

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Ricketts, Hagerty, Barrasso, Cruz, Scott, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Van Hollen, and Rosen.

Also present: Senator Cotton.

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

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

We have an interesting agenda this morning and important work to do. I want to open by saying as usual we welcome the attendance. This is a public meeting, and certainly we enjoy people coming here.

On the other hand, we have a zero tolerance policy for either interruptions, or for that matter, attempting to somehow communicate with either—any members of the committee or the witnesses.

So everybody knows what the penalty for that is. It is arrest and banned from the committee for a year, and it has been happening only infrequently this year. We hope it never happens again.

Nonetheless, we have zero tolerance for that, and we have important business to do. We cannot do it if we are interrupted.

So, with that, I want to thank our nominees for being with us today, and most importantly, to them and their families for willing to serve in these important positions that help govern this country.

We are proud to have moved 33 of President Trump's nominees through this committee and look forward to moving your nominations through just the same. We are at a blistering speed compared to the previous administrations, and that is done with the cooperation, and just as importantly, the urging of the President of the United States.

Mr. Helberg, as the Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth you will work on an extensive list of issues that will be exceptionally important as we compete with our adversaries around the world, particularly China.

The CCP—Chinese Communist Party—threatens U.S. leadership globally through its competition to control emerging technologies, abusive trade practices, and economic coercion.

Following the previous Administration's failure to promote U.S. economic interest you will be responsible for State's role in renewing American prosperity including a robust strategy to promote U.S. energy and technology abroad. I look forward to hearing your plans.

Mr. Puzder, over the last 3 years Putin's aggression has created the largest security crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

President Trump is working diligently to help end this conflict, but we must keep pushing our European allies to increase their security cooperation.

As Ambassador to the European Union your role will require hard conversations with America's closest allies to urge them to meet the threats they face from Russia.

You must also work with your counterpart at NATO to ensure U.S. security interests are reflected in European policy.

As you understand, security investments from the EU must benefit members of all our alliances, not just Europe. I hope you will deliver a firm message to our European allies America is a reliable partner, but it is not an ATM.

Mr. Kapur, as Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian affairs you have an expansive and challenging region. Many countries in South and Central Asia want to work with us. We need to build on that desire and create deeper partnerships that advance American interests.

But at the same time, we will need to have frank conversation about China's growing influence and threats to regional security, particularly in South Asia.

The recent conflict between India and Pakistan is deeply concerning and has shown us that we must continue our counterterrorism cooperation across the region.

The U.S. shares national security interests with both countries, and we need peace between them. Additionally, the Biden administration's efforts to sweep its failures in Afghanistan under the rug meant turning a blind eye to oppression and a growing threat of terrorism in the country.

It will be part of your job to turn the trajectory around and keep Americans safe.

Mr. Black, as you know, one of our best tools to counter Chinese economic aggression is harnessing American ingenuity and spreading it to countries in need to the U.S. international Development Finance Corporation.

Congress created the DFC in partnership with President Trump, and it has proven to be critical in advancing U.S. economic and strategic interests.

But since its creation the agency has struggled to fill its dual mandate to catalyze development and invest in sectors that move the needle in protecting our national security interests.

That is why the Ranking Member and I are working on legislation to ensure DFC delivers both strategic and development value. We want the agency to attract talent, become more risk tolerant, and operate efficiently and effectively.

If confirmed, you will be taking the helm of the DFC at a critical juncture. I look forward to working with you to improve it.

Mr. Brodie, as Ambassador to Finland you will step into a role very near to NATO's border with Russia. Finland contributes a good amount of their GDP to defense spending and has a robust defense industrial base.

We appreciate these contributions to our collective defense, but like all of us, Finland could do more. After all, a strategic location means that for its own security Finland must play a role in protecting the Baltic Sea from Russian hybrid operations, risks posed by its shadow fleet, and in securing the Arctic from Russian and Chinese expansion.

Mr. Brodie, I look forward to hearing more about how you plan to work with Finland to counter Russian aggression and advance American security interests. I believe you will find Finland is a willing partner.

A lot of us here pressed very hard to get them into NATO, and they are in now. They have a long relationship with Russia. You will find it quite interesting in dealing with them.

These are exciting but challenging times in foreign policy. Without a doubt the work you do will be mentioned in history books for decades. I look forward to seeing what you accomplish to make America more secure and prosperous.

Thank you and your families for willingness to serve and for being with us.

Now I will turn to the distinguished Ranking Member to help shed light on these issues.

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

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would just add to your comment about the speed with which we are trying to get our ambassadorial nominees on the ground that in addition to the President and to your leadership, the Democratic minority has been very important in helping to move those nominees in a way that has—is important to the country.

I hope that is a model that will continue regardless of who the next President is because it is in America's interest to have our nominees on the ground.

Now, welcome to each of you. Congratulations on your nomination. Welcome to your families and friends who are here to support you.

From leading diplomatic missions in Europe to guiding policy in South Asia to promoting economic growth at the State Department or the Development Finance Corporation, one of your most important responsibilities, if you are confirmed, will be protecting the United States from our adversaries.

Mr. Helberg, you have been nominated to be Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment.

In the past you have been outspoken in supporting tougher U.S. action toward the Chinese, toward their use of technology and foreign influence, and whether it is space technology or renewable energy or artificial intelligence, Beijing is working to outcompete the United States.

But your ethics agreement, which is designed to safeguard taxpayer dollars and our national security, lists these sectors as potential conflicts of interest.

So I am going to be interested in hearing how you will be able to work to counter China's influence if you have to recuse yourself or avoid participating in meetings on these topics.

Mr. Black, you have been nominated to lead the Development Finance Corporation, and while we do not yet know the full scope of DFC's responsibilities, you have written about prioritizing private equity investments, something that we all agree needs to change with DFC.

Until recently the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation were laying the groundwork for private investment by building roads, installing electricity, delivering fresh water, and without these development projects it will be harder for the DFC to attract the private investments necessary to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.

So, if confirmed, how will you ensure countering adversaries remains one of the DFC's priorities? And given DFC leadership of the U.S.-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund, how will you look out for both the United States and Ukrainian interests in the critical minerals deal?

Mr. Kapur, you have been nominated to be Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs. Not only does this post encompass a recent worrying military exchange between India and Pakistan, two states with nuclear weapons, it also includes Afghanistan, a country I do not believe we should simply wash our hands of now that the Taliban is in charge.

That is also true for the Afghans who stood with our service members and diplomats and answered the call to promote women's rights and minority rights and democracy in Afghanistan.

So, if confirmed, what will you do to make sure we do not abandon Afghan SIVs and refugees including those safely resettled in the United States?

Mr. Brodie and Mr. Puzder, you have been nominated to serve in posts representing the U.S. in Finland and the EU. I would like to hear how you will bring an end to this senseless tariff brawl with our European allies, which is costing American consumers on a daily basis.

I also hope you will speak to how you will reassure our European allies facing the threat of Russian aggression. It appears that President Trump has caught on to Putin's delaying tactics, which I believe is a step in the right direction, but we need to find ways to keep the pressure on Vladimir Putin and Russia like the Graham-Blumenthal sanctions bill that has overwhelming support in the Senate from over 80 Senate sponsors.

How will you use your post to give President Trump and the United States more leverage against Russia?

Finally, Mr. Puzder, in addition to these substantive questions I want to address concerns about your fitness for this position. You were nominated to serve as Secretary of Labor in the first Trump administration, but Republican members of this Senate refused to confirm you.

The facts have not changed in the last 8 years, but this committee needs to conduct its own due diligence on your suitability for this role and for Senate confirmation, and frankly, some of the past statements and allegations against you are deeply concerning.

So I look forward to hearing from you and from all of our nominees today. Thank you all, and again, thank you for being willing to continue to serve this country.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

How this is going to work we have got a few introductions Senators want to make, and then we will hear each of you for about 5 minutes. Try to keep it to 5 minutes.

We can—if it is longer than that you can certainly put other statements in the record if you wish. Then we will open it up to a round of 5 minute questions back and forth.

So let us start. Senator Cotton is a very busy Senator, and he has graced us with his presence this morning to make an introduction.

So, Senator Cotton, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TOM COTTON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARKANSAS**

Senator COTTON. Thank you, Chairman Risch and Senator Shaheen, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Good morning. I want to congratulate all of our nominees, many of whom I know personally, and thank them for their willingness to serve the country.

But I am specifically here today to introduce a true America First patriot, Mr. Benjamin Black, who is joined today by his wife Charlotte, and I understand the two of you are also celebrating your wedding anniversary tomorrow.

So, first, I want to congratulate you, and second, I want to say I hope you have something better in mind than this hearing for your anniversary.

[Laughter.]

Senator COTTON. I also want to thank Ben for answering the call to serve our nation as the Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation.

I am here today to offer my full support for Mr. Black's nomination to serve in this position.

Created during the first Trump administration, the International Development Finance Corporation facilitates overseas investment projects that better position us to compete with Communist China's global infrastructure pursuits.

This position requires a person with expertise in strategic investment opportunities, an understanding of America's foreign policy priorities, and tested leadership capabilities.

For these reasons I am confident that President Trump made the right choice in selecting Mr. Black for the job.

Mr. Black has spent more than 15 years working in credit and equity investing. He is the founder and managing Partner of Fortinbras Enterprises, a multi-strategy credit investment firm.

Previously, he served as the senior portfolio manager and head of credit at Michael Milken's Knowledge Universe Holdings as prin-

cial and co-founder of OCB Partners and as an associate at Apollo Global Management.

Additionally, Mr. Black is on the boards of Ascent Hospitality, Peninsula Real Estate, and the Naval War College. He is a member of the Global Advisory Council of the Woodrow Wilson Center and a member of the advisory board at Harvard's Center for Public Leadership.

Along with his family, Mr. Black provides support to veterans and active duty members of our armed forces, attending Harvard's JFK School of Government, the Harvard Business School, and Harvard Law School where Mr. Black received not only an MBA but a JD, in addition to the BA he received from University of Pennsylvania in history and the masters of law he has from New York University.

He has, as we say in Arkansas, more degrees than a thermometer. All of this is to say simply that I believe Mr. Black will bring a wide range of experience and expertise to this job.

I am pleased to support his nomination, and I urge all of my colleagues on the committee and the Senate to join me in doing the same.

Senator Risch, Senator Shaheen, thank you for allowing me to appear.

Senator RICH. Senator Cotton, thank you very much for those good remarks, and I know you have got other stuff to do so you are welcome to stay but understand you have other fish to fry, so to speak.

Senator Cruz.

Well, actually Senator Scott was here first. Let us give him a run at this.

Senator Scott.

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

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you, Chairman.

It is my honor today to introduce my friend Jacob Helberg, President Trump's nominee to serve as Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment, to this committee.

I have had the privilege of knowing and collaborating with Mr. Helberg for several years now. He is smart, hardworking, with a wide breadth of expertise.

Years ago, when I was warned about the growing threats of Communist China, he joined me for a roundtable discussion. We have continued to work together on this and several other issues.

It is wholly unsurprising to me then that when President Trump was selecting someone to serve in this important role Mr. Helberg stood out in both the depth of his experience and his willingness to serve.

Jacob is someone who deeply loves this country. As a grandchild of two Holocaust survivors he personally understands the reality of global threats and also the unshakable value of the American dream.

He is a patriot. He recognizes that America's strength begins at home with a strong economy, abundant energy, and the freedom to

innovate. He is principled. He listens and he brings people together to solve hard problems.

He has been a leading voice on the threat of Communist China to the American and global economies and to our national security. He has worked at the forefront of America's response to authoritarianism, supply chain insecurity, and energy dependency.

He has worked in both the private and public sectors. As someone who ran businesses before embarking on government service, I can confirm Mr. Helberg embodies the bold qualities of both.

At a time when the lines between the economics and international security are increasingly intertwined, Jacob's knowledge from semiconductors to critical minerals to countering Xi in Communist China is indispensable.

But what stands out even more than Mr. Helberg's policy depth is his character. I have every confidence that he will serve this country with honor and distinction, and I am confident he will be a strong asset to the team President Trump and Secretary of State Rubio have assembled to pursue peace through strength.

He has my full support. I urge my colleagues to advance his nomination quickly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Senator Cruz.

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

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me say to each of the nominees I have multiple friends here today. Welcome. Congratulations.

I am confident you are all going to do a terrific job, although, Mr. Black, I will say you have too many damn degrees from Harvard. You may have lost my vote just based on that.

[Laughter.]

Senator CRUZ. It is my honor right now to introduce today, Howard Brodie. Howard is a Yale Law School graduate, which is not any better, with extensive experience in international business, major financial transactions, and negotiations.

Prior to his time at Yale, he graduated from Duke University with a degree in political science where he also contributed to the *Duke Journal of Politics*.

His academic pursuits also led him to study at Oxford University and later serve as a visiting scholar at St. Petersburg Law School in Russia.

For over 30 years Howard has supported international corporations in navigating complex negotiations across Europe, North America, and Asia. As an attorney, he has provided legal counsel to companies such as Emcore Corporation and Purolite Corporation.

Howard currently serves as co-president and general counsel for Brodie Generational Capital Partners where he leads investment and legal strategy.

Howard's deep commitment to education extends to his philanthropy. He has donated to Yale Law School, where he also founded the Howard Wexler Brodie 93 School of Jewish and Israeli Law as

well as to Brasenose College at Oxford University and the University of Pennsylvania.

His extensive experience in international negotiations, his time teaching and learning overseas, and his ability to lead and manage complex, cross-cultural environments make him a well qualified candidate to represent the United States overseas.

But what makes Howard particularly qualified to be U.S. Ambassador to Finland is his love for his country and for Finland, his devotion to putting the United States first, and his commitment to working with the President to foster international relations.

Howard is the right candidate to serve as Ambassador to Finland, and I encourage my colleagues to support his nomination.

Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Senator Cruz.

I know Senator Hagerty has some introductions too, and we will give him the floor when he gets here, but in the meantime let us go ahead and start with the nominees' statements.

So we will start with you, Mr. Helberg. You have the floor for 5 minutes, give or take.

STATEMENT OF JACOB HELBERG, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. HELBERG. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of this committee, it is the honor of a lifetime to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment.

I want to express my deep gratitude to President Trump and my friend Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence. If confirmed, I will work every minute of every day to advance President Trump's economic security and diplomacy agenda on behalf of the country we all love.

I also appreciated the time that the members and staff of this committee have spent with me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my husband Keith, our two beautiful children, Anne and Eli, my mother Edith, my stepfather Michel, and my late father Ted for their unending years of support.

My grandfather was liberated by the U.S. military from Auschwitz and given a second chance at life. My grandparents were 32 years old when they moved here. They had no education and spoke no English, but they had an instinct for survival and a dream.

I imagine my grandfather, dispossessed of his family in the Holocaust, coming home tired to the bone from his day job at a Jeep factory and his night shift as a hospital janitor.

I imagine telling him his adoptive country would someday give his grandson the opportunity to appear before the U.S. Senate as a nominee for Under Secretary of State. If that is not the American dream I do not know what is.

I share the top policy priority of winning our strategic competition with China, something that President Trump, you, Mr. Chairman, and many on this very committee have long championed.

As an author, I have thought deeply about this issue and believe the relationship between Washington and Silicon Valley will directly shape the strength of America's military and the size of its economy.

I launched the Hill & Valley Forum as a superhighway for bipartisan, bicoastal partnership to solve our hardest national security challenges.

It has been an honor to work with many of you on a bipartisan basis through the Hill & Valley Forum and my work on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

My experiences in the tech industry as an investor, advisor, author, and cofounder of the Hill & Valley Forum have prepared me to deploy American industry as a diplomatic instrument to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

They also instilled in me an indelible belief that economic security is national security, an idea President Trump introduced during his first term and one which will be the north star of the E family, if confirmed.

The world economy is on the foothills of a new great divergence in the geography of global wealth on a scale unseen since the first industrial revolution.

Nations harnessing the power of new technologies like artificial intelligence are economically leaping ahead of others. The implications for America's safety and strength are significant.

History teaches us that periods of rapid technological change can lead to major shifts in the global balance of power. The Trump administration is committed to making America the birthplace and leader of the fourth industrial revolution.

If confirmed, the State Department's E family will do its part to ensure America's economic and technological leadership is built on strong foundations.

First and foremost, decades of globalization have left America's economy precariously reliant on a technology supply chain exposed to geopolitical adversaries and vulnerable to disruptions. These dependencies create unacceptable risks to U.S. economic security and long term growth.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and other departments to build the rails of a secure technology supply chain anchored around flagship projects.

This will be the State Department's overarching framework to answer President Trump's call and guide State Department policy on economic statecraft, promoting America's economic security and growth, and American technological dominance abroad.

Second, if confirmed, I will work to position the United States as the industrial engine of the department's global supply chain strategy.

I will do this by working with other departments including the Departments of Commerce and Treasury to help guide and accelerate the deployment of foreign investment commitments in infrastructure that will jolt American industrial productivity and competitiveness.

Examples include advanced manufacturing like the TSMC expansion in Arizona, mineral extraction processing like the Lithium

Loop in Nevada, and large energy infrastructure projects like the Alaska LNG project.

Third, if confirmed I will implement President Trump's America First trade and investment policies and work with the U.S. Trade Representative and other departments to expand market access for American companies abroad and promote exports for American energy, particularly oil, liquefied natural gas, and nuclear energy.


I will also advance a level playing field for U.S. companies and address unfair and predatory trade practices, particularly by China's state backed global champions across third markets and the Global South.

Thank you all for the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I welcome your questions, and if confirmed I look forward to working with you and your staff to deliver a foreign policy that protects the interests of our nation and its people.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?
Answer: Yes


Printed Name: Jacob Helberg
Date: 06/10/2025

[The prepared statement of Mr. Helberg follows:]

Prepared Statement of Jacob Helberg

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

It is the honor of a lifetime to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. I want to express my deep gratitude to President Trump and my friend, Secretary Rubio, for their trust and confidence. If confirmed, I will work every minute of every day to advance President Trump's economic security and diplomacy agenda on behalf of the country we all love.

I also appreciate the time that the Members and staff of this Committee have spent with me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my husband, Keith, our two beautiful children, Anne and Eli, my mother, Edith, my stepfather, Michel, and my late father, Ted, for their unending support throughout the years.

My grandparents were liberated by the U.S. military from Auschwitz and given a second chance at life. They were 32 years old when they moved here. They had no education and spoke no English, but they had an instinct for survival and a dream. I imagine my grandfather, dispossessed of his family in the Holocaust, coming home tired to the bone from his day-job at a Jeep factory and his night shift as a hospital janitor. I imagine telling him his adoptive country would someday give his grandson the opportunity to appear before the U.S. Senate as nominee for Under Secretary of State. If that isn't the American dream, I don't know what is.

