

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:37 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch [Chairman] presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Ricketts, McCormick, Daines, Hagerty, Barrasso, Lee, Paul, Cruz, Scott, Curtis, and Cornyn.

Also present: Senator Collins.

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

We have not unusually a lot of issues today as we try to move these two matters forward. We have a business meeting where we have a number of nominations to consider, but we have arcane rules as to how we have to do that, and who has to be in the room, and that those rules are not met at this moment.

So, what I'm going to do is, the other item on the business this morning is a nominations hearing for a number of very good nominees that the President has given to us. And the way we always start those is we have introductions. And so, we will do that, and then we'll proceed through that hearing. And when I get the right number in the room, we're going to take a break, and you can stay right where you are and won't take us but a few minutes to run through getting nominations to the floor.

But in any event, that's where we are, and we have some of our colleagues here that are very busy, including Senator Collins, who's always up to her elbows in budgeting matters and leads us faithfully in that regard.

So, Senator Collins, I am going to give you the floor for an introduction.

STATEMENT OF HON. SUSAN COLLINS, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Chairman Risch, and members of the committee.

I am delighted to appear before you today to introduce Caleb Orr, and to recommend his nomination to become Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

A native of Texas, Caleb received his BA from Abilene Christian University before coming to Washington to serve on the staff of then Senator Marco Rubio 10 years ago. He received his JD from

Georgetown University Law Center in 2023, and worked in private practice for the late Ambassador C. Boyden Gray. He was serving as a judicial law clerk for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Houston before being called back to Washington earlier this year.

He and his wife, Gabby, have two young daughters, Poppy and Lily. I just met Poppy, who is behind us.

I want to tell you a bit about how I got to know Caleb. It was back in 2020 at the height of the Covid crisis when I was working around the clock with then Senator Marco Rubio along with the ranking member of this committee, Senator Shaheen, and former Senator Ben Cardin. We crafted the small business relief package known as the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP.

That bipartisan program was signed into law as part of the CARES Act on March 27, 2020. And within 3 weeks, using the private sector, had distributed \$342 billion in crucial economic aid to help nearly 1.7 million small businesses meet payroll and avoid shutting their doors. Over the full life of the program, the PPP provided nearly 43,000 forgivable loans in my home State of Maine.

As the Deputy Staff Director of the Small Business Committee, Caleb played an absolutely essential role in creating, crafting, and implementing this crucial lifeline. We were talking before the hearing about the 2 a.m. calls that he had with a counsel on my staff. And that is no exaggeration. He literally worked night and day to address countless complex issues that had to be resolved to stand up this program in a rapidly changing pandemic environment.

That same attentiveness will be required of him as assistant secretary, where he will be responsible for helping American businesses navigate the many challenges they face every day across the globe, advocating for their interests, both within our government and abroad.

I am confident that Caleb is not only up to the task, but also will bring the same creativity, energy, commitment, and hard work to the State Department's economic bureau that he did in helping to manage small business relief during the pandemic.

It is thus my great pleasure to introduce Caleb Orr to you today, and to recommend to this committee positive consideration of his nomination as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Collins. And certainly, credit to you and everyone who worked on the PPP program. Probably, one of the most impactful things that's happened to American citizens over recent years with the difficulties we had. So, thank you for your work.

I know you're busy on other matters, so we will excuse you. You're welcome to stay if you'd like, but I know the answer to that question, so.

Senator COLLINS. Only because I have three hearings going on at once.

Senator RISCH. Don't we all.

Senator COLLINS. I know. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Collins.

Senator Cruz.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TED CRUZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS**

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to all of the nominees. And an excellent slate of ambassadorial nominees and friends.

I have the honor of introducing someone I've known for a long time, a fellow Texan, and a friend, Ken Howery. Ken embodies the spirit of Texas—hard work, genuine hospitality, and fierce leadership. He excelled at Stanford where he earned a degree in economics, but was also managing editor of the *Stanford Review*. He graduated from Stanford in 1998, and that same year, began a career of innovation and investment that literally transformed the financial world when he helped found and run PayPal.

Over the years, Ken has been recognized for his success and vision. He served on the boardrooms of venture capital firms. He's held leadership positions in various companies, and he's operated at the highest and most respected levels of diplomacy. And throughout all that time, parallel to his financial and corporate success, Ken has been devoted to public life and service.

In college, he interned in Washington for my predecessor, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, in the speech writing department. That passion has extended into his diplomatic work. From 2019 to 2021, he served as Ambassador to Sweden. He worked to advance our national security interests and to push Sweden to insulate its telecom networks from Chinese malign activities. He helped implement the Trump administration's burden sharing strategy, contributing to Sweden's historic 40 percent increase in defense spending, and he championed American businesses encouraging trade, and innovation, and investment between the two countries.

Ken is a strong leader with a clear eyed understanding of diplomacy, strategy, and partnership, and he's exceptionally well qualified to serve as our next Ambassador to Denmark. There are real challenges in our friendship with Denmark, including, of course, the President's stated interest in acquiring Greenland, which will make this appointment critical to the future of this country. And I have every confidence that Ken has the integrity, the experience, the vision, to strengthen our relationship with this important ally and to navigate these complicated and incredibly important issues.

Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

Senator Cornyn, I understand you might have something to add to this.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CORNYN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS**

Senator CORNYN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling two hearing for two Texans; Mr. Orr and Mr. Howery.

It's a pleasure to join my colleague, Senator Cruz, in saying a few nice words about Ken Howery. And I won't repeat everything he said, but I think it's fair to conclude that Mr. Howery is a super achiever. He's done a lot in his short life, but the things that I have been most impressed about is his prior service in Sweden back at a time when the Administration was trying to persuade other countries not to adopt Huawei technology because it essentially was a

way to spy on those countries by the PRC and Chinese Communist Party. He was successful in getting them to ban those technologies. That's a big deal.

I remember Ken telling me at lunch last May about some of the challenges he had helping the Swedes navigate during Covid from reopening their society after the lockdown, to addressing some of the vulnerability of his supply chains. I have no doubt that his background and experience will serve him well and serve our country well in Denmark.

As the U.S. and our partners around the globe continue to navigate evolving threats with technology and national security, I'm confident he will represent our interests on the world stage.

So, Ken, congratulations to you and your family on this nomination. I look forward to voting for your nomination in committee and on the floor, and I'd encourage all of my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Cornyn.

Senator Scott, I understand you have a couple of introductions here. Is that right?

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICK SCOTT,
U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA**

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, it is an honor to sit before you today to introduce a fellow Floridian and my friend, Ambassador Callista Gingrich, to this committee. I'd also like to recognize Callista's husband, another Florida resident, Speaker Newt Gingrich, who is here today.

In nominating another Floridian to his administration, President Trump made an excellent choice in Callista to serve as Ambassador to Switzerland. She proudly served as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See during President Trump's first term. It would be exciting to be there today to watch what they do.

During her time in that role, she worked to combat human trafficking, provide humanitarian assistance, and support the Administration's efforts on the global scale. In 2019, Ambassador Gingrich received the Sue M. Cobb Award, one of the highest recognitions at the State Department for exemplary diplomatic service. And in 2020, she received the title Dame Grand Cross of the Order of Pope Pius IX by Pope Francis, the highest distinction given by the Holy Sea to laypersons in recognition of her contributions to the Catholic Church and Society.

President Trump chose a leader who can deliver for Americans and for the great men and women who of our diplomatic service who are stationed in Switzerland. I'm confident that her skills, character, and expertise will make her an effective Ambassador to Switzerland, and I look forward to hearing from her today on her vision for U.S.-Switzerland relations, and how she plans to advance President Trump's agenda.

Together with President Trump and Secretary Rubio, I am confident she will help restore peace through strength and stand for America's best interest. She has my complete support. I urge my colleagues to advance her nomination very quickly.

Now let me go on to my second nomination. Congratulations, by the way.

It's an honor to sit before you to also introduce Somers Farkas to this committee. I'd like to recognize her husband Jonathan, who's here supporting her today.

President Trump made an excellent choice in Somers to serve as Ambassador to Malta. Somers is highly recognized for philanthropic efforts and success in business. She's appointed by President Trump to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships and Commission on Presidential Scholars, and serves as a trustee of the New York City Police Foundation, Chairman of the nominating committee and member of the executive committee.

She's also an honorary battalion chief of the Fire Department of the City of New York, and advises the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Foundation and Broward Sheriff's Advisory Council.

President Trump chose a leader who can deliver for America and for the great men and women of the disciplined service to our stationed in Malta. I'm confident that her skills, character, and expertise will make her an effective Ambassador to Malta. I look forward to hearing from her today on her vision for U.S.-Malta relations, and how she plans to advance President Trump's agenda.

I know with President Trump and Secretary Rubio, she will help restore peace through strength and stand for America's best interest. She has my complete support, and I urge my colleagues to advance her nomination, and hopefully we can all these individuals voted for on the floor very quickly. Congratulations.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Scott. We appreciate that. And now, I'm going to recognize Senator Lee.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE LEE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM UTAH**

Senator LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's my great honor and pleasure to be here today to introduce my friend Mr. Leandro Rizzuto, who's been nominated to the important position of serving as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States.

Mr. Rizzuto comes to us with a wealth of experience, experience and background that make him exceptionally well qualified for this task. For three decades he led the Conair Corporation serving in a number of senior management and marketing roles, and running the entire enterprise, ultimately.

Look, most households in America own at least one Conair product. And I think it's fair if we were to place a bet on how many people in this room have at one point or another used a Conair product. I would say it's a solid majority, probably a super majority.

That alone speaks to Mr. Rizzuto's talents and to the abilities that he'll bring to this task as an innovator, as a builder. He's someone who, having been involved in manufacturing for many, many decades, is always looking for defects to be corrected, improvements to be made, and weak points to be identified, and made smooth, and turned into strengths.

Aside from his business experience, Mr. Rizzuto has also served our government abroad. During the previous Trump administra-

tion, he very capably served as the U.S. Consul General in Bermuda, where on day one, he started going back to bat for the American citizens and worked tirelessly on behalf of American interests. And he continued the same tendency that he learned as an executive in the manufacturing business to identify defects and weak spots.

He started seeing problems right away when he got down there. There were problems with various contracts that had been entered into, the mail wasn't getting there. He went in and much more than anyone else in his position would otherwise be inclined to do. He had that thing figured out in about 6 minutes. I'm sure it took longer than that, but to the rest of the world, by comparison, it seemed like 6 minutes, especially during Covid when the whole world was being turned upside down. I have no doubt that those skills will prove especially useful within the Organization of American States.

When President Monroe gifted us his eponymous doctrine, the doctrine that bears his name, he recognized something that's still very true today. That the Western Hemisphere and the neighbors we have here, the protective oceans we have to our east and to our west, put us in a unique place in the world. And it makes the Western Hemisphere uniquely important.

