 7063(b).

*Question.* What is your view of Congress’ role in foreign affairs?

Answer. Our Constitution assigns the Congress an important role in foreign affairs, including with respect to oversight of the executive branch. As the Supreme Court recognized in *Zivotofsky v. Kerry*, “many decisions affecting foreign relations—including decisions that may determine the course of our relations with recognized countries—require congressional action.” I recognize and appreciate the interest that this Committee and its members have in such matters. If confirmed, I commit to engaging cooperatively with you and your staff.

*Question.* Do you believe Russia is committing war crimes in Ukraine?

Answer. I have read that the prior administration determined that certain members of Russia’s armed forces and other officials committed war crimes in Ukraine. However, I have not been in the government, and currently do not have access to the information that must inform any assessment regarding a particular person’s war crimes culpability.

That said, President Trump has made clear that his highest priority, regarding the Russia-Ukraine War, is to stop the dying and forge a path toward a durable peace. My role and focus as Legal Adviser, should I be confirmed, will be on providing legal advice to the Secretary as he works to achieve such a peace.

*Question.* Do you believe it is important that there is accountability for the victims of war crimes in Ukraine?

Answer. President Trump has made clear that his highest priority regarding the Russia-Ukraine War, is to stop the dying and forge a path toward a durable peace. My role and focus as Legal Adviser, should I be confirmed, will be on providing legal advice to the Secretary as he works to achieve such a peace.

*Question.* What is your view on whether the President can unilaterally withdraw from NATO?

Answer. I am not aware that the Administration plans to withdraw from NATO so I would not want to presume that a question concerning withdrawal from the treaty will arise. Regardless, this too is an important and nuanced legal question. My understanding, however, is that the Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Counsel has previously opined that the authority to exercise the United States’ right to withdraw from a treaty is a necessary incident of the President’s exclusive authority to execute treaties and to conduct diplomacy. If this question were to arise, I would review the matter carefully and consult with the Department of Justice.

---

RESPONSES TO FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*Question.* Do you believe the executive branch must comply with orders issued by Federal courts?

Answer. Generally, if there is a court order that directly binds a Federal official who is a party to the case and subject to the court’s jurisdiction, the official should follow it.

*Question.* Would you advise the Department to comply with a Federal judge’s order that orders the Department to take certain action or prohibits certain action?

Answer. Generally, if there is a court order that directly binds a Federal official who is a party to the case and subject to the court’s jurisdiction, the official should follow it.

*Question.* Do you believe in the unitary executive theory?

Answer. Article II section 1 of the Constitution provides “The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.” The text is quite clear: Under the Constitution, the President, and no one else, has executive power. Therefore, the executive may be fairly described as “unitary.” How this “theory” applies in any given case, of course, depends on the facts.

*Question.* What is your explanation of the theory of a unitary executive—specifically with regard to any constraints on executive power by the legislative branch?

Answer. This too is a fact-specific question. The Constitution obviously assigns the coordinate branches different powers and roles. Sometimes, one branch will clearly overreach, but often the inter-branch dispute occurs in a grey area. I believe the approach taken in the OLC opinions on the Open Skies Treaty (September 22, 2020) and the Syrian chemical weapons airstrikes (May 31, 2018) provides a useful template for analyzing the constitutional interplay and resolving inter-branch disputes.

Generally speaking, I view the Supreme Court's decisions in *Myers*, *Seila Law*, and *Free Enterprise Fund* to be controlling and instructive with respect to the scope of the President's Article II section 1 power.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

*China's Ongoing Genocide of Uyghurs*

*At the beginning of the Biden administration, State Department officials repeatedly refused to acknowledge that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was engaged in a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang that was ongoing, in part because the Biden administration already knew it would be reliant on supply lines that run through Xinjiang for their Green Agenda.*

*Question.* Do you believe that the Chinese Communist Party is engaged in a genocide against the Uyghurs and other religious minorities in Xinjiang that is ongoing?

*Answer.* Yes. Based on my understanding of the facts and as Secretary Rubio has stated, China, under the direction and control of the Chinese Communist Party, has committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang, which is ongoing.

*Iran Snapback*

*United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231 endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Paragraph 7(a) of the resolution terminated the provisions of resolutions 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835, 1929, and 2224, i.e., it terminated United Nations sanctions against Iran. Paragraphs 10–15 of UNSCR 2231 envision a so-called “snapback mechanism” that terminates 7(a), thereby restoring those sanctions. The mechanism can be triggered unilaterally by any “JCPOA participant State” in response to “significant non-performance” of commitments under the JCPOA.*

*During the Trump administration, the State Department's Office of Legal Advisor assessed that “As the United States is an original JCPOA participant identified in paragraph 10 of UNSCR 2231, 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.” That assessment was provided to me by the State Department in 2019 and the Trump administration initiated the snapback mechanism in 2020. The Biden administration rescinded the snapback in February 2021.*

*Question.* Do you assess that there is a legally available argument for the United States to initiate the snapback process under UNSCR 2231?

*Answer.* I understand that, in August 2020, the United States advised the United Nations Security Council that we have an explicit right to initiate the snapback of United Nations measures on the Islamic Republic of Iran because UNSCR 2231 established a fixed term, “JCPOA participants,” that expressly includes the United States in its definition. I have no reason to disagree with that view.

I believe it is critical to emphasize that President Trump has made clear in National Security Presidential Memorandum 2 (NSPM–2) that Iran's nuclear program, including its enrichment and reprocessing-related capabilities and nuclear-capable missiles, poses an existential danger to the United States and the entire civilized world. In NSPM–2, the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations was directed to work with key allies to complete the snapback of international sanctions and restrictions on Iran. If confirmed, I will provide the Secretary with the legal advice necessary to effectuate NSPM–2.

*Iran Deal*

*Throughout 2021 and 2022, Biden administration officials refused to fully clarify their understanding of the President's obligation to bring to Congress any nuclear deal with Iran in which the President would have waived or lifted congressionally mandated sanctions.*

*Question.* Please assess whether and to what degree any nuclear deal with Iran, in which the President waived or lifted congressionally mandated sanctions, would require congressional approval.

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department receives the legal advice necessary to act fully in accordance with the requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015.

---

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR TIM Kaine

*Question.* The State Department plays a critical role in war powers issues, including the implementation of the War Powers Act of 1973. What procedures will the Department follow under your leadership to ensure that Congress receives appropriate and timely reports under the War Powers Resolution?

Answer. The President and Congress have separate and complementary powers under the Constitution related to the use of the armed forces to protect national security, and I understand that there has been a long-standing practice, including in the first Trump administration, of providing reports consistent with the War Powers Resolution. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the State Department continues our cooperative and continuing relationship with Congress on use of force issues.

*Question.* Do you commit to advising the Secretary of State that a specific statutory authorization from Congress would be necessary before supporting hostilities in Mexico or elsewhere, consistent with the War Powers Resolution and the Constitution's Declaration of War Clause?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to providing the Secretary with best possible legal advice concerning any issue related to the use of force. Having said that, I am not in a position, prior to my confirmation and in the absence of specific facts, to offer a legal view on any particular use of force question. I understand that the executive branch has long taken the view that whether the President may order military action without the prior approval of Congress in a given case turns on whether (1) the action serves an important national interest, and (2) the reasonably anticipated nature, scope, and duration of the operation and any possible responses would not rise to the level of "war" for purposes of the Constitution's Declare War Clause. I am aware of a line of OLC opinions to this effect.

I believe this issue implicates core constitutional separation of powers questions. If confirmed, I would work closely with experts in my office and, when appropriate in my judgment, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, to assess the relevant facts and applicable law and ensure that the Secretary receives the best possible legal advice in an appropriate and timely fashion on any use of force question that arises during my tenure.

*Question.* What legal authority would be determinative for determining if the Administration can conduct airstrikes, offensive action, or other kinetic action against Mexico or another country?

Answer. All uses of military force by the United States must be conducted consistent with applicable law. Ultimately, of course, our Constitution is the determinative legal authority. Whether any particular use of force is authorized would depend on the specific facts and circumstances. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to ensure that the Secretary is provided the best possible legal advice on questions related to the use of force by the United States.

*Question.* Under what conditions may POTUS use force without congressional authorization?

Answer. I understand that the executive branch has long taken the view that whether the President may order military action without the prior approval of Congress in a given case turns on whether (1) the action serves an important national interest, and (2) the reasonably anticipated nature, scope, and duration of the operation and any possible responses would not rise to the level of "war" for purposes of the Constitution's Declare War Clause. I am aware that the Office of Legal Counsel has opined to this effect.

