

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, Chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

We have business to do today. As usual, we welcome everyone in our audience to watch. This is not interactive. There will be no participation from the audience, and I think those of you who are contemplating it know what is going to happen if you do. So we look forward to doing the government's business uninterrupted, and we again appreciate people's attendance.

We have today five nominations to consider, and we have a good panel, an interesting panel, and we are going to proceed. I am going to give an opening statement, a few opening remarks. I am going to yield to Senator Shaheen to do likewise. Then we will hear from the nominees, and then we will proceed to a round of 5 minute questions from all of the members of the committee who wish to ask questions. Before we do that, we have a couple of introductions.

Senator Lee, I believe you have something for the good of the order.

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

Senator LEE. Yes, I do. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

It is an honor and a great privilege for me to be here today to introduce my friend Kari Lake who has been nominated to be the next United States Ambassador to Jamaica.

Ms. Lake is a true champion of truth, of accountability, of the U.S. Constitution, and of the freedoms that we all enjoy as Americans.

President Trump has a clear eyed vision for the Western Hemisphere, ensuring that American prestige and security remain strong and remain strong particularly in this hemisphere. The key to our prosperity does not always lie on the other side of the world. It often is found, it is often best defended, close to home, in our

own hemisphere. And that certainly includes the Caribbean and Jamaica, the country where she has been asked to serve as the ambassador.

We need somebody now more than ever who knows how to advance our interests and articulate our values, and Kari Lake is that person, exactly that person. If you tried to design a person better suited to be the U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, you could not do a better job than Kari Lake.

As a leader for the U.S. Agency for Global Media, she has looked out for American interests all over the world to make sure that the U.S. Government's international broadcasting efforts actually advance our interests. She has fought for that every day, and her work in uncovering security threats at an agency as well as rampant waste, fraud, and abuse demonstrate how unwavering her patriotism is and her commitment to good government.

She has also spent nearly 30 years in the media industry as a television news journalist and anchor. And in that capacity, she has become a very effective communicator. She knows how to get a point across succinctly, clearly, and with the appropriate emphasis that the occasion happens to require. Throughout her entire career, she has received awards for her work. While she was at FOX 10 News in Arizona, she conducted several high level, one on one interviews with then President Barack Obama in 2016 and with President Trump in 2020.

She stepped down from her position at FOX back in 2021 where she was one of the longest serving and top rated news anchors and dedicated her life and her career to public service and to media accountability.

In addition to her success as a journalist and an advocate for our country, she is also a wife to Jeff Halperin and to their children, Ruby and Leo, who are with us today.

I have no doubt that upon her confirmation, Ms. Lake will hit the ground running, and she is going to build on our relationship with Jamaica and do so in a way that advances American interests meaningfully and consistently, unwaveringly.

Kari, you have my unqualified, enthusiastic support. I know you are ready for this position, you were born for this position, and I look forward to working with you.

To my colleagues, I strongly encourage you to support her nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Lee.

Senator Hagerty.

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

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Shaheen. I appreciate you holding today's hearing.

It is my distinct honor to also introduce Kari Lake, President Trump's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica.

I have had the privilege of serving our nation myself as U.S. Ambassador to Japan during President Trump's first term, and I know firsthand what it takes to succeed as an ambassador, and in par-

ticular I know how essential it is for an ambassador to have the President's trust.

Kari Lake has that trust. She has earned it through her courage, her dedication to the American people, her abilities as a great communicator, and her willingness to fight for the principles that make our country great.

In fact, Kari's story is a remarkable example of the American dream. She grew up in Iowa as the youngest of nine children, the daughter of a football coach and a history teacher, in a family where nothing was handed to her and where she was taught the importance to earn and value what you have. In a large household, Kari learned early how to speak up and hold her own, yet also to listen carefully and to nurture relationships with those closest to you.

She earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Iowa and subsequently spent three decades as a top rated news anchor and television journalist in Arizona. What is apparent though is that Kari has the heart of a public servant. She could have easily chosen to remain in the private sector where she had built a successful, lucrative, and Emmy award winning career in news media. But Kari felt a genuine calling to public service, and she has acted on that calling because she believed there were critical issues facing our country that demanded new leadership and a fresh voice.

After running as a candidate for public office, she subsequently served as a political appointee in the Trump administration. At the U.S. Agency for Global Media, Kari has helped return the agency to its statutory mission. The agency was supposed to be providing news that is quote, "consistently reliable, authoritative, accurate, objective, and comprehensive." Before her arrival, however, the agency had drifted far from that charge, with the State Department Inspector General identifying major information security and grant oversight failures that increased the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse at the agency. Through much needed reforms, Kari has helped restore accountability, and she has put the agency back on the side of the American taxpayer.

As the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, Kari also brings a genuine love for the island, its people, and its culture. She is deeply familiar with Jamaica, having visited the island over 40 times, and she understands the tremendous promise of the deeper strategic partnership between the United States and Jamaica. Of importance, Jamaica, as host government, will know that if she is confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, she will be a chief of mission who has a clear line of communication with the President.

Kari will bring to this post a uniquely American story, a proven ability to communicate a deep trust and connection to the President, and the strength required to represent our nation with utmost confidence. I believe she has what it takes to be an excellent Ambassador, and I therefore urge this committee to move quickly in considering Kari Lake's nomination so she can begin her important work as our next Ambassador to Jamaica.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Hagerty.

So first of all, let me say thank you to the panel, for all of you willing to step forward and take on these positions. And just as importantly, thank you to your families. We all know the families play a huge role in these kind of jobs, and their support is absolutely necessary, and they will certainly assist with that.

So let's get down to business, and I am going to start, Mr. Vance, with you. While the bureau you would manage is smaller than some of its intelligence counterparts, the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, or INR, and its staff punch well above their weight in competition with the other 17 intelligence agencies that America has.

INR has a history of analytic independence and was famously the only intelligence agency to get it right on what was going to happen when Putin got into Ukraine. Every other agency gave us estimates that the war was going to last somewhere between 3 days and 3 weeks, and the agency you are talking over said, "I'm not sure of that." They were only one of the—at that time there were 17, but they were the only one of the 17 agencies that got that right.

Today, I hope to hear how you will continue this tradition and advance the Administration's security priorities.

Mr. Hanrahan, as you know, the U.S. and Europe share the world's largest economic relationship and account for one-third of global trade. Our security alliances and institutions, most of all NATO, which is the most successful political-military alliance in the history of world, have underpinned an unprecedented period of growth and prosperity on this planet. But the threat posed by Russia, China, and Iran working together grows clearer by the day, and we need our European allies on our side to confront them.

As Assistant Secretary for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, you will be on the front lines of defending Americans from these threats. I am eager to hear how you will implement policy that strengthens and modernizes our relationships in Europe, particularly our security and economic relationships. Those of us on this committee deal regularly with our European allies, and you will find some interesting conversations as you go forward with our allies. It is important we maintain a good relationship with them.

Ms. Lake, the United States and Jamaica maintain a robust relationship based on shared democratic values and our economic and security interests. I was glad that Jamaica decided to end its participation in Cuba's medical professionals labor trafficking and join the Administration's Shield of the Americas initiative. I hope that as ambassador, you would work with this positive inertia and advance U.S. interests in Jamaica and the Caribbean more broadly.

Mr. Segura, the United States has an enduring interest in a prosperous, democratic, and stable Western Hemisphere, as clearly outlined in the National Security and National Defense Strategies. I believe the most substantial threats to U.S. interests in our hemisphere are China and violent transnational criminal organizations. I deeply appreciate President Trump's actions to curb both threats in the Panama Canal, Mexico, and in Venezuela.

Mr. Segura, I hope to hear from you on how you will build on this work as Assistant Secretary to the Western Hemisphere and ensure the United States can strengthen regional cooperation to advance our national interests.

And finally, Mr. Bauer, as you know, the U.S. remains Belize's top trading partner and largest foreign direct investor, underscoring our longstanding bilateral relationship. I appreciate Belize's continued support for Taiwan, and I look forward to hearing from you on efforts to deepen that partnership and our partnership with this key Caribbean neighbor.

Thank you again to all of our nominees. And with that, I would now like to turn it over to the Ranking Member, Senator Shaheen.

Thank you.

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

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our nominees this morning. To your families and supporters who are here with you, thank you for being willing to be considered for these positions.

I think one of the real benefits that the United States has enjoyed has been its credibility. I think the credibility of this country is a strategic asset, and distrust of U.S. statements really matters. Iran, Russia, and China understand that. Last year Tehran increased funding for its state broadcaster by 50 percent. At that very moment our adversaries were investing in the information battlefield, the United States was retreating from it, dismantling programs designed to deliver independent, fact based news to people living under authoritarian regimes.

Ms. Lake, the Administration put you in charge of that effort. I have a different view than Senator Hagerty about your work on that effort. You placed hundreds of employees at the U.S. Agency for Global Media and Voice of America on administrative leave. You attempted to cut off funding for Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia until a court intervened. USAGM and Voice of America survived, but our adversaries exploited that chaos. Iran's LEGO video campaign mocking and humiliating the President reached more than a billion views in just 30 days. Its purpose was not to strengthen Iran. It was to weaken confidence in the United States.

Ms. Lake, this is the information environment you may soon have to navigate as Ambassador to Jamaica. If confirmed, I hope you will push back not only by advancing the Administration's message, but by contesting the narratives our adversaries are spreading throughout the region. Beijing and Moscow are investing heavily in shaping perceptions of the United States across the Global South.

Mr. Segura—am I pronouncing your name correctly?—you have been nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, and Mr. Bauer you have been nominated to be Ambassador to Belize. Russia has trained more than 1,000 Latin American influencers to spread pro-Kremlin propaganda messaging across Latin America, and that network did not stop operating when Maduro fell. If confirmed, I hope each of you will take these efforts seriously.

Mr. Hanrahan, you have been nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary for Europe. But I think we have to ask a threshold question there, and that is what is the portfolio that you are going to have? Ukraine peace talks are being run by Special Envoy Witkoff. The Armenian initiative is led by the Policy Planning Staff. Bosnian policy appears to have been outsourced to the White House.