I share the top policy priority of winning our strategic competition with China, something that President Trump, you, Mr. Chairman, and many on this very committee have long championed. As an author, I have thought deeply about this issue and believe the relationship between Washington and Silicon Valley will directly shape the strength of America's military and the size of its economy. I launched the Hill & Valley Forum as a superhighway for bipartisan bicoastal partnership to solve our hardest national security challenges. It has been an honor to work with many of you on a bipartisan basis through the Hill & Valley Forum and my work on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

My experiences in the tech industry, as an investor, advisor, author, and co-founder of the Hill & Valley Forum, have prepared me to deploy American industry as a diplomatic instrument to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. They also instilled in me an indelible belief that economic security is national security—an idea President Trump introduced during his first term, and one which will be the North Star for the E family, if confirmed.

The world economy is on the foothills of a new Great Divergence in the geography of global wealth, on a scale unseen since the first Industrial Revolution. Nations harnessing the power of artificial intelligence are economically leaping ahead of others. The implications for America's safety and strength are significant. History teaches us that periods of rapid technological change can lead to major shifts in the global balance of power. The Trump administration is committed to making America the birthplace and leader of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

If confirmed, the State Department's E Family will do its part to ensure America's economic and technological leadership is built on strong foundations.

First and foremost, decades of globalization have left America's economy precariously reliant on a technology supply chain exposed to geopolitical adversaries and vulnerable to disruptions. These dependencies create unacceptable risks to U.S. economic security and long-term growth. If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and other Departments to build the rails of a secure technology supply chain, anchored around flagship projects. This will be the State Department's overarching framework to answer President Trump's call and "guide State Department policy on economic statecraft, promoting America's economic security and growth, and American technological dominance abroad."

Second, if confirmed, I will work to position the United States as the industrial engine of the Department's global supply chain strategy. I will do this by working with other Departments, including the Departments of Commerce and Treasury, to help guide and accelerate the deployment of foreign investment commitments in infrastructure that will jolt American industrial productivity and competitiveness. Examples include advanced manufacturing like the TSMC expansion in Arizona, mineral extraction and processing like the Lithium Loop in Nevada, and large energy infrastructure projects like the Alaska LNG project.

Third, if confirmed, I will implement President Trump's America First Trade and Investment Policies and work with the U.S. Trade Representative and other Depart-

ments to expand market access for American companies abroad and promote exports of American energy, particularly oil, liquefied natural gas, and nuclear energy. I will also work to advance a level playing field for U.S. companies and address unfair and predatory trade practices, particularly by China's state-backed "global champions" across third markets and the Global South.

Thank you all again for the opportunity to appear before this distinguished Committee. I welcome your questions. And, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff to deliver a foreign policy that protects the interests of our Nation and its people.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Helberg.
Mr. Puzder.

STATEMENT OF ANDREW PUZDER, OF TENNESSEE, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE EUROPEAN UNION, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY

Mr. PUZDER. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the European Union.

I am immensely honored by the confidence President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me. I am also very grateful for the support of my wife of nearly 38 years, Deanna. She is here with me today, and I would not be here today if not for her support.

I am also very grateful for the love and support of my six children, three of whom are here today—my daughter Vanessa and my sons Christian and John—and my six grandchildren, the oldest of whom is serving as we speak in the Pacific on the aircraft carrier *Nimitz*. Thank you for all the joy you bring to my life.

Today, I remember my parents who encouraged me to dream big and always said I could be whatever I wanted to be if I put in the work. I grew up in a working class home in Cleveland, Ohio, and became the first member of my family to graduate from college.

My parents did not have the money to help with my education, but thankfully, I grew up in a country that provided a path for me to work my way through college and law school while supporting my young family.

Our great country has given me tremendous opportunities, and if confirmed I will give America my best. I would employ the principles that made me successful as an attorney and in business to make our nation safer, stronger, and more prosperous for the good of the American people.

I consider it a particularly special honor that President Trump nominated me as Ambassador to the EU, America's largest trading partner and our nation's top counterterrorism partner for over the past 20 years.

As Secretary Rubio said, America First does not mean America Only. Our U.S.-EU relationship is incredibly consequential for American security and prosperity.

In this respect, there are three lines of effort that I would like to touch on today because they are critical to making the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

First, as President Trump has said, trade with the EU must be both fair and free to promote American prosperity. If confirmed, I

will work to ensure that transatlantic commerce serves the economic interests of the American people.

The United States should be the EU's economic partner of choice in every sector. The U.S.-EU trade relationship holds immense potential.

But as President Trump has made abundantly clear, this potential can only be unleashed if the EU market is more open to buying American goods and services.

If confirmed, I will work to expand U.S. exports from agricultural products to energy, automobiles, machinery, and defense equipment with the latter being essential for expanded European defense capacity.

President Trump's America First agenda is strengthening America's global leadership, and if confirmed I will commit to protecting America's economic leadership in Europe.

Second, I will advocate for an EU market where American companies are free to thrive without excessive regulation, red tape, and taxes.

For far too long American companies have been unfairly targeted by EU regulators and penalized for their success, particularly American tech companies, which are the envy of the world, leading the way on innovation.

When American companies are allowed to innovate and grow they thrive, and the American people, as well as people across the globe, benefit and prosper.

Third, global peace is essential for American safety and prosperity. Commerce prospers where peace abounds. This is why President Trump and Secretary Rubio are urging the EU to invest more in defense.

Europe must be up to the task of defending itself. If confirmed, I will advocate for a Europe that assumes a greater role in its defense, fostering peace and international security.

In closing, I am proof that the American dream is alive and well. My path to success was made possible only by the support of my family and the free market capitalism our great country offers.

Free markets are the proven path to prosperity and have lifted billions of people out of extreme poverty across the globe over the past 200 years including my family, which has deep roots across the European continent.

During my time as CEO of CKE Restaurants, a position my Slovakian grandparents would never have imagined I could achieve, I saw firsthand the great talent and potential of the American work force and how functioning free markets create jobs and opportunity while increasing wages for working class Americans.

America can further grow those opportunities if our transatlantic relationship advances America's interests. Thanks to President Trump's America First foreign policy the United States is now positioned to enjoy an economic resurgence.

Fair and robust transatlantic trade, bolstered by peace in Europe, will advance, preserve, and strengthen American prosperity and security.

If confirmed, I will bring the same determination I brought to my business career to the cause of ensuring that our transatlantic relationship works for the American people.


I have heard very positive things about the staff of the EU embassy in Brussels, and if confirmed, I look forward to meeting and working with every one of them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my American story with this esteemed committee. I look forward to taking your questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?
Answer: Yes


Printed Name: Andrew F. Puzos
Date: 6-5-25

[The prepared statement of Mr. Puzder follows:]

Prepared Statement of Andrew Puzder

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the European Union. I'm immensely honored by the confidence President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me. I'm also very grateful for the support of my wife Deanna, my six children, and my six grandchildren. Thank you for the joy you bring to my life.

Today, I remember my parents who encouraged me to dream big and always said I could be whatever I wanted to be if I put in the work. I grew up in a working-class home in Cleveland, Ohio and became the first member of my family to graduate from college.

My parents didn't have the money to send me to college or law school. But thankfully, I grew up in a country that provided a path for me to work my way through college and law school while supporting my young family. Our great country has given me tremendous opportunities, and, if confirmed, I will give America my best. I would employ the principles that made me successful as an attorney and in business to make our nation safer, stronger, and more prosperous for the good of the American people.

During my time as CEO of CKE Restaurants, a position my Slovakian grandparents would never have imagined I could achieve, I saw firsthand the great talent and potential of the American workforce and how functioning free markets create jobs and opportunity while increasing wages for working-class Americans.

I consider it a particularly special honor that President Trump nominated me as Ambassador to the EU, America's largest trading partner, and our nation's top counterterrorism partner for over 20 years. As Secretary Rubio said, "America First does not mean America Only." Our U.S.-EU relationship is incredibly consequential for American security and prosperity. Every international relationship should advance America's best interests, and our transatlantic relationship is no exception.

In this respect, there are three lines of effort that I'd like to touch on today because they're critical to making the United States safer, stronger and more prosperous.

First, as President Trump has said, trade with the EU and its member states must be fair, free, and reciprocal to promote American prosperity. If confirmed, I'll work to ensure that transatlantic commerce serves the economic interests of the American people.

The United States should be the EU's economic partner of choice in every sector. The U.S.-EU trade relationship holds immense potential, but, as President Trump has made abundantly clear, this potential can be unleashed only if the EU market is more open to buying American goods and services. If confirmed, I'll work to expand U.S. exports.

Second, I'll advocate for an EU market where American companies are free to thrive without the weight of excessive regulations, red tape, and taxes. For far too long, American companies have been unfairly targeted by EU regulators and penalized for their success. This is particularly true with respect to American tech companies, which are the envy of the world, leading the way on innovation.

Third, global peace is essential for American safety and prosperity. Commerce prospers where peace abounds.

This is why President Trump and Secretary Rubio are urging the EU to invest more in defense. Europe must be up to the task of defending itself. If confirmed, I'll advocate for a Europe that assumes a greater role in its defense fostering peace and international security.

In closing, I'm proof that the American dream is alive and well. My path to success was made possible only by the support of my family and the free-market capitalism our great country offers. Free markets are the proven path to prosperity and have lifted billions of people out of extreme poverty across the globe over the past 200 years, including my family, which has deep roots across the European continent.

America can further grow those opportunities if our transatlantic relationship advances America's interests. Thanks to President Trump's America First foreign policy, the United States is now positioned to enjoy an economic resurgence.

Fair and robust transatlantic trade, bolstered by peace in Europe, will advance, preserve and strengthen American prosperity and security. If confirmed, I'll bring the same determination I brought to my business career to the cause of ensuring that our transatlantic relationship works for the American people. I've heard very

positive things about the staff of the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels and, if confirmed, I look forward to meeting and working with every one of them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my American story with this esteemed committee. I look forward to taking your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Puzder. You are going to find that position very interesting.

Senator Hagerty, you wanted to say a couple things about some of the nominees?

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

Senator HAGERTY. I did, Chairman Risch. Thank you for the opportunity to do that, and Ranking Member Shaheen. I appreciate that.

I wanted to mention specifically two of the candidates, and I might make a remark too about another as well, but both Andy Puzder and Jacob Helberg are long time friends of mine and people I think that are just eminently qualified for the positions that they are being nominated for by President Trump.

Mr. Puzder, of course, has been nominated by President Trump to be our Ambassador to the European Union. I would like to first speak to his qualifications for this.

Andy is a patriot whose highly accomplished career in business, law, and public policy makes him an excellent candidate for this ambassadorial role. Andy is widely recognized for his leadership as the former CEO of CKE Restaurants. That is the parent company of Carl's, Jr. and Hardee's.

During his tenure he led the company through a significant turnaround, growing CKE's role as a major player in the global fast food industry.

Under Andy's leadership, CKE expanded to over 3,800 restaurants across 48 States and 40 foreign countries. He had more than 115,000 employees worldwide.

His experience navigating international markets and cross-border business challenges gives him practical, hands on understanding of global commerce that will be an asset of particular relevance to a diplomatic post in Brussels that is so focused on transatlantic economic relations.

Yet, his qualifications extend well beyond the boardroom. Andy's a seasoned attorney, a published author, and a deeply respected voice in national debates over public policy.

He has also been a vocal advocate for pro-growth economic policies, for regulatory reform, and for other efforts to strengthen American competitiveness in global markets, issues that are central to the ongoing relationship between the United States and the European Union.

As the nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the EU, Andy brings with him not only decades of executive leadership but also a clear understanding of how economic policy affects real people, businesses, and international relationships.

At a time when transatlantic cooperation faces both opportunities and challenges from trade and technology to security, Andy's experience and know how will be critical to furthering ties between

the United States and Europe in support of President Trump's agenda.

Let me now turn to Jacob Helberg, a nominee whose vision, intellect, and tenacity make him uniquely qualified for the role of Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment.

His nomination comes at a pivotal moment. From economic coercion to critical mineral choke points to energy issues and the weaponization of advanced technologies, the challenges posed by adversaries to our nation are urgent, and they are complex.

To meet these challenges we need fierce advocates for American competitiveness, advocates like Jacob, in the State Department. Over the years I have known Jacob, I have found that he is a true visionary with a rare ability to take big, strategic ideas and turn them into meaningful action.

I remember when Jacob came to my office shortly after being nominated, and I commented that his nomination was likely very unwelcome news in Beijing and for a good reason.

Jacob's ideas and publications have helped reframe how policymakers view China's predatory trade practices and the strategic dimensions of emerging technologies in AI, space, and robotics.

Jacob is a public servant whose work as a commissioner on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission has driven U.S. policy toward a safer and more prosperous future.

And Jacob is an internationally recognized leader whose Hill & Valley Forum has become a preeminent venue for bringing Washington policymakers and Silicon Valley innovators together to address important economic and national security issues, the same issues that Jacob will tackle if he is confirmed as Under Secretary.

At a time when authoritarian regimes like China exploit economic tools and emerging technologies in order to undermine our national interests, Jacob's nomination reflects the urgent need for strategic, tech savvy leadership of U.S. foreign policy.

Jacob will bring to the role of Under Secretary not only a profound understanding of the global economy but also a powerful grasp of the digital battlegrounds where this century's great power competition is playing out right before our eyes.

I have no doubt that Jacob will serve with an integrity, focus, and a determination to strengthen America's hand on the world stage.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for this opportunity to introduce my friends Andy and Jacob this morning, and I would also like to extend my regards to Ben Black.

Ben has been nominated to lead the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation. His expertise in investment and development will be instrumental in advancing our nation's global economic interest.

We need these highly qualified leaders in the front lines of American diplomacy, and I want to urge my colleagues to support their nominations.

And if it would be OK with you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter my written remarks for the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Hagerty follows:]

Submitted by Senator Bill Hagerty

- Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Shaheen, thank you for holding today's hearing.
- It is my honor to introduce two of my good friends this morning:
 - **Mr. Andy Puzder**—President Trump's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the European Union; and,
 - **Mr. Jacob Helberg**—President Trump's nominee to be Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment.
- Let me first speak to Andy's qualifications.
- Andy is a patriot whose highly accomplished career in business, law, and public policy makes him an excellent candidate for this ambassadorial role.
- Andy is widely recognized for his leadership as the former CEO of CKE Restaurants, the parent company of Carl's Jr. and Hardee's.
 - During his tenure, he led the company through a significant turnaround, growing CKE's role as a major player in the global fast-food industry.
 - Under Andy's leadership, CKE expanded to over 3,800 restaurants across 45 states and 40 foreign countries, with more than 115,000 employees worldwide.

- His experience navigating international markets and cross-border business challenges gives him a practical, hands-on understanding of global commerce—an asset of particular relevance to a diplomatic post in Brussels that is focused on transatlantic economic relations.
- Yet his qualifications extend beyond the boardroom.
 - Andy is a seasoned attorney, a published author, and a deeply respected voice in national debates over public policy.
 - He has also been a vocal advocate for pro-growth economic policies, regulatory reform, and other efforts to strengthen American competitiveness in global markets—issues that are central to the ongoing relationship between the United States and the European Union.
- As the nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the EU, Andy brings with him not only decades of executive leadership, but also a clear understanding of how economic policy affects real people, businesses, and international relationships.
- At a time when transatlantic cooperation faces both opportunities and challenges—from trade and technology to security—his experience and know-how will be critical to furthering ties between the United States and Europe in support of President Trump’s agenda.
- Let me now turn to **Jacob Helberg**, a nominee whose vision, intellect, and tenacity make him uniquely qualified for the

role of Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment.

- His nomination comes at a pivotal moment.
 - From economic coercion to critical mineral choke points to energy issues and the weaponization of advanced technologies, the challenges posed by adversaries to our nation are urgent and complex.
 - To meet these challenges, we need fierce advocates for American competitiveness like Jacob at the State Department.
- Over the years I have known Jacob, I have found that he is a true visionary, with a rare ability to take big, strategic ideas and turn them into meaningful action.
- I remember when Jacob came by my office shortly after being nominated and I commented that his nomination was likely very unwelcome news in Beijing—and for good reason.
 - Jacob’s ideas and publications have helped reframe how policymakers view China’s predatory trade practices and the strategic dimensions of emerging technologies in AI, space, and robotics.
 - Jacob is a public servant, whose work as a commissioner on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review

Commission has driven U.S. policy toward a safer and more prosperous future.

- And Jacob is an internationally recognized leader, whose Hill and Valley Forum has become a preeminent venue for bringing Washington policymakers and Silicon Valley innovators together to address important economic and national security issues—the same issues that Jacob will tackle if confirmed as Under Secretary.
- At a time when authoritarian regimes like China exploit economic tools and emerging technologies to undermine our national interests, Jacob’s nomination reflects the urgent need for strategic, tech-savvy leadership of U.S. foreign policy.
- Jacob will bring to the role of Under Secretary not only a profound understanding of the global economy, but also a powerful grasp of the digital battlegrounds where this century’s great power competition is playing out.
- I have no doubt that Jacob will serve with integrity, focus, and a determination to strengthen America’s hand on the world stage.
- Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to introduce my friends Andy and Jacob this morning.
- I would also like to extend my regards to **Ben Black**, nominated to lead the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, whose expertise in investment and

development will be instrumental in advancing our nation's global economic interests.

- We need these highly qualified leaders on the frontlines of American diplomacy, and I urge my colleagues to support their nominations.

Senator RISCH. They will be entered, Senator. Thank you very much.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you very much.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Hagerty. We appreciate that. Mr. Kapur, you have the floor.

STATEMENT OF DR. PAUL KAPUR, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

Dr. KAPUR. Thank you.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to join you as President Trump's nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian affairs.

I appreciate the trust and the confidence that President Trump has placed in me by nominating me for this role.

I am also grateful for the unwavering support of my family and friends. A number of them sit behind me today, including my wife and three of my five children. Others I know join us in spirit, and I thank them all.

Appearing before you I cannot help but feel that I have come full circle. I was born in New Delhi to an Indian father and American mother.

Although I visited India often during my childhood, I grew up in the United States as a thoroughly American kid, never imagining that my career would someday return me to the place where I was born.

But I became interested in studying the region in graduate school and soon was working on it as a scholar and as a government official. In my scholarly capacity I wrote books and articles about the region and its security environment and also about U.S. policy.

In my official capacity I taught military officers about the region, led U.S.-India strategic engagement projects, and covered South and Central Asia in the State Department's policy planning staff.