If confirmed, I will work closely with experts in my office and, when appropriate in my judgment, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel to assess the relevant facts and applicable law and provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate fashion on any use of force question that arises during my tenure.

*Question.* What are the constitutional limits to such uses of force?

Answer. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel has published a series of opinions across Administrations of both parties explaining the parameters of the

President's authority to use force without prior congressional authorization. I understand that these opinions suggest that whether the President may order military action without the prior approval of Congress in a given case turns on whether (1) the action serves an important national interest, and (2) the reasonably anticipated nature, scope, and duration of the operation and any possible responses would not rise to the level of "war" for purposes of the Constitution's Declare War Clause.

*Question.* In your view is the War Powers Act, including its 60-day timeline, constitutional?

*Answer.* This is an important and nuanced legal question. I understand and respect the constitutional role of Congress on use of force issues, as well as the important role that the War Powers Resolution has played over many decades in coordination between Congress and the executive branch. I find the May 31, 2018, Office of Legal Counsel to be instructive and interesting in this regard. The opinions in the Supreme Court's *Zivotofsky* case, majority, concurring, and dissenting, are also illuminating in my opinion.

If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the State Department continues our cooperative and continuing relationship with Congress on use of force issues.

*Question.* Does the ongoing bombing of Yemen constitute the introduction of U.S. forces into hostilities under the War Powers Act?

*Answer.* As a nominee, I am not able to address the Administration's legal position on the application of the War Powers Resolution to these particular operations. However, based on what I have read, I generally understand the Administration's view to be basically consistent with the analysis provided in the May 31, 2018, OLC opinion I referenced above—that the President has Article II authority to authorize the kinds of uses of force recently carried out against the Houthis to protect and defend U.S. forces and degrade and disrupt the ability of the Houthis to carry out attacks against vessels in the Red Sea region.

If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that Congress is well-informed about these very important matters.

*Question.* Is it legal to negotiate with terrorists?

*Answer.* I anticipate that the applicability of various U.S. laws to such a situation could depend on the particular actors, circumstances, and actions contemplated.

If confirmed, I will work closely with experts in my office and, when appropriate in my judgment, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel to assess the relevant facts and applicable law and provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate manner.

*Question.* What legal requirements must be met for a U.S. official to conduct such negotiations?

*Answer.* I anticipate that the applicability of various U.S. laws to such a situation could depend on the particular actors, circumstances, and actions contemplated.

If confirmed, I will work closely with experts in my office and, when appropriate in my judgment, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel to assess the relevant facts and applicable law and provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate manner.

*Question.* U.S. Foreign Assistance Act Subsection 620I(a) provides that "no assistance shall be furnished under this Act or the Arms Export Control Act to any country when it is made known to the President that the government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance." What type of restrictions on humanitarian and life-saving assistance would trigger Section 620I of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act?

*Answer.* I understand that assessments regarding this restriction are highly fact-specific.

If confirmed and presented with this issue, I will work closely with my colleagues and, when appropriate in my judgment, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel to assess the relevant facts and applicable law and provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate manner.

*Question.* Does the First Amendment apply to noncitizens in the United States?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will study this issue in collaboration with my colleagues and, when necessary in my judgment, with input from the Department of Justice to provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate manner. My understanding is that the Supreme Court has never held that aliens have the same First Amendment rights as citizens; in fact, the relevant

precedent suggests that such a holding could be inconsistent with an originalist reading of the Constitution.

*Question.* I understand that the Trump administration is using and plans to expand the use of INA Sec. 237(a)(4)(C), the Foreign Policy ground of deportability against noncitizens in the U.S. who are participating in political protests and activities. Under the plain language of Sec. 237(a)(4)(C), do protests rise to “reasonable grounds” to deport a lawful permanent resident married to a U.S. citizen?

*Answer.* Pursuant to INA 237(a)(4)(C), the Secretary of State has broad authority to determine that an alien’s presence or activities in the United States would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences, and whether their beliefs, statements, or associations would compromise a compelling foreign policy interest of the United States. Consistent with Executive Order 14150, America First Policy Directive to the Secretary of State, it is the foreign policy of the United States to always put American interests and American citizens first and any alien whose presence, activities, beliefs, statements, or associations undermine that objective has potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences. Whether an alien’s involvement in a protest could lead to such a determination by the Secretary would depend on the specific facts and circumstances of the individual and associated foreign policy interests of the United States.

*Question.* What about associations with other protesters?

*Answer.* Whether an alien’s association with other protesters could lead to an INA 237(a)(4)(C) determination by the Secretary would depend on the specific facts and circumstances of the individual and associated foreign policy interests of the United States.

*Question.* What about associations with Family?

*Answer.* Whether an alien’s associations with family could lead to an INA 237(a)(4)(C) determination by the Secretary would depend on the specific facts and circumstances of the individual and associated foreign policy interests of the United States.

*Question.* How do we balance this with the First Amendment protections for free speech and freedom of association?

*Answer.* Secretary Rubio has said that foreign nationals in the United States who violate U.S. laws, make misrepresentations on visa applications, or take action to support foreign terrorist groups will face consequences, including visa denial and revocation.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues and, when appropriate in my judgment, with the Department of Justice to provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate manner.

See also Answer 11 above.

*Question.* Sec. 237(a)(4)(C) refers to INA Sec. 212(a)(3)(C)(iv), which requires the Secretary of State “to notify on a timely basis [the chairs of the House and Senate Judiciary and Foreign Relations Committees] of the identity of the alien and the reasons for the determination.” Do you know whether the State Department has been complying with this requirement?

*Answer.* For determinations made under clause (iii) of INA Sec. 212(a)(3)(C), I understand the State Department intends to provide notice to the chairs of the House and Senate Judiciary and Foreign Relations/ Affairs Committees of the identities of aliens and the reasons for the Secretary of State’s determinations.

*Question.* If you are confirmed, will you commit to fulfilling this legal obligation?

*Answer.* I will support the Department’s compliance with legally required reporting obligations, consistent, of course, with my professional obligations to protect attorney-client and other similar executive branch privileges.

*Question.* Is Tren de Aragua a ‘foreign nation or government’ under the Alien Enemies Act?

*Answer.* I understand that on March 15 President Trump issued a proclamation under the Alien Enemies Act declaring that Tren de Aragua “is undertaking hostile actions and conducting irregular warfare against the territory of the United States both directly and at the direction, clandestine or otherwise, of the Maduro regime in Venezuela.” This matter is currently the subject of ongoing litigation which is being handled by the Department of Justice. Therefore, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further.

*Question.* I understand you have led efforts to promote free speech in a number of your past roles, including at the Department of Education, and in your role at America First Legal. This is clearly a right you hold near and dear. Under what circumstances is it legal for the United States to restrict freedom of expression, including by punishing speech?

*Answer.* The First Amendment strongly protects our citizens' freedom of speech and expression. It is a bedrock for our constitutional Republic, uniquely rooted in the Anglo-American legal tradition and informed by the Judeo-Christian values that infused our Founding Fathers' political thought. But this right is not absolute; the Supreme Court has set limits and guidelines. For example, incitement to imminent violence and true threats are not protected forms of speech or expression; similarly, speech or expressive conduct violating appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions are not protected. The First Amendment does not protect the violent "heckler's veto," nor does it allow demonstrators to seize and vandalize buildings or threaten and deny students access to classrooms, as occurred at MIT and UCLA.

If confirmed, I will provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice in a timely and appropriate manner regarding the First Amendment and the scope of its protections.

---

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR MIKE LEE

*Question.* During your testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you indicated that you did not yet know the State Department's institutional view regarding the interaction between domestic and international law. You also suggested that the U.S. generally recognizes customary international law. If confirmed, can you commit to a subsequent briefing to my office on these issues? The briefing should include:

- The Department's institutional view on how international law or agreements become binding on the U.S.;
- The extent to which customary international law is binding upon the U.S. in the absence of domestic implementing legislation, including rationale and specific instances;
- How the Department interprets domestic legislation imposing caps on U.S. contributions to the U.N. or restricting U.S. funding of UN entities that admit the Palestine Liberation Organization or groups without the internationally recognized attributes of statehood.

*Answer.* Yes. I commit to briefing your office on these important issues. I look forward to our discussion.