The Organization of American States gives us the opportunity to be heard in a forum where we can hear from other nations that are of such great importance to us. Can't think of anyone I would have greater confidence in this role than my friend, Lee Rizzuto, who's here with his wife, Denise, who will serve as especially strong, and faithful, and capable companion to him in that world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Senator Lee.

And again, I ask everybody to be patient with us, and it may look like we're a little disorganized, but we do have two different hearings going on at the same time.

Ordinarily, Senator Shaheen, the ranking member, is here. But again, she has a commitment in another meeting, but we're going to get enough people here to vote before too long. And we'll interrupt this hearing to go to the business meeting. So, be patient with us, for the nominees.

And so, what I'm going to do is I'm going to make an make some opening remarks right here. And then what I'm going to do is turn to each of you to give us about 5 minutes of your thoughts on your nomination. And then at some point in time, like I said, we're going to take a break. Senator Shaheen may or may not want to make a statement when she does appear.

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

So, with that, let me welcome you all here today, and I want to recognize issues that each of you are going to be facing.

And Mr. Rizzuto, if confirmed to be Ambassador to the Organization of American States, a critical part of your job will be working to institute fair burden sharing across OAS member organizations.

As is the case with so many of the international organizations that America is part of, the U.S. is taken advantage of at the OAS.

In 2023, American taxpayers contributed a staggering 49.99 percent, essentially half, of the organization's budget. If the member states want to maintain an organization, all member states should support the organization. It's as simple as that.

This is particularly important given the rising threats we face from Chinese malign influence in the Western Hemisphere. I look forward to hearing how you will work with the OAS to counter the influence and ensure fair contributions from all member states.

Ms. Gingrich, as Ambassador to Switzerland, you'll be working in a country that is famously neutral, but nonetheless, a close partner of the United States. However, given the war in Ukraine, tensions in the Middle East, and a rising threat from China, we need all hands on deck to protect our shared values and common interests. Free nations must work together to preserve our way of life. And I know that you'll work with the Swiss to prepare for the rapidly changing security environment that we're facing today.

Mr. Howery, there's no doubt that Denmark is an important ally as we work to confront the security challenges in Europe. President Trump has made it clear that Greenland sits in a strategic location, and is critical to U.S. and our allies' security in the North Atlantic. It's also important that the U.S. work with Denmark to protect international shipping lanes from nefarious and irresponsible actors. I look forward to hearing how you will engage with all parties on these matters.

Mr. Orr, America's strength has always been in our private sector. Our businesses, large and small, our free markets have created an environment where business thrives, and innovation and risk taking are encouraged. America's economy indeed lifts the whole world.

As Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, you'll be charged with spreading this message and working with other nations to foster prosperous economies in their country that then also benefit the American economy. During our time today, I look forward to hearing how you will execute on President Trump's economic vision while at the State Department.

Ms. Farkas, as you know, Malta is an ally and a European Union partner that is strategically located in the Mediterranean. It is important that we continue work to work with Malta to continue our cooperation on regional security and countering illicit finance and money laundering. The U.S. has a vital role to play there, but we also need to see leaders at the European Union continue their efforts as well, especially on the question of Malta's Golden Passport program. I look forward to hearing how you'll work with your counterparts in Malta to advance these issues.

These are big jobs, and you'll be at the forefront of implementing the changes that will guide the next 4 years of American history. I'm grateful for your willingness to serve. We all are grateful for your willingness to serve, and look forward to our conversation today.

In a moment, when Senator Shaheen gets here, I know she's going to have some words of wisdom for you also, but at this moment, let's move to the nominees, and we'll give each of you 5 minutes more or less to talk about your thoughts on your nomination. And I think that if I'd ask that you hold it to 5 minutes. If you

have additional thoughts on that what we will do is put them in the record. If you'll submit them for the record, we'll be happy to put them in there.

So, with that, Mr. Orr, the floor is yours for 5 minutes, more or less. Hopefully, less. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MR. CALEB ORR, OF TEXAS, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Mr. ORR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of this committee, I'm honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

I am immensely grateful to the President and Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence. I also want to thank the members and staff of this committee for taking time to meet with me. As a former Senate staffer to then Senator Rubio, I understand first-hand the vital role this committee plays in shaping our foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you in this role.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank my wife, Gabby, and our daughters for their love and support. Gabby and our eldest, Poppy, are seated behind me, while Lily, our youngest, watches from home. I also want to thank my parents, Jim and Elaine, who along with many other family and friends, are watching from the great State of Texas, the State my family has called home for six generations. I would not be here today without them. The greatest gift I've received from my family is a legacy of Christian faith. Above all, I thank God for His grace and provision.

As an attorney and longtime economic policy advisor to Secretary Rubio, the intersection of economic policy and international affairs has been the focus of my career. For 7 years in the Senate, I had the privilege of serving under former Senator Rubio, helping build bipartisan consensus on confronting the economic and strategic challenges posed by China and creating incentives for reshoring supply chains to the United States and nearshoring to the Western Hemisphere.

As deputy staff director of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I worked with Congress, including several members of this committee and the Administration to create and implement the Paycheck Protection Program, which was a lifeline to millions of American businesses during the pandemic. And as an attorney in private practice, I litigated complex securities cases to enforce the laws that underpin our world class capital markets.

If confirmed, it would be a privilege to continue this work as assistant secretary, ensuring that our international economic policy, first and foremost, benefits America, American families, American workers, American businesses.

Congress has tasked this position with responsibility to the Secretary for international economics and business matters in the conduct of foreign policy. These issues have been central to American foreign policy since our nation's founding. In George Washington's

farewell address, our first President exhorted that quote, “extending our commercial relations” must be part of “the great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations.”

From merchant ships establishing new diplomatic ties in the early republic to manufacturing and financial companies spanning the globe after World War II. Throughout our history, American businesses have been leading ambassadors for U.S. interest abroad. The State Department’s Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs plays an important role in facilitating our commercial statecraft by participating in the Administration’s international economic policy-making, and advocating for American businesses through the Department’s missions around the world.

If confirmed, my top two priorities as assistant secretary would be, first, advancing commercial diplomacy. The American private sector’s innovation and dynamism are unmatched. Yet for decades unfair trade practices and investment restrictions abroad have impeded our competitiveness. With President Trump’s historic actions to bring about balanced and reciprocal trade, American companies stand poised to compete in global markets. Through exports and productive outbound and inbound investment we can expand our influence, strengthen relations with key countries, and create high wage jobs here at home.

Second, using economic tools to protect national security. Our financial system, capital markets, and the dollar status as reserve currency provide us with great leverage to advance our foreign policy interests. We must both protect and press these advantages. We must use tools such as sanctions and investment screening strategically, but to maximum effect. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing these tools to bear in support of U.S. foreign policy goals.

Thank you for this opportunity. I welcome your questions, and if confirmed, look forward to advancing America’s economic interest, both at home and abroad.

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. Orr follows:]

Prepared Statement of Caleb Orr

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of this Committee:

I’m honored to appear before you today as President Trump’s nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs. I’m immensely grateful to the President and Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence. I also want to

thank the Members and staff of this Committee for taking time to meet with me. As a former Senate staffer to then-Senator Rubio, I understand firsthand the vital role this Committee plays in shaping our foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you in this role.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank my wife Gabby and our daughters for their love and support. Gabby and our eldest, Poppy, are seated behind me, while Lily, our youngest, watches from home. I also want to thank my parents, Jim and Elaine, who along with many other family and friends are watching from the great State of Texas—the State my family has called home for six generations. I would not be here today without them. The greatest gift I've received from my family is a legacy of Christian faith. Above all, I thank God for His grace and provision.

As an attorney and long-time economic policy adviser to Secretary Rubio, the intersection of economic policy and international affairs has been the focus of my career. For 7 years in the Senate, I had the privilege of serving under former Senator Rubio, helping build bipartisan consensus on confronting the economic and strategic challenges posed by China and creating incentives for re-shoring supply chains to the United States and near-shoring to the Western Hemisphere. As Deputy Staff Director of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I worked with Congress—including several members of this Committee—and the administration to create and implement the Paycheck Protection Program, which was a lifeline to millions of American businesses during the pandemic. And as an attorney in private practice, I litigated complex securities cases to enforce the laws that underpin our world-class capital markets.

If confirmed, it would be a privilege to continue this work as Assistant Secretary, ensuring that our international economic policy first and foremost benefits America—American families, American workers, American businesses.

Congress has tasked this position with responsibility to the Secretary for “international economics and business matters in the conduct of foreign policy.” These issues have been central to American foreign policy since our nation's founding. In George Washington's Farewell Address, our first President exhorted that “extending our commercial relations” must be part of “the great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations.” From merchant ships establishing new diplomatic ties in the early republic to manufacturing and financial companies spanning the world after World War II, throughout our history American businesses have been leading Ambassadors for U.S. interests abroad.

The State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs plays an important role in facilitating our commercial statecraft by participating in the administration's international economic policymaking and advocating for American businesses through the Department's missions around the world. If confirmed, my top two priorities as Assistant Secretary would be:

First, advancing commercial diplomacy. The American private sector's innovation and dynamism are unmatched. Yet, for decades, unfair trade practices and investment restrictions abroad have impeded our competitiveness. With President Trump's historic actions to bring about balanced and reciprocal trade, American companies stand poised to compete in global markets. Through exports and productive outbound and inbound investment, we can expand our influence, strengthen relations with key countries, and create high-wage jobs here at home.

Second, using economic tools to protect national security. Our financial system, capital markets, and the dollar's status as reserve currency provide us with great leverage to advance our foreign policy interests. We must both protect and press these advantages. We must use tools such as sanctions and investment screening strategically but to maximum effect. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing these tools to bear in support of U.S. foreign policy goals.

Thank you for this opportunity. I welcome your questions and, if confirmed, look forward to advancing America's economic interests both at home and abroad.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Orr. I look forward to you getting over to the State Department. Marco was doing a great job, but he needs help over there. That's a big organization.

So, Mr. Howery, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. KENNETH HOWERY, OF TEXAS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENI-POTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK

Ambassador HOWERY. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to address the committee as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark.

I thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for the trust they have placed in me with this nomination. I also thank the outstanding professionals at the White House, the Department of State, our embassy in Denmark, our consulate in Greenland, for sharing their expertise and guidance. My family is here with me again today, including my parents, Karen and Ken, as well as my sister, Christina, and her daughter, Emma, while others watch from home.

I learned the importance of serving our nation and its values from my family. Both of my grandfathers served in World War II; Hubert Jurek, who fought in Europe and North Africa as part of the larger allied effort, which also liberated Denmark, 80 years ago this month. And Fred Howery, who battled in the Pacific Theater.

Both returned to a home they helped make safer and eventually raised their own families in Texas where I grew up. I later moved to Silicon Valley where I co-founded PayPal, and then a venture capital fund. That fund supported hundreds of entrepreneurs whose companies have created over 100,000 jobs and trillions of dollars in value. We led investments in pioneering companies working in fields including aerospace, defense, AI, and biotechnology.