Now, if confirmed, I will lead the State Department bureau responsible for this critical part of the world, so appearing before you today really does make me feel like I have come back to my beginning.

The United States' relationships with the countries of South and Central Asia hold great promise and with effective policy they can flourish and enable us to achieve Secretary Rubio's goal of making the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Let me briefly speak about each of these relationships and their opportunities. I begin with our partnership with India.

The United States and India share a host of common interests—ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific region which is not dominated by China, expanding bilateral trade, building our economic relationship so that it is more symmetrical and more profitable, facilitating technology sharing and innovation and ensuring access to the energy necessary to fuel our economies—and if confirmed I will work to further advance U.S.-India relations and put our partnership on course to realize its tremendous promise.

On Pakistan, if confirmed I will pursue security cooperation where it is beneficial to U.S. interests while seeking opportunities for bilateral collaboration in trade and investment.

South Asia recently avoided a costly conflict with Vice President Vance and Secretary Rubio intensely engaged on the issue.

If confirmed, I will continue to promote longstanding U.S. security interests with India and Pakistan through the pursuit of peace and stability and the fight against terrorism.

Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan are important for stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Sri Lanka and Maldives are located along major oceanic trade routes while Bangladesh boasts the largest economy in the region after India.

If confirmed, I will advocate for enhanced U.S. cooperation with these countries to bolster our security, counterbalance China's influence, and expand trade.

In Afghanistan, if confirmed, I will support President Trump and Secretary Rubio in bringing home wrongly detained Americans. I also will work to ensure that the country never again becomes a springboard for terrorism, threatening the homeland.

Finally, in Central Asia the United States seeks to advance sovereignty and the territorial integrity of regional states—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

If confirmed, I will leverage the C5+1 process as well as bilateral formats and pursue cooperation in areas including energy, critical minerals, counterterrorism, the fight against transnational crime, and the development of physical and digital infrastructure.


The opportunities in South and Central Asia that I have just outlined hold tremendous promise. If confirmed, I will pursue them energetically to realize their potential, to enhance the safety, strength, and prosperity of the American people.

I thank the Chairman, the Ranking Member, and the committee for your time and the opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to your questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?
Answer: Yes


Printed Name: S. Paul Kapur
Date: 10 June 2025

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kapur follows:]

Prepared Statement of Paul Kapur

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to join you as President Trump's nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs. I appreciate the trust and confidence that the President placed in me by nominating me for this role. I am also grateful for the unwavering support of my family and friends. A number of them sit behind me today, including my wife and three of my five children. Others, I know, join us in spirit. I thank them all.

Appearing before you, I can't avoid the feeling of having come full circle. I was born in New Delhi, to an Indian father and an American mother. Although I visited India often during my childhood, I grew up in the United States as a thoroughly American kid, never imagining that my career would someday return me to the place where I was born. But I became interested in studying the region in graduate school and soon was working on it as a scholar and as a government official. In my scholarly capacity, I wrote books and articles about South Asia's security environment and U.S. policy in the region. In my official capacity, I taught military officers about the region, led U.S.-India strategic engagement projects, and covered South and Central Asia on the State Department's Policy Planning Staff. Now, if confirmed, I will lead the State Department bureau responsible for this critical part of the world. Appearing before this committee today really does return me to my beginning.

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On Pakistan, if confirmed, I will pursue security cooperation where beneficial to U.S. interests, while seeking opportunities for bilateral collaboration in trade and investment.

South Asia recently avoided a costly conflict, with the Vice President and Secretary Rubio intensely engaged on the issue. If confirmed, I will continue to promote longstanding U.S. security interests with India and Pakistan through the pursuit of peace and stability, and the fight against terrorism.

Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan are important for stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Sri Lanka and Maldives are located along major oceanic trade routes, while Bangladesh boasts the largest economy in the region after India. If confirmed, I will advocate for enhanced U.S. cooperation with these nations to bolster our security, counterbalance China's influence, and expand trade.

In Afghanistan, if confirmed, I will support President Trump and Secretary Rubio in bringing home our remaining detained Americans. I also will work to ensure that the country never again becomes a launching pad for terrorism threatening the homeland.

Finally, in Central Asia, the United States seeks to advance the sovereignty and territorial integrity of regional states—Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will leverage the C5+1 process as well as bilateral formats, and pursue cooperation in areas including energy, critical minerals, counterterrorism, the fight against transnational crime, and the development of physical and digital infrastructure.

The opportunities in South and Central Asia that I have just outlined hold tremendous promise. If confirmed, I will pursue them energetically, to realize their potential and to enhance the safety, strength, and prosperity of the American people.

I thank the Chairman, Ranking Member, and Committee for your time, and the opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.
Mr. Brodie.

**STATEMENT OF HOWARD BRODIE, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED
TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENI-
POTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE
REPUBLIC OF FINLAND**

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

I am honored and humbled by President Trump's nomination to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Finland.

I would like to thank the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence and for entrusting me with advancing the three fundamental pillars of American foreign policy: strength, security, and prosperity.

I also want to thank my—I also want to express my gratitude to this committee for its vital role in shaping and overseeing our foreign policy. I would like to thank Senator Cruz for his generous introduction and support.

It is often said that serving overseas is a family endeavor. In that spirit, I want to thank my wife Jimena, a recent immigrant from Mexico and soon to be proud American, for her love and excitement about moving our family to Finland if I am confirmed.

I am also joined today by my parents whose guidance and unwavering support have shaped my values. My father is a true example of the American dream. After losing his own father at a young age he helped care for his family, and alongside his brother, founded a small business in his basement that grew into a successful multinational specialty chemical and life sciences company.

My mother, the keeper of our family memories, recently reminded me that I once dreamed of a career in diplomacy. While my path led me first into international business law, this moment brings those early aspirations full circle.

I was born and raised in Pennsylvania and attended Yale Law School. Over the past three decades I have worked at the intersection of law, global investment, and business, most recently as co-president and general counsel of my family office.

I have negotiated deals worldwide, studied at Oxford, and lived and studied in Russia from 1990 to 1992. During my time in Russia I witnessed pivotal events: the Soviet crackdown in the Baltics, the August 1991 coup attempt, and ultimately the collapse of the Soviet Union.

These experiences shaped my understanding of the region and the resilience of nations on Russia's periphery. Few understand those challenges better than Finland, sharing an 830 mile land border with Russia.

Its recent accession to NATO reinforces collective defense and highlights Finland's role as a capable, reliable partner. Our bilateral defense cooperation agreement enhances readiness and ensures strategic access in the region. Finland's support for Ukraine and its investments in defense demonstrate a strong commitment to transatlantic security.

As the United States advances its Arctic strategy and maintains freedom of navigation in the Arctic, Finland's geographic position and deep cold weather expertise make it an indispensable partner.

As part of the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort—or ICE Pact—our two nations are engaging in work force development and maritime innovation to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding and support American jobs. Finland’s leadership in quantum computing and 5G and 6G are equally vital to countering strategic threats from China.

Finland also plays a critical role in our economic relationship. It is one of the fastest growing sources of foreign direct investment in the United States. Finnish firms support tens of thousands of American jobs.

Finland is also a key partner in securing the critical minerals needed for defense and high tech manufacturing, bolstering the resilience of U.S. supply chains.

All of this ties back to my four core priorities, if confirmed: protecting U.S. citizens in Finland as my highest priority, deepening our bilateral security ties and NATO cooperation, strengthening Arctic and maritime collaboration, and expanding technological and economic ties with Finland with the goal of reducing our trade debt. The Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, tells of the forging of the Sampo, a mythical object of prosperity created through innovation, effort, and resolve.

In one passage, it reads, “The smith Ilmarinen forged the Sampo with skill. On one side there is a corn mill, on the second a salt mill, a money mill on the third, and then the Sampo ground—one binful to eat, another to sell, and a third to store at home.”

Though the Sampo is mythical it is an apt metaphor for the values we hold in common with our Finnish partners. The grain it mills symbolizes self-sufficiency, the belief that a nation should sustain itself through its own labor.

The salt evokes trade and our shared commitment to it being fair and mutually beneficial, and the money represents national strength, the prosperity that enables us to defend freedom and invest in our future.

I am eager to join the deeply experienced and capable team at Mission Helsinki. If confirmed, I will work to support their mission, morale, and safety every day.

Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to your questions, and if confirmed, to serving our country with honor and integrity in Helsinki.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Additional Nominee Questions

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?
Answer: Yes



Printed Name: Howard P. Rodie

Date: June 10, 25

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brodie follows:]

Prepared Statement of Howard Brodie

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

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored and humbled by President Trump's nomination to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Finland. I thank the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence and for entrusting me with advancing the three fundamental pillars of American foreign policy—strength, security, and prosperity. I also want to express my gratitude to this Committee for its vital role in shaping and overseeing our foreign policy.

I would also like to thank Senator McCormick for his generous introduction and support.

It is often said that serving overseas is a family endeavor. In that spirit, I want to thank my wife, Jimena—a recent immigrant from Mexico and soon-to-be proud American—for her love and excitement about moving our family to Finland, if I am confirmed. I am also joined today by my parents, whose guidance and unwavering support have shaped my values. My father is a true example of the American dream: after losing his own father at a young age, he helped care for his family and, alongside his brother, founded a small business in his basement that grew into a successful multinational specialty chemical and life sciences company.

My mother, the keeper of our family memories, recently reminded me that I once dreamed of a career in diplomacy. While my path led me first into international business law, this moment brings those early aspirations full circle.

I was born and raised in Pennsylvania and attended Yale Law School. Over the past three decades, I have worked at the intersection of law, global investment, and business—most recently as Co-President and General Counsel of my family office. I've negotiated deals worldwide, studied at Oxford, and lived and studied in Russia from 1990 to 1992.

During my time in Russia, I witnessed pivotal events—the Soviet crackdown in the Baltics, the August 1991 coup attempt, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. These experiences shaped my understanding of the region and the resilience of nations on Russia's periphery.

Few understand those challenges better than Finland, sharing an 830-mile land border with Russia. Its recent accession to NATO reinforces collective defense and highlights Finland's role as a capable, reliable partner. Our bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement enhances readiness and ensures strategic access in the region. Finland's support for Ukraine and its investments in defense demonstrate a strong commitment to transatlantic security.

As the United States advances its Arctic strategy and maintains freedom of navigation in the Arctic, Finland's geographic position and deep cold-weather expertise make it an indispensable partner. As part of the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort—or ICE Pact—our two nations are engaging in workforce development and maritime innovation to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding and support American jobs. Finland's leadership in quantum computing and 5G and 6G are equally vital to countering strategic threats from China.

Finland also plays a critical role in our economic relationship: it is one of the fastest growing sources of foreign direct investment in the United States. Finnish firms support tens of thousands of American jobs. Finland is also a key partner in securing the critical minerals needed for defense and high-tech manufacturing—bolstering the resilience of U.S. supply chains.

All of this ties back to my four core priorities if confirmed: protecting U.S. citizens in Finland as my highest priority; deepening our bilateral security ties and NATO cooperation; strengthening Arctic and maritime collaboration; and expanding technological and economic ties with Finland with the goal of reducing our trade deficit.

The Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, tells of the forging of the Sampo—a mythical object of prosperity created through innovation, effort, and resolve. In one passage, it reads:

The smith Ilmarinen
forged the Sampo with skill:
on one side there's a corn mill
on the second a salt mill
a money mill on the third.
And then the new Sampo ground
one binful to eat

another to sell
and a third to store at home

Though the Sampo is mythical, it is an apt metaphor for the values we hold in common with our Finnish partners. The grain it mills symbolizes self-sufficiency—the belief that a nation should sustain itself through its own labor. The salt evokes trade, and our shared commitment to it being fair and mutually beneficial. And the money represents national strength—the prosperity that enables us to defend freedom and invest in the future.

I am eager to join the deeply experienced and capable team at Mission Helsinki. If confirmed, I will work to support their mission, morale, and safety every day. Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to your questions and, if confirmed, to serving our country with honor and integrity in Helsinki.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.
Mr. Black.

**STATEMENT OF BENJAMIN BLACK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES INTER-
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION**

Mr. BLACK. Thank you.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, thank you for having me here today and for the time you and your staffs have spent with me in anticipation of this hearing.

Congratulations as well to my fellow panelists.

Senator Cotton, thank you for your incredibly gracious introduction and your friendship over the many years, and Senator Hagerty, thank you very much for your kind words and endorsement.

This committee's insights and judgments are critical to serving all Americans' interests by executing foreign policy objectives through strategic and economic development investing.

I am honored to be nominated by President Trump to be the Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation and am forever grateful for his trust and faith in me.

My wife, Charlotte, is here with me today. I want to thank her for her endless love, support, and encouragement. I aim to make her and our young son Rafe proud every day.

Charlotte's father, Tempel, is also the mayor of a small town in Illinois called Old Mill Creek, and Charlotte has incredible patience with civic duty and political process.

My parents, Leon and Debra, are also here today amongst other family members, and I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart. They are wonderful parents who have always instilled in my siblings and I the importance of family.

Finally, I would be remiss as an uncle on this day if I did not wish a very happy birthday to my twin nephews, Nate and Charlie.

Throughout this confirmation process I have relied on the input, guidance, and support of the current acting as well as the former leadership of both the DFC and its predecessor, OPIC.

I am deeply grateful to Scott Nathan, Adam Boehler, Ray Washburne, and Rob Mosbacher, Jr. I appreciate their support for my nomination and the agency.

I also want to thank the fantastic group of hard working professionals at the DFC, its interagency partners, and the leadership at

the Departments of State, Commerce, and Treasury with whom I have met in preparation for this confirmation process.

This is an exciting and important time for the DFC. I believe the agency is positioned to achieve great things on behalf of the American people. The DFC was created with bipartisan support and a consensus that it could be an effective tool of U.S. foreign policy.

The DFC can be a catalyst for bringing private capital to worthy projects that serve the United States' strategic foreign policy objectives. It can promote economic development in allied and potential ally nations.

The creation of the DFC through the BUILD Act of 2018 codified the DFC's dual mandate of both economic development and strategic foreign policy priorities, provided an enhanced investing tool-kit, and expanded the scope of investment targets.

Implicitly and explicitly Congress has challenged the DFC to make a greater impact and to serve as a substantive economic counterweight to China and its Belt and Road Initiative and other global strategic competitors.

From the Revolutionary War to the cold war, the United States and the American people always rise to a challenge. If confirmed, I aim to help the DFC rise to the challenge of China and its Belt and Road Initiative.

My consultations with members of this committee and staff have been very valuable and informative. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to shape and to continue to grow DFC's capabilities and capacity so that it can properly fulfil the responsibilities it has been given.

The challenges facing our nation and the world today can seem overwhelming, but the opportunity for the DFC to be part of meaningful solutions that move the needle is enormous.

If confirmed, I will draw on my nearly two decades of investment, managerial, and legal experience to help the DFC pursue this mission.

I will dedicate myself to making sure the agency has the right strategy, resources, structure, and processes to efficiently and effectively source, analyze, and underwrite investment opportunities, and just as importantly, after deployment to properly and continually measure and monitor portfolio investments.

If confirmed, I will do my utmost to integrate and partner with private sector capital providers and investors to effectively scale capital deployment, increase opportunities for American companies and workers, and help the DFC become a best in class financial institution and resource for the United States.

There is one final person I would like to thank today, and that is my grandfather Ira Ressler. He served as a technical sergeant and rear gunner in the Army Air Corps in the Aleutian Islands during World War II and afterwards attended college and law school on the GI Bill.

His service and patriotism inspired my lifelong dream to serve my country and pursue public service. He was and always will be my hero, and though he passed away 25 years ago his lessons, moral character, and ethics remain deeply ingrained on my consciousness.


I am deeply proud to be an American, and it would be the honor of a lifetime to serve my fellow citizens and further the interests of the United States of America.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?
Answer: Yes


Printed Name: Ben Black
Date: 6/10/2025

[The prepared statement of Mr. Black follows:]

Prepared Statement of Benjamin Black

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Members of the Committee, thank you for having me here today and for the time you and your staff have spent with me, in anticipation of this hearing. Senator Cotton, thank you for your kind words and for your friendship over many years. This Committee's insights and judgments are critical to serving all Americans' interests by executing foreign policy objectives through strategic and economic development investing.

I'm honored to be nominated by President Trump to be the Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation, and am forever grateful for his trust and faith in me.

My wife, Charlotte, is here with me today. I want to thank her for her love, support, and encouragement.

I aim to make her and our son, Rafe, proud every day.

Charlotte's father, Tempel, is the mayor of a small town in Illinois, and while political process is not new to her, her patience and understanding throughout this process have been tremendous.

My parents are also here today and I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart. They have been great parents.

Together with my brothers, sister, brother-in-law, family, and friends who have mentored me and played such crucial roles in my life, I thank you for your love and support.

I also want to wish a very happy birthday to my twin nephews.

Throughout this confirmation process, I've relied on the input, guidance and support of the current acting, as well as the former leadership of both DFC and its predecessor, OPIC. I'm deeply grateful to Scott Nathan, Adam Boehler, Ray Washburne, and Rob Mosbacher Jr. I appreciate their support for my nomination and the agency.

I also want to thank the fantastic group of hard-working professionals at DFC, its interagency partners, and those at the Departments of State, Commerce, and Treasury with whom I have met in preparation for this confirmation process. This is an exciting and important time for DFC. I believe the agency is positioned to achieve great things on behalf of the American people.

DFC was created with bipartisan support and a consensus that it could be an effective tool of US foreign policy. DFC can be a catalyst for bringing private capital to worthy projects that serve the United States' strategic foreign policy objectives. It can promote economic development in allied and potential ally nations. The creation of DFC through the BUILD Act of 2018, codified DFC's dual mandate of both economic development and strategic foreign policy priorities, provided an enhanced investing toolkit, and expanded the scope of investment targets. Implicitly and explicitly Congress has challenged DFC to make a greater impact and to serve as a substantive economic counterweight to China and its Belt and Road Initiative and other global strategic competitors.

My consultations with members of this Committee and staff have been very valuable and informative. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to shape and to continue to grow DFC's capabilities and capacity, so that it can properly fulfill the responsibilities it has been given.

The challenges facing our nation and the world today can seem overwhelming, but the opportunity for DFC to be part of meaningful solutions is enormous. If confirmed, I will draw on my 20+ years of investment, managerial and legal experience to help DFC pursue this mission. I will dedicate myself to making sure the agency has the right strategy, resources, structure, and processes to efficiently and effectively source, analyze, and underwrite investment opportunities. And after deployment to properly and continually measure and monitor portfolio investments.

If confirmed, I will do my utmost to integrate and partner with private sector capital providers and investors to effectively scale capital deployment, increase opportunities for American companies and workers, and help DFC become a best in class financial institution and resource for the United States.