The threats in this region are not waiting for Washington to sort itself out. Vladimir Putin has spent years investing in far right parties across Europe, parties that oppose Ukraine aid and want to dismantle European institutions. Ukrainian battlefield successes have complicated those influence operations, but they have not stopped Putin from exploiting our political divisions. If confirmed, I hope you will be a strong voice against Russian influence and for those governments that have stood with us and with Ukraine.

And finally, Mr. Vance, you have been nominated to lead the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. As the Chairman said, INR occupies a unique role within the intelligence community. It is independent of other intelligence agencies, and it is charged with providing objective, fact based analysis to the Secretary of State. I have concerns given your unwillingness to affirm the basic fact that President Biden won the 2020 election. I have concerns about your commitment to that fact based mission. You have also written that Western Europe is succumbing to what you call "soft authoritarianism" and have compared some European practices to the Soviet Union. If confirmed, I hope you will put aside prior views and provide Secretary Rubio with the unvarnished intelligence he that needs to operate.

Again, thank you all.

Senator Risch. Well, thank you, Senator Shaheen. I appreciate that.

We are now going to hear from each of you. We are going to start with Mr. Segura. What I would ask that you do is please keep your remarks to 5 minutes or thereabouts. If you have anything you want to add, we got lots of room in the record, so you can submit whatever you would like for the record. But in the meantime, to give everybody a chance at questions, if you would keep it to 5 minutes, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Segura, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF JUAN SEGURA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS AND A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 20, 2032

Mr. SEGURA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me at this watershed moment in our engagement with the hemisphere.

I would also like to thank my family who in part are here today. They truly are the bedrock of my life. To my wife and partner,

Cecilia, I love you, and thank you for everything you do, every day. I would be nothing without your support and belief. To my parents, Enrique and Alejandra, thank you for always challenging me and for setting a beautiful example of faith, hard work, and great sacrifice. It is truly through the eyes of my parents, who came to this great country with nothing more than 40 years ago, that I first came to understand the why of the United States of America.

From as young as I can remember, three words would ring true at the Segura kitchen table: “Never Give Up.” Whether it was in sports, in school, or in building companies, where there was a will, there was a way. And as I reflect on my own story, of building a healthcare company to be one of the largest maternal monitoring companies in the world, to leading economic growth and international trade for the great Commonwealth of Virginia, a State that has a GDP of more than \$620 billion a year, “never giving up” is how we overcame seemingly impossible obstacles. I believe this Administration will never give up on the hope for America and its people, and how America works with and partners with the “Americas.”

President Trump’s National Security Strategy underscores the critical importance of the Western Hemisphere. The Trump administration has set an ambitious agenda that includes securing our border, defeating narcoterrorist groups, securing critical infrastructure, and expanding economic opportunities for Americans.

The National Security Strategy also outlines the United States will reassert the Monroe Doctrine to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere and push back on the influence of global adversaries and malign actors in the region.

The Trump administration is aggressively implementing this strategy with regional partners, expanding cooperation bilaterally as well as enlisting partners in new initiatives including the Shield of Americas, the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition, and a Critical Minerals Ministerial to build secure and resilient supply chains.

As a former Virginia Secretary of Commerce, I am particularly enthusiastic about the Trump administration’s prioritization of commercial diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I look forward to employing all available tools to ensure American companies are well positioned to help our regional partners build their economies.

As the National Security Strategy notes, an economically stronger Western Hemisphere is not only a more attractive market for American companies and investment, but increased commercial linkages will benefit both sides and reduce the space and influence of non-hemispheric actors. This will require closer coordination with the American private sector, and this coordination is a role I am eager to embrace drawing on my professional background as a former entrepreneur and investor.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to enlist the cooperation of our regional allies, the private sector, and Congress to advance the Trump administration’s ambitious agenda for the Americas.

Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome 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:


Juan Segura

Date:

June 18, 2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Segura follows:]

Prepared Statement of Juan Segura

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

I am grateful for the confidence President Trump, and Secretary Rubio have placed in me at this watershed moment in our engagement with the Hemisphere. I'd also like to thank my family who in part are here today. They truly are the bedrock of my life.

To my wife and partner, Cecilia, I love you and thank you for everything you do, every day. I would be nothing without your support and belief.

To my parents, Enrique and Alejandra: thank you for always challenging me and for setting a beautiful example of faith, hard work, and great sacrifice. It is truly through the eyes of my parents, who came to this great country with nothing more than 40 years ago, that I first came to understand the WHY of the United States of America.

From as young as I can remember, three words would ring true at the Segura kitchen table: "Never Give Up." Whether it was in sports, in school, or in building companies, where there was a will, there was a way. And as I reflect on my own story, of building a healthcare company to be one of the largest maternal monitoring companies in the world, to leading economic growth and international trade for the great Commonwealth of Virginia, a State that has a GDP of more than \$620 billion a year, "never giving up" is how we overcame seemingly impossible obstacles.

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If confirmed, I look forward to leading the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to enlist the cooperation of our regional allies, the private sector, and Congress to advance the Trump administration's ambitious agenda for the Americas.

Thank you for your consideration. I welcome your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Let's move to Mr. Hanrahan.

STATEMENT OF BRENDAN HANRAHAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. HANRAHAN. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to join you as the nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. I appreciate the trust that President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me by nominating me

for this role. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with you and members of your staff as I work to implement our foreign policy.

I want to start by thanking the many teachers, mentors, and colleagues that have shaped the educational and professional experiences that I will bring to this role, in particular, the teachers and coaches at Roxbury Latin in Boston, who fundamentally instilled in me the call to public service.

My foremost thanks I extend to my family for their love and support. To my grandparents, who have led through example of public service in our military, and who have exemplified humility and hard work. To my three siblings, Mary Aidan, Grace, and Eamon, who have been my foundational support throughout my life. To my parents, Drs. Lynn and John Hanrahan, who have given me my faith in God and taught me the imperative of personal integrity and service to others. And finally, my greatest thanks and love to my wife Lauren, who is here with me today, and our newborn son James. I would not be here without their support.

The United States stands at a critical moment in our relationship with our oldest and strongest continent of allies. I think it is important to underscore that core framing to our relationship with Europe. It is an alliance, forged in a shared history and a civilizational heritage. As Secretary Rubio stated in his Munich speech earlier this year, we want Europe to be strong, and we want a strong relationship with Europe. A safer, stronger, and more prosperous United States in the 21st century requires a reinvigorated relationship with Europe that can better advance our shared prosperity. Leading this work requires a seriousness of purpose and candid diplomacy. Should I be confirmed, I will bring both to our efforts.

In practical terms, I will focus on four guiding objectives.

First, keeping American citizens safe by working closely with our ambassadors and missions abroad. This is our highest and most essential goal.

Second, rebalancing our relationship with Europe to better advance our core interests—the security and prosperity of American citizens. In the domain of security, this means advocating for transferring primary responsibility for conventional European defense to our allies, while simultaneously expanding the U.S. defense industrial base and co-production opportunities with NATO partners. We must press our allies to fulfill the defense investment commitments they made in The Hague last year. Rebalancing also means enforcing a reciprocal trade and regulatory environment, especially with the European Union, one that permits a level playing field for American businesses and workers.

Third, if confirmed, I will focus on promoting a peaceful, stable Europe that unlocks the economic potential of the region. I will support President Trump's efforts to secure a durable peace in the Russia-Ukraine war. I will work to solidify the significant gains from President Trump's historical peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And I will work to further deescalate other regional tensions by empowering local actors to forge local solutions.

One of the key tools to advancing this peace and stability is commercial: ensuring Europe and Eurasian countries partner with the United States for their technology and energy. The United States

has already supplanted Russia as the LNG supplier of choice, and by pushing for large scale energy infrastructure projects to transport U.S. gas across the continent we can further secure Europe's energy sector and support the American worker.

Fourth and finally, if confirmed I will work with European counterparts to guard against emerging and future threats to U.S. interests. This will entail enhancing law enforcement cooperation to combat terrorist networks, organized crime, and other bad actors that have exploited unfettered mass migration to the detriment of Europe and the United States. It will also require protecting supply chains by mitigating our collective dependence on adversaries and rivals. If confirmed, I will focus on countering China's abuse of the global trading system by advocating for commercial partnerships between trusted U.S. and European firms to reinforce a secure U.S.-Europe economic partnership.

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

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

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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:


Brendan Hanrahan

Date:

June 18, 2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hanrahan follows:]

Prepared Statement of Brendan Hanrahan

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to join you as the nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. I appreciate the trust that President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me by nominating me for this role. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with you and members of your staff, including through regular briefings, as I work to implement our foreign policy.

I want to start by thanking the many teachers, mentors, and colleagues that have shaped the educational and professional experiences that I will bring to this role. In particular, the teachers and coaches at Roxbury Latin in Boston, who fundamentally instilled in me the call to public service.

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In practical terms, should I be confirmed for this position, I will focus on four guiding objectives.

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Second, rebalancing our relationship with Europe to better advance our core interests—the security and prosperity of American citizens. In the domain of security, this means advocating for transferring primary responsibility for conventional European defense to our Allies, while simultaneously expanding the U.S. defense industrial base and co-production opportunities with NATO partners. We must press our allies to fulfill the defense investment commitments they made in The Hague last year; we are chartering a better course, but more work remains to be done. Rebalancing also means enforcing a reciprocal trade and regulatory environment, especially with the European Union, that permits a level playing field for American businesses and workers. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Pentagon, USTR, and the broader interagency on both issues.

Third, if confirmed, I will focus on promoting a peaceful, stable Europe that unlocks the economic potential of the region. I will support President Trump's efforts to secure a durable peace in the Russia-Ukraine war. I will work to solidify the significant gains from President Trump's historical Peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And I will work to further deescalate other regional tensions by empowering local actors to forge local solutions. One of the key tools to advancing this peace and stability is commercial: ensuring Europe and Eurasian countries partner with the United States for their technology and energy. The United States has already supplanted Russia as the LNG supplier of choice, and by pushing for large scale energy infrastructure projects to transport U.S. gas across the continent, we can further secure Europe's energy sector and support the American worker.

Fourth and finally, if confirmed, I will work with European counterparts to guard against emerging and future threats to U.S. interests. This will entail enhancing law enforcement cooperation to combat terrorist networks, organized crime, and other bad actors that have exploited unfettered mass migration flows to smuggle fentanyl into the United States. It will also require protecting supply chains by mitigating our collective dependence on adversaries and rivals. If confirmed, I will focus on countering China's abuse of the global trading system by advocating for commercial partnerships between trusted U.S. and European firms to reinforce a secure U.S.-Europe economic partnership.