In 2019, I left the private sector for public service, representing our country as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden. I worked with the excellent team at Embassy Stockholm to enhance our vital transatlantic partnership, countering China's influence, promoting President Trump's burden sharing priorities, and paving the way for eventual NATO accession. We also advanced trade investment and Arctic defense collaboration.

I look forward to building on our strong relationship with the Kingdom of Denmark, another close ally with many shared interests and values. I have long admired Denmark and have visited many times. Our bond traces back to 1636 when Danish immigrants first arrived in what is now New York. We have had uninterrupted diplomatic relations since 1801, and more than 1.2 million Americans proudly claim Danish heritage.

We are at a consequential moment for our partnership with the Kingdom making greater investments in defense and assuming key roles in international organizations, the U.N. Security Council, the Presidency of the Council of the EU, and this month, the chair of the Arctic Council. If confirmed, in addition to the core priority of protecting American citizens, I will focus on three priorities across the Kingdom of Denmark, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

First, will be our shared security. Denmark is a founding NATO member, and Danish troops, including their renowned Special Forces, served alongside our own in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the

Balkans, and the Baltics. We honor the bravery and sacrifice of those Danish soldiers, some of whom fell in combat.

Denmark is a F-35 founding partner, and will spend over 3 percent of its GDP on defense this year. The Faroe Islands are important for maritime security, and if confirmed, I will strengthen defense ties across the Kingdom, ensure NATO interoperability, and address emerging threats.

My second priority will be our economic relationship. The U.S. is Denmark's largest trading partner outside of Europe, and Danish firms have invested \$40 billion here, supporting over 91,000 jobs. Denmark is a leader in life sciences, shipping, and quantum science, and I will seek to strengthen ties in technology, entrepreneurship, and scientific research.

My third priority will be Arctic security, particularly in Greenland, drawing on my experience working on Arctic issues. Greenland has hosted our military installation since World War II, when we first assumed its defense at the request of Denmark's ambassador in exile. In 1951, we signed a permanent defense agreement, and our current Pituffik Space Base, the northernmost U.S. military base, opened in 1953. In 2020, we reopened our consulate in Nuuk.

As Russia and China accelerate efforts to dominate the Arctic, and as new sea lanes open, Greenland's geopolitical importance grows. While recent conversations about the appropriate U.S. role in Greenland's future have been spirited, I believe that through open dialogue and collaboration, we can find opportunities to advance our shared security and prosperity. These priorities, while complex, are areas where we can achieve meaningful progress in the coming years.

My experience building global companies, advancing transatlantic partnerships, and prior service in the region has uniquely prepared me to represent the United States as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark. I will approach this responsibility with humility, and if confirmed, will work to serve the American people and strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee. 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 will appear before this Committee when invited.

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

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I will keep the Committee fully and currently informed about the activities under my purview.

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 will engage in meaningful consultation with the relevant congressional committees.

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 will promptly respond to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its staff.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Howery follows:]

Prepared Statement of Kenneth A. Howery

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

It is an honor and privilege to address the Committee as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark.

I thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for the trust they have placed in me with this nomination. I also thank the outstanding professionals at the White House, the Department of State, our Embassy in Denmark, and our Consulate in Greenland for sharing their expertise and guidance.

I would like to acknowledge my family who are here supporting me today, including my parents, Karen Howery and Charles Kenneth Howery, as well as my sister, Christina Howery, and her daughter, Emma McLellan. Supporting me from home are Christina's husband, John McLellan, their other daughter, Eden McLellan, my father's wife, Jan Howery, and the rest of my family.

I learned the importance of serving our nation and its values from my family. Both of my grandfathers served in World War II: Hubert Jurek, who fought in Europe and North Africa as part of the larger Allied effort which also liberated Denmark 80 years ago this month, and Fred Howery, who battled in the Pacific Theatre. Both returned to a home they helped make safer, and eventually raised their own families in Texas, where I grew up.

I later moved to Silicon Valley, where I co-founded PayPal and then a venture capital fund. That fund supported hundreds of entrepreneurs and their companies, which created over 100,000 jobs and trillions of dollars in value. We led early investments in pioneering companies working in fields including aerospace, defense, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology.

In 2019, I left the private sector for public service, representing our country as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden. Through this work I learned that nations can strengthen their relationships by endeavoring to truly hear and understand each other. While in Sweden, I worked to enhance our vital transatlantic partnership: increasing security cooperation, countering China's influence, promoting President Trump's burden-sharing priorities, and strongly advocating for Sweden's increased defense spending and interoperability, helping pave the way for its eventual NATO accession. Alongside an excellent team at Embassy Stockholm, I also advanced trade, investment, and Arctic defense collaboration. My experience in Stockholm reinforced the importance of aligning common principles with shared responsibilities and opportunities, and advancing American interests while respecting Allies. If confirmed, I look forward to likewise building on our strong relationship with the Kingdom of Denmark, another close Ally with whom we share many interests and values.

Denmark is a country I have long admired, and have visited many times. The U.S.-Danish bond traces back to 1636, when the first Danish immigrants arrived in what is now New York. We have had uninterrupted diplomatic relations since 1801, and today, more than 1.2 million Americans proudly claim Danish heritage and over 30,000 call Denmark home. We are at a consequential moment for our partnership, with Denmark making markedly greater investments in defense and assuming key roles in international organizations: the U.N. Security Council, Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and this month the Kingdom assumes the chair of the Arctic Council. If confirmed, in addition to the core priority of protecting the safety and security of American citizens, I will focus on three key priorities:

My first priority will be our shared security. Denmark is a founding member of NATO, and Danish troops, including their renowned special forces, served alongside our own in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Balkans, and the Baltics. Some of these soldiers fell in combat while serving alongside our own troops, and we honor their bravery and sacrifice. Denmark is an F-35 founding partner nation, and its plan to spend over 3 percent of its GDP on defense this year, with a continued upward trajectory, underscores Denmark's dedication to burden sharing within NATO. I will work to ensure that Copenhagen maintains that trajectory and fulfills the President's mandate of allocating 5 percent of GDP. The Faroe Islands, located along a critical transit route in the North Atlantic, is important for maritime security and, if confirmed, I plan to continue U.S. engagement with the Faroese on this front. I will work closely with Danish leaders to strengthen defense, law enforcement, and intelligence cooperation, ensure NATO readiness and interoperability, and address emerging threats.

My second priority will be our economic relationship. The United States is Denmark's largest trading partner outside of Europe. Denmark is a major investor in

the United States, supporting over 91,000 jobs nationwide. Just as two examples of the \$40 billion Danish firms have invested here, Novo Nordisk produces medicines in North Carolina, and probably the world's most famous Danish brand, LEGO, is currently gearing up to make its iconic bricks in Virginia. Denmark is also a leader in life sciences, shipping, and quantum science, and I will seek opportunities to strengthen our ties in technology, entrepreneurship, and scientific research.

My third priority will be Arctic security, particularly in Greenland, drawing on my experience in Sweden working on Arctic issues. The United States' security relationship with Greenland is robust, and Greenland has been home to several U.S. military installations since World War II, when the United States first assumed defense of Greenland at the request of Denmark's Ambassador in exile. In 1951, the United States signed a permanent defense agreement with Denmark establishing joint responsibility for Greenland's security, and our current Pituffik Space Base—the northernmost U.S. military base—opened in 1953. Today it provides crucial defense capabilities, including missile warning, and is, as is Greenland, critical to the security of the United States.

In 2020, we reopened our Consulate in Nuuk. As Russia and China accelerate their efforts to dominate the Arctic, including Greenland, and as new sea lanes open, Greenland's geopolitical importance grows. While recent conversations about this reality, and the appropriate U.S. role in Greenland's future, have been spirited, I believe that through open dialogue and collaboration, we can find opportunities to advance our shared security and prosperity.

These priorities, while complex, are areas where we can achieve meaningful progress in the coming years. I believe my experience building global companies, advancing transatlantic partnerships, and prior service in the region has uniquely prepared me to represent the United States as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark. I will approach this responsibility with humility, and if confirmed, will work to serve the American people and strengthen the bilateral relationship. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. Mr. Howery.
Ms. Gingrich.

STATEMENT OF HON. CALLISTA GINGRICH, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Ambassador GINGRICH. Senator Scott, thank you for that very kind introduction.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence the President has placed in me. I'm pleased to be joined today by my husband, Newt. We both hold this committee in the highest regard for its vital work in shaping U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your staff.

The United States enjoys strong, collaborative, and growing relationships with both Switzerland and Liechtenstein, built on shared democratic values, robust economic ties, and mutual respect. Switzerland is the sixth largest investor in the United States with over \$350 billion in investments supporting nearly 500,000 American jobs. It is also the largest foreign source of research and development in the U.S., contributing nearly \$15 billion annually. Swiss

investors bring more capital to our economy than those from France and Italy combined. Switzerland also sends more visitors per capita to the U.S. than any other nation strengthening our cultural bonds.

More than 1,200 American companies operate in Switzerland, making the U.S. Switzerland's top foreign investor. Although our countries do not have a free trade agreement, we have signed numerous agreements to expand bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Switzerland has made important procurements to modernize its military, including a \$6 billion procurement for 36 U.S. F-35 fighter jets, and a \$2 billion procurement for a U.S. Patriot Air Defense System as part of its Air 2030 modernization program. We also deeply value Switzerland's longstanding role as our protecting power in Iran, a responsibility it has carried out since 1980.

Our relationship with Liechtenstein, formally established in 1997, is also significant. Based on shared values, Liechtenstein is a reliable partner whose companies contribute to U.S. jobs and growth. The U.S. is both the top foreign investor in Liechtenstein and a major destination for its investment. These ties—economic, cultural, and diplomatic—are rooted in our shared commitment to democratic principles. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen these partnerships, expand economic opportunities, deepen bilateral investment in trade, and promote the values our nations share.

I understand the weight of representing the President of the United States abroad. As a former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See I bring the diplomatic experience, leadership, and perspective necessary for this role. I am also personally honored by this nomination, given my mother's Swiss heritage. As a former ambassador, business owner, author, and documentary film producer, I am humbled by the opportunity to serve my country once again.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome 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 will appear before this Committee when invited.

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

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will keep the Committee fully and currently informed about the activities under my purview.

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 will engage in meaningful consultation with the relevant congressional committees.

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 will promptly respond to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its staff.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Gingrich follows:]

Prepared Statement of Callista Gingrich

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations:

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence the President has placed in me.

I'm pleased to be joined today by my husband, Newt. We both hold this Committee in the highest regard for its vital work in shaping U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your staff.

The United States enjoys strong, collaborative, and growing relationships with both Switzerland and Liechtenstein—built on shared democratic values, robust economic ties, and mutual respect.