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States of America. Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

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

We are now going to do a round of 5 minute questions for members who are here. I am going to start with myself.

Mr. Brodie, Finland is a great example of what can happen on this planet. About 3 weeks before the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, my wife and I had the honor of having dinner with the Finnish ambassador at his home, and I had been a long time advocate for they and Sweden becoming members of NATO.

We had a robust discussion, as we usually do. He underscored to me that 70 percent of Finnish people really wanted to stay neutral.

They had a national policy of neutrality, which they said worked out very well for them, and interestingly enough they are very—even though they are neutral there is very few countries, I think, as prepared as they are to take an invasion because it is an all in with all their citizens.

But in any event, we had a nice discussion about it. But he said, nah, they really felt neutral. So about 3 weeks later, which was—about a week later—it was after the invasion—I ran into him at another reception.

I came across him and said, how is that neutrality thing working? He says, “We are in. We are all in.”

So in that short period of time they changed dramatically. Then I had the good fortune of being able to visit them last year, and they are a great partner.

I mean, as quickly as they came on, as you know, we struggled with one of our so called allies in NATO, two of them, as a matter of fact, to get them in. But we got the job done, and I think you are going to find them really all in.

So best wishes there, and I think you are going to find that a not particularly heavy lift convincing them that looking West rather than East is the way to go.

Mr. Puzder, at the EU what you are going to find is Europeans that are very nervous, which I am sure you already know, and we spend a lot of time—we spend a lot of time trying to convince them that we are a partner. We are a reliable partner, and we are all in.

We have had an argument over defense spending, and as you know, in NATO all of us agreed, and it was a unanimous agreement that we would spend 2 percent, and until President Trump took office only three countries had met that 3 percent.

And President Trump, as you know, has a way of speaking directly, and he spoke directly and the Europeans heard him, and they were offended a bit because he is—his sensibilities are not the same level as theirs are, but they started writing checks, and now we are into the 20s of the 32 members of NATO.

So I hope you will be able to talk with them about defense spending and convince them that it has got nothing to do with our relationship as much as it does them meeting their obligations.

Your thoughts on that?

Mr. PUZDER. I think it is essential.

Thank you very much, Senator, for that question, and I agree with you 100 percent. I think it is essential, as the President has

stated, that the Europeans be able to defend the European continent.

And I was reading the secretary general of NATO's comments yesterday about the need for NATO to step up and be able to defend itself with American help. They talked about America not withdrawing troops.

But NATO being NATO members needing to step up to now a 5 percent commitment, which many have stepped up to, I believe, including Finland recently, and as of yesterday even Canada agreed that it was going to meet its commitment to do 2 percent 5 years sooner than it had previously committed to do.

So I am—you know, obviously, as a citizen I am not read in on the intricacies of what is going on in the European Union with respect—or in NATO with respect to defense spending. But I think there is a realization in NATO that they do need to step it up, that the United States has commitments, particularly in the Pacific, that are going to be drawing on our resources.

I was reading one member of Parliament stating that a country with—excuse me, yes, a country with 450 million people should not be depending on a country with 340 million people to defend it against a country with 140 million people that cannot beat a country with 38 million people.

So it is—I think there is a realization there that they need to step it up. What I have heard in speaking with people over there is that there is a hope that somebody who actually knows the President and can speak with him comes over there and gives them a direct line, and I think that is one of the advantages I will have being in the European Union, and I think that will give me some credibility.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you. Although you say you are not read in on this spending you are going to get read in pretty quick on it.

Mr. PUZDER. Yes.

Senator RISCH. It is a matter that is discussed regularly every time we meet with them, and it can be robust discussion, but they are coming around. The momentum is the way you just described, and that is at first they were quite reluctant. We got a little help from Putin, I will admit that, but now they are—they understand what way this has to go.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start with you, Mr. Helberg, because I noticed in your opening comments that you talked about the importance of supporting fossil fuels and LNG, but you did not mention clean energy jobs, which I found interesting because in my State of New Hampshire the clean energy jobs are growing faster than the fossil fuel jobs, since we do not really have any fossil fuel in the State.

And while I do not think we can move immediately to alternative sources of energy I do think it is an important part of our energy mix and that continued over reliance on fossil fuels is not in the long term interest of the country, and certainly China has recognized that as they are looking at their energy mix in the future.

So I want to ask you about the reorganization at the State Department because under the reorganization plan at least three of-

fices—including global health, security and diplomacy, cyberspace and digital policy—will report to you.

So can you talk about how you can ensure that the reorganization is effective and maintains the State Department expertise in each of those areas as part of the E Bureau?

Mr. HELBERG. Thank you, Senator. As a private citizen I am not read into the full programmatic details of where budgets have been cut and personnel that is planned on being RIF'd.

With that being said, the Secretary made clear in his Senate testimony recently that the goal of the current reorganization that is in the works is to bring the State Department's mission closer to its original roots, to bring the State Department back to the center of American foreign policymaking.

Various accumulations of bureaucratic processes has caused the State Department to increasingly become marginalized in the foreign policymaking process over the years.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I am not asking you to comment on specific staffing issues. I am just asking you to tell me how you think about the E Bureau and how you would see absorbing those other areas that are not directly related to what has been the long term mission of the Bureau.

Mr. HELBERG. So my understanding is that the north star of the E Bureau, moving forward, will be economic security and economic statecraft, and therefore energy and technology will very much be a part of that.

It is hard for me to comment exactly on the different moving parts of the Bureau simply because I have not seen definitive org charts for what the new shape of the reorg looks like.

But ultimately, my job is a job that will be focused on implementing the President's agenda, and therefore, based on where they land with the current state of the org chart we will go ahead and execute the President's policy to pursue economic statecraft and use economics as a tool to advance security interests for the country.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Kapur, you have taught at the Naval Postgraduate School so you appreciate how our men and women in uniform view the allies on the ground who fight with them, and again, I was interested in your opening comment that when you talked about Afghanistan you talked about wrongfully detained, which I think we would all agree we need to bring home anybody wrongfully detained.

But you did not address the Afghans in the United States, the SIV holders, the people who risked their lives, and many people still are risking their lives and their families' lives who are in Afghanistan because of the Taliban rule.

So, can you talk about how you will address that if you are confirmed and whether you will advocate to keep those Afghans who supported our men and women in the military during that fight in the United States so that they will not be sent back to the Taliban?

Dr. KAPUR. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I have not been privy to the logic and the balancing of equities behind the review of the Afghan relocation program, and I think—

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, let me just ask, though, do you think Afghanistan now is a safe country to return to for those who fought with the United States?

Dr. KAPUR. Senator, I have not—I do not know whether it is—how safe it is. I mean, I think the—

Senator SHAHEEN. Dr. Kapur, you have taught at Stanford. You have taught in college. You have taught at the Naval Postgraduate School.

It is hard for me to believe that you think that Afghanistan is a safe country for us to send Afghans who helped the United States back to, given all of the public reporting about the Taliban and the people who have been killed who fought with the United States.

Dr. KAPUR. Senator, again, I do not know what the logic was behind the review and the change in some of the subcomponents of the Afghan relocation program. I know that some of those—some of those subcomponents remain in effect.

Some of them have been changed, and some of them have been canceled. When I—if I—when and if I am confirmed it is something that I will become more familiar with. But at this point I do not know what the thinking was behind the change in policy.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I certainly hope that you will continue to advocate for those people who helped us during the war in Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator RICKETTS.

Senator RICKETTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Well, thank you all for your interest in serving our country and for your families who also serve along with you as you work on their behalf.

And Mr. Black, you should tell Charlotte's dad that being a small town mayor is probably the toughest job in politics.

I think Senator Shaheen would agree, having been a Governor, that it is tougher than being a Senator or a Governor because your neighbors are not shy about sharing with you how you are damaging their quality of life by the decisions you make and so forth.

So it is a tough job so tell him we appreciate his service there.

Last month I hosted a bipartisan tabletop exercise with Senator Coons simulating a Communist Chinese energy quarantine of Taiwan, and that exercise confirmed one of Taiwan's biggest vulnerabilities which is—in such a conflict scenario, which is energy insecurity.

But it is not just about Taiwan. This is something that applies to all of our allies in the region, who are nearly just as vulnerable to relying heavily on seaborne energy imports in such a crisis.

Beijing could leverage that dependence to be able to drive a wedge between us and our allies if that were to come to pass.

Meanwhile, Communist China is rapidly growing its own energy independence. 2024 it had the largest expansion of coal power in its history. It is also adding on solar, wind, and nuclear, all the while building a naval capacity to be able to interdict and threaten critical energy supply lines.

The most immediate answer to this problem is for us to increase our exports of LNG. We are the world's top exporter with clean, re-

liable gas that is already helping our allies replace coal and cut emissions and harden their energy resilience.

However, we have seen firsthand Washington's regulatory paralysis especially during the Biden administration with his pause on LNG and what that can do to erode confidence in the United States as a dependable partner.

Mr. Helberg, as Under Secretary for Energy and the Environment what will you do to ensure that the U.S. is a strategically reliable partner when it comes to energy for our Indo-Pacific allies?

Mr. HELBERG. Senator, thank you for the question, and thank you for taking the time to meet with me in the Senate.

Energy is—will be a critical part of the strategy to secure our supply chains. The United States is very fortunate to actually be a net exporter of energy. The United States currently is the largest exporter of crude oil. It is the largest exporter of natural gas in the world. A number of our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific are net importers. India, obviously, has immense energy needs and is a net importer of energy. Japan is a net importer of energy and has substantial energy needs.

The energy needs of these countries is projected to go up substantially as a lot of these countries look to ramp up their activities in cutting edge technologies like artificial intelligence which, as you know, require large computing clusters which are very energy intensive.

And therefore, I think there is a substantial opportunity for the United States to increase energy exports to a lot of these partners. I think doing this would make the world substantially safer because it would help these countries, particularly India, move away from its energy imports from Russia, which has been the main engine of financing for its war in Eastern Europe.

And ultimately, I believe the President's executive order on nuclear energy will allow substantially increasing our domestic electricity generation from nuclear energy, which currently stands at 20 percent.

Bringing that number up will allow freeing excess capacity for natural gas, which we can use to export to allies around the world.

Senator RICKETTS. Given the threat of the Communist Chinese imposition of a blockade or energy embargo what steps will your bureau take to ensure Taiwan's energy lifeline remains open during a crisis?

Mr. HELBERG. Senator, the issues surrounding the physical security and integrity of freedom of navigation I believe it will be primarily a military issue, obviously, which will, if confirmed, be outside of my purview.

Obviously, from an economic policy standpoint China has a very extensive, illicit maritime fishing flotilla that it operates across the Pacific which is, obviously, believed to be convertible for military means in a time of war.

The United States is, based on what I understand, tracking that issue very closely. Ultimately, the economic integration between Taiwan and the United States will be a substantial factor in security related decisions on whether and how to support Taiwan in the event of a conflict. Taiwan is already the tenth largest trading

partner of the United States. TSMC has committed to investing \$100 billion in Arizona in advanced semiconductor manufacturing.

So I believe bringing the two countries closer together will be key in driving a lot of the security considerations around freedom of navigation around the Taiwan Strait.

Senator RICKETTS. Mr. Helberg, I think that one of the opportunities you will have is looking at Taiwan's current energy situation.

They have got a nuclear power plant that they are thinking about shutting down. That would be an opportunity for us to help them keep that open. So as you talk about nuclear also being able to have more energy stored onsite would be another thing that would help them mitigate an energy quarantine.

So I think those are some of the things you can take a look at. They are not directly military related but maybe within your purview.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and just a comment.

I share many of Senator Ricketts' prior recent concerns and look forward to working with you on them. We jointly went to Taiwan a number of weeks ago, and the energy security concerns, I think, are broadly shared.

If I could—to both Mr. Black and Mr. Helberg, congratulations on your nominations. My thanks to your wife Charlotte, who I hope will enjoy an anniversary once this confirmation is over, and to your husband Keith and your family.

If I could just speak to you first, Mr. Black, about the reauthorization of the DFC. As a co-author of the BUILD Act and someone who has strongly supported the DFC, I welcomed our constructive conversation. I look forward to working with Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Shaheen on timely reauthorization.

I hope the Administration will share reauthorization priorities promptly because we have to pass this before October or it will hold up significant deal flow, impacting the reputation of the DFC and have a chilling effect on our private sector partners.

A few just quick questions. Mr. Black, if confirmed, do you commit to timely and consistent consultation with Congress in the run up to DFC reauthorization to ensure it meets its objectives?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, if confirmed—thank you—I would absolutely look forward to working with Congress on the reauthorization.

Senator COONS. And do you commit to continuing the DFC's dual strategic development mandate by continuing investments in programs that support development objectives including, for example, health care and agribusiness?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, thank you.

As we discussed, I have said consistently that I feel the dual mandate is not in conflict. Development is very much strategic and has been from the earliest development projects outside the United States.

Senator COONS. I appreciate that and look forward to working with you on it.

And what is your view on the equity fix and whether or not it could be a critical part of expanding the scope of the DFC's reach?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, as we discussed, as currently authorized under the BUILD Act the DFC has a \$60 billion statutory maximum contingent liability. At the most conservative estimate China's Belt and Road Initiative has spent \$1.5 trillion if not—and most likely—much more.

No matter what the reauthorization is, the number for the DFC will be smaller than that, and it should be because the beauty of the DFC and the United States system is not going into countries, not even—

Senator COONS. Mr. Black, would you agree that an equity fix might help expand the scope of the DFC's work?

Mr. BLACK. Being able to take equity risk would be instrumental to working with the private sector and creating good capital opportunities.

Senator COONS. Last point that we discussed, the New York office provides greater access to the markets and to private sector partners. Will you commit to maintaining a ratio that includes career folks in a significant percentage as opposed to political folks in the New York office?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, thank you.

As you know from our conversation I am not in the building yet. We were with DFC's Chief of Staff who has been speaking about that, and if confirmed, I think it is absolutely crucial that career staff get exposure to New York finance firms and be able to work consistently with them so that career staff in the DFC, going forward, maintain continuity and are constantly on the radar and in conversation with the financial sector.

Senator COONS. I think it is important to keep that balance.

If I might, both Mr. Helberg and Mr. Black—Mr. Black, you spoke about your grandfather as your hero, and a key part of why you admire him is his integrity. As someone who worked in global business for an American manufacturing firm, I think that our reputation as a nation committed to integrity in business dealings and our refusal to engage in practices comparable to our key adversaries, in particular the PRC, where they use bribery as a tool of economic advantage, and we refuse to. It makes things like the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act having clear guardrails really important.

You both currently work in industries with significant overlap with the responsibilities of the positions to which you have been nominated.

If confirmed will you both commit to sustaining robust due diligence practices to ensure economic engagement remains honest? To recusing yourselves from any deals or matters or agreements with potential for conflicts of interest and to upholding the FCPA?

If you might, Mr. Black.

Mr. BLACK. Senator, thank you.

If confirmed, I fully commit to leading the DFC, following all strictures of the law, as well as my ethics agreement, and processes enforced and oversight by DFC's ethics lawyers.

Senator COONS. Mr. Black, currently there is no inspector general of the DFC. Do you recognize the central role that independent inspectors general play in every Federal agency?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, I am not as familiar with the workings of inspectors general and how the processes work from agency to agency. If confirmed, I will look into and look forward to working with Congress and looking at——

Senator COONS. I will tell you that inspectors general in every agency play a critical role in maintaining an independent review of the processes and conduct. They also help identify inefficiency and often help improve operations.

Mr. Helberg, your comment about sustaining due diligence guardrails, making sure that there is neither an actual or appeared conflict of interest in your very important work running the E family within State?

Mr. HELBERG. Senator, thank you, and I appreciated the time meeting with your staff, and I share your sentiment on the importance of maintaining high integrity and ethics standards.

If confirmed, I will work—my ethics agreement lays out a process by which I will work with State ethics attorneys in close consultation to ensure that all clauses in my ethics agreement and statutes passed by Congress are complied with.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Mr. Helberg, two quick last questions. You will be responsible for overseeing the State Department's implementation of sanctions. One of our primary sanctions targets is Russia, and it is critical to pushing Putin to the table, and frankly, we have not seen the active ongoing work to prevent sanctions avoidance using shell companies and otherwise.

Will you commit to fully enforcing sanctions on Russia consistent with U.S. policy?

Mr. HELBERG. Senator, my knowledge of the internal decision-making process of the State Department is limited as a private citizen.

However, my understanding of current U.S. policy is the maintaining of sanctions on Russia while the President is pursuing active negotiations in the pursuit of a lasting peace in Eastern Europe.

If confirmed, I will absolutely ensure that the sanctions that are currently in place have the highest levels of enforceability and will use the sanctions office to coordinate with allies to make sure that sanctions are enforced.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Helberg.

Senator Graham and I have worked hard to help create two public-private foundations to address both food security and conservation and the use by terrorist organizations of ungoverned spaces.

I look forward to working with you on both of these initiatives. Is that something you will commit to me that we will be able to do together?

Mr. HELBERG. Senator, I have very much enjoyed over the years working with industrious members of the Senate. Members of your staff have briefed me on the U.S. Foundation for International Conservation, which seems like a very important bill, and if the Congress passes the statute and it goes into effect——

Senator COONS. It has been signed into law.

Mr. HELBERG. I will fully commit to working with you to make sure that the law is applied.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your great—I have questions for the other members. I apologize for not getting to them, and I apologize to my colleague for going over my time.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator ROSEN.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Chair Risch. I appreciate you holding this hearing, and I want to thank our witnesses for testifying here today.

We have just a few minutes so let us get at it. I want to talk about women and girls.

We consistently hear that one of the biggest and most important differences between U.S. foreign assistance and that of the People's Republic of China is the U.S. commitment to investing in entire societies including women and girls. They are the backbone of families and stability in many of these nations.

So, Mr. Black, will you commit that, if confirmed, you will direct DFC to continue its support to women and girls including their economic empowerment and stabilizing role in maintaining peace and security?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, thank you for your question.

As you know, under the BUILD Act there are a number of different preferences that the DFC is to keep in mind for investments. One of them is for women.

If confirmed, I commit to following all the strictures of the BUILD Act and its reauthorization.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you.

I want to talk a little bit about Abraham Accords because over the past 5 years the Abraham Accords have produced tangible results. It has improved regional security.

It has been expanding economic opportunity and creating people to people ties that make peace achievable and lasting between Israel and its Arab partners.

While Hamas's brutal October 7 attack paused this progress, I am hopeful we will be able to see new countries join the Abraham Accords in the near future including those outside the Middle East and North Africa.