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. I appreciate that.

Mr. Bauer, it is good to be with you again. The floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ANDRÉ BAUER, OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENI-
POTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO
BELIZE**

Mr. BAUER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to Belize. I am honored by the confidence President Trump has placed in me through his nomination.

I would like to begin by thanking God for His many blessings and the opportunities that brought me here today. I would like to thank my wife Meredith who is here with me. I am also grateful to have all four of my children here, Holland, Hudson, Holden, and little André, whose presence in my life has been a continual source of joy and perspective as well as purpose. Additionally, I am eternally grateful to my parents for the sacrifices they made and the values they instilled in me.

Throughout my life, I have served in a variety of roles, as a substitute teacher, as an entrepreneur, and as a businessman. In South Carolina, I served in the House of Representatives, the South Carolina Senate, and as two terms as Lieutenant Governor. In each of these roles, I worked collaboratively with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address the concerns of constituents, improve government services, and bring attention to issues that had too often been overlooked.

The United States and Belize have a strong bilateral relationship. The United States is Belize's largest source of tourism, with more than 1 million Americans visiting annually. Additionally, more than 85,000 Belizeans live in the United States, further strengthening the close ties between our two nations.

Tourism remains a vital driver of Belize's economy, supporting jobs and economic opportunity throughout the country. If confirmed, I look forward to working alongside Belizean leaders to strengthen economic ties between our nations, to support continued tourism and trade, and expand avenues for cooperation and investment.

Having spent much of my career in the private sector, I understand the power of U.S. business and investment. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen commercial ties between our two countries. Creating a stable investment climate where U.S. business can grow and invest and also flourish is essential to expanding opportunities for the citizens of both our countries.

Belize and the United States enjoy a strong partnership in security cooperation. Belize works closely with the United States to combat counternarcotics, trafficking, and human trafficking, as well as transnational criminal activity. The United States continues to support Belize through programs focused on counternarcotics, border security, and criminal deterrence. If confirmed, I

will work diligently to continue supporting to promote security, stability, and safer communities for Belizeans and for American citizens. I will also work to ensure Belize remains a reliable partner in countering the risk posed by the Chinese Communist Party to hemispheric security and prosperity.

Protecting the safety and interests of United States citizens abroad will remain my highest priority. As we work together to address shared challenges, we must also continue to advance areas of mutual opportunity. Belize presents growing opportunities for American investment in areas including tourism and economic development that can benefit both of our nations.

If confirmed, I will serve with the same work ethic, determination, and commitment that have guided me through my life and my career. I will work to advance the interests and values of the United States while strengthening our partnership with Belize and its people.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It would be my honor of a lifetime to represent the United States as Ambassador to Belize. I thank you, and I look forward to answering all of 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: Andre Bauer
Date: June 18, 2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bauer follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. André Bauer

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to Belize. I am honored by the confidence President Trump has placed in me through this nomination.

I would like to begin by thanking God for His many blessings and the opportunities that brought me here today. I would like to thank my wife, Meredith, who is here with me, for her unwavering love and support. I am also grateful to have our children here with us, Holland, Hudson, Holden, and André Wesley, whose presence in my life has been a continual source of joy, perspective, and purpose. Additionally, I am eternally grateful to my parents for the sacrifices they made and the values they instilled in me.

Throughout my life, I have served in a variety of roles, including as a substitute teacher, entrepreneur, and real estate developer. In South Carolina, I served in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, and as Lieutenant Governor. In each of these roles, I worked collaboratively with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address the concerns of constituents, improve government services, and bring attention to issues that had too often been overlooked.

The United States and Belize share a strong bilateral relationship. The United States is Belize's largest source of tourism, with more than 1 million Americans visiting annually. Additionally, more than 85,000 Belizeans live in the United States, further strengthening the close ties between our two nations.

Tourism remains a vital driver of Belize's economy, supporting jobs and economic opportunity throughout the country. If confirmed, I look forward to working alongside Belizean leaders to strengthen economic ties between our nations, support continued growth in tourism and trade, and expand avenues for cooperation and investment.

Having spent much of my career in the private sector, I understand the power of U.S. business and investment. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen commercial ties between our two countries. Creating a stable investment climate where U.S. business can grow and investment can flourish is essential to expanding opportunities for the citizens of both our countries.

Belize and the United States also enjoy a strong partnership in security cooperation. Belize works closely with the United States to combat narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, and transnational criminal activity. The United States continues to support Belize through programs focused on counternarcotics, border security, and criminal deterrence. If confirmed, I will work diligently to continue supporting efforts that promote security, stability, and safer communities for both Belizeans and American citizens. I will also work to ensure Belize remains a reliable partner in countering the risk posed by the Chinese Communist Party to Hemispheric security and prosperity.

Protecting the safety and interests of United States citizens abroad will remain my highest priority. As we work together to address shared challenges, we must also continue advancing areas of mutual opportunity. Belize presents growing opportunities for American investment in areas including tourism and economic development that can benefit both of our nations.

If confirmed, I will serve with the same work ethic, determination, and commitment that have guided me throughout my life and career. I will work to advance the interests and values of the United States while strengthening our partnership with Belize and its people.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It would be the honor of a lifetime to represent the United States as Ambassador to Belize. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.
Ms. Lake.

**STATEMENT OF KARI LAKE, OF ARIZONA, TO BE AMBASSADOR
EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA TO JAMAICA**

Ms. LAKE. Thank you, and I would like to start really quickly with thanking Senators Lee and Hagerty for the wonderful introduction. I really appreciate that.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as Ambassador of the United States to Jamaica. I am deeply honored that the President has put his trust in me for this position, and I am mindful of the responsibility this role carries. I thank the President for his continued friendship and support.

I also want to thank my family. As was mentioned, I am from a big family. I would like to thank my siblings who are watching today, Vicky, Jill, Kim, Lori, Jack, Lisa, Susan and Jennifer. Thank you for shaping me into the woman I am today, and my parents in heaven.

I am joined today by my husband of 28 years, Jeff, who has given me unconditional love and is my rock. Also here my daughter Ruby and son Leo. Aside from a few moments in their teen years, they have brought me nothing but joy. My favorite claim to fame is telling people that I raised you. Also here today, my future daughter-in-law, Scotty, who is celebrating a birthday, and my son-in-law, Stetson, is watching back home in Arizona.

I spent three decades as a top rated television journalist and news anchor, communicating complex national and international issues with clarity and purpose. That experience, combined with my work leading the modernization and accountability efforts at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has prepared me to represent American interests abroad with transparency, discipline, and results driven leadership.

Over the past 35 years, I have traveled to Jamaica too many times to count. Jeff and I honeymooned in Jamaica, and from the time our kids were very little until now we have spent family vacations, birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays in Jamaica. Yes, of course, Jamaica has beautiful beaches and mountains and waterfalls. That is a given. But it is the incredible Jamaican people, whose warmth, friendliness, and deep pride in their country keeps us going back.

When Jamaicans put their hearts into something, they succeed, from earning Olympic gold medals to creating entire musical genres, like reggae, to creating businesses. Nothing can keep a Jamaican down.

It is evident that God is a source of strength guiding Jamaica through challenges and shaping the nation's character. There are more churches per square mile in Jamaica than anywhere in the world, and as a woman of faith I really admire that. We have a shared belief that through God all things are possible.

Jamaica is among our largest trading partners in the Caribbean, with bilateral trade in goods exceeding \$3 billion in 2025. Americans account for more than 70 percent of the tourists visiting the island. And Jamaica is also a key security partner and a founding member of the Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition combating nar-

cotics trafficking in the region. These deep economic, security, and personal ties are the foundation of a strong and enduring relationship.

Under the Trump administration, we are renewing our focus on strengthening partnerships in the Western Hemisphere, recognizing that our neighbors are vital partners in creating mutual security and prosperity.

If confirmed, I will focus on four priorities.

First, keeping Americans safe. Protecting the tens of thousands of U.S. citizens living in Jamaica, along with the roughly two million who visit each year, is a core responsibility. With hurricane season now underway, and after two devastating storms in the past 2 years, it is especially important that this role is filled soon and actively engaged to work with the Jamaican government to strengthen preparedness, improve coordination, and respond effectively to future disasters. The United States and the American people stood firmly with Jamaica during its recovery from the catastrophic Hurricane Melissa and acted with compassion and generosity. If confirmed, I will build on that commitment and ensure this critical work continues.

Second, strengthening security cooperation. I will work closely with the Jamaican government to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, disrupt drug trafficking, and combat financial scams targeted at vulnerable Americans.

Third, advancing American economic interests. I will advocate for U.S. businesses, work to address trade barriers such as Jamaica's longstanding restrictions on U.S. pork exports, and promote American investment, especially as Jamaica continues to rebuild. I will also work to ensure American companies can compete and succeed as we deepen our economic partnerships with Jamaica.

Fourth, we must counter China's growing economic influence less than 500 miles from our shores. The Chinese Communist Party has made strategic investments across the Caribbean in ports, infrastructure, and critical sectors that carry long term security implications. In a region this close to the United States, those efforts are not just economic, they are strategic. I will work to ensure that Jamaica continues to choose transparency, sovereignty, and partnership with the United States over dependence on actors whose interests do not align with our shared values.

Jamaica's democratic traditions, strategic location, and resourceful and strong citizens make it an indispensable partner in the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will bring my work ethic, clear communication, and a commitment to accountability to this role, and I will ensure that the United States Embassy proudly represents the American people with professionalism and purpose.

I thank you for your consideration today, 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

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Printed Name: Kari Lake

Date: June 18, 2026

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lake follows:]

Prepared Statement of Kari Lake

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as Ambassador of the United States to Jamaica. I am deeply honored by the President's trust and mindful of the responsibility this role carries.

I am joined today by my husband of 28 years, Jeff, my daughter Ruby, and son, Leo.

I spent three decades as a top-rated television journalist and news anchor, communicating complex national and international issues to broad audiences with clarity and purpose. That experience, combined with my work leading modernization and accountability efforts at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has prepared me to represent American interests abroad with transparency, discipline, and results-driven leadership. Over the past 35 years, I have traveled to Jamaica on numerous occasions.