Switzerland is the sixth-largest investor in the United States, with over \$350 billion in investments supporting nearly 500,000 American jobs. It is also the largest foreign source of research and development in the U.S., contributing nearly \$15 billion annually. Swiss investors bring more capital to our economy than those from France and Italy combined. Switzerland also sends more visitors per capita to the U.S. than any other nation, strengthening our cultural bonds.

More than 1,200 American companies operate in Switzerland, making the U.S. Switzerland's top foreign investor. Although our countries do not have a free trade agreement, we have signed numerous agreements to expand bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Switzerland has made important procurements to modernize its military including a \$6 billion procurement for thirty-six U.S. F-35 fighter jets and a \$2 billion procurement for a U.S. Patriot air defense system, as part of its Air2030 Modernization Program.

We also deeply value Switzerland's longstanding role as our protecting power in Iran, a responsibility it has carried out since 1980.

Our relationship with Liechtenstein, formally established in 1997, is also significant. Based on shared values, Liechtenstein is a reliable partner whose companies contribute to U.S. jobs and growth. The U.S. is both the top foreign investor in Liechtenstein and a major destination for its investment.

These ties—economic, cultural, and diplomatic—are rooted in our shared commitment to democratic principles.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen these partnerships, expand economic opportunities, deepen bilateral investment and trade, and promote the values our nations share.

I understand the weight of representing the President of the United States abroad. As a former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, I bring the diplomatic experience, leadership, and perspective necessary for this role. I am also personally honored by this nomination, given my mother's Swiss heritage.

As a former Ambassador, business owner, author, and documentary film producer, I am humbled by the opportunity to serve my country once again.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator Risch. Thank you, Ambassador.

We'll turn now to Ms. Farkas.

STATEMENT OF MS. SOMERS FARKAS, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

Ms. FARKAS. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and ladies and gentlemen of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Donald J. Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malta.

Senator Scott, thank you for your kind words.

I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence. I am humbled. I'm also grateful to this committee for considering my nomination.

If you allow me the privilege to serve America, I will count on our continued cooperation to advance President Trump's key America First priorities in the context of our shared, fundamental commitment to making America safer, more secure, and more prosperous. Together, we will unleash her glorious destiny.

I would like to acknowledge my devotion and faith in God, His Son, and Holy Spirit, who not only saved the life of our great President Trump, but who have also led me here today. Great love for my husband, Jonathan Farkas. His mother, Ruth Farkas, served as the American ambassador to Luxembourg. I would be honored to follow in her diplomatic footsteps.

My sisters, Kellam and Caramine White, who support I cherish. My father, Isaac Somers White, served our country in the Korean War, and my mother, Caramine Kellam, inspired me to lead a life of purpose and patriotism. I credit my Virginia upbringing and my mother for making me the woman I am, for it was she who taught me to leave my corner of the world better than I found it.

It has been said there is no greater honor than to serve one's country. Recalling my mother's words I maintain a strong involvement in public affairs, and I am active in philanthropy. I, too, have worked on programs and initiatives dedicated to veterans, law enforcement, and their families. I am especially grateful to President Trump for giving me the opportunity to serve on the President's Commission of White House Fellowships during his first term.

This august committee knows well that Malta sits at a critical location between northern Africa and southern Europe. The Republic of Malta is a notable partner. Our bilateral relationship has deepened significantly on a range of priorities, ranging from fortifying security in the Mediterranean Sea, to expanding economic and commercial ties across the continent. My experience as a businesswoman, strategist, and philanthropist will enable me to strengthen our valued relationship with this important archipelago.

Three priorities will guide my work. First and foremost, my priority will be to protect the safety and welfare of Americans living and visiting in Malta. If confirmed, I will also ensure the promotion of regional peace, security, and stability. Simply, Malta is integral to the European Union. It has played an important role in Europe.

In 2024, Malta served as chair and office of the OSCE, and as President of the U.N. Security Council in 2023. Also important, Malta is along the Mediterranean's principal shipping routes. Thirty percent of the world's annual merchant shipping passes through near waters. America and Malta share a common interest in safeguarding fair, safe navigation. If confirmed, I will work to solidify our cooperation with Malta to advance our interests on regional security and multilateral issues.

My second priority will be to promote prosperity, trade, and invigorate people's diplomacy, which is a phrase coined by Eugenie Anderson, America's first female ambassador. If confirmed, I will seek to identify common bilateral interests and foster cultural diplomacy. I will also work to increase economic ties with the goal of promoting opportunities in Malta for United States' trade and investment, including in the energy sector.

Malta has the potential to become a destination for America LNG exports. American expertise can play a fundamental role in diversi-

fyng and securing Malta's energy sector. President Trump has taken bold actions to make America and the world safe again.

My third priority will be to counter transnational crime, bolster international law enforcement cooperation, and stem illegal migration. If confirmed, I will enhance our cooperation with Malta to counter nefarious activities, including illicit financing, smuggling, and sanctions evasion.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

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 agree to appear before this Committee and make officials under my purview available to the Committee and designated staff when invited.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to keeping this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under my purview.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Farkas follows:]

Prepared Statement of Somers Farkas

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and ladies and gentlemen of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Donald J. Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malta. Senator Scott thank you also for those kind words.

I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence; I am humbled. I am also grateful to this committee for considering my nomination.

If you allow me the privilege to serve America, I will count on our continued discussions and coordination to advance President Trump's key America First priorities in the context of our shared—yes, shared—fundamental commitment to making America safer, more secure, and more prosperous. Together we will unleash her glorious destiny.

I would like to acknowledge my devotion and faith in GOD, his SON, and HOLY SPIRIT, who not only saved the life of our great President Trump, but who have also led me here today.

Additional recognition and love for my husband Jonathan Farkas; his Mother, Ruth Farkas who served as the United States Ambassador to Luxembourg; I would be honored to follow in her footsteps of diplomatic service.

My sisters, Kellam and Caramine White, whose support I cherish. My Father, Isaac Somers White, served our country in the Korean War, and my Mother, Caramine Kellam, inspired me to lead a life of purpose and patriotism. I credit my Virginia upbringing and Mother for making me the woman I am, for, it was she who taught me to leave my corner of the world better than I found it.

It has been said there is no greater honor than to serve one's country. For decades, I have worked on programs and initiatives dedicated to veterans, law enforcement officers, and their families. I also serve as a Trustee for the New York City Police Foundation.

Recalling my Mother's words, I maintain a strong involvement in public affairs and have been active in philanthropy.

I am especially grateful to President Trump for giving me the opportunity to serve on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships and the Commission on Presidential Scholars during his first term.

This august Committee knows well that Malta sits at a critical location between northern Africa and southern Europe. The Republic of Malta is a notable partner; our bilateral relationship has deepened significantly on many priorities, ranging from fortifying security in the Mediterranean Sea to expanding economic and commercial ties across the continent.

My experience as a businesswoman, strategist and philanthropist will enable me to strengthen our valued relationship with this important archipelago. Three priorities will guide my work:

First and foremost, my priority will be to protect the safety and welfare of United States citizens living or traveling in Malta.

If confirmed, I will also ensure the promotion of regional peace, security, and stability. Simply, Malta is integral to the European Union. It has played an important role in Europe; In 2024, Malta served as Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and as President of the U.N. Security Council in February 2023.

Malta is at the crossroads of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, and is along the Mediterranean Sea's principal shipping routes.

Thirty percent of the world's annual merchant shipping passes through near waters. America and Malta share a common interest in safeguarding freedom of navigation.

If confirmed, I will work to solidify our cooperation with Malta to advance America's interests on regional security and multilateral issues.

My second priority will be to promote prosperity, trade, and invigorate people's diplomacy, a phrase coined by Eugenie Anderson, America's first female Ambassador. If confirmed, I will seek to identify common bilateral interests and foster cultural diplomacy.

I will also work to increase U.S. and Maltese economic ties with the goal of promoting opportunities for United States trade and investment, including in the energy sector.

Malta has the potential to become a destination for American LNG exports; American expertise can play a fundamental role in diversifying Malta's energy sector.

So too, through Malta's engagement in the European Union, I will work with my colleagues to ensure continued growth and prosperity for Malta and for the American people.

President Trump has taken bold actions to make America and the world safe again. My third priority will be to counter transnational crime, strengthen international law enforcement agency cooperation, and stem illegal migration. If confirmed, I will enhance our cooperation with Malta to counter nefarious activities, including illicit financing, smuggling, and sanctions evasion.

Malta faces significant challenges with illegal migration, as well as trafficking in persons and drugs. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Republic of Malta to address these challenges.

It too will be a privilege to lead the outstanding Embassy Valletta team.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Ms. Farkas.

Mr. Rizzuto, if you'd sit tight for just a minute. I'm waiting for Senator Lee. When he gets here, we're going to have all members, all Republican members, here. According to our rules, we're going to be able to vote. We will vote immediately, and I suspect we will lose some to the wind at that point. But we'll move on with this hearing as soon as we're done with the vote, which will take seconds, probably, so.

So, visit amongst yourself, like they say at the airport. Don't leave the boarding area—

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH [continuing]. Because we're going to go quickly.

[Proceeded to other business.]

Senator RISCH. We will return to the nominations hearing.

I want to thank all of you for your cooperation in attending.

So, with that, Mr. Rizzuto, you are up.

STATEMENT OF MR. LEANDRO RIZZUTO, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. RIZZUTO. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I'm deeply honored by President Trump's nomination to serve as the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, OAS. And I appreciate the confidence placed in me by Secretary Rubio. Should I be confirmed, I would approach this role with a clear mission to advance American interest, defend our values, and ensure that our engagement in our hemisphere is strategic, accountable, and focused on achieving results for the American people.

This is a moment that calls for clarity, not compromise. As Secretary Rubio has said, a stable and prosperous Western Hemisphere is crucial to advance in President Trump's strategic priorities. My extensive background as a business executive equips me to provide fresh perspectives that advance U.S. interests effectively and efficiently.

From a young age, I started in our family business, Conair Corporation, and achieved immense success, leading and directing global operations, securing growth in over 125 countries, and overseeing the manufacturing of over a hundred million appliances per year. I personally led efforts in securing and receiving a grant of over 25 U.S. patents. Throughout my career, I engaged with industry associations, ultimately being elected as chairman of the Professional Beauty Association by my peers and competitors.

My commitment to not accepting the status quo, my extensive business background, and my focus on family and community underpin my dedication to the mission that potentially awaits me at the OAS, if confirmed. I was honored to serve my country as U.S. Consul General in Bermuda. I tackled significant challenges such as the suspension of U.S. mail, when the COVID-19 pandemic halted American airline flights.

By collaborating with my staff and the State Department, and colleagues at the U.S. Postal Service, we restored mail services to Bermuda and 13 other countries within my first 3 weeks of arriving. The impact of this accomplishment was underscored by the tragic death of a local resident who died while waiting for their medication.