So, Mr. Kapur, what do you think of the possibility of Central Asian countries joining the Abraham Accords, and will you commit that if confirmed you will work with me to explore this idea further?

Excuse me—Dr. Kapur.

Dr. KAPUR. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

It is, certainly, something that I would consider, and I would look forward to discussing with you if I were confirmed. I do not know what the various countries would think about that or what they would have to say about it, but it is something that I would be interested in discussing further with you, and perhaps, pursuing.

Senator ROSEN. I can tell you I think that they will welcome strengthening the Abraham Accords' economic ties and opportunities for peer to peer exchange in so many different areas. We will look forward to working with you on that.

Dr. KAPUR. Thank you.

Senator ROSEN. I want to move now to the European Union and tariffs because in recent years Nevada has imported over \$2 billion in goods per year from the EU. It has also exported close to \$2.5 billion in goods to the EU per year.

President Trump has threatened to place a 50 percent tariff on all imported goods from the EU, and the EU announced it is prepared to impose retaliatory tariffs on the U.S.

This is going to place a heavy burden on Nevada families and businesses, especially small business and family owned businesses. We are talking over \$2 billion.

So, Mr. Puzder, if confirmed how will you navigate this issue and ensure that my Nevada families, my Nevada businesses, do not face financial hardship as a result of a potential trade war between the U.S. and EU countries, not to mention every State, I am sure?

Mr. PUZDER. Thank you, Senator. That is a [off mic].

As you know, President Trump [off mic] his commitment to reset our international trade relationship so they no longer were America last, were over generous to our competitors and threatened our national security.

So tariffs are a part of that, but I do have to say we are in negotiations now, Representative. I only—and, again, I only know this—

Senator ROSEN. I know, but it is over \$2.5 billion hit to Nevada, and we are only a State of 3 million people. That is a pretty big hit, sir, so we need to discuss this.

Mr. PUZDER. Right. I am not read into what is going on in the negotiations, but Trade Representative Greer just came out with very positive comments about the progress they are making. I know the EU wants an agreement. I know the United States wants an agreement. So I—and actually there was an article in the *Wall Street Journal* just yesterday about the—

Senator ROSEN. Well, my Nevada businesses do not—cannot wait, and they are going to suffer now, and so we will move on because I want to get my last—I see Senator Barrasso is here, and I just want to ask about critical and emerging technology.

The PRC is vying to replace United States' technological edge in a number of critical spheres. We know this—AI, biotechnology, quantum computing. This cannot happen as U.S. leadership in critical and emerging tech I believe is key to maintaining economic security, maintaining deterrence, and bolstering stability in the Pacific.

So, Mr. Helberg, if confirmed, how will you work to ensure the U.S. maintains its qualitative edge across the spectrum of critical and emerging technologies?

I have a lot of questions for you, but my time is out. We will just start with this one.

Mr. HELBERG. Thank you so much, Senator, and thank you for taking the time to meet.

We have one of the best innovation ecosystems in the world. The foundations of that ecosystem are currently sitting on top of very brittle supply chains. It is one of our biggest weaknesses.

China's export controls on rare earth minerals is currently constraining the global automobile industry along with many various

other industries. I believe that efforts that the U.S. Government undertakes to secure our supply chains will not only help create job opportunities in the United States, including in Nevada with the Lithium Loop, but will also help ensure America's technological leadership because it will ensure that our technological champions have all of the resources that they need in order to innovate and expand capacity in the U.S., expanding data center compute capacity as well as access to cutting edge chips.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. We are very proud of our Nevada Lithium Loop and hope to expand that further.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator RISCH. Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman.

A couple quick questions.

Mr. Black, congratulations. Well, congratulations to all of you.

I want to talk about the core mission of your—to which you have been nominated because over the last several years the scope of the U.S. Development Finance Corporation has significantly evolved.

You know, initially it was designed as a tool for development, and the goal was to support U.S. strategic foreign policy interests around the world.

Eventually it was refocused to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative. It has since focused on a wide range of areas including infrastructure, critical minerals, climate, renewable energy, food security, vaccines. More recently, there has even been a shift toward domestic investments.

Could you just talk about the core mission of the DFC and the impact?

Mr. BLACK. Senator, thank you for your question.

If we rewind back, earlier I spoke about the BUILD Act's dual mandate for the DFC, and that is both for development finance as well as strategic foreign policy interests, and the preamble and authorizing components by Congress were really focused on China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Now, I know some of your previous skepticism here. Part of this is effectively to engage private markets to invest strategically. Actually, not dissimilar, going back to the more effective foreign policy economic statecraft initiatives of the United States, going as far back as the Marshall Plan, the key thing to think about is the DFC should never be crowding out private capital.

I spoke earlier with Senator Coons about the concept of risk and equity, and if confirmed, that would be a highly important thing to engaging the private sector. An example I would give you is the DFC is supposed to be return focused, not necessarily risk adjusted return focus.

So if one believes in efficient markets the private sector will build these ports, terminals, and so forth if it pencils properly for them.

However, there can be deals where a lot of the capital stack pencils, but equity risk for a port overseas in the Philippines or the Cook Islands may only pencil to a 10 percent equity return.

It does not change the returns across the top of the capital structure where private capital would want to play, and in so doing if

the DFC engaged at the bottom of the capital stack, you can induce both private capital and achieve strategic interests.

Senator BARRASSO. Thanks.

So, Mr. Helberg, following up on this China and global issues, it is estimated in 2025 global investments in energy are going to hit a record, over \$3 trillion, and reports are that China is on track to spend almost as much on energy as the European Union and the United States combined.

So with rising competition from China, we are talking about AI, what the needs are—data centers and all of those sorts of things—I think we need to stay ahead as a global energy leader.

So, in your opinion, what role does the State Department have in supporting American oil, natural gas, and coal producers in the face of growing international competitors?

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

I think you hit the nail on the head with respect to the importance of energy. One can draw a straight line between total energy supply and economic growth throughout most of human history.

Our total electricity supply has stagnated since, roughly, the year 2008. That will ultimately not be sustainable. If, as a country, we set goals of expanding manufacturing capacity and expanding computing capacity in the United States we will need substantially more energy.

I believe we have the opportunity to do that through President Trump's all of the above approach to energy. His executive order on expanding nuclear energy capacity in the United States has opened opportunities to substantially increase electricity production. The expansion of natural gas exploitations also further add to that effort.

Ultimately, I believe the State Department has an opportunity to both stimulate domestic demand for American made energy by finding foreign markets and expanding market access for American energy overseas on the one hand, and on the other hand I also believe the State Department has an opportunity to help facilitate and accelerate the deployment of foreign investment into the United States into large infrastructure projects like the LNG Alaska project which, as you know, currently includes a large number of foreign investors including Japan, which is obviously eyeing to potentially be a major consumer of that project.

Senator BARRASSO. A final question.

Mr. Puzder, if I could just visit with you about EU and China. It seems to me, just watching the news—and I know you have not been confirmed yet, but you have been, clearly, watching this—the EU's stance on China tends to vary, at least that is how I have been reading it.

Several EU member states have aligned with the United States, share our concerns regarding China's growing influence and its record on human rights. Others seem to be more cautious of tensions and prefer to cooperate with China.

Can I just ask your assessment of the relationship right now between the EU and China?

Mr. PUZDER. There was a meeting [off mic]. Thank you for that very timely and good question.

The trade representative from the European Commission, Maros Sefcovic, made some comments to the Chinese about the trade relationship that they had that sounded very similar to comments that Americans have made, that we need fair and reciprocal trade, that we need regulatory transparency, that we need intellectual property protection—the kinds of things that I think the United States is looking for.

I believe that we are the preferred trade partner for Europe. I do not believe they want to make China their preferred partner. They are seeing that retail market diminish as China's economy has declined, which is a problem for them.

So I think while they are speaking with the Chinese I think we are in a superior position with respect to the potential for a trade deal.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator, and congratulations to all of you on your nominations.

Dr. Kapur, I had good discussions with the Indian and Pakistani parliamentary delegations that were in Washington last week in the aftermath of the India-Pakistan crisis.

As you know, President Trump and Secretary Rubio have taken credit for bringing about the ceasefire. As you probably already know, the Indian government has denied that a ceasefire resulted from American mediation.

But regardless, there is a fragile ceasefire in place. Secretary Rubio said this on May 10, and I am quoting, "I am pleased to announce the governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site," unquote.

So, Dr. Kapur, if you are confirmed what broad set of issues will you push India and Pakistan to discuss?

Dr. KAPUR. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

So I am not familiar with exactly what issues the Secretary had in mind when he talked about that. I think that as somebody from the outside looking in it looked to me as if the Administration and senior leadership in the Administration—the Secretary, the Vice President—were actively involved in using their good offices to encourage deescalation in the crisis, and I think that probably had a salutary effect.

In the end, India and Pakistan have to decide for themselves—and did in this case too—decided for themselves to deescalate, and that will be the case—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. If I could just because, you know, again, you will be the Assistant Secretary, if confirmed, and I am just quoting what the Secretary of State, your boss, said. He said that would—they had agreed to start talks on a broad set of issues and you are saying you do not have any idea what the Secretary was talking about with respect to broad sets of issues?

Dr. KAPUR. I do not know the issues that he had in mind. I was not part of the government at that time so I was not privy to those discussions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. OK. Well, broad does imply, does it not, sort of a comprehensive range of issues between the two countries?

Dr. KAPUR. It could.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. It seems it would. I am just curious about where that is going. I have raised in the last couple years concerns about Pakistan's backsliding on democracy, also concerns about issues of a crackdown on freedom of speech in India and Pakistan, and I will submit some questions for you to the record for you on those points.

Dr. KAPUR. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So, Mr. Puzder, I want to really pick up on Senator Barrasso's questions because during the first Administration many of us worked with the Administration to urge our European partners to derisk their relationship with China—their economic relationship. We spent a lot of time urging them not to adopt Huawei technology, and other issues, and that actually was continued, that policy, during the Biden administration.

But during this Trump administration since the President called for, quote, "Liberation Day tariffs" we have seen our European partners obviously express great concerns, and President von der Leyen, who was one of those who had been advocating for derisking from China, has talked about expanding trade and investment ties to China.

She said not that long ago to her European colleagues, quote, "I know many of you feel let down by our oldest ally. If you take on one of us you take on all of us."

So my question to you is pretty straightforward. How do we convince our European partners to derisk their economies from China when we are putting their economies at risk through our trade, our tariff, and other policies?

How do we tell them do not deal with China, but we are going to whack you with all these tariffs?

Mr. PUZDER. Thank you, Senator.

Again, as a follow up to Senator Barrasso's question that is very timely, the most important thing we need to do is reach a trade agreement with the European Union, and I know we are aggressively pursuing reaching that agreement.

While that agreement—while we are pursuing those negotiations both sides are going to say things. We will see what comes out in the final wash. But I know from comments, and really only from things I have read because, again, I am a citizen—I am not read in on any of this.

But reading what Trade Representative Greer has had to say and also reading what President von der Leyen has been saying, and again, Trade Rep Maros Sefcovic, there is great interest in reaching an agreement with the United States. They are very concerned. You know, there are bribery allegations with respect to China in Europe. There are concerns with the trade practices. There are concerns with dumping of products in Europe.

So I believe that we can work out an agreement with the European Union. I think it is in their interest and our interest, and I think they are pursuing it aggressively.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you.

And Senator, just in closing, I was quoting from the president of the EU, and she also said, quote, "Our message is clear. Europe is reliable, predictable, and open for fair business," unquote, meaning

they will happily do business with anyone in the world including very much China. And clearly, when she said they are reliable and predictable to the rest of the world the message was the United States is not reliable and predictable.

So you have got a lot of work to do, if you are confirmed, and I think that you have—I think, unfortunately, the Trump administration to date has made your job much harder.

Thank you, Mr. Senator.

Senator RICKETTS [presiding]. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Sure.

Well, first off, congratulations to each of you. I think you are going to—this is an exciting time. You are going to work for a President that is going to put America first.

He is going to succeed peace through strength, so you are going to—we are going to be respected again. So I think you are going to be serving at a historic time.

Mr. Helberg, you are often at the forefront of cutting edge technology and understanding its implications on our national security here at home.

Given your background, I think you will make a great addition to the State Department. As you prepare for the job what would you say is the biggest threat the United States or our allies face? Specifically, which countries and what risks do these do these countries pose?

Mr. HELBERG. Thank you very much, Senator, and thank you for taking the time to meet in the lead up to this hearing.

The biggest economic security threat to our country is, without any hesitation, our industrial over reliance on Communist China.

They are currently instating export controls of rare earth magnets on Europe and the United States, which is already taking a toll on the global automobile industry as well as other industries.

As someone who works in the private sector I know that private companies are often very reluctant to come out publicly saying when they are negatively impacted by these types of policy decisions because they are afraid of bad PR.

But these types of policy decisions really do sting. We are 90 percent reliant on Taiwan for semiconductors, 90 percent reliant on China for rare earth minerals, 70 percent reliant on China for cell phones, tablets, and drone production.

That is not sustainable, and therefore the E family will be entirely committed to developing a whole of government approach to securing our supply chains, and that will ultimately be the overarching policy framework through which we will engage with our partners and allies overseas.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you.

Mr. Puzder, while I wish the European Union well, it has become increasingly apparent that it is a broken system and compensates for its struggles to create wealth and prosperity with redistribution and over regulation.

It is a large reason the United States managed to have a much better relationship with individual countries over the European Union headquarters.

Given your expertise in the private sector with economic growth, what do you think about the EU strategy, and how should this shape our relationship with the EU going forward?

Mr. PUZDER. Thank you, Senator. Great question.

I think as President Trump has made clear, the European Union needs to walk back its over regulation, its red tape, its retaliatory taxes that damage American companies.

So there is a lot of work to be done, but the Europeans know that. There is the Draghi report, who was a former Prime Minister of Italy, that came out and said that, in fact, over regulation is killing competitiveness. It is killing the economy in the European Union.

In fact, their GDP was slightly larger than that of the United States back in 2008. It has already—and that was including the U.K. who was a member of the EU back then—including the U.K. today. They are 30 percent lower than we are. Take the U.K. out they are 50 percent lower than we are today.

So they need to make changes, and they know they need to make changes. There are advantages, however, to dealing with the European Union as opposed to individual states because many of those individual states have conceded part of their sovereignty to the union including, for example, on trade, on tariffs, on sanctions.

So American businesses need to deal with the European Union and the individual states, and there is some comfort in dealing with the union because American companies know how to deal with the European Union.

If you look at the states, for example, in the Balkans where we have got a number of states that are trying to get into the EU but they are not there yet, to get in they are going to have to bring their legal systems in compliance with EU standards, and they are going to have to reduce corruption, and I think both of those things are also an advantage to the United States.

If you look at, for example, Croatia, which entered the EU in 2013, since they entered our exports to Croatia have increased, I think, three—they have tripled since they entered.

So there are advantages. Clearly, there are problems with the EU. I know they know it. They need to address them. But there are reasons to deal with them nonetheless.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you.

Mr. Kapur, so tell us how—what would you like to accomplish with Pakistan?

Dr. KAPUR. Senator, thank you for the question.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, I think there are a number of areas where we could cooperate with Pakistan in the security realm.

I think there will be instances where counterterrorism cooperation would be useful. We can also build out our relationship away from sort of a myopic focus on security in the direction of trade investment, and I know there are some opportunities there in critical minerals as well.

So I think those are areas that I would be interested in exploring.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Congratulations to each of you on your nomination.

Senator RICKETTS. We do not have—unless somebody comes in while I am talking we are going to go ahead and close this out. I do not see anybody.

Again, I want to thank, gentlemen, for your willingness to serve our country. We very much appreciate it.

And for the record, we are going to add Senator McCormick's introduction of Howard Brodie, the Ambassador—the nominee to be the Ambassador of Finland—letter of support for Jacob Helberg. Thank you all for the benefit of your testimony here in responses today.

Before closing I will order any letters of support the committee has received to be added to the record. I will also note for the information of members that the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, June 11, including for the members to submit questions for the record.

With the thanks of the committee, this hearing is now adjourned. [Whereupon, at 11:44 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JACOB HELBERG BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. As you know, the Kremlin has historically weaponized Europe's dependence on Russian energy to achieve greater influence and control over European leaders. Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted the EU to reconsider this dependence, which also created an opening for increased U.S. exports to help fill the gap. The European Union recently committed to the RePower EU Roadmap, which would phase out imports of Russian energy, including oil and gas, to Europe by the end of 2027. How important is it for the United States to help keep the Europeans honest by removing any temptations for backsliding, while also supporting greater investment in European energy infrastructure and increased U.S. LNG exports to Europe?

Answer. Energy security is national security. Strong European allies who reduce their exposure to unreliable energy suppliers are of clear value to the United States. If confirmed, I will support continued investment in European energy infrastructure that enables Europe to diversify its energy supplies and that facilitates improved market access to drive increased U.S. energy commodity and technology exports, including LNG.

Question. Do you support maintaining the U.S. sanctions on Nord Stream 2 to avoid repeating past mistakes by allowing the return of Russian gas to Europe?

Answer. I understand that Nord Stream 2 remains subject to U.S. sanctions. The United States is the most reliable energy partner in the world, and President Trump's actions since taking office clearly demonstrate our aim to out-innovate and out-compete other market players. As the President has stressed, the United States can support Europe's energy security through supplies of U.S. liquified natural gas (LNG). If confirmed, I will advocate for U.S. exports and help expand global opportunities to ensure full market access for U.S. energy exports.

Question. At the end of 2024, the Biden administration tried to sneak through an extension of the U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement (STA). While STAs with allies are a crucial building block for science and research collaboration, they make much less sense with adversaries like China, particularly given the many ways the CCP exploits existing research partnerships and steals American research and technological innovations and knowledge. If confirmed, do you commit to conducting a thorough security review to determine whether the U.S.-China STA should be terminated?

Answer. The United States is acutely aware of the profound challenges of scientific cooperation with China—including concerns over U.S. researcher safety, theft of U.S. intellectual property, dual-use risks, and lack of transparency and data reciprocity. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department takes a thorough look at the

U.S.-China STA to determine if it appropriately addresses potential risks and is aligned with President Trump's America First policy to strengthen the prosperity, safety, and security of the American people and maintain America's dominance in science and technology.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JACOB HELBERG BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. In response to the Trump administration's tariff policy, South Korea, Japan and China have 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 the United States economically against the PRC when our allies and partners believe this Administration's trade and economic policies are coercive and make 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 mercantilist policies, unfair trade practices, and economic coercion challenge their economic security, industries, and jobs, just as they threaten those of the United States. If confirmed, I will expand 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. Do you commit to supporting the appointment of a Head of the Office of Sanctions Coordination with the rank and status of Ambassador that reports to the Secretary of State, as is required by law?