Jeff and I honeymooned in Jamaica—and from the time our kids were little to now we've spent family vacations, birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays in Jamaica. Yes, Jamaica has beautiful beaches, but it's the incredible Jamaican people—whose warmth, resilience, and deep pride in their country—kept us going back. Jamaica has more churches per square mile than anywhere in the world—and it's evident that belief in God is a source of strength, guiding Jamaica through challenges and shaping the Nation's character. That is something I deeply admire, as I lean on my faith every day for guidance. That shared sense of faith and resilience is part of what makes Jamaica not just a neighbor, but a trusted partner.

Jamaica is among our largest trading partners in the Caribbean, with bilateral trade in goods exceeding \$3 billion in 2025. Americans account for more than 70 percent of tourists visiting the island, and tens of thousands of Jamaican workers support American farms and businesses each year across more than 35 states. Jamaica is also a key security partner and a founding member of the Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition combating narcotics trafficking in the region. These deep economic and people-to-people ties are the foundation of a strong and enduring relationship. Under the Trump Administration, we are seeing a renewed focus on strengthening partnerships in the Western Hemisphere—recognizing that our neighbors are vital to our security and prosperity.

If confirmed, I will focus on four priorities.

First, keeping Americans safe. Protecting the tens of thousands of U.S. citizens living in Jamaica, along with the roughly two million who visit each year, is a core responsibility. With hurricane season now underway—and after two devastating storms in the past 2 years—it is especially important that this role is filled and actively engaged to work with the Jamaican government to strengthen preparedness, improve coordination, and respond effectively to future disasters. The United States and the American people stood firmly with Jamaica during its recovery from Hurricane Melissa and acted with generosity and compassion. If confirmed, I will build on that commitment and ensure this critical work continues.

Second, strengthening security cooperation. I will work closely with the Jamaican government to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, disrupt drug trafficking, and combat lottery scams that target and defraud vulnerable Americans.

Third, advancing American economic interests. I will advocate for U.S. businesses, work to address trade barriers such as Jamaica's long-standing restrictions on U.S. pork exports, and promote American investment—especially as Jamaica continues to recover from Hurricane Melissa. I will also work to ensure American companies can compete and succeed as we deepen our economic partnership with Jamaica.

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Jamaica's democratic traditions, strategic location, and resilient people make it an indispensable partner in the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will bring my strong work ethic, clear communication, and a commitment to accountability to this role, and I will ensure that the United States Embassy represents the American people with professionalism and purpose.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Ms. Lake.
We will hear from Mr. Vance.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL VANCE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Mr. VANCE. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be considered for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research.

I have too many people to thank to give everyone the credit they deserve for getting me to this point, but I do want to express my gratitude to the President for his confidence, and to the Secretary of State for the trust he has placed in me.

I would also like to thank my wife Alessandra for her patience and loving support over the course of my career. She is with me here today, along with my four children, Wyatt, Morgan, Ellis, and Mabel. I also want to thank my parents for the example they have set for me in life. My mother, a retired Dickenson County, Virginia, school teacher, taught me the value of education. My father, a former coal miner turned small business owner, taught me about hard work and dedication to family. I know they are watching today from home. Finally, I would like to thank the many colleagues from across the intelligence community, the State Department, and the White House who have offered encouragement throughout the nomination process.

If confirmed, it would be a tremendous privilege to lead the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, an organization with a proud tradition of analytic rigor, independence, and service to U.S. foreign policy. INR plays a unique and indispensable role within the intelligence community. Its officers provide objective, policy relevant, all source intelligence analysis, and support rooted in deep expertise and an understanding of diplomacy, ensuring that policymakers receive assessments that are candid, timely, and free from political influence.

At a time of increasing global competition, persistent conflict, and rapidly evolving technological challenges, the demand for high quality intelligence has never been greater. If confirmed, my foremost priority would be to safeguard the integrity and independence of INR's analysis, while ensuring it continues to meet the needs of the Secretary, the Department, and Congress.

I also recognize the critical importance of partnership within the Department, in the intelligence community, and with our friends and allies overseas. INR's value is magnified when it understands the Department and its needs, collaborates effectively across agencies, and integrates diplomatic insight with intelligence collection and analysis. If confirmed I would work to strengthen those relationships.

Equally important is our responsibility to Congress. I am committed to transparency, timely engagement, and forthright communication. Robust oversight strengthens our intelligence institutions, and I would view my relationship with Congress as essential to the Bureau's success.

Finally, I would be deeply mindful of our obligation to the dedicated public servants of INR. Their expertise, professionalism, and quiet dedication underpin the Bureau's reputation for excellence. If confirmed, I would prioritize supporting and developing this workforce, ensuring they have the tools, leadership, and trust necessary to carry out their mission.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions and to the opportunity to serve our country.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

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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: Michael Vance

Date: June 18, 2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vance follows:]

Prepared Statement of Michael Vance

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be considered for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research.

I have too many people to thank to give everyone the credit they deserve for getting me to this point, but I do want to express my gratitude to the President for his confidence, and to the Secretary of State for the trust he has placed in me.

I would also like to thank my wife, Alessandra, for her patience and loving support over the course of my career. She is with me here today, along with my four children, Wyatt, Morgan, Ellis, and Mabel. I also want to thank my parents for the example they have set for me in life. My mother, a retired Dickenson County, Virginia school teacher, taught me the value of an education. My father, a former coal miner turned small business owner, taught me about hard work and dedication to family. I know they are watching today from home. Finally, I would like to thank the many colleagues from across the Intelligence Community, the State Department, and the White House who have offered encouragement throughout the nomination process.

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Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions and to the opportunity to serve our country.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you very much.

We will now proceed to a round of 5 minute questions by the members on the basis of first come, first served.

With that, I was here first, I guess, so I will go first. Even if I wasn't, I am still going to go first.

Senator SHAHEEN. [Inaudible.]

Senator RISCH. I was. I was just down the hall.

Senator SHAHEEN. Sure.

Senator RISCH. So Ms. Lake, you spent time at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, and there has been a lot of discussion about the USAGM amongst members for some time, and I would like you, if you could, to talk about your work while you were there, please.

Ms. LAKE. Chairman, thank you so much for that question. I appreciate it. And thank you for asking me about the work that I have done at U.S. Agency for Global Media. I am very proud of the

work that we have done there, and I am currently still in the role as Deputy CEO at the agency.

The agency runs Voice of America. The agency runs Office of Cuba Broadcasting. We have several grantees. And if you ask people who work at the agency right now, they will say we are doing the best news product that we have ever done. I am really honored today to have in the crowd Alvaro Alba. He runs our Office of Cuba Broadcasting. He has been there 28 years, started as a reporter. And even though the media reports have tried to disparage the work we have done, Alvaro would tell you that every single thing they have asked for in the effort to get news into the island of Cuba that I have provided or given him or made access to so that they could be incredible journalists covering what is happening in Cuba so that the Cuban people can hear it.

The same goes for Iran as well. We are putting in an exceptional product into Iran. Even during outages when the internet was down, we were on the air 24/7. I have people that run the newsroom, the VOA newsroom, VOA Persian, who say we are doing the best coverage we have ever done. Unfortunately, the media has not been fair in their coverage of what we are doing.

We have been modernizing the agency, and we have been making it more efficient and rooting out some of the waste.

Every single media outlet across the globe has been modernized and had efficiency measures taken, except for, unfortunately, some of our government run media. So I had the tall task that President Trump assigned me to with an executive order to bring the agency to where it should be statutorily, and we are proud to say that we are operating in a statutory fashion right now with an incredible team of journalists who are proud of the work that they are doing.

We are no longer pushing anti-American sentiment, no longer pushing pro-CCP, pro-regime sentiment. We are putting out America's story and how it aligns in our foreign policy and our National Security Strategy.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. Hanrahan, you are going to find a challenge dealing with our European counterparts. The Ranking Member and I and other members of this committee frequently deal with our European allies, and I have to say that it is very, very mixed. You get some that are wringing their hands and talking about how bad the relationship has deteriorated, and others that have a recognition that it is time for them to step up and be much more of an equal partner than what they have been. And it is a rough patch with some people, but you are going to have to navigate that.

I have said over and over again that Europe and NATO and our European allies are our natural partners, our natural allies, as we go through this century and confront what is going to be a real challenge from China. Even if you put our two populations together, we are still only about half of what China is.

But we are much more like our European cousins than like China, and it is important that we stand together because it is going to take that, really, to stand up to China as they become more and more sophisticated in their challenge to us.

And they are the most likely, they are the most natural allies we have in that regard. Our values are the same. We are democracies.

We are capitalists. We have a rule of law, a strong view and respect for human rights. China is 180 from that. So it is a lot easier for us to work with our European allies.

Are we always going to agree? Of course not. That is never going to happen. But I would like to hear your thoughts on the relationship and your management of that.

Mr. HANRAHAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for that question, and thank you also to all your teams' time as I went through this process. I really appreciate it.

I agree with your assessment completely. I think as I noted, the intention and objective for our relationship with Europe is, one, an alliance that can counter shared threats, and those come from both Russia, and increasingly in the 21st century, those will come from China.

I think one of the key focuses for President Trump's administration is to bring that message and to be direct to our European partners that they need to step up. And inevitably in some of those conversations that directness creates some bumps in the road, but I think how I, if confirmed, would take that message forward is calmly and candidly to them. And I do think we are starting to see some good progress in that domain.

I think in particular in China, there is really two components that we can work on. One is increasing awareness of the threats. Some of our European partners are there. Others still have a ways to go to show them what the challenges can be.

I think once we get past that, the second component is really bringing the experiences we have to think about how to calibrate export controls, synthesizing those, how to think about putting in the right level of investment screening legislation that can create better security for the vendors they are selecting and their economies.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. That sounds like you have a good handle on the landscape there, and I wish you well as you go forward. If you can bring those things to fruition, it will be in the best interest of the United States of America.

With that, Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Lake, I want to begin with you because as you heard in my opening statement, I have real concerns about how you operated at USAGM. You destroyed the Farsi language broadcasting ahead of President Trump's war in Iran. You cut the Spanish language services ahead of the Administration's action in Venezuela. You put over 2,000 employees on leave, paying them not to do anything for months. And when my staff asked how much that costs taxpayers, you had no idea.