When my term ended, Premier Burt and three former premiers each invited my wife and I to their homes to say thank you for the job done. Indeed, having been married for 38 years and raising three lovely daughters is a testament to my belief in the institution of marriage, love of family, and country. We proudly consider ourselves patriotic Americans.

With that moral clarity, I see in our region the consequences of failed leadership and unchecked authoritarianism; from the collapse of governance in Haiti to the totalitarian regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba, these conditions fuel immigration,

stymie economic progress, and threaten the security and sovereignty of the United States and our neighbors.

We must continue to hold autocrats accountable and remain resolute in our commitment to support those who risk their lives to defend freedom and democracy. Secretary Rubio's nomination of Rosa María Payá to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, for example, reflects that commitment.

If confirmed, I will further support these efforts by focusing on four priorities. First, securing borders and stabilizing the region. OAS member states must respect each other's sovereignty. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to foster border enforcement among member countries. As affirmed in the OAS charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the rule of law and the effective territorial control are fundamental pillars for peace, security, and democratic stability across our hemisphere.

Second, trade. There is a great opportunity to leverage the OAS as a platform to promote trade. The benefits would bring economic prosperity, resulted in the reduction of illegal immigration. Increase in trade with member countries would be a win for these nations in our hemisphere.

Third, the CCP continues to advance interest through strategic loans and investments and the influence in international institutions. We must promote U.S. investments in our region as a better alternative and expose CCP manipulation with the multilateral systems and OAS members.

And finally, refocus in the OAS to deliver the results. With bipartisan support from this committee and member states, I will work to reduce bureaucracy and push for needed reforms and ensure that our funding aligns with U.S. interests. If confirmed, I will support our priorities at the OAS General Assembly in June and the Summit of the Americas in December.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members the committee, our engagement in the Americas must reflect who we are: a nation of laws, strength, and liberty. I believe deeply in the promise of the Inter-American system, but only if we insist that it lives up to its core mission and purpose. Given the opportunity, I'll work to protect American citizens, promote democratic values, and ensure that our leadership at OAS is worthy of the people we serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and 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.

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. Rizzuto follows:]

Prepared Statement of Leandro Rizzuto

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored by President Trump's nomination to serve as the United States' Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), and I appreciate the confidence placed in me by Secretary Rubio.

Should I be confirmed, I would approach this role with a clear mission: to advance American interests, defend our values, and ensure that our engagement in our hemisphere is strategic, accountable, and focused on achieving results for the American people. This is a moment that calls for clarity—not compromise. As Secretary Rubio has said, a stable and prosperous Western Hemisphere is crucial to advancing President Trump's strategic priorities.

My extensive background as a business executive equips me to provide fresh perspectives that advance U.S. interests effectively and efficiently. From a young age, I started in our family business, Conair Corp, and achieved immense success leading and directing global operations, securing growth in over 125 countries and overseeing the manufacturing of over 100 million appliances per year. I personally led efforts in securing a grant of over 25 U.S. Patents. Throughout my career, I engaged with industry associations, ultimately being elected as chairman of the Professional Beauty Association by my peers and competitors.

My commitment to not accepting the status quo, my extensive business background, and my focus on family and community, underpin my dedication to the mission that potentially awaits me at the OAS.

I was honored to serve my country as U.S. Consul General, Bermuda. I tackled significant challenges, such as the suspension of U.S. mail when the COVID-19 pandemic halted American Airlines flights. By collaborating with my staff at the State Department and colleagues at the U.S. Postal Service, we restored mail services to Bermuda and 13 other countries within weeks. The impact of this accomplishment was underscored by the tragic death of a local resident who died while waiting for medication.

When my term ended, Premier Burt and 3 former Premiers each invited my wife and I to their homes to say thank you for the job done. Indeed, having been married for 38 years and raising three lovely daughters is a testament to my belief in the institution of marriage, love of family and country. We proudly consider ourselves Patriotic Americans.

With that moral clarity, I see in our region the consequences of failed leadership and unchecked authoritarianism—from the collapse of governance in Haiti, to the totalitarian regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. These conditions fuel illegal immigration, stymie economic progress, and threaten the security and sovereignty of the United States and our neighbors.

We must continue to hold autocrats accountable and remain resolute in our commitment to support those who risk their lives to defend freedom and democracy. Secretary Rubio's nomination of Rosa María Payá to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, for example, reflects that commitment.

If confirmed, I will further these efforts by focusing on four priorities:

First, Securing Borders and Stabilizing the Region:

OAS member states must respect each other's sovereignty. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to foster border enforcement amongst member countries. As affirmed in the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the rule of law and effective territorial control are fundamental pillars for peace, security, and democratic stability across our hemisphere.

Second, Trade:

There is great opportunity to leverage the OAS as a platform to promote trade. The benefits would bring economic prosperity resulting in the reduction of illegal immigration. Increasing trade with member countries would be a win for these nations and our hemisphere.

Third, Countering Communist Influence:

The CCP continues to advance its interests through strategic loans and investments, and influence in international institutions. We must promote U.S. investments in our region as a better alternative and expose CCP manipulation within multilateral systems and OAS member states.

Finally, Reforming and Re-focusing the OAS to Deliver Results:

With bipartisan support from this Committee and member states, I will work to reduce bureaucracy, push for needed reforms, and ensure that our funding aligns

with U.S. interests. If confirmed, I will support our priorities at the OAS General Assembly in June and the Summit of the Americas in December.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee: our engagement in the Americas must reflect who we are: a nation of laws, strength, and liberty. I believe deeply in the promise of the Inter-American system—but only if we insist that it lives up to its core mission and purpose.

If given the opportunity, I will work to protect American citizens, promote democratic values, and ensure that our leadership at the OAS is worthy of the people we serve. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, each of you. We want to give you our sincere appreciation for serving. Ordinarily, what we do is we move to a round of questions at this point, but I'm told that everybody's got other things going on, so you're going to be spared that.

However, having said that, we're going to leave the record open until tomorrow at close of business, 5 p.m., in which case the members can submit a written question to you, if they wish. If you get one of those, I'd ask you to respond as quickly as you can so we can move your nominations as quickly as we can.

So, again, thank you to you, thank you for your families. We will move the President's agenda here, which includes your nominations, as quickly as we can. I apologize for the bit of chaos this morning, but there's lots of moving parts up here, as you know, and that's just the way it is. But that's good news for you because sometimes these can get a little testy, but obviously, that won't happen this morning.

So, with that, again, thanks to the committee, thanks to the President of the United States, and the people of America for your willingness to serve. And with that the committee will be adjourned.

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

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CALEB ORR BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. 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) with foreign countries for questions concerning U.S. sanctions policy. If confirmed, do you commit to cooperate with this office to ensure its success and the fulfillment of its statutory mandate?

Answer. Yes. Coordinating within the Department, across the interagency, and with foreign countries is critical to the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions policy. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Office of Sanctions Coordination and will support the office's ability to carry out its statutorily mandated activities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CALEB ORR BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Under the proposed reorganization for the Department of State, certain functions from the Bureau of Energy Resources may be folded into EB. How do you envision merging those functions and do you intend to retain current State subject matter experts in those fields?

Answer. The State Department's reorganization process is ongoing. U.S. leadership in the energy sector is a critical part of U.S. commercial diplomacy. If confirmed, I look forward to promoting U.S. energy leadership and working closely with those who have been involved in the reorganization process to ensure an efficient transition of any personnel and functions into the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, consistent with President Trump's and Secretary Rubio's goals.

Question. In response to the Trump Administration's tariffs, South Korea, Japan and China held their first economic dialogue in 5 years and allies across Europe are meeting with PRC trade delegations. How do you plan to convince our allies and partners to align with us economically against the PRC when this Administration's policies are employing similar coercive tactics and making the United States an unreliable partner?

Answer. China poses numerous threats to our allies and partners in Europe, Asia, and beyond. Our allies and partners recognize that China's unfair trade practices and economic coercion challenge their economic security, industries, and jobs, just as they threaten the United States. Japan, South Korea, and countries across Europe are increasing investment in the U.S., underscoring our strong economic ties. President Trump's "Fair and Reciprocal Plan" for trade policy presents an historic opportunity to re-orient our trade policy with these and other partners to confront the strategic challenges posed by China.

If confirmed, I will expand our coordination with allies and partners to build our economic resilience, reduce dependencies on China, counter Beijing's economic coercion, and strengthen U.S. and partners' inbound and outbound investment tools to address national security risks.

Question. Are the current U.S. tariffs meant to right trade deficits, respond to reciprocal tariffs or address non-trade barriers?

Answer. President Trump's "Fair and Reciprocal Plan" for trade policy seeks to correct longstanding imbalances in global trade and bring fairness to our trading and investment relationships. For decades, the United States has outsourced jobs, technology, and intellectual property to foreign countries. Non-reciprocal tariffs and non-tariff barriers by foreign countries have played a critical role in driving these imbalances. Our shortsightedness in failing to address these disparities has devastated vital industries, hurt once-prosperous communities, and played into the hands of China.

Question. Given the Trump Administration negotiated the USMCA with Canada and Mexico in 2018—an agreement that this Administration now says takes advantage of the United States—why should any of our allies and partners trust that the United States will remain committed to any agreements negotiated now or in the near future?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to supporting President Trump's America First Trade Policy, ensuring that our allies and partners hold up their end of our trade and investment deals. As President Trump has said, USMCA is effective, but our partners must follow it. I will work with the U.S. Trade Representative to ensure that agreements like USMCA create balanced and reciprocal trade that supports high-wage jobs for Americans.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CALEB ORR BY SENATOR PETE RICKETTS

Question. Do you commit to prioritizing the expansion of international markets for U.S. ethanol?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing the expansion of international markets for U.S. ethanol. U.S. ethanol exports provide opportunities for U.S. farmers to gain additional value from their crops, helping the United States both feed and fuel the world.

Question. Given the increased demand for U.S. ethanol in Japan and Southeast Asia, what specific actions can the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs take to support the expansion of U.S. ethanol exports?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs engages with Japan and other countries, both in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, to grow the U.S. biofuels market. We will do so in conjunction with other U.S. Government agencies abroad by enforcing trade deals, collaborating with U.S. industry to

promote U.S. biofuels, and advocating for international regulations and standards that align with the Trump Administration's America First Trade Policy.

Question. How can the Bureau help ensure that these markets remain open and accessible in the long term, particularly for producers in States like Nebraska that depend heavily on the biofuels industry?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs coordinates with U.S. agencies, trade associations, and local officials to promote American biofuel export opportunities for U.S. farmers. We will advocate bilaterally for market opportunities and negotiate for standards and regulations that level the playing field for the U.S. biofuels industry.