---

NO RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

*Question.* Do you believe that the President of the United States can issue a directive that is illegal?

[No response received.]

*Question.* Do you believe an Act of Congress signed by a U.S. President constitutes a U.S. law?

[No response received.]

*Question.* If any member of the Trump Administration directs you to take an illegal action, how would you respond?

[No response received.]

*Question.* If any member of the Trump Administration directs a State Department employee or political appointee to take an illegal action, how would you advise that employee or political appointee?

[No response received.]

---



RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO REED RUBINSTEIN BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

*Question.* Based on your previous work, I believe you would agree that Federal employees should be held accountable for mishandling classified information. Compromising classified information by using unclassified platforms to store or discuss state secrets undermines U.S. national security, puts lives at risk, and jeopardizes the success of U.S. military operations. If you learned that political appointees at the State Department were discussing classified information on unclassified servers, would you recommend legal consequences?

*Answer.* I agree that protecting classified information from unauthorized access or disclosure is of the utmost importance. Apart from the imposition by the Department of State of any employment or security consequences that would be appropriate in such a case, the question of whether there should be legal consequences for any Department employee discussing classified information on an unclassified system would ultimately be for the Department of Justice to determine. But, if confirmed, I commit to taking very seriously the need to protect classified information and to advising my colleagues on all applicable laws and regulations governing the handling and processing of classified information and Federal records more generally.

*Question.* If the answer to the above question is yes, what would those legal consequences look like?

*Answer.* I am aware that, under the Department's regulations, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security may suspend or revoke a Department employee's security clearance if, following investigation, it determines that the employee has engaged in activities that would disqualify them from continued access to classified information. However, in my experience, the question of criminal consequences for improperly discussing or storing classified information is left for the Department of Justice to assess and decide.

---

*Submitted by Senator Jeanne Shaheen*



October 17, 2022

Ms. Melody Hobson  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
Starbucks Corporation  
2401 Utah Ave. South  
Seattle, WA 98134

**Re: Waste of Corporate Assets/Failure of Internal Controls**

Dear Ms. Hobson,

We write to you in your capacity as Chair of the Board at Starbucks Corporation, on behalf of concerned Starbucks shareholders, customers, and employees. The purpose of this letter is to highlight the mismanagement and inadequate internal controls that have resulted in the Company's intentional and systematic violations of federal civil rights and non-discrimination laws. These violations have caused unlawful waste of the Company assets, and unnecessarily exposed it to potential regulatory and/or Congressional investigations and actions.

The Company's latest SEC Form 10-K, which bears your signature, acknowledges in relevant part that:

Business incidents that erode consumer trust can significantly reduce brand value, potentially trigger boycotts of our stores or result in civil or criminal liability and can have a negative impact on our financial results. The impact of such incidents may be exacerbated if they receive considerable publicity, including rapidly through social or digital media (including for malicious reasons) or result in litigation. Consumer demand for our products and our brand equity could diminish significantly if we, our employees, licensees or other business partners act or are perceived to act in an unethical, illegal, racially-biased way including with respect to the treatment of employees. Additionally, if we fail to comply with laws and regulations [or] take controversial positions or actions our brand value may be diminished.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Starbucks Corp., 2021 Form 10-K at 12-13 (Nov. 19, 2021) (cleaned up), <https://bit.ly/3CAVGAO>.

611 Pennsylvania Ave SE #231  
Washington, DC 20003

Notwithstanding these assurances, in 2020, the Company announced a “commitment” to “advancing social and racial equity (sic).”<sup>2</sup> This “commitment” included a “mentorship program connecting Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) partners to senior leaders, beginning with a cohort of svp+ leaders [(Senior Vice Presidents+)] and BIPOC directors in corporate and retail roles in FY21” and “annual Inclusion and Diversity goals based on retention rates and progress toward, achieving BIPOC representation of at least 30% at all corporate levels and at least 40% at all retail and manufacturing roles by 2025.”<sup>3</sup> Then, in January 2022, the Company announced a “Leadership Accelerator Program” limited to “BIPOC partners.”<sup>4</sup> By design, all of these programs limit, segregate, or classify employees in a way that deprives or tends to deprive white and Asian employees of employment opportunities because of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, in clear violation of 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e-2(a)(2), (d), and 42 U.S.C. § 1981. Also, the “Inclusion and Diversity goals (sic)” suggest the Company is practicing unlawful racial balancing and maintains illegal racial quotas.

In truth, the Company’s employment data generally suggest serious and systemic violations of federal civil rights and non-discrimination laws. For example, seventy-one percent of the Company’s employees are female, suggesting that male employees are discriminated against in hiring and promotion. Similarly, the Company brags that its workers are “48.2% BIPOC.” But if this claim is true, then “BIPOC” individuals are significantly *overrepresented* in the Company’s employment pool, necessarily suggesting that the Company’s management has targeted white Americans for invidious racial discrimination.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the empirical evidence strongly suggests that management has infused the Company’s employment practices with an illegal racial double standard. The American Civil Rights Project’s allegation that management has committed the Company “to the flagrant, systematic violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (as amended at the current codification at 42 U.S.C. §1981), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended), and a host of relevant state non-discrimination statutes”<sup>6</sup> appears to be manifestly true. Management’s public response to this allegation was an assertion that it is “not in [the Company’s] best interest”<sup>7</sup> to implement non-

<sup>2</sup> Starbucks, *Our Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity at Starbucks*, (Oct. 14, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3dSSKpC>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* “People of color” is a term without a fixed or readily discernable legal meaning.

<sup>4</sup> Starbucks, *Starbucks Broadens Efforts to Advance Racial and Social Equity on Behalf of Partners and Communities*, (Jan. 11, 2022), <https://bit.ly/3CnNOCC>.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Jones *et al.*, *Improved Rave and Ethnicity Measures Reveal U.S. Population is Much More Multiracial*, UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU (Aug. 12, 2022) <https://bit.ly/3C1AS49>.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Morenoff, *Open Letter on Behalf of Shareholders to Officers and Directors of Starbucks Corporation*, American Civil Rights Project (March 25, 2022), <https://bit.ly/3EbQMM1>.

<sup>7</sup> *National Center for Public Policy Research v. Schultz*, 22-2-02945 (Spokane Super. Ct.); Dan Morenoff, *Starbucks’ Shareholder Sues to Stop Its Civil Rights Violations from Wasting Corporate Assets*, American Civil Rights Project (Aug. 30, 2022), <https://bit.ly/3E3hA0M>.

discriminatory hiring and promotion practices in compliance with our Nation's civil rights laws. However, management's position is legally unsupportable and morally indefensible.

Workplace anti-discrimination mandates are an essential and mission-critical regulatory compliance risk. You and the Board, among your other fiduciary obligations, have a duty of oversight and the responsibility to ensure a reasonable board-level system of compliance monitoring and reporting relating to these mandates. *See Marchand v. Barnhill*, 212 A.3d 805, 824 (Del. 2019); *In re Clovis Oncology, Inc. Derivative Litig.*, No. CV 2017 0222-JRS, 2019 WL 4850188, at \*12 (Del. Ch. Oct. 1, 2019).

However, you have failed to appropriately discharge these important duties and stop management's racist employment practices. Consequently, the Company faces a shareholder derivative action and a heightened risk of expensive and damaging regulatory and Congressional investigations and action.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, to prevent the waste of the Company's assets, to repair and safeguard the Company's brand, goodwill, and reputation among its customers, and in fulfillment of your fiduciary duties to the Company and its shareholders to ensure compliance with civil rights laws, we demand that the Board immediately take the following steps.

1. Retain an independent counsel to audit the Company's employment practices and publicly report on the remedial measures required, if any, to bring the Company into full compliance with all applicable state and Federal non-discrimination laws and regulations.
2. Fully and transparently disclose to the Company's employees and shareholders, by releasing contemporaneous email and other communications, (a) how and why, precisely, management formulated and implemented its "mentorship program connecting Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) partners to senior leaders, beginning with a cohort of svp+ leaders [(Senior Vice Presidents+)] and BIPOC directors in corporate and retail roles in FY21", its "annual Inclusion and Diversity goals based on retention rates and progress toward, achieving BIPOC representation of at least 30% at all corporate levels and at least 40% at all retail and manufacturing roles by 2025", and its "Leadership Accelerator Program" limited to "BIPOC partners"; (b) the evidence management relied upon in determining that these programs would create shareholder value; and (c) the legal justification for these programs. Among other things, all communications to or from the Company's General Counsel and its outside counsel regarding these matters should be made public.