Well, we know that keeping those personnel out of office and on administrative leave has cost American taxpayers \$139.7 million. An independent audit found that your interpretation of the so called statutory minimum standard on staffing caused the agency to violate the law.

And when my staff asked questions about these actions and invited you to meet with them, you refused to meet, and you subsequently directed your team to stop all communications with my staff on this committee.

So, help me understand how we are going to be able to trust you to respond to Congress' concerns if you are confirmed as Ambassador to Jamaica if what you have done to date is to stonewall questions that I have on behalf of this committee.

Ms. LAKE. Thank you, Ranking Member Shaheen, for the question. I appreciate your concern for the agency. It is an important agency, and as I said to the Chairman, I am really proud of the work that we are doing there.

We have made ourselves available to your team. I was really happy to be able to meet with your team. I see some of them behind you right now, from your Western Hemisphere expert to Naz and Amy and Mike and Mark. They were incredibly kind and had a lot of questions about USAGM. It is a difficult task, to bring an agency to statutory minimum, and I leaned heavily on career civil servants who were at the agency to help figure out what that meant. And we are actually operating at a higher level than what they suggested. I think that we needed more people to do the job, and we are working really hard to make sure we continue to be efficient.

If we have not been forthcoming with our time with your committee, I will apologize for that. I know that many members of our team have met with your staff, and I can think of three or four times that we have met with them already. And if that was not enough, then we can work to continue our open dialogue. I know that we have reached out recently and said, "Where can we find some common ground here on what you need, so that we are providing it in a timely fashion?" And we have not heard back. I did say that I would make myself available to meet with you, and I never got a response from your team if that was open in your schedule.

Senator SHAHEEN. If you did not hear back from us, I am sorry that that happened. I hope you will commit to provide this committee any information that is requested if you are confirmed.

Ms. LAKE. Yes, I will commit to working through the State Department and their Legislative Affairs folks to make sure that we have an open line of communication and that whatever is needed, we can provide you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Hanrahan, as I said in my opening statement, I am concerned about some of the decisions that are being made in other places throughout the Administration. One of those areas in particular is our policy toward Bosnia-Herzegovina. The changes have been done without consultation with this committee. In our efforts to raise concerns about decisions that have been made, we have had really unacceptable responses to substantive requests.

And so I would like to submit for the record the response that I received from the Department in response to my March letter, which called on the Administration to impose the sanctions that are required by the Fiscal Year 2026 NDAA on those responsible for undermining peace and stability in the Western Balkans. And let me be clear, I believe it is unacceptable, under any administration, to not abide by the law.

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

Senator SHAHEEN. So, if confirmed—when the Chairman comes back, we will ask him to submit that response for the record—but if confirmed do you commit to work within the Administration to follow the law?

Mr. HANRAHAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Shaheen for that question. Thank you also to your staff's time through this process, they have been very generous with it.

Specifically on the component of the 2026 NDAA related to the Western Balkan sanctions, yes, we will commit to following the law as outlined. And if confirmed, I will work with our Office of the Legal Adviser inside of the State Department to work through that, and we will be in communication with this committee as it relates to those requirements.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I am sure you are aware that despite the modest economy of the Republic of Srpska, under the continued direction of Milorad Dodik, it is spending millions of dollars in lobbyists and consultants to undermine the Dayton Peace Accords. One lobbying firm, which is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, stated, very blatantly, that its objective was to secure the support of the United States and obtain independence from Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Republic of Srpska, they were saying. And that obviously would be in violation of the Dayton Peace Accords. So, can you commit to upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement?

Mr. HANRAHAN. Senator, thank you very much for that question.

As it relates to this specific contract you were describing, I can say unequivocally it is the Department and Administration's position that there should be no secession in Bosnia, and that we support the peace that the Dayton Peace Accords have brought. And so I think we are very clear on that.

Senator SHAHEEN. OK. Well, I appreciate that. I hope you will be very clear with the multitude of lobbyists who have been hired to try and separate the Republic of Srpska from the rest of the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MCCORMICK [presiding]. Thank you to the Chairman and the Ranking Member for holding today's hearing, and thank you to the nominees and your families for really being willing to serve and put yourself out there. So we appreciate that.

Ms. Lake, it is great to see you today. Thank you for coming to meet me earlier this week. As the father of six spirited daughters, I can appreciate how your eight siblings help lay the early groundwork for a role in conflict resolution and international diplomacy, so you are well schooled.

There are some misconceptions regarding your candidacy in the 2022 elections and the 2024 elections, where you and I were both on the ballot. So, I would like to just give you a minute to step back and give you the opportunity to speak in the case there is anything you would like to address, as it relates to your 2022 and 2024 elections.

Ms. LAKE. Can I have more than 5 minutes?

Senator McCORMICK. No, I do not know about that.

Ms. LAKE. Actually, you do not want that, probably. But thank you so much, Senator McCormick, for opening your schedule to me this week. I enjoyed meeting with you. And yes, in a family of nine, eight girls, one boy, I did learn diplomacy, because you have to. At the end of the day, and we did not have a lot of means, we were pretty poor, although nobody ever told us that, we had to hop in bed and sleep with our sisters, we did not have enough bedrooms. So, you did not want to take that fight or disagreement all that way to the next day. So, I am so honored to have grown up in a big family. Thank you very much.

I felt that I ran incredible campaigns with the grassroots of Arizona firmly behind me, and I am very proud of the way that I conducted myself, and the way we ran those campaigns. As a newcomer to politics, I thought that this country was set up where an outsider could step into politics, but then I realized that sometimes the political class does not want the outsiders. But that is OK. It was a great learning experience.

I fought for fair and free elections in the courts for the people of Arizona, and I am glad that the President is going to continue fighting for fair and free elections. I am looking to the future, and what I want to do is to hone my skills. I want to take everything I have learned thus far, and work at being the best diplomat and Ambassador that the U.S. has ever sent to Jamaica, and I am looking forward to that.

Senator McCORMICK. Very good, thank you.

In your opening statement, you mentioned working with the Jamaican government to combat lottery scams that target vulnerable American victims to the tune of \$300 million annually. Jamaica has struggled for years to prosecute these networks domestically. If confirmed, what practical resources or support would you pursue to encourage more effective cooperation between our law enforcement agencies to stop these scams?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you for asking that question, Senator. I think people think, "How could you get scammed out of your life savings?" But there are some bad actors in Jamaica who have really honed the skill of bilking people out of their money through these lottery scams and other financial scams. And so we will work very closely with Jamaican law enforcement officials. We already have a great relationship. We will work with our counterparts at the State Department, and we will work with local law enforcement here in the United States to make sure that we are doing everything we can to alert people to this problem, because I think a lot of people unsuspectingly do not even realize that they are obviously being caught up in a scam, and then prosecute people to the fullest extent of the law. And I will put pressure on the Jamaican government, if I am confirmed, to really prosecute and take seriously these types of crimes.

Senator McCORMICK. Very good, thank you.

Mr. Segura, the Administration has prioritized going after the cartels in the Western Hemisphere, and in pursuing a whole of government approach to dismantling the narcoterrorist organizations. Key to this is enlisting our allies and partners in the Western Hemisphere to control migration, stop drug flows, and strengthen

maritime and territorial interdiction capabilities. I saw this firsthand a couple weeks ago in Colombia, where there is remarkable cooperation.

If confirmed how do you intend to use the Bureau's diplomatic tools to build sustained operational cooperation with partners that translates into real success in disrupting those narcoterrorist networks?

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

I think this is an incredible priority for the Department. It is one of my largest priorities, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary. And what has been very encouraging, especially through the President's leadership, the Secretary's leadership, is creating the space to be able to work with our partners in the region to combat these narcoterrorist organizations. And so that is going to be a huge priority of mine. And also working across the Department with our different bureaus that unleash funding, different tools and resources, so that we can address this scourge in the hemisphere.

Senator McCORMICK. Very good.

Senator Murphy, I think you are next.

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

Ms. Lake, I heard you in response to earlier questions take credit for the programming that is going into Iran right now. And that was a little curious, given the fact that one of the early actions you took was to effectively dismantle our programming in Iran. You cut off funding for Farsi language Radio Farda, you put the VOA Persia staff on leave, such that when the bombing campaign began last summer, we had really no ability to be able to send any message into Iran. In fact, you were able to broadcast 75 minutes of content in a 72 hour period at the very moment when it would probably be very important for the United States to be able to broadcast a message there.

So, I heard you take credit for the current amount of programming in Iran. Was your decision to dismantle Radio Farsi and Radio Farda and the VOA Persia staff a mistake?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you so much for that question Senator Murphy. I appreciate it.

RFE is who runs Radio Farda, we run VOA Persia, and it is very much alive and well. We had great coverage. We went into surge mode when the attack happened, and we immediately brought in a huge team of folks to cover it. We actually covered the President's speech live with live translation, so that the people in Iran could—

Senator MURPHY. Just to be clear, I am not asking you to tell me what is happening now. I am asking you why did you fire or put on leave all of the VOA Persia staff? Why were we in a position where we had to reconstitute all of that? Do you concede that that was a mistake?

Ms. LAKE. I do not think it was a mistake. I think that we were bringing things to statutory minimum, which is what the executive order mandated for us to do, and we had a small staff, but the minute this happened we immediately surged and brought more people in. They call it "breaking news mode," and anybody who works in journalism understands that you have kind of a homeostasis level and then when news breaks you jump in.

Senator MURPHY. So when this crisis passes you will bring that staff back down to statutory minimums?

Ms. LAKE. No. I think we are always assessing and reassessing and making sure that we are running things smoothly. But I listen to the folks in VOA. I do not run VOA. I work at the agency level, and I listen to the professionals there to what they need.

I know there are people here in this room who work at VOA, who would tell that every single thing they have asked for, we have provided.

Senator MURPHY. Well, that is absolutely not true. That staff protested the devastating cuts. It was a mistake to dismantle our information operations in Iran, and your inability to concede that was a mistake suggests that we have not learned lessons. And perhaps when this crisis is gone we will once again reduce staff there.