Question. If confirmed, how will you ensure that our economic officers are equipped and empowered to ensure American companies are able to fairly compete for procurements funded through U.S. foreign assistance programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the State Department's economic officers around the world are equipped to assist U.S. firms competing for procurements, including procurements funded through foreign assistance programs, through increased private sector engagement and commercial advocacy. By utilizing U.S. Ambassador-led efforts like Deal Teams, which identify foreign tenders, economic officers will have the tools to support U.S. firms. I will coordinate with interagency partners, like the Department of Commerce's Advocacy Center, to augment a whole-of-government approach to principal-level commercial advocacy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CALEB ORR BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. What tools would you, if confirmed, use to bolster American companies abroad given the uncertainty that many U.S. businesses are currently feeling due to the fast-evolving tariff situation?

Answer. President Trump's "Fair and Reciprocal Plan" represents an historic opportunity to promote American commercial interests around the world. By seeking to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to U.S. exports in foreign countries, President Trump is positioning U.S. firms to enhance their competitiveness in global markets.

If confirmed, I would utilize the Direct Line program, Partner Posts, and Deal Teams to support U.S. companies abroad. The Direct Line program connects U.S. businesses with foreign decisionmakers to amplify commercial opportunities in critical sectors, such as port development. The Partner Post program trains and supports economic officers in commercial duties in countries without Foreign Commercial Service presence. Finally, I would empower U.S. Ambassadors to establish Deal Teams in their host countries to identify commercial opportunities for U.S. firms.

Question. What role would you expect to have in future policy decisions on tariffs, given the wide-ranging foreign policy implications of tariffing close allies and partners?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to supporting the President's America First Trade Policy, ensuring that our allies and partners hold up their end of fair and balanced trade and investment deals. I will work with the U.S. Trade Representative, our allies, and partners to foster trade that advantages American workers and businesses, safeguards our essential supply chains, supports high-wage jobs in the United States, and strengthens our economic ties with strategic partners.

Question. Cryptocurrency is an important vector for money laundering and illicit finance. Given the role of the Bureau in combatting terrorist financing and money laundering, how would you, if confirmed, plan to address cryptocurrency's prominent role in funding criminal and terrorist organizations and evading sanctions?

Answer. As President Trump noted in his Strengthening American Leadership in Digital Financial Technology Executive Order, the Administration will protect and promote the lawful use of open public blockchain networks and legitimate dollar-backed stablecoins worldwide.

If confirmed, I will promote this lawful use while taking actions to disrupt and deter the illicit and unlawful use of cryptocurrencies which erode confidence in the legitimate market and harm our national security.

Question. How do you intend to ensure that the Department has the appropriate staff and resources to help secure our critical mineral supply chains, develop mar-

kets for U.S. exports, compete in the global clean energy market, and expand our partners' access to energy?

Answer. U.S. leadership in the energy sector is a critical part of U.S. commercial diplomacy. Securing access to critical minerals is an essential component of U.S. national and economic security. If confirmed, I will utilize the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs to strengthen U.S. energy leadership and critical minerals supply chains and maintain a laser-like focus on developing and expanding both American energy and energy technology exports.

Question. What opportunities do you think exist for strengthening U.S. engagement on geothermal energy?

Answer. Geothermal is a reliable, affordable, and secure source of energy. U.S. leadership in geothermal energy technology presents unique opportunities to advance U.S. interests in exports and energy security, especially in the Pacific. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs works to open markets for American geothermal technology exports and investors, creating jobs for U.S. workers, bolstering U.S. prosperity and technological leadership, and strengthening the energy security of our allies and partners.

Question. Pacific Island countries are very interested in expanding their relationships with U.S. businesses and attracting foreign investment as part of their economic security. Where do you see the most opportunity for the State Department to support U.S. economic engagement in the strategically important and challenging business environment of the Pacific?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit that the Bureau will work with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and our posts in the region to engage with our Pacific neighbors to preserve a secure and prosperous region that benefits American workers and businesses. We will leverage our diplomatic footprint in the region and coordinate with like-minded countries to strengthen economic engagement with our Pacific neighbors in areas such as energy and infrastructure, among others. We will also continue to work with the Department of the Treasury to ensure Correspondent Bank Relationships allow the Pacific Islands countries access to the U.S. dollar system, and with U.S. agencies such as the Development Finance Corporation, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, and the Export-Import Bank of the U.S. to unlock public-private partnerships in the region and strengthen our economic ties.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KENNETH HOWERY BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Denmark is very concerned about the risks associated with the transit of Russian oil through the Danish straits. These vessels are often old, fail to practice professional maritime behavior, and lack adequate insurance. It is really a matter of when, and not if, one of these vessels has an accident. As Ambassador, how will you work with the Danish government to address the Russian shadow fleet?

Answer. The United States and Denmark have a shared interest in effectively addressing the risks shadow fleet vessels pose to freedom of navigation and maritime infrastructure. This has been a key area of cooperation among the United States, Denmark, and our Baltic Allies. Denmark has played a leading role in curbing Russia's use of shadow fleet vessels, including advocating for tough EU sanctions on Russia as well as increased and intensified collaboration with Allies and partners, and between the public and private sectors to tackle this specific challenge. I understand that in February, Denmark launched its Global Strategy for Maritime Security (2025–2028) which outlines three key principles: (1) protecting Danish maritime interests, (2) upholding the rules-based world order, and (3) promoting multilateral cooperation. The strategy addresses international maritime security challenges outside Denmark's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone focusing on threats to freedom of navigation and maritime infrastructure including pipelines, cables, offshore wind turbines, and other offshore installations, recognizing that these challenges can directly impact navigation rights. If confirmed, I will deepen the United States' cooperation with Denmark on this important issue.

Question. The future of Greenland will be one of the most important issues you tackle if confirmed to be Ambassador. What are the U.S.'s primary security concerns regarding Greenland?

Answer. President Trump has made clear that the safety and security of Greenland is important to the United States as China and Russia look to make significant investments throughout the Arctic region.

The United States has long and enduring interests in Greenland and has maintained a military presence there since World War II. Greenland is part of the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap—a key naval chokepoint. Domain awareness in these waters is key for antisubmarine warfare and the homeland defense of the East Coast of the United States. Greenland is home to the United States’ northern most military facility—Pituffik Space Base—which is part of our early warning missile defense system and critical to space operations, as well as force projection through the base’s airfield and deepwater port. Greenland is also home to large scale deposits of rare-earth elements and critical minerals, necessary inputs for technologies that play critical roles in our national security, including military equipment and defense systems, as well as emerging technologies, such as semiconductors and energy storage for the United States’ power grid.

Question. Who do we need to defend the North Atlantic from?

Answer. The Arctic is an emerging arena of strategic competition from Russia and China. Russia has focused on augmenting its hard power in the Arctic, a region it views as essential for its economic future and security interests. Russia has rebuilt its cold war bases, increased the tempo and complexity of Arctic exercises, and deployed novel missile systems in the region to project dominance. Over the past decade, China has pursued greater influence through the Arctic component of its Belt and Road Initiative, branded as the “Polar Silk Road.” The Arctic is also a growing facet of the “no limits” partnership between Russia and China through increased investments and joint military activity in the region.

Question. How will you work with Denmark to counter malign Russian and Chinese encroachment in Greenland, its surrounding waters, and the broader Arctic region?

Answer. Thank you for raising such an important issue. During my previous service as U.S. Ambassador to Sweden, I saw firsthand the threats Russia and China pose in the Arctic, and I worked extensively on Arctic issues, including working closely with the Swedes as they incorporated security concerns into their Arctic strategy to more closely mirror our own.

Danish and Greenlandic leaders understand the strategic importance of the Arctic region and have repeatedly said they want to find ways to work with the United States to enhance our collective security. Our 1951 Defense of Greenland agreement with Denmark and cooperation as NATO Allies gives us a strong basis for further defense cooperation in Greenland and throughout the Arctic. The United States also continues to cooperate closely with the Kingdom of Denmark on economic security issues, such as investment screening and cyber defense. If confirmed, I will work to deepen and expand our cooperation with the Kingdom of Denmark to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KENNETH HOWERY BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Do you agree that Denmark is an important NATO ally with whom we share interests and values?

Answer. The Kingdom of Denmark is a treaty Ally and founding member of NATO, a valuable partner, and close friend. The United States and the Kingdom of Denmark have a long history of partnership across a range of areas, including trade and investment, defense and security, law enforcement, and advancing scientific research, especially on critical and emerging technologies such as quantum and biotech. They have served alongside us in missions around the world, have purchased US military equipment including F-35s and Seahawk helicopters, and our countries signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement in 2023. Denmark also committed to spending over 3 percent of their GDP on defense this year. If confirmed, I aim to strengthen our cooperation in each of these areas of partnership, including through deepening defense and intelligence cooperation, ensuring NATO readiness and interoperability, and addressing emerging threats together.

Question. Do you support President Trump’s stated intent to “acquire” the territory of Greenland?

Answer. President Trump has made clear that Arctic security is critical to the safety and security of the United States, and Greenland is key to achieving this goal. President Trump and Vice President Vance have also stated we respect the self-determination of Greenlanders. Danish and Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

Question. Do you recognize the right of Greenland to self-determination?

Answer. President Trump and Vice President Vance have stated that the United States respects the self-determination of Greenlanders, and I do, as well.

Question. Do you commit to respecting Greenland's place as a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, which continues to handle foreign relations and defense policy for Greenland?

Answer. President Trump and Vice President Vance have stated that the United States respects the self-determination of Greenlanders, and I do, as well. Danish and Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

Question. Do you commit to working through bilateral issues with Greenland exclusively in diplomatic forums?

Answer. I understand that diplomacy is the crux of the job, and I will carry out my duties to the best of my ability, if confirmed. Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security.

Question. If the Danes are a responsible ally and partner on Arctic security issues, why does the United States need to take over Greenland?

Answer. Denmark and Greenland are important partners, and Danish and Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security.

President Trump has been clear that the safety and security of Greenland is important to the United States as China and Russia look to make significant investments throughout the Arctic region.

The Arctic is an emerging arena of strategic competition from Russia and China. Russia has focused on augmenting its hard power in the Arctic—a region it views as essential for its economic future and security interests. Russia has rebuilt its cold war bases, increased the tempo and complexity of Arctic exercises, and deployed novel missile systems in the region to project dominance. Over the past decade, China has pursued greater influence through the Arctic component of its Belt and Road Initiative, branded as the “Polar Silk Road.” Beijing hopes to increase its access and influence in the Arctic through investments in critical infrastructure and trade, reshaping norms through international organizations and lawfare, and conducting dual-use scientific research. The Arctic is also a growing facet of the “no limits” partnership between Russia and China through increased investments and joint military activity in the region. In Denmark, given Greenland's strategic location, these security concerns are even more important: for example, China tried to buy a deepwater port and invest in multiple airport projects in Greenland.

President Trump and Vice President Vance have stated that the United States respects the self-determination of Greenlanders, and I do, as well. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

Question. Are you aware of any requests regarding Greenland that the U.S. has made of Denmark, that the Danes have refused?