Answer. Yes, I commit to supporting the appointment of a Head of the Office of Sanctions Coordination, in accordance with the law.

Question. For many countries in the global south, U.S. global health assistance has deepened our ties for greater economic partnerships. The administration's cuts to global health will severely impact many countries economic outlook as decades long assistance programs like PEPFAR are limited. What is your understanding of the economic impact of global health terminations on countries in Africa, South America, and Asia?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department of State is evaluating the situation globally and that lifesaving assistance is continuing. If confirmed, I will work with the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy to monitor this situation and ensure PEPFAR, and all foreign assistance programs, advance American interests and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Question. As the U.S. pulls back on its global health commitments around the world, the PRC looks to fill the void left by the U.S. in many different contexts. For many countries, U.S. global health assistance has been the foundation for further economic partnerships, particularly in Africa. With the U.S. cuts to global health programming, what is the U.S. losing in terms of economic opportunities with recipient countries?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department of State routinely assesses China's influence efforts around the world, including the economic implications of these efforts, and will continue to do so. If confirmed, I will ensure PEPFAR and all foreign assistance programs advance American interests, including its economic interests, and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Question. Do you believe global health advances U.S. interests and economic ties with recipient countries?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary and the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy to ensure foreign assistance programs are re-focused to ensure they provide critical life-saving aid as well as advance U.S. diplomatic, security, and economic interests.

Question. What will be the impact of U.S. cutting many global health programs?

Answer. It is my understanding that PEPFAR continues to support lifesaving HIV testing, care and treatment, and prevention of mother to child transmission services approved by the Secretary of State. I understand that all PEPFAR-supported HIV programs operating through the Department of State are being reviewed to ensure that they reflect the President's foreign policy priorities, advance American interests, and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Question. Under the life-saving waiver for PEPFAR, prevention services like the distribution of PrEP are no longer being funded except for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Only focusing on treatment and not prevention will only result in more being becoming infected with HIV thus need life-long treatment. What is your understanding of the costs that the U.S. will incur only focusing on treatment and not providing prevention services through PEPFAR?

Answer. It is my understanding that PEPFAR-funded services, including prevention methods like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, are being reviewed by OMB for assessment of programmatic efficiencies and consistency with United States foreign policy.

Question. How can the committee be helpful to you in potentially understanding the economic impacts of cuts global health. How could we work together to unlock prevention services within PEPFAR?

Answer. It is my understanding that PEPFAR routinely collects and monitors program data, and country-level context such as economic conditions, to ensure accountability and impact. If confirmed, I will work with you to continue to ensure that foreign assistance, including for PEPFAR, reflect the President's foreign policy priorities, advance American interests, and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JACOB HELBERG BY SENATOR STEVE DAINES

Question. The spirit and text of the Trade Promotion Agreement between Panama and the United States requires that U.S. Companies are not subject to discriminatory or unlawful treatment by the Panamanian government. It has come to our attention that the Panamanian government is not upholding its end of the agreement, choosing to fail to pay U.S. Companies for services U.S. companies provided to the government.

Will you hold Panama accountable to their obligations?

Answer. I am committed to advocating that foreign governments treat U.S. companies fairly, including honoring their international obligations and ensuring fair resolution of disputes. I believe advancing the interests of American companies is a core element of successful diplomacy, and if confirmed I will appropriately engage with foreign interlocutors to this end.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JACOB HELBERG BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. How should an Undersecretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment help shape global norms governing the use of AI systems?

Answer. To strengthen U.S. AI leadership, the United States must shape global norms to ensure American AI technology continues to be the gold standard worldwide. If confirmed, I will promote a pro-innovation approach and push back against efforts by China and others to centralize government control of AI development and deployment. I hope to build on the first Trump Administration's support for the OECD AI principles in line with the American AI Initiative. I will work shape AI norms bilaterally and multilaterally to advance U.S. economic prosperity and national security.

Question. What specific steps would you take, if confirmed, to navigate the tension between embracing the development of advanced technologies and safeguarding the democratic values they can be used to erode?

Answer. Technology is a critical component of national influence, strength, prosperity, and security. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the Department's work in forging partnerships to promote American technological excellence. I will also advance a vision for the development and governance of technology that embodies democratic values and deters the misuse of technology to facilitate human rights abuses and violations, including acts of censorship and arbitrary or unlawful surveillance.

Question. As we've seen with polio, COVID-19, malaria, and Ebola, disease threats don't respect borders. U.S. leadership on global health programs not only keep Americans safe and provide economic opportunities for American businesses,

but these programs also strengthen our partnerships with countries around the world while countering China's malign influence. In the State Department's recent proposal to reorganize the Department, the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy would report to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment. Given the success and bipartisan support of programs like PEPFAR, Gavi, President's Malaria Initiative, and polio eradication efforts, if confirmed, how would you, through the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy, ensure that global health remains a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy that protect Americans' health and economic interests—particularly as our nation works to counter China's malign influence around the world?

Answer. It is my understanding that through the support of the United States, significant progress has been made in the global HIV, Polio, COVID-19, Malaria, and Ebola responses. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary and the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy to ensure foreign assistance programs remain a key part of U.S. foreign policy and are refocused to ensure they provide critical life-saving aid as well as advance U.S. diplomatic, security, and economic interests.

Question. U.S. leadership on global health issues can only be accomplished if we have the people, expertise, and structures in place to support global health programs and diplomacy. What steps will the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy take to address recent staffing gaps and organizational uncertainties that risk undermining our global health partnerships and influence, including for instance, combatting malaria and eradicating polio, both of which have longstanding bipartisan congressional support, and that the President's Budget identified as key focal diseases?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership to ensure staffing needs are aligned with administration priorities and program needs.

Question. The Trump administration has terminated many, if not most, global health programs focused on disease prevention. How do you assess the economic and security risk of divesting in preventative programs, particularly in innovations like vaccine delivery and disease surveillance, in the shaping of future global health security strategies?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Administration intends to continue Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, International Humanitarian Assistance, and Global Health Security Partnerships to maintain health programs that keep Americans safe. If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership to ensure disease prevention programs reflect the President's foreign policy priorities, advance American interests, and reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Question. If confirmed, you would support efforts for American businesses abroad and economic growth policy for the Department. USAID's Prosper Africa has previously been effective in connecting American businesses with African businesses and markets and supporting over 1,000 deals. Do you support the work of Prosper Africa?

Answer. I support the original purpose of Prosper Africa as outlined under President Trump's leadership—specifically, the emphasis on streamlining private sector access to U.S. commercial tools and leveraging the capabilities of 17 U.S. Government agencies to advance business activity across the African continent.

Question. If confirmed, would you recommend the State Department implement a similar coordinating program focused on economic opportunities for American businesses across Africa?

Answer. Yes—while its implementation has faced challenges in recent years, the core mission of Prosper Africa remains as vital today as it was when first envisioned during the first Trump Administration.

Question. If so, how would you enhance or improve Prosper Africa?

Answer. To fully realize Prosper Africa's potential, I believe the initiative should be anchored within the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs (AF). To revitalize and refocus Prosper Africa, AF would utilize U.S. economic development, trade promotion, and financing tools—working in partnership with agencies like Commerce, DFC, EXIM, and USTDA—to support opportunities for U.S. companies to increase exports to, and operations on, the continent. It is my understanding that we are reviewing how these development assistance functions can be integrated to lead a strategically aligned Prosper Africa, which would harness interagency

strengths to drive U.S. commercial outcomes and support Africa's long-term development across priority sectors.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JACOB HELBERG BY SENATOR MIKE LEE

Question. As the Trump administration works to unleash American energy potential, how can the State Department complement these efforts and push our European allies toward reliable, and realistic, energy futures?

Answer. The State Department engages with European allies to supply reliable, diversified, affordable U.S. energy, including by: (1) encouraging long-term contracts for U.S. liquefied natural gas to get new U.S. export projects to market; (2) addressing infrastructure bottlenecks that limit availability of U.S. energy; and (3) pushing for pragmatic regulations that do not disadvantage U.S. energy suppliers, specifically the EU Methane Regulation. If confirmed, I will push for increased U.S. energy exports to promote U.S. prosperity and bolster the energy security of our European allies.

Question. Relatedly, following the European Union finalizing its Methane Regulation in July 2024, the EU is actively engaged in handicapping its member states and simultaneously placing U.S. oil and gas exporters at a disadvantage in the European market. While emissions reporting to the EU begins this year, the remaining phases of implementation lack requisite clarity. The Methane Regulation will impose EU-compliant measurement, reporting, and verification procedures on U.S. exporters. It will also impose an artificial methane intensity calculation leveraging still-unknown methodology and, eventually, culminate in a yet to be determined methane intensity cap.

If implemented as planned, how will the EU Methane Regulation hinder your efforts to make foreign markets accessible for U.S. energy exporters, and what tools would you advise the Trump administration to leverage to alleviate the forthcoming negative effects on U.S. exporters because of the EU regulation?

Answer. The State Department is committed to reducing regulatory barriers to U.S. energy exports. The EU Methane Regulation, if implemented without modification, would adversely affect U.S. LNG exports, despite U.S. companies leading in methane abatement. I understand the State Department is working with U.S. industry, the Department of Energy, major European energy companies, and the European Commission to shape the EU Methane Regulation based on the realities of the U.S. market, and to appropriately recognize that U.S. producers are leaders in methane management technologies.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JACOB HELBERG BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. If confirmed, what policy changes would you pursue to would push back against digital authoritarianism, especially by the PRC and other foreign governments?

Answer. Digital authoritarianism, which takes its most severe form in China, poses a global threat to both the free speech of Americans and the economic interests of the United States. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and interagency to counter efforts to export digital authoritarianism, censor Americans, or dictate to our companies what they can and cannot host. I will also collaborate with public, private, and civil society sector partners to push back against digital censorship, whether from China or any other nation.

Question. Which other departments and agencies would be the most capable and important State Department partners in addressing restrictions on digital freedom?

Answer. Countering threats to digital freedom requires a coordinated interagency response. There are critical tools for countering threats to digital freedom throughout the U.S. Government, such as at the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Commerce, and Department of Treasury. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the State Department leads the effort to address global restrictions on digital freedom, while augmenting the work of interagency colleagues.

Question. Is the U.S. Government doing enough to address foreign government restrictions on digital freedom? Is there an organizing strategy?

Answer. As the President and Secretary have made clear, promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is critical to our foreign policy. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the U.S. Government protects and promotes international digital freedom by pushing back on adversaries' efforts to export their models of digital authoritarianism, and calling out problematic efforts to exercise control over the digital realm through misguided actions that unduly limit freedom of expression, restrict the free flow of information, and undermine fair competition, innovation, and privacy.

Question. What is your approach to U.S. economic sanctions? Do you think they are currently overused? Underused? What changes would you pursue?

Answer. Sanctions continue to be an essential tool to disrupt and deter malign activity and to advance U.S. foreign policy priorities. They are most effective when used together with other foreign policy instruments. If confirmed, I will work to ensure effective use of sanctions to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Question. How can we ensure that sanctions include explicit and appropriate off-ramps to better incentivize targets to maximally support U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The United States' sanctions actions always intend to disrupt, deter, and change the behavior of malign actors. If confirmed, I will work with the interagency, especially with the Department of the Treasury, to ensure that every designation is appropriately targeted and linked to the accomplishment of our foreign policy objectives and national security interests.

Question. How will you approach the winding down of Syria sanctions?

Answer. President Trump announced his intention to cease sanctions against the Syrian regime on May 13. On May 23, the Departments of State and the Treasury issued a Caesar Act Waiver, and the Department of the Treasury issued General License 25 as a first step to achieving that goal. President Trump is providing the Syrian government the chance to promote peace and stability, both within Syria and in Syria's relations with its neighbors. If confirmed, I pledge to implement the President's agenda for Syria.

Question. In the Taiwan semiconductor case, how do you view the trade offs between strengthening deterrence of catastrophic conflict and promoting investment in advanced manufacturing in the United States?

Answer. This is not an either/or choice. Taiwan is increasing investment in the United States because it makes both economies stronger, more prosperous, and more resilient to coercion or any contingency. By investing in advanced manufacturing in the United States, Taiwanese firms gain access to the biggest market in the world with the best R&D. The investments are rerouting long-exposed supply chains to the United States, which further strengthens the safety and security of both Americans and the people in Taiwan. Successful commercial diplomacy that creates high-quality jobs in the United States demonstrates to the American people the value of our robust unofficial ties with Taiwan.

Question. How do you approach the entwined nature of security and economic policy when it comes to U.S. commitments to Taiwan?

Answer. Maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is a priority of this Administration and a longstanding U.S. policy. If confirmed, I intend to redouble our economic diplomacy. This would entail expanding the coalition of allies and partners willing to condemn and counter China's economic coercion and bolstering efforts to develop secure supply chains for strategic technologies.

Question. In the midst of this proposed reorganization and further staffing cuts, how would you ensure that the Department has the appropriate staff and resources to secure critical mineral supply chains, develop markets for U.S. exports, compete in the global clean energy market, and expand our partners' access to energy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department of State continues to prioritize work and programming that supports secure U.S. critical mineral supply chains and increased energy exports while expanding our partners' access to secure sources of energy.

Question. What opportunities do you think exist for strengthening U.S. engagement on technologies in which we have a competitive advantage, such as geothermal energy?

Answer. Rising global energy demand presents significant opportunities for increased exports of U.S. energy resources and technologies. If confirmed, I will work

to promote export of America's abundant energy resources and innovative technologies, including geothermal, to provide the reliable and affordable energy supply the world needs, support jobs for American workers, and maintain U.S. technological and energy leadership.

Question. Do you commit to fully considering the ways in which the State Department, in conjunction with other departments and agencies, can help U.S. geothermal companies export technology and services to key allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, including the Philippines and Taiwan, to support U.S. national security interests, such as reducing energy security vulnerabilities and exposure to blockade or coercion and strengthening bilateral ties?

Answer. Geothermal energy is a reliable energy source that can power critical infrastructure for national security and help advance economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will work to promote American geothermal technology exports and investments to deliver the reliable and affordable energy our allies need, including in the Indo-Pacific, Central America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, as commercially viable.

Question. How will you ensure that the Department meets its statutory obligations with respect to international engagement on climate change and clean energy technologies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department continues engaging internationally in a manner consistent with its statutory requirements in all areas for which I am responsible.

Question. Will you retain personnel from the Office of Global Change and the Bureau of Energy Resources that have the necessary technical expertise to protect U.S. interests in a set of issues that many of our partners and adversaries prioritize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the State Department continues to prioritize and protect U.S. interests and promote a safer, stronger, and more prosperous America in the face of challenges from our adversaries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ANDREW PUZDER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. How will you push the EU to support defense spending while ensuring that any and all security-related decisions take U.S. interests into account and do not interfere NATO's role as the #1 security organization in Europe?

Answer. The United States has a collective defense arrangement with NATO Allies, which includes 23 of the 27 EU member states. Europe is increasing defense spending to take more responsibility for its security. Those decisions involve EU finance and infrastructure ministers as well as defense ministers. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our NATO Ambassador to ensure our NATO Allies in the EU follow through on defense spending commitments.

Question. China is expanding its global influence to shape the world toward its own interests. If we want to counter this threat, we need Europe on board as a partner, especially on economic issues. The EU's trade and industrial policy has not only held back economic competitiveness in Europe but has unfairly impacted U.S. companies too. How will you support efforts to restore fairness to the U.S. and EU trade relationship while supporting our ability to work closely with Europe to counter China's malign economic interests?

Answer. President Trump imposed tariffs to address unfair trade practices that have contributed to America's trade deficit and imbalances to better protect American workers and our national security. These decisions are taken not to punish countries; I am pleased to see ongoing negotiations between the United States and EU and look forward to further supporting this cooperation, if confirmed. The EU has raised concerns with China about unfair trade practices. If confirmed, I will ensure we remain aligned on taking coordinated actions against China's unfair economic practices.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ANDREW PUZDER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. You were accused in court documents of domestic violence, including “assaulting and battering” your former spouse and striking her “violently about the face, chest, back, shoulders and neck”. Did you ever engage in violence or abuse of any kind against your former spouse?

Answer. No. My former wife (Lisa Henning previously known as Lisa Fierstein) has fully and unequivocally withdrawn the allegations of abuse, admitting repeatedly that they were false. I never engaged in violence or abuse of any kind against my former spouse Ms. Henning as she has consistently acknowledged for three and half decades.

Question. Were the police ever called to your home?

Answer. Yes, the police were called to our home, however, no arrests were made and there were no finding of abuse.

Question. You have been accused of engaging in threatening language against your former spouse, including that you “vowed revenge” against her and said “I will see you in the gutter. This will never be over. You will pay for this.” Did you ever say these things?

Answer. No. To the contrary, in 1991 Ms. Henning acknowledged in an unsolicited letter that, rather than seeking “revenge,” we had “laid our animosity to rest” and that “[w]ere Andy of a different character, he would not be able to do this.” This letter concluded by stating that “Andy’s ability to empathize, care and understand is consistent with his character and personality. He has extended his forgiveness and understanding to me and I wish to do the same.”

Question. Have you ever threatened a member of your family, a colleague, or any individual with violence?

Answer. No.

Question. In 2004, you were sued by a former colleague for sexual harassment and discrimination. Have you ever engaged in inappropriate behavior toward a colleague, or any woman? Do you agree that inappropriate behavior, including of a sexual harassment or sexual discriminatory nature, has no place in the workplace?

Answer. No, I have never engaged in any inappropriate behavior toward a colleague or any other woman. There is no place for inappropriate behavior of any kind in the workplace. This claim—the only such claim in my 17 years as CEO—was by a former disgruntled employee. The case was settled for what I was informed was less than litigation expense could have been had it gone to trial. As I was a defendant (along with certain other executives), the decision to settle was made by our General Counsel and Board Chair. Personally, I paid nothing to settle this case, the claims were dropped, and I have consistently denied any wrongdoing.

Question. You reposted a statement from December 30, 2025 on X (formerly Twitter) by an account titled Mark Hemingway that stated “I don’t know anyone that thought January 6 was a good thing, but the unjustified draconian prosecution of so many nonviolent people—especially on the heels of letting all the BLM rioters skate—dramatically undermined faith in the rule of law. Graves is a villain.” Do you believe that individuals who participated in the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol were “nonviolent”?

Answer. As a private citizen I have reposted many statements on X. This does not mean I agree or disagree with the comments, it is a way to engage with the broader discussion. With respect to January 6th, I was not there nor, to my knowledge, do I know anyone who was.