There was this very specific issue where staff were requesting access to U.S. transmitters in Kuwait that were necessary in order to broadcast into Iran, and you denied them access to use those transmitters, finally giving them access to one frequency when they needed multiple frequencies. You said that it was because the transmitters were down, that they were inoperable. That does not seem to be true. It seems, in fact, from all reports that those transmitters were available and you were simply making a decision to limit the amount of capacity we had to broadcast into Iran. And you seem to have walked back your contentions that those transmitters were down. It seems like you were not telling the truth. Can you tell us now whether those transmitters were actually inoperable or whether you were actually actively denying the ability for our staff who do this work to transmit information into Iran?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you very much for that question. I appreciate it.

First of all, we have given all funding to Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, every grantee. Radio Free Europe is the one that operates Radio Farda. And we have given them every single—

Senator MURPHY. But talk to me about—this is a very specific issue where there was a major problem because we were not able to broadcast into Iran because you had denied access to these transmitters. You said it was because they were inoperable. They were not inoperable. Correct?

Ms. LAKE. We have had repairs done on them, so it could have been at a time when there were repairs done. But we were not denying them in any way.

Senator MURPHY. No, you were definitive. You said that this was not a decision to deny them access, that they were inoperable. I mean, this committee can find the answer to this question pretty easily. You are always doing repairs on transmitters. Those transmitters were not inoperable. Correct?

Ms. LAKE. I will have to look into that. I do not know.

Senator MURPHY. But you said, you stated on the record that they were inoperable, whereas your staff contended that you were denying them access to the transmitters in order to limit the amount of information in Iran.

Ms. LAKE. Radio Farda was doing a product and VOA Persia was doing a product, and we were using the 24 hours we had to put VOA, which is a government owned entity, out on the airwaves in

Iran. And you know, we have only 24 hours in the day, unfortunately. Sometimes I wish we had more. But we chose to put VOA—

Senator MURPHY. I am well over my time. I think your limitation of our ability to transmit information to Iran was egregious. It was made more egregious by the fact that you were not telling the truth about what was happening behind the scenes to limit our ability to tell an American story in Iran. And I will follow up for the record on this question of whether you were telling the truth about those transmitters being inoperable.

Ms. LAKE. I will be happy to answer any additional questions.

Senator MURPHY [presiding]. Sorry. Senator Hagerty, you are next.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Lake, I would like to stay with you on this point for just an aspect of some clarification for my colleagues on this committee.

The first time I was ever charged with running a government agency I went in and eliminated over 40 percent of the positions in the department. I did it right away. Basically, McKinsey had CG'd the department and eliminated over 40 percent of the positions. I did that in the face of a great deal of criticism. That sort of change created a lot of discomfort.

But what happened was we took a department that was delivering a State that was performing in the bottom half of every economic metric to one that moved very quickly to performing at the very apex of that. Those sorts of transitions, those sorts of rewiring, take time, take disruption, but in fact what you can see at the end is a much higher performing entity.

So I just want to applaud you for where you actually took the agency and acknowledge the fact that sometimes that movement requires disruption, and it is not always a seamless effort, but it is something that can result in what I think can be a much better product for the American taxpayer.

And if I think about what you must have encountered when you took over the U.S. Agency for Global Media, I have got some specific examples of what—this is not what you found. This is what investigators found. Hundreds of thousands of dollars at the Voice of America were being spent to sponsor a cricket team in Afghanistan. They hired journalists who had previously worked for companies that were tied to the Kremlin. In fact, one of the people that the agency hired as a freelancer was arrested by one of our allies on suspicion of spying for Russia. These are people that taxpayer dollars, American taxpayer dollars, are being used to hire.

One of the American employees was convicted of making threatening calls to Republican Members of Congress. Last year, the Voice of America's broadcast in Spanish ran a story with the President of the United States' image and a swastika impressed on his forehead. That, to me, sounds like an agency that is desperately in need of reform. And I want to thank you for leaning in to stopping the waste, to making certain that American taxpayer dollars are being used effectively, and getting us back on the right track.

Let me get back onto the topics that concern me.

Mr. Segura, when I think about your job, your challenges in the Western Hemisphere, they are great. I just think about what has

happened with our southern border, countering the narcoterrorist networks there is a big challenge. If I just think about the statistics, the CDC has explained that in 2024 we had over 80,000 deaths due to drug overdoses here in America, over 48,000 of those from fentanyl. And when I think about the number of people killed by fentanyl in a single year, it exceeds the sum total of all Americans that died in Vietnam in active duty. This is a real crisis, and I think the challenge is very, very significant. And I want to thank the Administration for stepping up our activities in border security, stepping up the activities in fentanyl interdiction, stepping up the activities trying to disrupt these cartels.

But I also want to ask you, moving forward, what is the most important role the State Department and the Western Hemisphere Bureau can play to continue to undertake this battle? What do you need, and what do you intend to do?

Mr. SEGURA. Well, thank you, Senator, for the question, and as a fellow I understand you were a Secretary of Commerce in Tennessee at one point, so I really appreciate the work you did there, as well.

As it relates to stopping the flow of fentanyl, this Administration has categorically changed the game in a positive way when it comes to stopping the flow of illegal narcotics into this country. We have applied pressure. We have rebalanced relationships, for example, with Mexico. We have really held them to account. For example, on the southern border they now are enlisting more than 10,000 National Guardsmen on their side of the border to stop the flow of illegal immigration. That is a huge component to this fentanyl fight.

But there are other tools. We have to secure ports of entry all over the hemisphere, because that is how a lot of these substances, especially on the precursor side, are feeding into the hemisphere and then eventually getting into our country. So these are all areas that I plan to focus on and prioritize, and I look forward to working with the committee.

Senator HAGERTY. I applaud that. Please keep us updated. A lot of Tennesseans are suffering, and I want to see this effort successful. We all do, on every side of this dais.

Ms. Lake, I want to come back to you on a related topic here, and that has to do with, beyond your normal role as ambassador you are going to be responsible for an interagency effort to deal with U.S.-Jamaica counternarcotics efforts. And that is going to require leading a team that has personnel in the State Department side and in law enforcement. Can you just illuminate us in terms of how you plan to approach that challenge?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you so much for the question, and I want to commend the people who are on the ground in Jamaica. From what I understand they are doing incredible work. Working with the Jamaican authorities we are taking the incredible knowledge we have in law enforcement here in America, also in investigations, and we are helping to train additional forces in Jamaica, and we will be working with the Department of War. I understand that they are very much hot on bringing down these narcoterrorists.

Most of the drugs, from what I understand, are coming from Colombia, about 40 percent of the drugs coming from Colombia, and

they stop at Jamaica, and then they go out to other areas. Some of them are making their way into the United States.

One death from fentanyl or overdose from drugs, in my opinion, is one death too many, and I am glad we have a President who is taking this issue seriously. Fentanyl is a weapon of mass destruction, and I think that the people of Jamaica deserve the safety that their government is now working to help provide. They have brought down the murder rates by 43 percent, from what I understand, in the country. They are making huge progress in making Jamaica a safer country, and I think the people of Jamaica deserve that, and the people of America deserve that as well.

Senator HAGERTY. When I was serving as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, we found out that China was using Japan as a transshipment point as well. I think every one of our ambassadors needs to be extremely diligent, looking for the type of challenge you are going to be addressing, and if my offices can be of any help in that regard, I open the door to you to utilize that.

Ms. LAKE. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH [presiding]. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Lake, in response to a question from Senator McCormick, you said that you were proud of the way you ran your campaigns in 2022 and 2024. I'll ask you a question: on September 27, 2024, you gave a TV interview about your opponent, then House member, now our colleague, Senator Gallego, in which you said he is, quote, "controlled by the cartels." His own father was a Colombian drug trafficker, and so he has got links to the cartel.

A *PolitiFact* article on October 3, a few days later, rated that "Pants on fire!" And the title of the article, and I would like to submit it for the record, Mr. Chair, is "In Arizona Senate race, Kari Lake fabricates link between Ruben Gallego and drug cartels."

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

Senator KAINE. Now, this is pretty undiplomatic behavior.

And just for my colleagues, I hope you might read this story. Ruben, our colleague, has written a memoir about his very troubled upbringing, and about the fact that he was abandoned by his father, who then did get into criminal trouble. He was abandoned by his father. He had to be raised by his mother. He was so furious at his father that he changed his last name to be his mother's maiden name, not his father's name.

He talks about graduating from boot camp as a Marine, and after years of abandonment, his dad tried to show up and take credit for his own graduation from Marine boot camp, and he writes about how furious that made him and still makes him. He writes about how ashamed he is of his father, how angry he is at his father. Abandonment by a father is one of the most seminal tragedies of life. I mean, go back to the biblical phrase, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" This is not something to fool around with.

Ms. Lake accused one of our sitting colleagues of being controlled by the cartels. You had no evidence then, nor do you have any evi-

dence now, that our colleague, Senator Gallego, is controlled by cartels, do you, Ms. Lake?

Ms. LAKE. Well, we provided the receipts. The father was a high level drug trafficker, trafficking hundreds of thousands of—

Senator KAINE. You said that Ruben Gallego was controlled by the cartels. You provided no evidence. This was rated “Pants on Fire,” a lie. You had no evidence then, and you have no evidence now, that Ruben Gallego is controlled by cartels. Isn’t that right?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you for the question, Senator Kaine. I do appreciate it.

I do not know, and I am not here to do reputational control or reputational repair for—

Senator KAINE. OK. How about an apology to our colleague? If you made that claim, that he was controlled by cartels, and now you are saying you do not know what the facts are, then you are acknowledging that your charge was wrong. How about apologizing to our colleague?

Ms. LAKE. I do not believe my charge was wrong.

Senator KAINE. OK.

Ms. LAKE. Ruben Gallego’s father is a high level drug trafficker.

Senator KAINE. That is not the question I asked you.

Ms. LAKE. He was a felon.

Senator KAINE. That is not the question. You asserted he was controlled by cartels. You had no evidence then. You have no evidence now. You are unwilling to admit it.

And here is something that is even worse, Mr. Chair. That was during the heat of a campaign. Sometimes we say things during campaigns that we go too far. She has continued to repeat this, as a sitting member of the Trump administration. A couple months ago, Ruben Gallego put out a tweet against the invasion of Venezuela. He did not mention Ms. Lake, he just said he was against it. And she, at 2:35 in the morning the following day, responded, “You are a member of a Mexican cartel family. You are also a fraud. No one is surprised by your take.”