Answer. I am not aware of any such requests.

Question. If a country were to invade or annex Greenland, would you agree that this act would constitute an attack on a NATO ally?

Answer. I want to be mindful to avoid speculating on hypotheticals.

Article 1 of the 1951 Defense of Greenland Agreement between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark states that the governments of both countries, “in order to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic Treaty area by uniting their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security and for the development of their collective capacity to resist armed attack, will each take such measures as are necessary or appropriate to carry out expeditiously their

respective and joint responsibilities in Greenland, in accordance with NATO plans.” The United States has enjoyed good cooperation with Denmark in this regard for many decades.

Danish and Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

Question. If President Trump continues to antagonize Denmark with inflammatory rhetoric about Greenland, Denmark may choose to revisit the U.S.-Denmark Defense Agreement. How would you address the Danish concerns with respect to our Defense Agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Danes to advance our defense cooperation.

Danish and Greenlandic leaders understand the strategic importance of the Arctic region and our cooperation both bilaterally and as NATO Allies and have repeatedly said they want to find ways to work with the United States to enhance our collective security. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

Question. If Denmark requests permission to export U.S. origin weapons systems to Ukraine, will you advocate approving these transfers within the interagency?

Answer. I understand that the U.S. Department of State reviews all such requests on a case-by-case basis, consistent with all statutory authority, regulations, and policy, including the President’s Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, seeking interagency input, as required. While each case will have to be considered based on its own merits, if confirmed, my primary goal will be to ensure continued adherence to this well-established review process.

Question. Will you commit to conveying Denmark’s views on Ukraine both to the Administration and Congress?

Answer. Denmark and the United States share a common desire to see a swift and peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine. Denmark has been a strong supporter of Ukraine as one of the top donors of security and other forms of assistance. It has also expressed openness to sending peacekeepers if that were requested. If confirmed, I will work closely with Denmark to support our shared goal of bringing the war to a swift and sustainable end and commit to conveying Denmark’s views on Ukraine both to the Administration and Congress.

Question. Where do you anticipate opportunities to work with Denmark in the framework of the Arctic Council?

Answer. The United States remains committed to peaceful cooperation in the Arctic, including through the Arctic Council. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Kingdom of Denmark to continue the Council’s important work during its Chairmanship, including advancing economic development in the Arctic.

Question. How do you think the United States can work with Denmark to protect Arctic biodiversity and ecosystems?

Answer. The Arctic Council is the pre-eminent forum for addressing the most pressing issues for the Arctic region, including topics related to biodiversity and ecosystems. If confirmed, I will work with the Kingdom of Denmark, the new Arctic Council Chair, to continue this important work through the Council’s technical Working Groups.

Question. Many foreign governments are now seeking deals with Starlink as a way to mitigate or reduce President Trump’s tariffs. Does that strike you as a responsible trade policy? Do you see that as problematic?

Answer. I defer to the expertise and authority of the President and his team who are working to ensure trade is free, fair, and reciprocal.

Question. You hold stock in Starlink. Are you divesting that stock, and if not, do you commit to recuse yourself from any matters or discussions involving Starlink?

Answer. I take my ethics obligations very seriously. As reflected in my ethics agreement, in light of my retained financial interests in Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, which wholly owns Starlink, if confirmed, I have committed to recusing from any particular matter involving or affecting that entity, absent a written waiver. If questions arise, I commit to consulting with the Office of Government Ethics or the State Department’s Legal Advisor.

Question. According to recent reporting, Secretary Rubio has directed State Department employees to promote American satellite services—including Starlink. Would you recuse yourself from any such efforts?

Answer. I take my ethics obligations very seriously. As reflected in my ethics agreement, in light of my retained financial interests in Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, which wholly owns Starlink, if confirmed, I have committed to recusing from any particular matter involving or affecting that entity, absent a written waiver. If questions arise, I commit to consulting with the Office of Government Ethics or the State Department’s Legal Advisor.

Question. When talking to allies, what will be your best argument when explaining why the Trump Administration has suspended operations and planning for offensive cyber operations against U.S. adversary, Russia, while instructing the intelligence community to ramp up intelligence gathering against Greenland?

Answer. At present, as a private U.S. citizen, it is outside my area of expertise to address questions regarding U.S. policy toward Russia. At this time, it would also be inappropriate for me to speculate on any intelligence-related matters.

Question. How will you address the instruction to ramp up intelligence gathering against Greenland with the Danes, if confirmed?

Answer. At present, as a private U.S. citizen, it would be inappropriate for me to speculate on any intelligence-related matters.

Question. Does President Trump, in fact, want to take over, conquer, or annex Greenland?

Answer. President Trump and Vice President Vance have stated that the United States respects the self-determination of Greenlanders, and I do, as well. Danish and Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KENNETH HOWERY BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

The United States and the Kingdom of Denmark have a strong and deep defense relationship. Denmark is a key NATO ally, and Greenland is host to Pituffik Space Base. President Trump has made comments that he will not rule out military force when it comes to controlling Greenland, which is part of NATO.

Question. Do you believe that long-term U.S. national security interests are strengthened through coercive economic or military action by the United States to seize smaller countries, including those that are treaty allies of the United States?

Answer. The Arctic is an emerging arena of strategic competition from Russia and China. President Trump has made clear that the safety and security of Greenland is important to the United States, especially as China and Russia look to make significant investments throughout the Arctic region. Danish and Greenlandic leaders understand the strategic importance of the Arctic region and have repeatedly said they want to find ways to work with the United States to enhance our collective security. If confirmed, I will work to deepen and expand our cooperation with the Kingdom of Denmark to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

Question. How would you characterize the risks of undermining NATO through territorial disputes between members while Russia is actively invading Ukraine?

Answer. As President Trump and Secretary Rubio have underscored, we want a NATO that is stronger and more capable. President Trump has made clear he supports NATO, and the United States will remain active and engaged in NATO. The Administration is committed to securing peace in Ukraine and appreciates that our close Allies, including Denmark, support our efforts and are prepared to do what they can to secure lasting peace.

Question. What do you assess to be the main threats to U.S. security and economic interests in Denmark and Greenland today?

Answer. The US has enjoyed a strong partnership with Denmark, and I believe we can confront key threats together. The future of the Arctic is one such area of

concern. President Trump has been clear that the safety and security of Greenland is important to the United States as China and Russia look to make significant investments throughout the Arctic region.

The Arctic is an emerging arena of strategic competition from Russia and China. Russia has focused on augmenting its hard power in the Arctic, a region it views as essential for its economic future and security interests. Russia has rebuilt its cold war bases, increased the tempo and complexity of Arctic exercises, and deployed novel missile systems in the region to project dominance. Over the past decade, China has pursued greater influence through the Arctic component of its Belt and Road Initiative, branded as the “Polar Silk Road.” Beijing hopes to increase its access and influence in the Arctic through investments in critical infrastructure and trade, reshaping norms through international organizations and lawfare, and conducting dual-use scientific research. The Arctic is also a growing facet of the “no limits” partnership between Russia and China through increased investments and joint military activity in the region.

Greenland is home to large scale deposits of rare-earth elements and critical minerals which are necessary inputs for technologies that play critical roles in our national security, including military equipment and defense systems, as well as emerging technologies, such as semiconductors and storage for the United States’ power grid. Securing U.S. access to diverse critical minerals supply chains is necessary to ensure U.S. economic and national security.

If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with our Danish partners to address these and other emerging issues.

Question. Polls have made clear that the people of Greenland are opposed to becoming part of the United States. Do you commit to respecting the views of the people of Greenland in any engagements with Danish and Greenlandic officials?

Answer. President Trump has made clear that Arctic security is critical to the safety and security of the United States, and Greenland is key to achieving this goal. President Trump and Vice President Vance have also stated that the United States respects the self-determination of Greenlanders, and I do, as well.

Danish and Greenlandic leaders have expressed that they remain committed to expanding cooperation with the United States to enhance our collective security. Their views are important to me, and I look forward to better understanding their perspectives through direct discussions.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the best possible outcome for our countries in security, defense, economic, trade, and other matters.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CALLISTA GINGRICH BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Switzerland hosts a number of international organizations and has facilitated communication between the U.S. and countries with which we do not have diplomatic relations. How will you work with the Swiss to support U.S. international engagements in these contexts?

Answer. Switzerland has served as the United States’ protecting power in Iran for 45 years and has a longstanding role in promoting international dialogue and peace. Its neutrality and the presence of a number of international organizations makes Switzerland a valuable location for hosting sensitive diplomatic talks and negotiations. If confirmed, I will work closely with Switzerland to leverage its unique role to advance the Administration’s foreign policy priorities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CALLISTA GINGRICH BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to approach trade talks with Switzerland and Liechtenstein?

Answer. The Trump Administration’s America First Trade Policy is about achieving more balanced trade and benefits to the American people, workers, and companies; our industrial base; and our national security. The United States has a significant goods trade deficit with Switzerland and a smaller but still important trade deficit with Liechtenstein. I understand trade negotiations with both countries are currently ongoing. If confirmed, advancing the Administration’s trade policy and decreasing the trade deficit with both countries would be one of my highest priorities.

Question. What is President Trump seeking in discussions over lowering the tariff rate on Switzerland?

Answer. President Trump's trade policy is putting American workers and businesses first by leveling the playing field for American companies and exports overseas and bringing manufacturing back to the United States. If confirmed, I will advance these priorities by working with Switzerland to increase bilateral trade, decrease the goods trade deficit, and encourage further investment in the United States.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with Switzerland to advocate for rules requiring lawyers to alert authorities to suspicious transactions—that potentially violate anti-money laundering laws?

Answer. Given Switzerland's role as a global financial hub, it must do more to prevent illicit finance. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Federal Council and parliament to strengthen financial oversight and enforcement and tighten anti-money laundering rules.

Question. Will you commit to sharing the Swiss government's concerns with Congress regarding U.S. commitments to the multilateral institutions based in Switzerland, even where you or the White House disagree?

Answer. If confirmed, I will keep the Committee fully informed about the activities under my purview. As the President's personal representative, I will carry out the foreign policy of the President with regard to U.S. commitments to multilateral institutions.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Swiss to do all they can to assist Ukraine, including pursuing the possibility of Russian asset seizures, in line with their own parliament's request?

Answer. President Trump has sought peace in the Russia-Ukraine war since day one of his Presidency. The President has been clear he has a range of measures available if Russia is not serious about ending the war. If confirmed, I will encourage close cooperation with Switzerland to advance the President's goal of peace. I will take further policy direction from the President.

Question. This week Federal prosecutors ordered UBS to pay \$510 million in fines for the role Credit Suisse played in helping clients evade taxes. Credit Suisse, now part of UBS, helped clients hide more than \$4 billion from the Internal Revenue Service in at least 475 accounts. Credit Suisse's Singapore office was singled out for holding undeclared accounts for people who owed taxes. If confirmed, how will you work with Swiss authorities to address U.S. tax evasion in Swiss banks?