---

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

3. Implement genuinely effective and objective internal controls to prevent the Company from engaging in employment practices that violate non-discrimination and civil rights laws.
4. Identify and remove the person(s) who determined that the Company's best interests are not served by non-discriminatory employment practices.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Reed D. Rubinstein

Senior Counselor and Director of Oversight  
and Investigations  
America First Legal Foundation

Cc: Richard E. Allison, Jr., Director  
Andrew Campion, Director  
Isabel Ge Mahe, Director  
Jorgen Vig Knudstorp, Director  
Satya Nadella, Director  
Joshua Cooper Ramo, Director  
Howard Schultz, Director and Interim CEO  
Clara Shih, Director

*Submitted by Senator Jeanne Shaheen*



August 9, 2023

Mr. Steven Cahillane, Chief Executive Officer  
Kellogg Company  
One Kellogg Square  
Battle Creek, Michigan 49016-3599

**Potential Waste of the Kellogg Company's Corporate Assets and Breach of Fiduciary Duty due to Systemic Violations of Civil Rights Laws**

Dear Mr. Cahillane:

We write to you in your capacity as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of the Kellogg Company. This letter is to alert you to mismanagement threatening the waste of Company assets and breaches of fiduciary duty.

**I. Waste of Assets and Breach of Fiduciary Duty**

The company acknowledges that shareholder value depends upon consumer perceptions of its brand and products.<sup>1</sup> However, management has hijacked the brand to advance an extreme political and social agenda, heedless of the evidence that such activity drives away Kellogg's customers and harms shareholders. Further, although management has actual knowledge that its "Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Leadership" and its Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity employment programs that violate American civil rights laws create substantial reputational, market, and regulatory risks, it has failed to acknowledge the problem, to notify shareholders, or take appropriate risk mitigation measures.<sup>2</sup>

**A. Controversial Product Messaging**

Management acknowledges that "Brand recognition and loyalty can also be impacted by the effectiveness of our advertising campaigns, marketing programs, influencers, and sponsorships, as well as our use of social media. If we do not maintain the favorable perception of our brands, our results could be negatively impacted."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kellogg Co., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 3, 12 (Feb. 23, 2023) (available at <https://tinyurl.com/4e26ewxv>).

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2.

<sup>3</sup> Kellogg Co., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 13 (Feb. 23, 2023) (available at <https://tinyurl.com/4e26ewxv>).

Despite the immense trust that hard-working American mothers and fathers have placed in Kellogg's, management has discarded the Company's long-held family-friendly marketing approach<sup>4</sup> to politicize and sexualize its products. For example, to target children:

- The 2021 "Together with Pride" cereal, a partnership with "GLAAD" - which describes itself as "the world's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) media advocacy organization", opposes parental rights to know about transgender "transitions" in public schools, and promotes censorship and cancel culture - depicts beloved and iconic characters such as Tony the Tiger®, Toucan Sam®, and Snap™, Crackle™, and Pop™ cheering around a bowl of rainbow heart-shaped cereal and Mini™, the Frosted Mini Wheats® mascot, holding an LGBTQ flag. The top and left panels of the box provided a fill-in-the-blank space for consumers to fill in their own pronouns. Upon the campaign's release, GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis praised the "opportunities for homes and families to have conversations about the importance of acceptance, compassion, and understanding, especially when it comes to LGBTQ+ youth" and to "spotlight the importance of using correct pronouns to create safe and welcoming spaces for trans and nonbinary people."<sup>5</sup>
- In September 2022, the Company spun up an old-time lunchbox favorite by releasing limited-edition Cheez-It® boxes featuring drag queen RuPaul and Jersey Shore star "Snooki."<sup>6</sup>
- Also in 2022, the Company brand Pop-Tarts® released a limited-edition "NEON Pink Block Party Lemonade Pop-Tarts®." The box illustrations depict cartoon drawings of individuals waving "Philadelphia's People of Color Inclusive" flags and background rainbows of the same pattern.<sup>7</sup>
- Five Below carries a set of Company brand "All Together" cereal-flavored lip balm. This product juxtaposes the same beloved characters with a rainbow "All Together" logo on the balm labels, for which the expected audience is pre-teen girls.<sup>8</sup>
- In June 2023, at the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Tony Awards in New York City, a famous Kellogg's mascot (Tony the Tiger) posed for photographers; linking elbows with

<sup>4</sup> See Randy Ludacer, *Celebrity & the Kellogg's Corn Flakes Box*, BEACH PACKAGING DESIGN BLOG (Mar. 10, 2011), <https://tinyurl.com/ypj7mut7>; see also Alexandria Sage, *Kellogg Drops Olympian Phelps After Photo Brouhaha*, REUTERS (Feb. 5, 2009), <https://tinyurl.com/3ftbpzn2>; *Ex-Miss America Loses Kellogg Role*, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, July 27, 1984, at B3.

<sup>5</sup> *Kellogg Company's Latest Collaboration with GLAAD Unwraps Why 'Boxes Are for Cereal, Not For People'*, KELLOGG'S CORPORATE & U.S. NEWS (May 20, 2021), <https://tinyurl.com/2vptxber>.

<sup>6</sup> Anne Sych, *Food: Cheez-Its Gets Even Cheesier With These Celebrity Endorsements*, BIZWOMEN (Sep. 16, 2022), <https://tinyurl.com/3kfjem7k>.

<sup>7</sup> See Dave McDonald, *Here's What the Different LGBTQIA+ Flags Represent*, BOSTON UNIVERSITY TODAY OPINION (June 7, 2022), <https://tinyurl.com/mrya7sje>.

<sup>8</sup> FIVE BELOW, *Kellogg's® All Together Cereal Flavored Lip Balm 8-Count*, <https://bit.ly/3OPpDmX>.

the controversial transgender activist Dylan Mulvaney.<sup>9</sup> By this point, management knew or should have known that Mulvaney's association with Bud Light had cost InBev shareholders billions of dollars and that there was a strong likelihood that using him as an avatar for Kellogg's would drive away many of the Company's core customers and significantly damage the brand.

#### **B. Failure to Disclose Material Risks to Investors Due to Misalignment of Values**

Kellogg's brands have significant value; they are rightly termed "iconic."<sup>10</sup> Management acknowledges that these brands require careful "promoti[on] and protecti[on]" and a calculated ability to "reach consumers at the right time with the right message."<sup>11</sup> Yet management has failed to properly warn investors of the risks associated with the apparent misalignment of management's political and social values with Kellogg's customers' values or taken steps to mitigate them.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, other large companies offer warnings like these to their investors.<sup>13</sup> Kellogg's does not.

Kellogg's officers and directors are free to spend their own money on whatever social or political cause they deem fit. However, this freedom does not extend to spending the Company's funds, brand equity, goodwill, and other assets on their extreme, idiosyncratic leftist activism.

#### *Tony Awards & Dylan Mulvaney*

The recent photo op with Mulvaney unleashed a news and social media firestorm, with several news and advocacy organizations capturing the call to boycott the Company.<sup>14</sup> Kellogg Company's and Kellogg's Frosted Flakes' Instagram and Facebook accounts also lit up with consumer backlash. Many users made comments

<sup>9</sup> Shannon Power, *Kellogg's Faces Boycott Calls After Mascot Poses With Dylan Mulvaney*, NEWSWEEK (June 13, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/3w834f65>.

<sup>10</sup> Kellogg Co., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 12 (Feb. 23, 2023) (available at <https://tinyurl.com/4e26ewxv>).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> See also Andrew Ramonas, *Citi, Valero, ADT Flag New Investment Risk: the Anti-ESG effect*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Mar. 15, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/yc5b8hmf>; Emma Williams, *What Are the Risks of Social Washing?*, MORNINGSTAR (Aug. 19, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/2zp2b8ws> (stating that adopting ESG goals "[i]nvariably [] means alienating certain groups while appeasing others" and "lead to backlash from both sides of a debate" that can "result in social risks being poorly managed or even elevated").

<sup>13</sup> See e.g., Walt Disney Co., Annual Report, (Form 10-K) at 21 (Oct. 2, 2021), (available at <https://tinyurl.com/4abdvuee>).