She is continuing to repeat a lie. She just told the committee she has no idea whether it is true or false, but she was glad to say it, and she will not retract it now. That should be disqualifying.

Mr. Segura, I have got a question for you. Your role is not only to be the Assistant Secretary, for which you are nominated, but also to be key on the Inter-American Foundation. That is a congressionally established foundation. It has sustained robust bipartisan support in the Fiscal Year 2026 Approps Bill. Will you abide by the law, which states, quote, “The Foundation shall have perpetual succession unless sooner dissolved by Congress,” and commit to us not to take any action to dismantle or imperil the work of the foundation, unless dissolved by Congress?

Mr. SEGURA. Well, Senator, thank you for the question. And also I just want to commend the work you did as a missionary in Honduras. I also was a missionary in Latin America, and so it is a beautiful thing to do.

As it relates to your question, I will follow all laws, Senator.

Senator KAINE. And so that particular law, that the Foundation will have perpetual succession unless sooner dissolved by Congress, is one you will follow?

Mr. SEGURA. Like I mentioned earlier, I will follow all laws.

Senator KAINE. All right, thank you.

I yield back.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Lee.

Senator LEE. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Lake, what can you tell us about your take on the best way to help Jamaica? As ambassador, if confirmed, do you intend to focus more on aid or on lifting trade burdens and on increasing economic opportunities for the island?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you, Senator Lee, for that question.

I think, if confirmed, we are going to look at everything. We are going to hit the ground running, and look at ways to expand American business opportunities, and try to level the playing field, because right now, as we know, when we are competing for a contract or a tender with the CCP or CCP controlled company, oftentimes they will underbid the United States. We want to make sure that we are working with Jamaica to make sure that there is a level playing field, so that American businesses have a real shot to do great work. We know that we provide better quality work, we hire Jamaicans, and we want to make sure that we are assisting and also allowing for American companies to expand.

I think there are big companies that could help right now. There is a huge need, as they are rebuilding after this Category 5, which devastated especially the southern and western part of the island. And if we do not take an active approach to getting American companies in to bid and get some of these big purchases and big jobs, we are going to see the vacuum filled by more Chinese influence in that country, and that is concerning to me. I think it is concerning to both sides of the aisle, when it comes to what China has done and their influence so close to home.

Senator LEE. We have seen that all over this hemisphere, in many parts of Central and South America, China gaining footholds, putting a base in Argentina, for example, a lot of increased ties with Brazil, with the current government in Colombia, just to name a few. I would imagine that adding Jamaica to the list and securing a significant foothold in Jamaica, would be a huge feather in the cap for the CCP folk who really want a massive inroad at the doorstep of the continental United States of America.

What do you think is the best antidote to that, and how can you work with the Jamaican government to discourage that from happening?

Ms. LAKE. Yes. Right now the Chinese have a massive stake in one of the key ports in Kingston, I think they have a 49 percent control over it, and that puts us at risk. And so we need to rebalance things and work with the Jamaican government on that.

And not just big businesses, there is small businesses as well. I love this story. We all know that Jamaica has incredible athletes. They dominate in track and field and in gold medals. The fastest man in the world, Usain Bolt, I mean, we all watched as he wowed the world. But they are one of the only tropical climates that also has a Winter Olympic team——

Senator LEE. Bobsled.

Ms. LAKE [continuing]. In the bobsled. And actually a company in Utah, Backcountry, does the outfitting for that team, the Jamaican bobsled team, which I think is very cool. I mean, we definitely want big projects, but we want to encourage all kinds of American businesses to invest in Jamaica, and Jamaicans to invest in America, as well. You can buy a lot of things in Jamaica. You can show up and not have swim trunks and you can purchase those. You can purchase beach towels, whatever you need, shorts and shirts, but you cannot purchase winter parkas in Jamaica.

Senator LEE. I would imagine it would have limited utility in Jamaica.

Ms. LAKE. It would. You just do not need it. So, I think there is a real opportunity to work with our partners, our neighbors, Jamaica, an incredible country, and I am looking forward to it.

Senator LEE. There is a growing sense that gang violence is becoming more of a problem throughout the Caribbean and the growing concern that some of this is a spillover effect from Haiti, which has really had a big problem with gang violence. Any thoughts on how best the United States can work with Jamaica in order to bring that problem under control?

Ms. LAKE. Well, thank you for the question.

Thank you for mentioning Haiti. I know that not only is the United States taking an active role with the gang suppression force down there, but Jamaica is as well. Jamaica has some very talented individuals that are on the ground. I think the second in command from what I understand in this gang suppression activity that is happening and the work to stabilize Haiti, is a Jamaican. So it is in Jamaica's interest, it is in the United States interest, it is really in the Caribbean interest to make sure that we can solve some of the serious problems in Haiti, and we will be focusing on that, if confirmed.

Senator LEE. Remind me again. You and I have talked about this in the past and you may have talked about it more while I stepped out to vote. You have had this ongoing relationship with Jamaica. I have not met many ambassadorial nominees who have been to that country nearly as many times as you have. Tell me how that came about. Remind me why you feel so strongly about this country.

Ms. LAKE. Well, growing up in Iowa, I never had a chance to do vacation in a big family. If we did vacation, it was camping somewhere with a short drive or going to visit grandparents.

Senator LEE. As one of seven children, I know that real well.

Ms. LAKE. Yes. The car trips were an experience, especially with nine carsick kids. So the first time I got to see the ocean, I saved money and flew to Jamaica. It was the first ocean I ever saw. I got spoiled. That is a great ocean to see, the Caribbean Ocean. And we just kept going back. The beaches are great. My family and I, our kids are big swimmers. We like to swim in the ocean. We like to cliff jump and there is some great cliff jumping in Westmoreland Parish.

But mostly we just love the people. There is a feeling you get when you are in Jamaica, the spirit of the people. They love their country. They are so proud to be Jamaican. It reminds me of the patriotic pride I carry in my heart for this great country, America,

where our opportunities are so great. And I am glad to see that things are looking up. I know that as they continue to rebuild after this devastating catastrophic hurricane, I think they are going to pull themselves out of this, and bright days are ahead for Jamaica.

Senator LEE. Well, they are indeed, especially after we get you confirmed. I wish you well. You are going to do very well in that capacity. Thank you.

Ms. LAKE. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Lee.

Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you, Chairman.

Well, first off, thank each of you for your willingness to serve. Congratulations on your nominations, and I look forward to when you all get through this whole process. I hope we have enjoyed your day so far.

Mr. Segura, Latin America. It is a big deal for Florida, right?

So if we want to unlock Venezuela's economic potential and attract the level of foreign investment needed for a true recovery that cannot happen on the back of a self, still entrenched corrupt regime. Any serious stabilization, recovery, and transition plan has to be accompanied by the full release of political prisoners, which has not happened, a genuine restoration of the rule of law in independent courts, credible elections allow Venezuelans to choose their leaders freely.

Without those basic political and legal foundations, the country's future will always be held back by the same corrupt people and structures that brought Venezuela to the state it is in now. After all, everyone who abused the Venezuelan people for decades, stole the property of U.S. citizens and kidnapped them, unfortunately, is still in power, comfortably in power. I know the Administration, and I have talked to the President. I have talked to Secretary Rubio. They clearly understand the difficulty of moving to democracy.

So can you talk about how you think about this and how we are going to get to free and fair elections and a complete change in the trajectory for Venezuelans?

Mr. SEGURA. Well, thank you, Senator, for the question and also for spending time with me a couple of weeks ago. I really enjoyed our meeting.

As it relates to Venezuela, the Secretary, and I agree with his strategy and approach, has been very clear that we have got to get to democratically held elections. There is a process. There is a three step process that we are going through, stabilization, recovery, and reconciliation, and then transition.

And so I have been very encouraged to see that in the second stage that the Secretary has mentioned we are in right now, we are seeing the release of political prisoners in Venezuela. We have to continue to pressure the interim government to kind of release all political prisoners, not just some, and to obviously get to the point where they can have that last step of transition in elections.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you.

Mr. Hanrahan, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has now lasted longer than World War I. I think this is one of the greatest foreign policy blunders of recent memory. Hundreds of thousands of Rus-

sian soldiers have been killed for minimal territorial gains while Russia state spending is on an unsustainable path. This year's Victory Day parade in Moscow scaled back and overshadowed by record Ukrainian drone attacks, destruction inside Russia underscores just how Ukraine is now bringing the war to Russian territory through its drone technology and expanding domestic manufacturing capacity. I think this year they are going to build five million drones.

As Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, how will you ensure that the United States is absorbing the key lessons of this conflict about drone and defense innovation, sanctions, economic pressure, and long term deterrence?

Mr. HANRAHAN. Senator, thank you very much for that question.

And I would just state at the outset that certainly ending the war in Ukraine through a negotiated settlement remains one of the key focuses for President Trump and Europe, and if confirmed I will engage in that vigorously.

To the specific question on the evolution of warfare and the lessons learned from that, certainly as you note, drone technology and the production of Ukraine in that those technologies has evolved rapidly. As I have been briefed, the Pentagon is currently in discussions pursuing the drone deal to try to indigenize some of the technologies that they have developed in Ukraine, which I think can greatly benefit the United States, the prosecution of future warfare, and is well suited to the support that we have provided Ukraine.

I think one of the other good evolutions that President Trump has led in this war is evolving the way that we support the Ukrainians, specifically by getting Europe to pay their fair share, in particular through the PURL program. NATO allies are stepping up. They are paying for U.S. weapons and munitions to be delivered to Ukraine, and I look forward to continuing that program, which I think has been a good benefit and evolution of the way that we support that conflict.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you.

Mr. Vance, Americans are safer because of the intelligence we share every day with our close allies. Through Five Eyes with the U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and through deep partnerships with countries like Israel, they give us real time insight on terrorism, cyber threats, and hostile state activity. Can you talk a little bit about how important these relationships are to what you will be doing in this role?

Mr. VANCE. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

In the course of my intelligence community career, of course, I started in 2002 with the National Security Agency where we worked extremely closely with our second party and third party partners. Throughout my career, I have seen the value, the way that our allies can be force magnifiers for us.

Sometimes just the geography, the state being in a position to facilitate collection against target countries can be extremely powerful, but also the unique regional insights. For example, our Australian partners provide us with tremendous insights into South-east Asia.