Question. Do you believe those who were prosecuted and convicted for attacking the Capitol and committing acts of violence against Capitol Police Officers were subjected to an “unjustified draconian prosecution”?

Answer. I was not there on January 6th nor, to my knowledge, do I know anyone who was. As for individual prosecutions, I did not follow them closely and do not feel it is appropriate for me to comment on any individual’s or any group’s conduct or liability.

Question. On November 15, 2024 you reposted a statement on X (formerly Twitter) by an account titled Thomas Sowell Quotes that stated “Those who say that all cultures are equal never explain why the results of those cultures are so grossly unequal.” What is your interpretation of this statement and why did you repost it?

Answer. As a private citizen I have reposted many statements on X. This does not mean I agree or disagree with the comments, it is a way to engage with the broader discussion.

Question. On January 4, you posted an article on X (formerly Twitter) entitled “The Progressive Moment in Global Politics is Over”, stating “About Damn Time!”. The cover photo of that article, and the article, represents the Alternative for Germany Party, an ultra-right wing political party whose leaders have made anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, anti-democratic statements and who have downplayed the impacts of the Holocaust. Do you support the stated goals and policies of the Alternative for Germany party?

Answer. This administration and I are committed to fighting anti-Semitism and promoting religious freedom around the world. In addition, if I am confirmed I will advocate for free speech and democracy.

Question. Do you commit to working against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in all forms?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to fighting anti-Semitism and promoting religious freedom.

Question. It is a bipartisan view that Europe should spend more on defense. Europe now has a plan to do just that. However, while we ask them to step up, the President has launched a trade war, including 50 percent tariffs on steel and aluminum and 10 percent tariffs on all EU products. Will tariffs on EU products impact cooperation with our Allies on defense, including our efforts to counter the PRC, Russia, Iran and North Korea?

Answer. Our EU allies understand the importance of their assuming a greater role in their continent’s defense. NATO member states recently committed to increase their defense spending to 5 percent of GDP, confirming that understanding.

President Trump imposed tariffs to address unfair trade practices that have contributed to America’s trade deficit and imbalances in order to better protect American workers and our national security. These decisions are taken not to punish countries; but to recalibrate international trade to be more balanced and mutually productive.

This administration does not believe the tariffs will hamper our ability to work with our EU partners on increasing their defense spending to counter global threats, including from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. NATO members states committing to increase their defense spending to 5 percent of GDP supports that belief.

Question. What tools do we have to support EU aspirant countries in strengthening their democracies and aligning with Western markets following the foreign assistance terminations?

Answer. Decisions related to EU accession are a matter for members and candidate countries. If confirmed, I would work with our Ambassadors in countries seeking EU membership (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine) to promote democratic values and free market economies.

Among the tools available to support EU aspirant countries, I would support American companies increasing their investment in these countries to strengthen and deepen not only our bilateral economic ties but help promote ties with the West instead of Russia and China. In addition, foreign assistance remains an option where, as Secretary Rubio has stated, it advances “the core national interests of the United States.”

Question. As the administration endeavors to negotiate a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, consultation with Allies will be critical. How would you approach consultations with the EU on negotiations concerning a critical candidate country?

Answer. This administration is dedicated to a negotiated, durable, and lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine. Our European allies have a vested interest in securing peace on their continent and a lasting peace will require durable security guarantees from our European allies. If confirmed, I commit to advance those important negotiations and to work in good faith as an interlocutor to facilitate them.

Question. If confirmed, would you advocate for the seizure of Russian assets in Europe to help rebuild Ukraine?

Answer. Ukraine has suffered substantial damage because of this war and will need financial assistance to rebuild. The Administration has made clear that its goal is a negotiated, durable and lasting peace and that all options are on the table to bring Russia to the negotiating table and to resolve this conflict including the potential for asset seizures.

It is important that companies from the United States, the EU, and other allied and partner states that have supported Ukraine should have the first opportunity to help Ukraine rebuild. If confirmed, I would work with our EU partners to block Russian and Chinese companies from this opportunity to rebuild and from profiting from the war.

Question. Will you commit to advocating for the EU to extend its sanctions regime on Russia and ensure we remain coordinated to exert maximum pressure on the Kremlin?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the EU supports the Administration's vision for an end to this war and a durable peace, including reviewing all possible options to get Russia to the negotiating table to realistically pursue peace. Those options would include potential sanctions. If confirmed, I commit to work as an interlocutor for conversations with the EU in coordination with the Department of State, Department of Commerce, and Department of the Treasury. As I understand it, President Trump and this administration want to bring an end to the war and will use all available resources.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ANDREW PUZDER BY SENATOR PETE RICKETTS

In 2024, the European Union (EU) adopted the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), a sweeping regulatory overreach aimed at forcing large companies around the world to adhere to Europe's climate and labor agenda. This rule threatens businesses that operate in the European market, including many of America's largest employers. Complying with this excessive directive will be costly for both small and large U.S. companies, and will likely lead to higher prices for consumers.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to oppose EU attempts like CSDDD to impose stringent regulations on American companies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with EU counterparts to make clear our opposition to the current version of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). I will advocate for a market environment that is fair and conducive to the success of U.S. companies doing business in Europe and for any regulatory measures to be balanced, transparent, and not disproportionately impact U.S. companies. My approach will include working closely with stakeholders, including U.S. companies, to protect American economic interests. Notably, there is also resistance to CSDDD overreach among the EU member states. French President Macron and German Chancellor have both recently called for repeal of the CSDDD.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ANDREW PUZDER BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. How do you expect tariffs and potential retaliatory tariffs to affect U.S.-EU trade relations, commercial opportunities, investments, and prospects for bilateral cooperation on issues of shared interest?

Answer. President Trump imposed tariffs to address unfair trade practices that have contributed to America's trade deficit and imbalances in order to better protect American workers and our national security. These decisions are taken not to punish countries; I am pleased to see ongoing negotiations between the United States and EU and look forward to further supporting this cooperation, if confirmed.

Question. How do you view concerns that U.S.-EU tensions over tariffs might lead to closer economic cooperation between the EU and China?

Answer. The EU views China as an economic competitor and has raised concerns with China about unfair trade practices. Beijing has accelerated manufacturing, spurring Chinese companies to dump excess goods into Europe. In response, the EU has launched foreign subsidy and anti-dumping investigations of China-based companies and finalized tariffs on China-made electric vehicles, among other actions. If confirmed, I will ensure we remain aligned on recognizing China as a threat and take coordinated actions against China's unfair economic practices.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ANDREW PUZDER BY SENATOR MIKE LEE

In 2023, the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) came into effect, threatening the free speech of American citizens and corporations. Pursuant to the DSA, digital service providers are required to moderate and remove "hate speech," "disinformation," and content that could have "negative effects on public discourse"—all defined at the whims of European bureaucrats—or risk fines up to 6 percent of a platform's global revenue. The constitutionally protected speech of American citizens, on American platforms can, and already has been, swept up by the European censorship regime.

Question. As you prepare to engage with the EU, how are you prepared to combat the DSA stifling protected American speech?

Answer. Freedom of expression is a core U.S. value and one of the core principles on which our relationship with Europe is based. Overly broad digital restrictions threaten free expression and impose regulatory compliance burdens on U.S. companies. If confirmed, I will advocate for the right to freedom of expression.

Question. The U.S. and EU have been engaged in ongoing trade negotiations. Should free speech protections be incorporated into any U.S.-EU trade deal?

Answer. Freedom of expression is a core U.S. value. However, As a private citizen, I have not been read in on the current state of the trade negotiations and do not want to comment on one aspect of what are certainly complex negotiations. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to support trade negotiations resulting in fair and balanced trade.

Question. Similarly, how can our defense commitments to the EU collective function as a leverage point to ensure the free speech rights of Americans are shielded from European censors?

Answer. As I noted, I consider freedom of expression a core U.S. value. The United States does have a collective defense arrangement with our NATO Allies, which includes 23 of the 27 EU member states. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our NATO Ambassador to advance our nation's best interests.

In another case of extraterritorial overreach, the EU published its Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) in July 2024. CSDDD imposes foreign labor and environmental standards, including the Paris Agreement standards, on large U.S. companies operating within the EU—again exposing them to a risk of significant fines doled out by European bureaucrats.

Question. Appreciating that you intend to advocate for an EU market friendly to American companies, would you urge the EU to exempt American companies from CSDDD requirements?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with EU counterparts to make clear our opposition to the current version of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). I will advocate for a market environment that is fair and conducive to the success of U.S. companies doing business in Europe and for any regulatory measures to be balanced, transparent, and not disproportionately impact U.S. companies. My approach will include working closely with stakeholders, including U.S. companies, to protect American economic interests. Notably, there is also resistance to CSDDD overreach among the EU member states. French President Macron and German Chancellor have both recently called for repeal of the CSDDD.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO PAUL KAPUR BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Do you commit to ensuring, where applicable, that foreign assistance programs coordinated through the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs are strategically aligned with U.S. foreign policy interests in the region?

Answer. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance and our policies are appropriately aligned and we are best prepared to meet the challenges facing the United States. I am committed to engaging with the Committee to ensure the Administration's priorities are advanced in South and Central Asia.

Question. From your vantage point as the incoming Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, what forms of foreign assistance programs do you hope to prioritize in South and Central Asia?

Answer. Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance is delivered in a manner that best meets the challenges facing the United States. My goal will be to support President Trump and Secretary Rubio in making the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous. I am committed to engaging with the Committee to ensure the Administration's priorities are advanced in South and Central Asia.

Question. What factors will you consider when determining whether a given foreign assistance initiative aligns with U.S. foreign policy interests in South and Central Asia?

Answer. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance makes us safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Question. Where do you see a need to more closely align U.S. foreign assistance programs with policy in South and Central Asia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance and our policies are appropriately aligned and we are best prepared to meet the challenges facing the United States and make the United States safer, more secure, and more prosperous. I am committed to engaging with the Committee to ensure the Administration's priorities are advanced in South and Central Asia.

Question. How do you hope to restructure the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs to take on new responsibilities pertaining to U.S. foreign assistance programs?

Answer. I have not been part of discussions or actions to date regarding the management of the Department or USAID. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance and our policies are appropriately aligned and we are best prepared to meet the challenges facing the United States. I am committed to engaging with the Committee to ensure the Administration's priorities are advanced in South and Central Asia.

Question. The recent conflict between India and Pakistan reminds us that the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia continues to persist. In Afghanistan, groups like ISIS-K and Al-Qaeda are likely taking advantage of our attention being diverted away from them due to rising tensions between India and Pakistan. What is your assessment of the terrorism threat from Afghanistan?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Administration's Afghanistan policy focuses on counterterrorism. If I am confirmed, I will ensure we continue to carefully monitor security developments in Afghanistan, prioritizing the security of all Americans first and foremost.

I am a private citizen and not yet part of the Administration, however, it is my understanding, that within the region, ISIS-K poses the most potent terrorist threat to U.S. interests. I understand al-Qa'ida is currently unable to launch attacks from Afghanistan against the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee to further the Administration's counterterrorism-focused Afghanistan policy.

Question. Given our limited access to Afghanistan, how likely is it that massive amounts of foreign assistance sent to Afghanistan by the last Administration enriched terrorist groups?

Answer. I share the Committee's concerns about diversion of U.S. assistance, which is well documented in public record, including by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. I cannot speak to the decisions of the former administration and as a private citizen I am not yet able to assess our access in Afghanistan. If I am confirmed, I am committed to continuing President Trump's suspension of all aid that could reach the hands of the Taliban, which Secretary Rubio has implemented, as conveyed in his May 21 testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the Fiscal Year 2026 State Department Posture.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO PAUL KAPUR BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. With the proposed dissolution of the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE), how will you ensure that the activities of CARE are fully implemented within SCA?

Answer. I understand from public reporting of the State Department re-organization that the functions of the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) will be realigned to the Office of Afghanistan Affairs within SCA. As I am not yet part of the administration, I am unable to speak directly to the reorganization plans.

If confirmed, I will work with the Committee to keep you informed of the Department of State's policies and programming related to Afghan relocations.

Question. What specific steps will you take to support safe travel of Afghans who hold visas or have legal pathways to the United States, such as through family reunification?

Answer. I understand that the Department continues to process Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications, including scheduling visa interview appointments, conducting consular interviews, and interagency security vetting at U.S. embassies and consulates globally. I also understand that certain immigrant visa categories for immediate relatives may be exempt from the Presidential Proclamation Restricting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats.

Question. Do you commit to keeping the Senate Foreign Relations Committee updated regarding the status of thousands of Afghan SIV applicants and holders stranded in Qatar, Pakistan, and additional third countries, and do you further commit to coordinating with host governments to ensure they are not deported to Afghanistan and are treated humanely?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Committee to keep you informed of the Department of State's policies related to Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants and holders.

Question. Will you work to ensure Afghan SIV applicants and holders are relocated to the United States?

Answer. I understand that Afghan SIV processing continues, both at the Chief of Mission (COM) review step and the visa adjudication step, including consular interviews and interagency security vetting at U.S. embassies and consulates around the world.

Additionally, I understand Afghan SIV applicants continue to be able to self-relocate to a third country for processing and, once a visa is obtained, to the United States.

Question. Will you commit to working with Congress to ensure that all Afghan allies who are eligible for resettlement are treated with dignity, urgency, and protection that their service and sacrifices warrant?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Committee to keep you informed of the State Department's policy for Afghan relocations and resettlement.

Question. Do you think Afghanistan is a safe country to return to, for Afghan women and girls in particular?

Answer. Concerning current security conditions in Afghanistan, I would refer to the May 12 DHS press release that noted security improvements in the country for its citizens. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on this issue.

Question. What do you consider to be the most pressing threats that face Afghans who fought against the Taliban alongside or on behalf of the United States or who answer the call to promote human rights and democracy?

Answer. I am not yet a member of the Administration, but as a private citizen, I am not aware of current systemic targeting of Afghans solely due to their past employment with the U.S. Government or NATO forces. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on these issues.

RESPONSES TO FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO PAUL KAPUR BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. With the proposed dissolution of the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE), how will you ensure that the activities of CARE are fully implemented within SCA?

Answer. I understand from public reporting of the State Department's re-organization that the functions of CARE will be realigned under the Office of Afghanistan Affairs within SCA. As I am not part of the Administration, I am unable to speak directly to the Administration's specific reorganization plans.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee to keep you informed of the Department's Afghanistan policies and programming, including on Afghan relocations.

Question. What specific steps will you take to support the safe travel of Afghans who hold visas or have legal pathways to the United States, such as through family reunification?

Answer. I understand that the Department continues to process Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications, including scheduling visa interview appointments, conducting consular interviews, and interagency security vetting, at U.S. embassies and consulates globally. I also understand that certain immigrant visa categories for immediate relatives are exempt from the Presidential Proclamation Restricting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats.

Question. Do you think Afghanistan is a safe country to return to, for Afghan women and girls in particular?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to continue this important discussion. As a private citizen, I do not have the official information needed to evaluate this issue. I understand that DHS Secretary Noem, based on a review by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, and in Consultation with the State Department, determined that the security situation in Afghanistan had changed recently. Given this improvement change, Secretary Noem concluded, Afghans, including women and girls, could return to Afghanistan without undue threats to their personal safety. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on this important issue.

Question. What do you consider to be the most pressing threats that face Afghans who fought against the Taliban alongside or on behalf of the United States or who answer the call to promote human rights and democracy?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to address this issue once more. As a private citizen, I do not have the official information needed to responsibly evaluate this. I am unaware of systemic targeting of Afghans solely due to their prior employment with the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on this important issue.

Question. Consistent with the wind down plan the State Department provided to Congress in September 2024, the State Department was set to complete processing of 99 percent of Afghan SIV applications by summer 2029. Is this still on track?

Answer. As I am not a member of the Administration, I am unaware of and cannot yet speak to the details on this timeline. If confirmed, I look forward to keeping the Committee updated on the status of Afghan SIV case processing.

Question. Does the State Department have sufficient resources and officers for Chief of Mission (COM) approval and interviewing for submitted Afghan SIV cases?

Answer. As I am not a member of the Administration, I am unaware of and cannot yet speak to the current status of resources dedicated to the Afghan SIV process. If confirmed, I look forward to keeping the Committee updated on the resources required to safely and securely review COM applications.

Question. Has State Department staffing affected the projection provided to Congress in September 2024 on completion of Afghan SIV applications by summer 2029?

Answer. As I am not yet a member of the Administration, I do not yet have the details of staffing patterns referenced in the Department's September 2024 report. If confirmed, I will update the Committee on the current status of Afghan SIV processing and keep Congress informed on the projected timeline for completing the pipeline of Afghan SIV applications.

Question. How have cuts to the Enduring Welcome program hindered the State Department's ability to process these cases quickly or at all?

Answer. As I am not a member of the Administration, I am not familiar with and cannot yet speak to the potential impact of any cuts to the Enduring Welcome program. If confirmed, I will keep the Committee updated on plans as the Department continues to safely and securely process Afghan SIV cases.

Question. How have budget and staffing cuts at the State Department slowed COM processing, including appeals of withdrawal of COM support cases for Afghans already in the U.S.?

Answer. As I am not a member of the Administration, I do not yet have the details on the Department's reorganization and budget plans. If confirmed, I will consult with the Committee on resource requirements to ensure the Department continues to safely and securely process Afghan SIV cases, including appeals of withdrawals of COM support for Afghans already in the United States.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO PAUL KAPUR BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. If confirmed, as Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, what types of foreign assistance would you prioritize in each of the 13 countries your bureau covers, respectively?

Answer. Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance and our policies are appropriately aligned to make the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Question. If confirmed, would you prioritize or support refugee and humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugee camps in and near Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh?

Answer. Foreign assistance is one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance and our policies are appropriately aligned, and we are best prepared to meet the challenges facing the United States. With those objectives in mind, I will support the Administration in carefully considering continued assistance for the Rohingya refugee camps.

Question. If confirmed, would you also prioritize or support assistance to the host communities of the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar?

Answer. Foreign assistance is but one of many diplomatic tools that allows us to advance U.S. interests. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Rubio, the Deputy Secretary, and other senior officials in the Department to ensure that our foreign assistance and our policies are appropriately aligned, and we are best prepared to meet the challenges facing the United States. With those objectives in mind, I will support the Administration in carefully considering assistance to communities hosting Rohingya refugee camps.

Question. If confirmed, would you prioritize engaging with the Bangladesh government to support the Rohingya refugee communities and ensure that they have access to the assistance, international humanitarian workers, and structures they need to live with dignity and basic human needs met?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Government of Bangladesh and the international donor community to consider opportunities to support the Rohingya refugee communities, in line with the Administration's priorities to make the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO PAUL KAPUR BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. Do you believe that the United States has a role to play as a mediator in the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir?