<sup>14</sup> Bill Donohue, *Kellogg's Exploits Kids - Time to Boycott*, CATHOLIC LEAGUE (June 14, 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/5n79p55v>; Heather Hamilton, *Conservatives Call for Kellogg's Boycott after Tony the Tiger Poses with Dylan Mulvaney at Tony Awards*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (June 12, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/4zdxzhhk>.



in the vein of “#boycottkelloggs,” “#stoperasingwomen,” “go woke, go broke,” and “No more Kellogg’s in my home.”<sup>15</sup>

Management has acknowledged that “[n]egative posts or comments about Kellogg, our brands, our products, our labor relations or any of our employees or agents on social or digital media platforms could seriously damage our brands, reputation and brand loyalty, regardless of the information’s accuracy.”<sup>16</sup> Although Senior Vice President Kris Bahner said in an email statement that Tony the Tiger® appeared to celebrate the Tony Awards and not for “endorsement agreements with individual nominees or attendees,”<sup>17</sup> management has ignored negative consumer comments on the Company’s social media posts.

#### *Business Partnerships*

As noted above, management has hijacked Kellogg’s family-friendly brands and trademarks solely to advance the agenda of a narrow psychosocial advocacy organization. It has also misused Company assets to support other leftist extremist groups. For example, as part of its Black History, Every Month campaign, the Company initiated a partnership with several “food justice” organizations and donated at least \$10,000 to each.<sup>18</sup> One of these organizations was Sprout NOLA.<sup>19</sup> The intent of this partnership program is to “[e]levate the modern-day heroes fighting for equitable food systems.”<sup>20</sup> Yet, Sprout NOLA’s advocacy is political and openly Marxist. Sprout NOLA “prioritizes *shifting power* to farmers and growers who are Black, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+, people of color, and women” (emphasis added).<sup>21</sup> As one of its four “Guiding Principles,” Sprout NOLA advocates that “White Supremacy has created multiple work-arounds for white people, land owners, and the capitalist class.”<sup>22</sup> It claims that our capitalist system and “local food system[s] perpetuate injustice and racism.”<sup>23</sup> Its website prominently features a “Black Lives Matter

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix. Generally, these social media accounts receive relatively few comments, but in the three-day period after the Tony Awards photos, Kellogg’s latest Instagram post from May 13 received over 65 negative comments either against Kellogg generally or calling for boycott, and Kellogg’s Facebook post from June 9 received at least 46 similar negative comments from angry consumers.

<sup>16</sup> Kellogg Co., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 12 (Feb. 23, 2023) (available at <https://tinyurl.com/4e26ewxv>).

<sup>17</sup> Diana Bradley, *No, Tony the Tiger and Dylan Mulvaney are not Working Together*, PR WEEK (June 12, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/2wumhe5k>.

<sup>18</sup> See Maegan Pulley, *Kellogg to Launch Black History. Every Month. Campaign*, KELLOGG COMPANY BLOG (Feb. 22, 2021), <https://tinyurl.com/4u4vrr5x>.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> See *About Us*, SPROUT NOLA, <https://tinyurl.com/43umtzfc> (accessed June 21, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> See, “*Sprout Growing Growers*” Chart, SPROUT NOLA, <https://tinyurl.com/bd6xrz3e> (accessed June 20, 2023).

<sup>23</sup> “*Black Lives Matter*” Statement, SPROUT NOLA, <https://tinyurl.com/ycyf3rk2> (accessed June 20, 2023).

Statement.”<sup>24</sup> Finally, Sprout NOLA asks its audience to “work to understand how whiteness... is rewarded in agribusiness,” “acknowledge your privilege as a white farmer,” and “pay direct reparations.”<sup>25</sup>

### *Sensitive Market Position*

Management admits that Kellogg’s faces a sensitive market position. While the First Quarter of 2023 started off better than expected,<sup>26</sup> management has predicted sub-stellar market performance this year overall.<sup>27</sup> The full-year adjusted profit per share is expected to fall between one and three percent. It has also steadily increased product prices to account for the increased costs of ingredients, which may further drive away loyal and prospective consumers to less expensive off-brand or private-label products. This “will likely limit upside to Kellogg’s EPS in 2023.”<sup>28</sup>

There is no business justification for management’s use of Kellogg’s assets and goodwill to target preschool and elementary school children with extreme sociopolitical messages and propaganda or to create partnerships with an organization that makes the overtly racist claim that “white farmers” have “privilege” and must “pay direct reparations.” In fact, although management claims to have been using Kellogg’s to advance leftist political and social causes for some time, it has never cited or published data suggesting that its use of Kellogg’s assets for this purpose enhances the Company’s brand among its core customers or creates shareholder value. In fact, the empirical evidence and recent case studies with InBev, Target, and Disney, all indicate that such conduct drives customers away and needlessly *destroys* shareholder value.<sup>29</sup>

### **III. Unlawful Discrimination and Compliance Violations**

Multiple federal and state laws prohibit race and sex discrimination in employment and contracting. As a long-time federal contractor, Kellogg’s has repeatedly made nondiscrimination representations to the federal government as part of its

<sup>24</sup> “Black Lives Matter” Statement, SPROUT NOLA, <https://tinyurl.com/ycyf3rk2> (accessed June 20, 2023).

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> See Kellogg Company Reports Strong First Quarter 2023 Results, Raises Full-Year Financial Outlook, KELLOGG COMPANY (May 4, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/mr23urt4>.

<sup>27</sup> See Aatrayee Chatterjee, Kellogg’s Pricing Actions Help Bolster Annual Forecasts, REUTERS (May 4, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/2z29y7hn>.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> See Phil Hall, *The Crisis at Disney: Part 1, Bob Chapek’s Blunder Road*, MARKETS INSIDER (June 21, 2022), <https://tinyurl.com/2p98p5u4>; see also Ronny Reyes, *Target Loses \$10B in 10 Days as Stocks Fall Following Boycott over LGBTQ-Friendly Kids Clothing*, N.Y. POST (May 28, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/ybnmbfy9>; Sabrina Escobar, *Target Isn’t the Only Retailer Facing Anti-Pride Backlash*, BARRON’S (June 1, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/4a8853pz>; Suzanne O’Halloran, *Bud Light Parent Anheuser-Busch Sees \$27 Billion Gone, Shares Near Bear Market*, FOXBUSINESS (May 31, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/2a7738fn>.

government contracting business.<sup>30</sup> However, the evidence is that management is knowingly and intentionally disregarding these legal mandates and falsely assuring government agencies that it complies with the law.

#### A. Hiring and Promotion

Management acknowledges that Kellogg’s profitability depends on its continuing ability to attract, retain, and develop the highly skilled people it needs to support the business.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, workplace anti-discrimination mandates are an essential and mission-critical part of managing regulatory compliance risk. The Board, among its other fiduciary obligations, has a duty of oversight and must put into place a reasonable board-level system of compliance monitoring and reporting relating to these mandates. *See Marchand v. Barnhill*, 212 A.3d 805, 824 (Del. 2019); *In re Clovis Oncology, Inc. Derivative Litig.*, No. CV 2017-0222-JRS, 2019 WL 4850188, at \*12 (Del. Ch. Oct. 1, 2019).

However, the evidence suggests that management is engaging in an intentional and willful pattern and practice of violating workplace mandates, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Management claims that Kellogg’s strives to be a “best-in-class company” where “every employee feels like they have a seat at the table where everyone’s voice can be heard and they can speak up, in a safe environment.”<sup>32</sup> However, management is openly engaging in race-based discrimination in hiring and promotion. Instead of equality of opportunity, which Kellogg’s defines as “giving each person the same things,” Kellogg’s employment practices are unlawfully based on “equity.”<sup>33</sup> However, the evidence clearly shows that at Kellogg’s, “equity” is a euphemism for discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, and sex.

#### Hiring

In Kellogg’s ‘Better Days’ Promise, management promises that by the end of 2025, management promises it will hire “25% underrepresented talent [sic] at the management level in the United States.”<sup>34</sup> The evidence is that Kellogg has

<sup>30</sup> FEDERAL PROCUREMENT DATA SYSTEM, *Search Results: Kellogg Company*, <https://tinyurl.com/35rdzjmt> (last visited Aug. 7, 2023).

<sup>31</sup> Kellogg Co., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 15-16 (Feb. 23, 2023) (available at <https://tinyurl.com/4e26ewxv>).

<sup>32</sup> *Our Approach*, KELLOGG COMPANY (last visited June 20, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ea6vu>.

<sup>33</sup> *Features 2021: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report*, KELLOGG COMPANY (last visited June 20, 2023), at 4, <https://tinyurl.com/tyxjjhm5>.