Answer. The United States and Switzerland have a close and productive relationship on tax matters. In 2024, the United States and Switzerland updated our inter-governmental agreement on the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), which obliges information sharing on accounts in Swiss banks held by U.S. citizens. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to help ensure that Switzerland is in compliance with the terms of our FATCA agreement.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO SOMERS FARKAS BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Malta, Switzerland and Liechtenstein all hold policies of neutrality. However, they do benefit from and contribute to the international system that the governments of Russia and China are actively trying to overthrow. If confirmed, how will you engage your respective host governments to uphold their responsibility to protect our shared interests, despite their stated neutrality?

Answer. Malta is strongly aligned with the United States and the current government has emphasized "active neutrality," whereby the country will call out injustices globally while advocating for peaceful solutions. Under this approach, Malta has consistently and vocally condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In 2024, Malta served as a principled Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a position it took on at U.S. urging when Russia rejected all other candidates. From 2023–2024, Malta served as an elected member of the U.N. Security Council, during which time Malta hosted the third iteration of the Ukraine's Peace Formula discussions, attended by more than 60 countries and organizations, including the United States. If confirmed, I will advocate strongly with

the Maltese government for its continued support of President Trump's path to peace.

Chinese state-affiliated enterprises have significant investments in Malta. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Malta to counter the Chinese government's unfair trade and economic practices and encourage U.S. businesses to offer safe, sustainable alternatives to China.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO SOMERS FARKAS BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

State Department Re-Organization

Question. Is it your understanding that the United States intends to maintain our Embassy in Malta?

Answer. Yes, it is my understanding that the United States intends to maintain our Embassy in Malta.

Question. What is your view of whether the U.S. Embassy Malta should remain open?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to proudly representing the American people as Ambassador to Malta and to working with the Embassy team to advance the interests of the American people.

Question. Do you commit to keeping Congress informed of any recommendations to close or downsize posts?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to keeping this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under my purview.

Question. Is a U.S. post in Malta essential to pushing back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy in Malta significantly contributes to countering Russian and Chinese influence. Malta has consistently and vocally condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine. If confirmed, I will advocate strongly with the Maltese for its continued support of President Trump's path to peace. If confirmed, I also would look forward to working with Malta to counter the Chinese government's unfair trade and economic practices and encourage U.S. businesses government to offer safe, sustainable alternatives to China.

Trade

Question. How do you hope to increase trade with Malta amid tariffs?

Answer. The U.S.-Malta economic relationship is an important pillar of the bilateral relationship, and I hope to see it become even stronger. If confirmed, I will work to bring U.S. technology, innovation, and products to Malta. If confirmed, I would also encourage Maltese companies to invest in the United States.

Question. Do you have any concerns that the Trump administration's approach to trade may drive Malta and other European allies and partners toward increased trade with the PRC?

Answer. I am confident in the administration's approach to trade, and I hope to see Malta's trade with the United States increase even more. If confirmed, I will work to bring U.S. technology, innovation, and products to Malta.

Question. What is your message to Malta on why the U.S. is a better trade partner than the PRC?

Answer. I believe that trading with U.S. companies offers partners economic stability, strong intellectual property protections, secure infrastructure, and transparent business regulations whereas trade with China does not. If confirmed, I would work with Malta to improve transparency in the financial sector, including by engaging with U.S. experts on investment screening best practices.

Press Freedom and Anti-Corruption

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with the Maltese government to promote press freedom and anti-corruption efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, I would emphasize the importance of a free and independent press, supporting independent journalists, and strengthening their profile as anti-corruption advocates. Governments should see that journalists receive the same protections as everyone else.

Malta must not only bring those responsible for the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia to justice but must also protect other journalists from lawsuits aimed at silencing or penalizing them for exercising their right to freedom of expression in the conduct of their work.

Sanctions Evasion

Question. What is your understanding of Malta's role in working with the U.S. to end sanctions evasion methods, particularly by Russia, China and Iran?

Answer. Malta is a strong supporter of tough, effective sanctions enforcement. The United States works with Maltese authorities to expand their surveillance, detection, and information capabilities. Malta, with U.S. help, has created a maritime information fusion center called the Spinola Center for flag-registry countries to share information on ships that have evaded or may be seeking to evade U.N. sanctions. If confirmed, I look forward to coordinating closely with Malta on additional steps to end sanctions evasion methods, particularly by Russia, China, and Iran.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO SOMERS FARKAS BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. Given that there has been reporting that Secretary Rubio plans to close the U.S. Embassy in Malta, what is your understanding of your day-to-day role if confirmed in this position?

Answer. I am not aware of any plans to close U.S. Embassy Malta. The Embassy continues normal operations and if confirmed, I look forward to proudly representing the American people as Ambassador to Malta and to working with the Embassy team to advance the interests of the American people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO LEANDRO RIZZUTO BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. How would you seek to address the proliferation of unfunded mandates at the OAS?

Answer. Like many organizations, the OAS has a history of establishing new mandates without always identifying the resources needed to carry them out. If confirmed, I will work against this tendency by promoting strict prioritization of mandates—focusing on quality over quantity—and ensuring that the organization's activities align with the OAS Charter and the organization's four pillars of promoting security, democracy, human rights, and development. I will work with fellow members to keep the organization's focus on essential activities that advance these core objectives.

Question. What have been the greatest obstacles for the OAS to effectively check growing authoritarianism in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua?

Answer. The OAS lacks strong enforcement tools as it relies on diplomatic pressure and political will. Recognized political fragmentation among Member States has also hindered unified action—necessary in a consensus-based body, particularly as it relates to rising authoritarianism in our region. If confirmed, I will work on strengthening implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, exploring alternatives to the decisionmaking structure, and building coalitions to further adherence to that Charter.

Question. What are your views on China's status as Permanent Observer to the OAS?

Answer. Under the organization's current rules, Permanent Observers do not need to adhere to the principles set forth in the Inter-American Democratic Charter. However, the organization was founded on the ideal that it would be a community of nations dedicated to democratic governance, the rule of law, and economic prosperity for the region—a community committed to drawing its resources from those who share these principles. China has no voting powers as an observer and has not provided financial contributions since 2021. If confirmed, I will work to ensure it remains that way.

Question. How would you seek to build regional consensus on the need to roll back the malign influence of China and Russia in our hemisphere?

Answer. The OAS must be a bulwark against the spread of authoritarian and malign influence in our hemisphere. If confirmed, I will support efforts that promote trade among Member States, the rule of law, national sovereignty, and transparency—principles the Chinese Communist Party seeks to undermine. That includes backing strong OAS election observation missions and anticorruption oversight through bodies like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Follow-Up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (MESICIC), within the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO LEANDRO RIZZUTO BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Do you believe that U.S. membership and leadership within the OAS advances U.S. national interests?

Answer. Yes. The OAS has a unique role and mandate in the Americas: to promote a hemispheric commitment to representative democracy, human rights, security, and development. A capable, effective, and responsive OAS is in the best interest of the United States, and we must keep advocating for substantial reforms to ensure the organization's continued role. No Western Hemisphere-focused group that excludes the United States can legitimately represent the interests of our region.

Question. What is the rationale for continuing to pause assistance to the OAS?

Answer. The State Department is working to reorient foreign assistance programming after decades of misaligned priorities in the delivery of foreign assistance, as directed by President Trump's Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid. While the Department has acted swiftly and has finished a comprehensive review of all of its existing awards, unsuspending some of the assistance that aligned with our priorities to ensure they make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous is an ongoing task.

Question. If the United States is to pull roughly half of the OAS's budget by slashing our contributions, how can we effectively steer the OAS away from Chinese influence?

Answer. Chinese influence in the OAS is limited as it holds no voting power, no ability to participate in the negotiation of resolutions, and has not contributed financially to the organization since 2021. If confirmed, I will support efforts that promote trade among Member States, the rule of law, national sovereignty, and transparency. That includes backing strong OAS election observation missions and anticorruption oversight through bodies like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and others.

Question. What will you do to be a champion for the OAS within the State Department, particularly in light of proposed slashing to the IO/OAS budget?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work on ensuring the OAS remains a central pillar of U.S. engagement in the Western Hemisphere. I will work with State Department leaders for strong, coordinated support of the OAS's core functions: regional security, democracy, human rights, and development. I will promote interagency collaboration to align U.S. priorities with OAS initiatives, focusing on quality over quantity when it comes to funding and diplomatic engagement. Strengthening relationships with like-minded Member States will be key to enhancing the OAS's impact.

Question. You have a history of inflammatory statements on social media, including against members of this Committee. You have since deleted your social media accounts. Why should this Committee trust you to carry yourself with decorum this role demands, and represent the United States, when you have denigrated people who may disagree with you and shown such a willingness to share conspiracy theories?

Answer. This role requires a forward-looking, solutions-driven mindset, and that is exactly what I would bring, if confirmed. My focus is on serving the American people with professionalism, clarity, and respect for our national interests. If confirmed, my commitment is to engage, lead, and represent our great country on the world stage with decorum, resilience, and principled service.

Question. What are your thoughts on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), and will you pledge to continue supporting the IACHR's work?

Answer. The IACHR serves as the only avenue for redress in addressing human rights challenges for individuals in some countries in the region. For example, the Commission has filed several cases against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela for gross human rights violations at the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, often resulting in merits-based findings of wrongdoing, which can be used to promote action domestically and on the world stage. If confirmed, I will support the work of the IACHR, while also focusing on promoting procedural reforms to ensure the Commission remains effective.

Question. In 2023/2024, the OAS played a crucial role protecting democracy in Guatemala. Do you think this was a worthwhile effort?

Answer. I understand that the OAS observed both rounds of Guatemala's 2023 elections, as it commonly does throughout the region, and remained engaged until the winner of those elections took office in 2024. OAS Election Observation Missions are a vital and important function of the OAS in securing strong and reliable electoral processes within OAS Member States and upholding democracy in the Americas. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about these missions and other OAS programs that strengthen democratic institutions in the region.

Question. How will the OAS be able to do similar interventions without its full budget?

Answer. The State Department is working to reorient foreign assistance programming as directed by President Trump's Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid. The Trump Administration is establishing a new paradigm for the State Department, fostering a more agile foreign assistance framework that advances an America First agenda abroad.

Question. Last year, the U.S. led the Voluntary Working Group to Strengthen the Inter-American Democratic Charter. What are your views on the Inter-American Democratic Charter and if confirmed, do you commit to continue finding ways to modernize and strengthen it?

Answer. Strengthening implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and regional collective adherence to the principles it articulates is vital to ensuring it remains effective in addressing today's challenges, including threats to regional security, electoral integrity, and democratic institutions. If confirmed, I commit to working with fellow Member States to use and apply the Charter in meaningful ways that strengthen democracy in the region.