Answer. The United States' long-standing policy on Kashmir remains the same. The pace, scope, and character of any negotiations on Kashmir are for India and Pakistan to decide upon bilaterally.

Question. How will you work to ensure that there is productive dialogue between India and Pakistan to prevent tensions from re-emerging?

Answer. I commend both the Indian and Pakistani governments for choosing the path of peace and maintaining the ceasefire. It is up to both governments to agree upon next steps for broader bilateral talks on areas of concern.

Question. On May 28, Secretary Rubio announced foreign nationals who are responsible for censorship of protected expression in the United States under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. He stated, "It is ... unacceptable for foreign officials to demand that American tech platforms adopt global content moderation policies or engage in censorship activity that reaches beyond their authority and into the United States." Secretary Rubio has indicated that the policy will apply to officials from "Latin America, Europe, or elsewhere."

Will this policy also apply to government officials from countries that fall under the remit of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, including India and Pakistan?

Answer. I understand this policy announced is a global policy.

Question. If so, what measures will be taken to implement the policy?

Answer. I understand this visa restriction policy is pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which authorizes the Secretary of State to render inadmissible any alien whose entry into the United States "would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States." Section 212(a)(3)(C) will be applied to foreign nationals who are responsible for censorship of protected expression in the United States.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HOWARD BRODIE BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Russia's belligerent actions in Ukraine and sabotage operations across Europe, including off the Baltic Sea coast of Finland, have sent dangerous signals to its neighbors, like Finland. How will you support U.S.-Finland cooperation on monitoring and deterring offensive Russian activity in the Baltic Sea and NATO's Eastern Flank?

Answer. Sharing an 830-mile-long land border with Russia, Finland is a model of whole-of-society resilience and defense. Finland is a top contributor at NATO and an active participant in NATO missions including Air Policing in the High North and Baltic Sentry in the Baltic Sea. If confirmed, I will work with Finland to ensure it remains and grows as a full-spectrum defense and security partner, maintains interoperability with U.S. forces, and continues to lead in the full range of NATO missions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HOWARD BRODIE BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to advocate within the interagency for Finland's ability to continue supporting Ukraine, including their ability to export U.S. origin security assistance to Ukraine?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with Finland to support President Trump's efforts to end the war and ensure continued adherence to the well-established review process for requests to export U.S. origin security assistance.

Question. As polar ice continues to melt, the Arctic is an area of increasing strategic importance. The Finnish military's cold-weather capabilities are a boon to NATO and Arctic security and Finland and Sweden's NATO accession now means that all Arctic nations save Russia are Allies of the United States. If confirmed, are there areas where you envision working with Finland to advance U.S. security interests in the Arctic?

Answer. President Trump recognizes Arctic security is critical to the safety and national security of the United States. Finland is fully aligned with the United States concerning Russia's military activity in the Arctic, and shares concerns about increasing Russia-China cooperation in the region. Finland has significant defense capabilities to operate in the High North and serves as an ideal platform for Arctic warfare training. Finland is also working closely with the United States and Can-

ada on icebreaker production through the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort (ICE Pact). If confirmed, I will work to deepen U.S. cooperation with Finland on Arctic security by supporting joint exercises in Lapland that enhance NATO's readiness for extreme-weather operations, and by advancing the goals of the ICE Pact to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding, acquire critical icebreaker construction expertise, and create high-quality American jobs.

Question. The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki offers a unique chance for transatlantic coordination. As technological aggression continues to evolve, how will you strengthen U.S. engagement with the Hybrid Center for Excellence and ensure interagency participation?

Answer. The United States is a founding member of the Centre of Excellence and, if confirmed, I will continue to support the Centre and its 35 other members (every NATO Ally and EU Member state) to accomplish its important and deeply practical work. The Centre's research, training, and exercise programs enable NATO Allies and EU members to counter the increasingly reckless hybrid campaigns that threaten our collective security, including technological threats. If confirmed, I will ensure robust interagency participation from relevant U.S. agencies in the Centre's exercises and research initiatives. I will also advocate for using the Centre as a platform to strengthen collaboration with trusted private sector partners on emerging threats such as AI-driven disinformation, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and infrastructure risk. With my legal and cross-border business background, I am particularly focused on the integrity of information systems and the resilience of supply chains—areas where Finland brings deep expertise.

Question. "Baltic Sentry" is an effort to enhance NATO presence in the Baltic Sea and respond quickly to destabilizing actions, including sabotage of communications and energy infrastructure, which was launched in Helsinki in January. If requested and appropriate, would you facilitate U.S. cooperation to safeguard critical infrastructure?

Answer. Finland is an important partner in promoting efforts and best practices to protect critical infrastructure, particularly critical undersea infrastructure in the Baltic Sea. Finland has endorsed the New York Principles concerning the protection of undersea cables and is an important contributor to NATO's Baltic Sentry, an activity announced at the NATO Baltic Sea Allies Summit it co-hosted this January in Helsinki. Baltic Sentry is a good example of our NATO Allies providing for their own security. If confirmed, I will continue the United States' partnership with Finland to safeguard critical infrastructure—including undersea cables and energy lines—by supporting NATO's deterrence efforts and promoting deeper trilateral coordination with Finland and Sweden on Baltic Sea monitoring, threat detection, and infrastructure hardening.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BENJAMIN BLACK BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

The DFC was created by Congress, and we are committed to ensuring that congressional intent is recognized and upheld. When we created the DFC, it was with the explicit intent that the corporation would pursue an "all of the above strategy" to reduce energy poverty. Multiple Indo-Pacific and African countries have told the Committee that they need natural gas. Under the Biden administration, the DFC imposed upon itself a carbon cap that limited its involvement in natural gas projects.

Question. Do you believe in the "all of the above" approach to reducing energy poverty and advancing energy security?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Does "all of the above" include natural gas?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Does it include nuclear? If confirmed, what role would nuclear play in the DFC's energy mix?

Answer. Yes. I understand that DFC has been able to consider nuclear investments since 2020. If confirmed, I would support DFC playing a role in advancing the Administration's focus on revitalizing the U.S. nuclear sector including through exports of nuclear technology where projects are commercially viable. Furthermore, I understand that on May 23, the President issued an Executive Order, "Deploying

Advanced Nuclear Reactor Technologies For National Security,” which references optimizing the value of DFC to provide equity and other financing of American nuclear energy technology.

Question. Do you agree that imposing country-, region-, or sector-specific mandates on the DFC will undermine its efficiency and effectiveness, including by reducing its potential customer base, and that the DFC should instead seek to balance interest and opportunity, wherever they may align?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to support reauthorizing DFC, including assessing country eligibility issues.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BENJAMIN BLACK BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Development Mandate

Question. The DFC was created to expand the work that was being done by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and USAID and to catalyze investment for development primarily in lower and middle-income countries. How will you ensure that DFC’s development mandate remains focused and effective in delivering impact?

Answer. If confirmed, drawing on my finance experience, I will work with the talented staff at DFC to ensure DFC continues to deliver on its mandate in service of the American people.

Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund

Question. How will you work to ensure the Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund will have enough initial capital to spur early investments?

Answer. If confirmed, I will coordinate with the DFC Board and the Administration to assess the initial capital needs for this investment and develop a plan to meet those needs.

Question. Do you commit to keeping the Senate Foreign Relations Committee updated regarding the status and operations of the Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BENJAMIN BLACK BY SENATOR PETE RICKETTS

Coordination to Strategically Compete with Communist China

Communist China has deployed its economic influence to gain influence and power, globally. In order to combat these efforts and maximize our own, I have been supportive of President Trump’s efforts to employ “economic statecraft” and realign U.S. global development aid toward strategic competition with Communist China.

Question. What role can the private sector play in increasing coordination across the various development-related agencies, including DFC, EXIM, USTDA, and MCC, to ensure a streamlined, complimentary approach to effectively compete with Communist China?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support increasing engagement with the private sector to maximize deployment of capital available for strategic and developmental investments to better compete with China. This includes working closely with inter-agency partners to effectively coordinate the economic tools of the U.S. Government.

Utilizing Technology to Improve Efficiencies at DFC

Question. How do you plan on updating the current technology and processes within DFC to make sure taxpayer dollars are spent effectively, efficiently, and in line with the Trump Administration’s priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support investing in DFC’s technology programs—applying my private sector experience and the knowledge base of the staff at DFC.

By making better use of technology, DFC can ensure taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BENJAMIN BLACK BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. There are competing priorities when it comes to the work of DFC. For example, DFC must weigh financial

Question. There are competing priorities when it comes to the work of DFC. For example, DFC must weigh financial performance in relation to foreign policy objectives and development mandates.

Question. If confirmed, how would you weigh and prioritize the different DFC statutory mandates?

Answer. If confirmed, in the context of deciding whether DFC should support a particular investment, I would weigh all of the competing interests and seek appropriate guidance and advice in connection with balancing those interests.

Question. Would you prioritize positive development impact in addition to generating financial returns?

Answer. Yes, I would prioritize developmental impact recognizing that long-term sustainable developmental impact that graduates from government investment is rooted in commercially viable projects.

Question. What kinds of development impact would you focus on?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners to determine what investments have real economic development impact while meeting DFC's mandate and mission.

Women make significant contributions to both the global and U.S. economy, both through paid work and unpaid caregiving. Closing the gender gap in labor markets could add trillions of dollars to the global GDP, and advancing women's employment also boosts economic output.

Question. Would you continue the work of DFC's 2X Women's Initiative?

Answer. The BUILD Act of 2018 includes supporting women-owned businesses. If confirmed, I would continue to meet statutory requirements.

Question. What is your view of DFC's statutory income restrictions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to support reauthorizing DFC, including assessing country eligibility issues.

Question. Do you see a need for DFC to have more flexibility to provide support in higher- or lower-income countries, and if so, for what specific reasons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to support reauthorizing DFC, including assessing country eligibility issues.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BENJAMIN BLACK BY SENATOR JOHN CORNYN

Denham Capital, a U.S. based private equity firm (with substantial Texas-based investments), is the founder and 50 percent owner of the Serra Verde rare earths mine located in Brazil. Serra Verde is one of the few potential large-scale, near-term sources of critical heavy and light rare earths outside of China. Currently, negotiations between Denham Capital and DFC to issue the first crucial loan disbursement from DFC to establish a \$465 million processing plant in Brazil have stalled. Denham Capital claims that an agreement must be reached no later than July to continue with the project and ensure the U.S. market and the DoD have access to these critical minerals and rare earth elements in the coming years.

Question. Given the strategic importance of this issue for our country, will you commit to prioritizing a resolution to this issue, which takes into account our long-term strategic interests, as soon as possible?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing this potential investment and exploring a resolution to this issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BENJAMIN BLACK BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

If confirmed, you will be grappling with the wide-ranging effects of the Trump administration's severe and illegal cuts to foreign assistance as head of the DFC.

Question. How do you envision the role of DFC in this new environment?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure DFC continues to implement its programs in accordance with DFC's statutory mandate.

Question. Are you concerned that slashed development and humanitarian assistance will reduce the number of countries in the pipeline who can then become qualified for DFC loans?

Answer. If confirmed, I fully expect that DFC will have a strong global pipeline of potential investments that meet DFC's statutory mandate.

Question. How does the role of DFC change if the United States significantly reduces its assistance previously executed by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation and other departments and agencies?

Answer. DFC's mission, authorities, and comparative strengths are distinct from that of other agencies. If confirmed, I will work with the interagency toward an efficient overall policy where DFC would contribute within its comparative strengths and authorities and collaborate with the other key United States economic agencies.

With DFC originating sizable private sector loans, there is significant risk of corruption and nepotism.

Question. What guardrails does DFC need to ensure that its lending remains transparent and based on sound financial criteria and U.S. foreign policy interests, especially in countries with weaker legal structures?

Answer. Given my finance experience, I am well-versed in the importance of transparency, meeting reporting requirements, and fiduciary responsibilities. If confirmed, I will continue to uphold DFC standards to be consistent with applicable laws.

Question. How do you intend to reduce the risk that any U.S. administration can use DFC's private sector relationships to curry favor with or financially benefit the president as it seeks investors for overseas projects to advance U.S. foreign policy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will abide by all laws and regulations, to include all applicable ethics laws and regulations when participating in investment decisions on behalf of DFC.

Question. Do you commit to maintaining DFC headquarters, including the CEO's office, in Washington, DC?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I would commit to maintaining DFC headquarters, including the CEO's office, in Washington, DC.

Compared to other U.S. Government entities, the DFC has relatively wide latitude in terms of its dispersal of funds.

Question. What are your regional priorities for lending?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with interagency partners and Congress to align priorities with those across the government. While DFC can seek to prioritize regions, DFC can only support investments in countries where it is authorized.

Question. What do you envision for the Indo-Pacific region, arguably the most important for the future of U.S. national security?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the interagency and Congress to ensure DFC's private sector mobilization advances the national security and foreign policy priorities for the Indo-Pacific region.

Question. What sectors, such as energy, critical infrastructure, and healthcare, do you seek to prioritize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with interagency partners and Congress on identifying priority sectors, including critical minerals, energy, and infrastructure, that meet DFC's mandate and further foreign policy interests.

The DFC has played an important role in financing projects to deploy clean energy and increase communities' resilience to disasters and extreme

weather. The International Energy Agency also estimates that global investments in clean energy will double global investments in fossil fuels in 2025.

Question. If confirmed, how will you use the DFC's tool to compete with China in these important sectors?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support efforts that align with U.S. foreign policy objectives to expand reliable, secure energy supply and to advance markets for U.S. energy products and services.

Submitted by Senator David McCormick

Howard Brodie Nomination Hearing Introduction
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 12, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to introduce Howard Brodie for his nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Finland.

For over 30 years, Mr. Brodie has supported international corporations in conducting complex negotiations across Europe, North America, and Asia. Howard currently serves as Co-President and General Counsel for Brodie Generational Capital Partners, an investment firm based in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, where he leads investment and legal strategy.

His experience as General Counsel includes providing legal advice for companies such as Emcore Corporation and Purolite Corporation, where he facilitated a \$3.7 billion sale to Ecolab. He has a robust professional skillset that includes intellectual property, corporate governance, joint ventures, mergers, and corporate law. All skills that will prove valuable as ambassador.

In addition to his professional experience, Howard has an abiding commitment to education which extends to his philanthropic endeavors. His major donations include to Yale Law School, Oxford University, and to the University of Pennsylvania. He is also the founder of The Howard Wexler Brodie '93 Center for Jewish and Israeli Law at Yale Law School.

Howard's extensive international negotiating experience, along with his proven ability to lead and manage in complex cross-cultural environments, make him a well-qualified candidate to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland.

Mr. Brodie holds a Bachelor of Arts *Summa Cum Laude* in Political Science from Duke University where he was also Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Yale Law School. He also studied at Oxford University in Great Britain and served as a visiting scholar at St. Petersburg Law School in St. Petersburg, Russia.

U.S.-Finland relations are strong and have significantly deepened since Finland's recent accession to NATO. I am confident that his experience, intellect, and leadership will make him an effective representative in Helsinki and I look forward to hearing his vision for the future of U.S.-Finland relations.

Howard, thank you for your willingness to serve and congratulations to you and your family.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman for allowing me to introduce Howard this morning, and I urge the Committee to support his nomination.



June 16, 2025

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch:

On behalf of the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and our member companies, I write to express strong support for the swift confirmation of Jacob Helberg to serve as the next Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment.

Consideration of Mr. Helberg's nomination comes at a critical time. The next round of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution is quickly approaching, and it is essential that the United States have a confirmed Under Secretary in place to lead and represent American interests.

The United States has an opportunity to shape a global agreement that both helps to protect the environment and supports continued innovation and economic growth. Strong U.S. engagement is vital to securing an outcome that reflects our national priorities—particularly the need for an agreement that recognizes the critical role of American manufacturing, supports scalable and science-based solutions, and promotes trade in circular economy technologies and materials. An America First plastics agreement will continue to strengthen U.S. energy dominance, validate the important role that plastics play in our society, and foster opportunities for businesses to invest in domestic manufacturing.

Mr. Helberg's background in technology policy, economic security, and global engagement positions him well to lead the U.S. negotiating team and to articulate a strategic America First vision in these discussions. His leadership will be critical in helping to ensure the United States is not merely reacting to the terms of an agreement written by our competitors to benefit their own industries but actively shaping them in a way that puts America first and upholds our energy dominance, environmental integrity, and economic competitiveness.

The Trump Administration must have the full diplomatic team in place to influence the final outcome of this process, and time is of the essence. I respectfully urge the Senate to act without delay in confirming Mr. Helberg so he can immediately engage in the lead-up to INC-5.2 and represent the United States effectively in Geneva in August.

Thank you for your consideration of this important nomination and for your continued leadership on issues vital to American industry and global environmental cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "CJahn".

Chris Jahn
President and CEO
American Chemistry Council





generalcatalyst.com

June 9, 2025

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Shaheen:

I am writing to offer my strong support for the nomination of Jacob Helberg as Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy & the Environment at the U.S. Department of State. Mr. Helberg's deep understanding of the global technological revolution, his firsthand experience with economic and national security challenges, and his ability to navigate complex international dynamics makes him exceptionally well-suited for this critical role.

Mr. Helberg brings a rare combination of personal and professional experience that will enable him to excel as a diplomat and economic strategist. Having grown up abroad surrounded by diverse languages and cultures, he has developed a nuanced perspective on global affairs that will serve him well in fostering international economic partnerships. His ability to engage across cultures, combined with his sharp analytical skills, positions him as the consummate diplomat - someone who can bridge divides and advance America's economic interests with strategic foresight and diplomatic skill.

Mr. Helberg's expertise in the intersection of technology, economic policy, and national security is particularly vital at this moment. He has been a leading voice on the economic and geopolitical competition between the U.S. and China, recognizing the urgent need to stay ahead in critical technologies such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and cybersecurity. His work in the private sector has underscored the economic and strategic imperatives of maintaining U.S. leadership in these sectors, ensuring that America remains the world's preeminent economic power in an era of fierce global competition.

At General Catalyst, we understand the transformative power of technology in shaping economic policy, global markets, and national security. Mr. Helberg shares this vision and will bring an unparalleled ability to align U.S. economic policy with the rapid pace of technological innovation. His leadership will be instrumental in advancing policies that strengthen America's economic standing, secure our supply chains, and enhance our competitive edge in key industries. I strongly urge the Senate to confirm his nomination and allow him to bring his expertise and vision to the service of our nation.

Sincerely,

Teresa Carlson
Founding President
General Catalyst Institute

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