<sup>34</sup> *Progress toward our Commitments, 2020-2021* [Report], KELLOGG, <https://tinyurl.com/bdf8mc64> COMPANY (last visited June 20, 2023).

implemented a patently illegal race-based quota system to meet this mandate.<sup>35</sup> Specifically:

- Kellogg admits to unlawful racial and ethnic workforce balancing.<sup>36</sup>
- Between 2020 and 2022, the percentage of racially underrepresented talent increased by almost exactly 2% across all position levels.<sup>37</sup> Given Kellogg’s commitment to “diversifying” leadership, this merits investigation as it seems to indicate racial balancing efforts.
- The ethnic composition of individuals in positions defined as “All Manager Roles and Above” especially appears suspiciously engineered about race.<sup>38</sup> While the ethnicity breakdown varies slightly more within the positions of Directors and VPs, Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics, each make up *precisely* 7% of the individuals who are managers or above.<sup>39</sup> Again, the Company appears to establish a racial quota that discriminates based on skin color.

#### *Training and Promotion*

Kellogg admits to unlawful training and promotion practices.

- Through 2022, Kellogg operated an “accelerated development program for Racially Underrepresented Talent [sic] at the management level.”<sup>40</sup>
- Kellogg operates a ‘Chef in Residence’ program, a “paid postgraduate fellowship for Black chefs to work with our Research and Development (R&D) team to help them better understand food’s role in Black communities

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., *United Steelworkers of Am. v. Weber*, 443 United States 193, 208 (1979); *Johnson v. Transp. Agency*, 480 U.S. 616, 621-641 (1987). See also *Bostock v. Clayton Cnty., Ga.*, 140 S. Ct. 1731, 1743 (2020).

<sup>36</sup> See *Our Approach*, KELLOGG COMPANY (last visited June 20, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ea6vu>; Kris Bahner, *Message from the SR. VP, Chief Global Corporate Affairs Officer*, KELLOGG COMPANY (Aug. 2022), <https://tinyurl.com/3ep76pv6>.

<sup>37</sup> From 2020-2022, the percentage of racially underrepresented individuals out of all employees increased from 36.3% to 38.1%; out of all salaried employees, from 21.9% to 23.7%; out of “All Managers & Above,” from 20.8% to 22.7%; and out of “All Directors & Above” (called “Senior Management” in 2020), from 19.2% to 23.1%. Between 2021 and 2022, “All VPs & above” increased from 25.6% to 27.6%. See *Features 2021: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report*, KELLOGG COMPANY, at 10, <https://tinyurl.com/tyxjjhm5> (last visited June 20, 2023); *Kellogg Company Moves Closer to Achieving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Goals*, KELLOGG’S CORPORATE & U.S. NEWS (Apr. 10, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/3mx538fs>.

<sup>38</sup> See *Kellogg Company Moves Closer to Achieving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Goals*, KELLOGG’S CORPORATE & U.S. NEWS (Apr. 10, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/3mx538fs>.

<sup>39</sup> See *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> *2023 Top 50 Companies for Diversity: Kellogg Company*, FAIR360 (last visited June 20, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/3rznb3k>.

worldwide.”<sup>41</sup> Only Black or African American chefs are allowed to participate, even if an applicant is otherwise qualified.<sup>42</sup>

#### *Sex Discrimination*

Management promises that by the end of 2025, it will achieve an “aspirational gender parity goal of 50/50 at the management level” in its global operations.<sup>43</sup> There is strong reason to believe that management is engaging in a pattern and practice of unlawful sex discrimination. For example, it has initiated a Leadership Development program specifically for women called “ASPIRE.”<sup>44</sup> Although the number of total and salaried employees has remained relatively stable since 2018, the percentage of women in management globally has jumped from 40.7% in 2018 to 45.7% in 2023.<sup>45</sup> Between 2021 and 2022, the number of women in “All VPs & Above” positions rose from 32.8% to 34.1%. In posts titled “All Directors & Above,” the percentage of women leaped from 38.4% to 41.2%. This is strong evidence that Kellogg’s is unlawfully preferring women in hiring, training, and promotion.

#### **B. Unlawful Contracting Practices**

Management describes partnering with “diverse suppliers” as “key” to the Better Days® Promise.<sup>46</sup> It defines “diverse suppliers” as “business[es] that [are] at least 51% owned and operated by an individual or group that is part of a historically underrepresented or underserved group,” which includes aboriginal, LGBTQ+, minority, and women-owned businesses.<sup>47</sup> The Company ranks its suppliers as “Tier 1” and “Tier 2” based on affinity; it directly contracts with Tier 1 suppliers, whereas Tier 2 suppliers are suppliers that the Tier 1 businesses contract with.<sup>48</sup> Management makes contracting decisions based on race with Tier 1 suppliers and now seeks to compel Tier 2 suppliers to violate the law as well.<sup>49</sup> In 2022, the Company “allocated” \$433,490,705 to Tier 1 “diverse” suppliers and \$60,947,379 to Tier 2 “diverse” suppliers.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *3 Strategies to Reach Diverse Consumers*, KELLOGG’S CORPORATE & U.S. NEWS (June 14, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/2cnaj8cw>.

<sup>42</sup> *Supra*, n. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *See Features 2021: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report*, KELLOGG COMPANY, at 4, <https://tinyurl.com/tyxjjhm5> (last visited June 20, 2023).

<sup>44</sup> *Supra*, n. 8.

<sup>45</sup> *See Kellogg Company Moves Closer to Achieving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Goals*, KELLOGG’S CORPORATE & U.S. NEWS (Apr. 10, 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/3mx538fs>.

<sup>46</sup> *See Supplier Diversity*, KELLOGG COMPANY, <https://tinyurl.com/46fd2ez5> (last visited June 21, 2023).

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*

<sup>49</sup> *2020 Features D&I report*, KELLOGG COMPANY, <https://tinyurl.com/yp9ecs2> at 17 (last visited June 20, 2023).

<sup>50</sup> *See Supplier Diversity*, KELLOGG COMPANY, <https://tinyurl.com/46fd2ez5> (last visited June 21, 2023).

No rational business justification is offered for this blatantly illegal conduct. Furthermore, management's standards are entirely nonsensical; the Company not only decides whether to contract based on race or sex but has also established an economic quota ("allocations") that determines how much business each supplier can get. If management's strategy to "driv[e] ED&I principles deeply into the supply chain"<sup>51</sup> means requiring others to engage in discriminatory contracting, then management is engaging in an unlawful conspiracy against rights. If, as represented, the Company's contracting decisions are driven by the race, color, national origin, religion, or sex of potential business partners, then management is violating the law, creating significant legal and reputational risk, and wasting the Company's assets, reputation, and goodwill. If race, color, sex, or national origin are not influencing or driving the Company's contracting decisions, then the Company misrepresents itself to the public. There can be no other alternative.

#### IV. Conclusion

To prevent the waste of the Company's assets, to repair and safeguard the Company's brand, goodwill, and reputation among its core customers, to protect the Company's shareholders, and in fulfillment of your fiduciary duties to the Company and its shareholders to ensure compliance with civil rights laws, we demand that the Board immediately take the following steps:

1. Retain an independent counsel for a full investigation of and a report on the events and circumstances behind management's decision to include educational materials and content regarding sexuality on Company products that are primarily directed at pre-adolescent children. The Board should transparently disclose to the Company's employees and shareholders, by releasing contemporaneous emails and other communications, how and why, precisely, management believed such conduct would create shareholder value and enhance brand reputation. Among other things, all communications to or from the Company's General Counsel regarding this matter should be made available, and the Company should promptly and transparently publish all studies and analytic data demonstrating that the promotion of sexuality education and content and other like measures enhances the Company's brand reputation and promotes alignment between its business and the tastes and preferences of its core U.S. and foreign customers.
2. Retain an independent counsel for a full investigation of and a report on the events and circumstances behind management's decision to initiate and retain a partnership with Sprout NOLA. The Board should transparently disclose to the Company's employees and shareholders, by releasing contemporaneous

---

<sup>51</sup> 2020 *Features D&I report*, KELLOGG COMPANY, <https://tinyurl.com/yp9ecsj2> at 17 (last visited June 20, 2023).

emails and other communications, how and why, precisely, management believed such conduct would create shareholder value and enhance brand reputation. Among other things, all communications to or from the Company's General Counsel regarding this matter should be made available, and the Company should promptly and transparently publish all studies and analytic data demonstrating that the promotion of an organization that patently propounds Marxist and racist ideas and abides by a divisive and controversial ideology enhances the Company's brand reputation and promotes alignment between its business and its customers' tastes and preferences.

3. Immediately cease and desist from all contracting and employment practices that discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, or sex, and/or that are designed to "match the combined demographics" of any racial or other group. Kellogg's should also immediately cease and desist from making any statements promoting or promising contracting and employment outcomes based on matching "combined demographics." Finally, Kellogg's should retain an independent counsel to conduct a compliance audit of the Company's hiring and contracting practices and then make that report fully and transparently available to investors and shareholders. The audit should include, but not be limited to, practices regarding hiring and promotions, including the "accelerated development program for Racially Underrepresented Talent," the Women's Leadership Development program "ASPIRE," and the "Chef in Residence" program.
4. Transparently disclose all records and material content relating to the "accelerated development program for Racially Underrepresented Talent," "ASPIRE," and the "comprehensive ED&I learning agenda," and demonstrate how including these potentially divisive opportunities and trainings will promote shareholder value and the Kellogg Company's reputation.
5. In anticipation of litigation, preserve all records relevant to the issues and concerns noted above, including but not limited to paper records and electronic information, including email, electronic calendars, financial spreadsheets, PDF documents, Word documents, and all other information created and/or stored digitally. This list is intended to give examples of the types of records you should retain. It is not exhaustive.

[Signature page follows]

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Reed D. Rubinstein

Reed D. Rubinstein

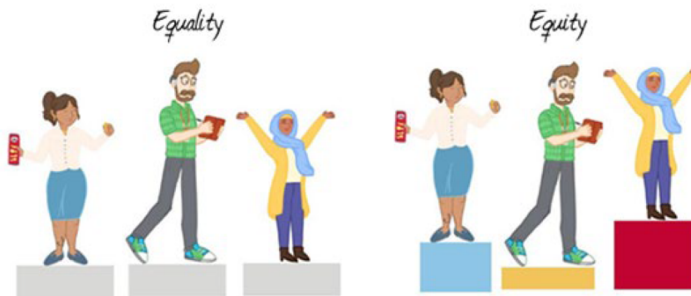
America First Legal Foundation

CC: Stephanie Ann Burns, Director  
Carter A. Cast, Director  
Roderick D. Gillum, Director  
G. Zachary Gund, Director  
Donald R. Knauss, Director  
Mary A. Laschinger, Director  
Erica L. Mann, Director  
J. Michael Schlotman, Director  
La June Montgomery Tabron, Director  
Carolyn M. Tastad, Director



## APPENDIX

Living Our Founder's Values	Addressing food security	Advocacy	Engage 1.5 billion people in the interconnected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 137,602,338 people engaged in 2020</li> <li>• 553,695,039 people engaged from 2015 baseline</li> </ul>
	Equity, diversity & inclusion	Gender parity	By the end of 2025, achieve aspirational gender parity goal of 50/50 at the management level	As of July 31, 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35.8% Salaried/Production</li> <li>• 45.7% Salaried</li> <li>• 43.4% Management</li> <li>• 36.6% Executive</li> </ul>
		Racial equity	By the end of 2025, achieve aspirational goal of 25% underrepresented talent at the management level in the U.S.	As of July 31, 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36.3% Salaried/Production</li> <li>• 22.2% Salaried</li> <li>• 21.1% Management</li> <li>• 25.5% Executive</li> </ul>



**Equity** is not the same as Equality. It is not about giving each person the same things; it **is about giving each person the unique support needed to lift them up to the same opportunity.**

## SOCIAL K

DRATE & U.S.

---

L K

---

ACT US

Home > [Social K](#)

### 50:50! The story behind Kellogg Europe's journey to gender parity

Everyone has a seat at the table at Kellogg.

And in Kellogg Europe, that table looks more balanced each day now that the team has reached its [Better Days® Promise](#) goal of having 50% female representation at the manager level and above.

A founding member of the Leading Executives Advancing Diversity (LEAD) Network, Kellogg Europe signed a pledge in 2019 to reach 50/50 representation by 2025. Turns out the team only needed until December 2022 to make it happen.

f

t

📡

"Together With Pride cereal marks the latest chapter in a years long partnership with GLAAD and is the evolution of the much-loved All Together cereal, which previously was only available online," said Doug VanDeVelde, General Manager of Kellogg U.S. Cereal Category. "Our delicious new recipe features berry-flavored, rainbow hearts dusted with edible glitter. We can't wait for fans to try our latest limited run."

Together With Pride cereal is now available at select major retailers nationwide while supplies last.



## EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Our Chef in Residency Fellowship is bringing more Black chefs into food research and development. The yearlong program helps leading Black chefs understand how companies develop new foods and introduces Kellogg to new tastes, ingredients and flavors enjoyed by Black consumers. Our Chefs in Residence are proving that the culinary arts are a great way to make cultural connections.



These efforts to create a good and just world for years to come can only happen with the help of our employees, shareowners, customers, people who enjoy our foods, suppliers, government leaders, nongovernmental organizations and partners. We're grateful for your support as we continue to create better days around the world.

*Submitted by Senator Jeanne Shaheen*

March 24, 2025

Senator John Thune  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator James Risch  
Chairman  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Thune and Schumer, Chairman Risch, and Ranking Member Shaheen,

We write to express strong opposition to the nomination of Mike Huckabee as Ambassador to Israel. Mr. Huckabee is unfit to serve in this critical diplomatic role given his record of anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian, and anti-semitic beliefs and rhetoric, his support for illegal settlements and annexation, as well as his extreme views supporting the Israeli government's genocide of Palestinians. His record shows that he will continue to be a threat to the Palestinian people, Muslims, Jews, and marginalized communities, and would harm any work toward building a future of lasting peace rooted in freedom and justice.

Mr. Huckabee has consistently engaged in inflammatory and discriminatory statements that demonize Palestinians and Muslims. During a 2008 campaign stop, Huckabee stated, "there's really no such thing as a Palestinian... You have Arabs and Persians, and there's such complexity

in that. But there's really no such thing."<sup>1</sup> He has further stated that "there's no such thing as an occupation," that the West Bank belongs to Israel, claiming that "the title deed was given by God to Abraham and to his heirs."<sup>2</sup> Huckabee's repeated denial of Palestine's existence and assertion that Israel has full entitlement to all of the West Bank reflects an ideological bias and extremism that disregards the fundamental right to self-determination of Palestinians and is out of step with the views of the overwhelming majority of Americans.

Mike Huckabee also has a long history of anti-Muslim rhetoric, characterized by inflammatory statements and discriminatory remarks that perpetuate harmful stereotypes and alienate Muslim communities. In August 2013, Huckabee called Islam "a religion that promotes the most murderous mayhem on the planet in their so-called 'holiest days.'"<sup>3</sup> Mike Huckabee's Christian nationalist beliefs are also inherently a form of antisemitism, as it is predicated on the expulsion of Jews from the diaspora to the land of Palestine and the demonization of Palestinians and Muslims as enemies of God.<sup>4</sup>

Huckabee's blatant disregard for international human rights principles and inflammatory rhetoric undermine the values of inclusion and mutual respect that guide U.S. diplomacy. As Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Huckabee would play a key role in shaping U.S. policy in one of the world's most complex and volatile regions. His appointment would send a dangerous signal that the United States does not respect international law, and endorses divisive and discriminatory policies that exacerbate tensions and undermine the prospects of a just and lasting peace.

Furthermore, Mr. Huckabee's support for Prime Minister Netanyahu's aggressive and expansionist policies only deepens concerns about his ability to serve as an impartial and fair representative of U.S. interests. His appointment would embolden those who oppose peace and fuel further division, rather than encouraging constructive dialogue and understanding.

At a time when the United States should strive to rebuild its credibility, appointing an individual with a history of extremist, apocalyptic, and hateful views to such a critical role would be a grave mistake.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bridge Initiative. (2024, November 26). *Factsheet: Mike Huckabee*. <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-mike-huckabee/>

<sup>2</sup> Bridge Initiative. (2024, November 26). *Factsheet: Mike Huckabee*. <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-mike-huckabee/>

<sup>3</sup> Bridge Initiative. (2024, November 26). *Factsheet: Mike Huckabee*. <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-mike-huckabee/>

<sup>4</sup> The Forward, (2024, July 10). What American Jews should know about Project 2025 and its connection to Christian Nationalism. <https://forward.com/fast-forward/631812/how-project-2025-christian-nationalism-affect-american-jews/>

We urge you to oppose Mike Huckabee's nomination and advocate for a candidate who will represent the United States with integrity, respect international law, defend the human rights of all people, and a commitment to advancing a just and lasting peace.

Thank you,

99 Coalition  
 Al-Haq  
 Alliance of Baptists  
 American Baptist Palestine Justice Network  
 American Friends Service Committee  
 Americans for Justice in Palestine Action (AJP Action)  
 A New Policy  
 Brooklyn For Peace  
 Ceasefire Now NJ  
 Center for Jewish Nonviolence  
 CODEPINK  
 Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ  
 Demand Progress  
 Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network  
 Faith In Texas  
 Fellowship of Reconciliation - USA  
 FOSNA Pittsburgh  
 Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA)  
 Hindus for Human Rights  
 Historians for Peace and Democracy  
 IfNotNow Movement  
 Indiana Center for Middle East Peace  
 Institute for Policy Studies New Internationalism Project  
 International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)  
 International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network  
 Jewish Voice for Peace Action  
 Just Foreign Policy  
 Justice Democrats  
 Justice in Palestine and Israel Community of the Alliance of Baptists  
 Malaya Kansas  
 McKean County Green Party  
 Minnesota Peace Project  
 MPower Change Action Fund  
 Muslim Counterpublics Lab

Muslim Legal Fund of America  
 Muslim Peace Fellowship  
 National Iranian American Council Action  
 New Jersey Friends of Sabeel North America  
 New Mexico Alliance for Justice in Palestine  
 NH Peace Action  
 NorCal Sabeel  
 Our Revolution  
 Palestine Justice Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
 Pax Christi USA  
 Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore  
 Pax Christi New Jersey  
 Pax Christi New York State  
 Peace Action  
 Peace Action Michigan  
 Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW  
 Physicians for Humanity  
 Progressive Democrats Of America (PDA)  
 Progressive Democrats of America, Colorado  
 Progressive Democrats of America, Missouri  
 Progressive Democrats of America - Central New Mexico  
 ReThinking Foreign Policy  
 RootsAction.org  
 Showing Up For Racial Justice Bay Area  
 The Oakland Institute  
 Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice  
 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
 United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)  
 US Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action  
 Valley View Presbyterian Church  
 We Are All America  
 World BEYOND War

*Submitted by Senator Jeanne Shaheen*

National Council of Jewish Women  
2055 L St NW Suite 650  
Washington, DC 20036

T: 202. 296. 2588



National Council of Jewish Women

March 20, 2025

United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Committee Members:

**On behalf of the 225,000 advocates of National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), I am writing to share our strong concern about the nomination of Governor Mike Huckabee to serve as the US Ambassador to Israel.** Governor Huckabee's record shows unwavering support for policies contradicting long-standing US policy and international law, including the expansion of settlements in the West Bank. His rejection of a two-state solution is at odds with current US policy and the views of a majority of US Jews — and could erode America's credibility as a fair broker in the region.

Furthermore, Governor Huckabee has a history of using divisive rhetoric that alienates Jews and non-Jews alike. His past statements trivializing the Holocaust for political gain and dismissing non-evangelical perspectives on Israel are not only offensive but also detrimental to US-Israel relations. A diplomat must foster unity and dialogue, not deepen ideological divides.


The role of Ambassador to Israel demands someone with the skill to navigate complex geopolitical challenges with nuance and respect for diverse perspectives, particularly in this moment. Governor Mike Huckabee's record suggests he might escalate tensions rather than promote peace and stability.

US-Israel relations and the stability of the entire region are at a critical juncture: hostages are still in Gaza, famine and disease are rampant among Palestinian civilians, and negotiations between Hamas and Israel have stalled. At perhaps the most important moment in history for our two countries, National Council of Jewish Women strongly urges you to consider the broader needs in the region — peace, stability, and strategic cooperation — and Governor Huckabee's polarizing background as you vote on his nomination.

Sincerely,

Jody Rabhan  
Chief Strategy Officer  
National Council of Jewish Women



UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA	
March 24, 2025	
<b>MITCHEL R. AEDER</b> <small>President</small> <b>RABBI MOSHE HAUER</b> <small>Executive Vice President</small> <b>RABBI JOSH JOSEPH, ED.D.</b> <small>Executive Vice President &amp; Chief Operating Officer</small> <b>NATHAN J. DIAMENT</b> <small>Executive Director</small> <b>ISAAC PRETTER</b> <small>Chairman, Advocacy</small> <b>YEHUDA NEUBERGER</b> <small>Chairman, Board of Directors</small>	  Senator James Risch, Chairman Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Mem. Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations and the U.S. Senate Washington, DC  Dear Senator,  We write to you on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America ("Orthodox Union") regarding the United States Senate's consideration of Mike Huckabee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel.  The Orthodox Union is the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization serving thousands of congregations nationwide. As a nonpartisan religious organization, it is our practice not to endorse or oppose a president's nominees before the Senate for confirmation. However, we wish to express our view to the Senate regarding several issues that have arisen in connection with Gov. Huckabee's nomination.  A vocal campaign, claiming to be broadly representative of the Jewish community, portrays Gov. Huckabee's views toward the Israeli - Palestinian conflict in general, and the historic connection of the Jewish People to the land of Judea and Samaria in particular, as extreme and "counter to U.S. interests." That position in no way represents "the" voice of America's Jewish community. We do not claim to speak on behalf of the entire Jewish or Orthodox Jewish community, but we can say with certainty that many American Jews -- within and beyond the Orthodox Union's constituency -- and other pro-Israel Americans share Gov. Huckabee's understanding of the realities of the region, especially in the wake of Hamas' heinous attack of Oct. 7, 2023, and its aftermath.  This recent history has caused many pro-Israel Americans who share the goal of achieving security and peace for all in the Mideast to view the model of the peace process pursued in the past as stale and illusory. These Americans support a new approach to how the United States will engage with this important aspect of American foreign policy.  Israel has demonstrated -- often through very painful sacrifices -- its commitment to do whatever it can to advance peace with the Palestinians and all its neighbors. Despite Israel's clear and consistent desire for peace, it has had to stand up forcefully to the ongoing Iranian-funded threats it faces on all fronts and advanced most aggressively by those who control and lead the Palestinian populations in both Gaza and the West Bank.  While Israelis understand that the Palestinians are not going anywhere and seek to live in peace with the Palestinians, they have not found a relevant partner on the Palestinian side who accepts that Israelis are not going anywhere and who seek to live in peace with Israel. The Palestinians

*Submitted by  
Senator David McCormick*

OU Advocacy is the non-partisan public policy arm of the Orthodox Union, the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization founded in 1898.

1730 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE, N.W. | WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 | TEL: 202.513.6484 | FAX: 202.513.6497 | WWW.OUADVOCACY.ORG

repeatedly, and through their official organs, deny the historic connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and refuse to recognize the legitimacy of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.

Lest we think the rejectionism is limited to the monsters of Hamas, in recent weeks we have again heard the leaders of the Palestinian Authority continue to commit their last penny to paying and incentivizing murderous terrorists. This has created a situation where from left to right there is no meaningful Israeli support to even consider Palestinian statehood absent a visible change in their culture and attitudes towards Israel. Supporters of Israel who continue their uninterrupted pursuit of Palestinian national aspirations are entirely out of step with the sentiment of most Israelis who feel that advancing such statehood would pose an existential threat to Israel's security. Gov. Huckabee understands the existential concerns of Israelis and that understanding will be very valuable in discharging the duties of U.S. Ambassador, should he be confirmed.

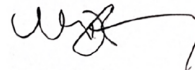
Gov. Huckabee's views have been shaped in significant part by his deeply held Evangelical faith that recognizes the unbreakable connection of the Jewish people to the biblical land of Israel. We are deeply appreciative of the Christian Zionist community for their stalwart support of Israel and active opposition to the deeply disturbing rising tide of antisemitism in the United States. We share a belief in the eternal Jewish connection to the land of Israel along with the desire to live in peace with the Palestinians and help them thrive.

We thank you for taking our perspective into account as you consider Gov. Huckabee's nomination.

Sincerely,



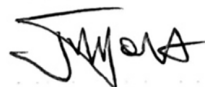
Mitchel Aeder  
President



Rabbi Moshe Hauer  
Executive Vice President



Nathan J. Diamant  
Executive Director



Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph  
Executive Vice President  
& COO



Isaac Pretter  
Chairman, Advocacy