Should I be confirmed to the role of INR Assistant Secretary I would bring that appreciation for how those partnerships can magnify our capabilities, both in the collection space as well as in the analysis space.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thanks.

Thank each of you for your willing us to serve.

Thank you, Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator CURTIS.

Senator CURTIS. Thank you.

It is great to be with all of you today.

Ms. Lake, as you know, I have enjoyed getting to know you better. If I am honest, I knew you from your persona, and you and I had really never met, and I have spent a lot of time trying to get to know the real Kari Lake, and I am grateful for the visit you made to my office and for the chance that we have had to talk about a number of issues.

So I am somewhat satisfied on all of those questions and would like to turn my attention today to Jamaica and particularly China. We have heard today about drugs, about gangs, but also equally concerning to me is China and their relationship in Jamaica. The Chinese Ambassador in Jamaica said in May that President Xi Jinping emphasized that Jamaica is a strategic partner of China. What is your assessment of China's strategic objectives in Jamaica, and really what are their true motives there?

Ms. LAKE. Thank you, Senator Curtis, and yes, thank you for the time that you afforded me in your office. I enjoyed getting to know you as well. I had never met you before, and I sometimes have to go and prove to people I do not have horns growing out of my head because the media has done a number on me. So thank you for giving me the chance.

Senator CURTIS. As I mentioned, as a Utahan, sometimes we have that same problem.

Ms. LAKE. The media is tough there too?

Senator CURTIS. Yes. People thinking we have horns.

Ms. LAKE. Yes. Well, we appreciate you. You are our neighbor. We love Utah, and we have a lot of good friends who live there, as well, so thank you so much.

I am learning a lot more about it. I do not know as much as you, and I appreciate your service on the Western Hemisphere Committee as the chairman, and we talked a little bit about it. But there is massive concerns, not just from the strategy of taking a huge section of the ports, but also when you look at the 5G and the telecom with Huawei expanding, it is very concerning what could happen.

There are always strings attached with China, and the question is do you want all of the information going through Huawei where you all of a sudden would have that information being trickled back to the CCP and China? There are massive concerns, and as this need right now to rebuild has created a lot of opportunity for companies to come in, I would rather see, and I know you would and everybody here, American companies coming in to assist, not the continued increase of Chinese companies.

Senator CURTIS. So speaking of that, as you know, a Chinese firm won a major contract for the Kingston Port expansion in 2025. What questions should the U.S. be asking about data access, port resilience, logistics, and dual use risks?

Ms. LAKE. When it comes to ports or when it comes to telecom?

Senator CURTIS. Well, in this case, specifically the port.

Ms. LAKE. The port. From what I have been briefed on, some of the concerns are when they are controlling and seeing everything that is coming in, it puts at a great risk for America, for our security. When they have access and control over everything coming into the country, there are huge risks. And I think the Department of War is probably looking closely at that.

I am looking forward to getting more briefings on this. As you know, everything I have been briefed on is what is publicly available. And as I learn more, I would be happy to meet with you, or if you want to share concerns I would be happy to listen in.

Senator CURTIS. You have a unique background in communications. How can you use that background to work with Jamaica and help them see exactly what comes with the Chinese relationship versus the U.S. relationship?

Ms. LAKE. You know, if you are not putting out your story, somebody else is. And the Americans have done such great work with our partners in Jamaica. They are our neighbors. We have a great relationship. We are culturally more similar than China is with Jamaica, and we need to tell the people what we are doing.

We were on the ground in massive numbers after the hurricane. The U.S. military put out 133 flights in the hours after the hurricane struck, and we brought in almost 500, I think 480-some humanitarian and relief workers. We brought in search and rescue crews, heavy equipment to move debris off of roads. There were entire communities that were cut off, and sadly, many deaths, 45 deaths and many, many others were hurt.

A quarter of a million people were displaced and needed housing. America was there. We need to tell that story. We will continue to be there. But we cannot continue to watch as China makes huge moves right here in our front yard.

Senator CURTIS. If you are confirmed, I would love to see you use all that expertise and talent to get that story out and help the United States get the credit and make sure that the blinders are off on China.

I am out of time, and I yield my time. Thank you.

Ms. LAKE. Thank you so much.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Curtis.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations to each of the nominees. Thank you for your service.

Mr. Segura, I want to talk about a foreign policy issue that is critical to my home State of Texas. In 1944, the United States and Mexico signed a treaty governing shared water resources. Under that agreement, Mexico is required to deliver 1.75 million acre feet of water every 5 years, which works out to about 350,000 acre feet each year.

For years, for the entirety of the Biden administration, Mexico has failed to meet those obligations. That has exacerbated the water crisis in Texas, and it has put farmers and ranchers and communities in south Texas at very serious risk. I have repeatedly pressed Mexico to deliver the water it owes under the treaty and have authored legislation to hold Mexico accountable for failing to do so.

Fortunately, the inaction from the State Department that we saw under Biden changed dramatically with President Trump's being elected, and I have worked hand in hand with President Trump to ensure that south Texas gets the water that Mexico owes it.

As a result of the President's leadership, Texas has received more water already than it did under the previous Administration. However, Mexico still owes us over 600,000 acre feet of water from prior commitments. Its most recent delivery of 202,000 acre feet came weeks after the March 31 deadline.

I want your commitment here today that if confirmed, you are prepared to take whatever steps are necessary against Mexico to ensure that Mexico stays current on its deliveries and pays back the water that they owe to Texas.

Mr. SEGURA. Thank you for the question, Senator, and also for making your staff available to me. Last week, I really enjoyed meeting with them, and I have to say the best decision that I ever made in my life was to marry someone from your great State.

Senator CRUZ. Amen.

Mr. SEGURA. I just wanted to say that. But in terms of—

Senator CRUZ. And that is some damn fine ass kissery, too.

[Laughter.]

Mr. SEGURA. So in terms of the water issue, I have been briefed as much as possible without being in the seat. I actually, if confirmed, would love to come visit your State, hopefully with you, to see the real impacts of the Mexican deficit that has accrued. As you mentioned in the last year, we have gotten more water to Texan farmers than the last 4 years under the previous Administration. So I know the State Department is making good progress, but we have got to hold Mexico accountable, and I am committed to doing that.

Senator CRUZ. Well, and you can see the very real consequences with the drought in south Texas. We have farmers who are taking, in many instances, half of their land out of production because they do not have the water. They are laying off workers. In 2024 the only sugar mill in Texas closed because there was not enough water to produce the crop, and Mexico is diverting that water to northern Mexico, and the farms in Northern Mexico are lush and verdant and awash with water.

And so I am grateful for the State Department's assistance and for the President directly. He has engaged directly on this issue multiple times, which is what produced action from Mexico finally honoring its treaty commitment. So I look forward to working closely with you.

Let's shift to another topic while we are on the topic of Mexico. I want to talk about the threat posed by Mexican drug cartels. Texans are on the front line, suffering the consequences of runaway policies in Mexico City. Vicious cartels run rampant in Mexico, fur-

ther fueling American deaths. These cartels are sophisticated, transnational criminal organizations that control territory that move billions of dollars in illicit revenue and operate with capabilities that rival those of some state actors. They should be treated as the threat that they are.

Last summer when I traveled down on a CODEL to Mexico, I pressed Mexican officials on this issue, and I shared President Trump's message that all options are on the table against these cartels. Do you share President Trump's commitment to eliminating these organizations, and does that commitment include potentially using military force, if necessary?

Mr. SEGURA. Thank you for the question, Senator. And to your point, under this President's leadership, the dynamic has completely changed. We have done things that folks had been trying to do for a long time, for example, designating the cartels as FTOs. That gives us a lot more tools at our disposal to go after these organizations.

And so 100 percent, we have to use every tool available to us to go after the cartels, and if confirmed I look forward to working with you, the committee to do that.

Senator CRUZ. Terrific. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Segura, if confirmed would you agree that part of the goal of someone in your position would be to encourage other countries in the Western Hemisphere to respect human rights and political rights?

Mr. SEGURA. Well, thank you for the question, Senator.

And yes, to your question.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So I do want to raise the situation in El Salvador because over 4 years ago, President Bukele initiated a 30 day state of exception. This was a state of emergency where they suspended certain constitutional rights like the right of free assembly, like the rights of due process, like their right to access to legal counsel, for a good purpose, which was to crack down on gang violence.

But here is the thing. He said it was going to be 30 days. It is now over 4 years. And by many credible reports, the prisons are filled with people who are not gang members, but people who were swept up in this state of exception. And they have used this state of exception to silence dissent, detaining political opponents, anti-corruption advocates, human rights defenders. There was a very credible report in March of this year by a Salvadorian human rights organization that said that more than 500 people had died in state custody under this so called state of exception.

And so my question to you is pretty straightforward. Will you work with us, if confirmed, to address some of these human rights abuses in El Salvador?

Mr. SEGURA. Well, thank you, Senator, for the question.

And we obviously have a bilateral relationship with the Salvadorians, a very productive one, and countering cartels, narco traffickers, the security situation. And so I can commit to working with the committee on a whole host of issues with El Salvador, including certain allegations or other information, and I can commit to that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I did not really hear a clear answer to whether or not you would work with this committee to ensure better compliance of the government of El Salvador with respect to human rights. You mentioned the bilateral relationship, and of course that bilateral relationship includes the fact that the government of El Salvador colluded with this Administration to take and hold people in violation of their constitutional rights.

In fact, the government of El Salvador has been very open that we paid them money, and they took these individuals without looking any deeper into the allegations against them.

So yes, we have a bilateral relationship. We have bilateral relationships with lots of countries, but my question to you is more specific, which is will you work with us to encourage the government of El Salvador to respect human rights and political rights?

Mr. SEGURA. Senator, like I mentioned, this is a big priority of mine, and so I will work with the committee.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Got it. So there are some U.S. citizens that have been swept up, apparently, and our goal is just to make sure that they have a fair hearing and a fair opportunity with respect to due process. Would you agree that the State Department has no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of U.S. citizens abroad?

Mr. SEGURA. Of course, that is a very important priority, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So can you work with us to ensure that these U.S. citizens who are detained receive the due process that we would expect the government to provide them?

Mr. SEGURA. So I am not in the Bureau right now, so I do not have details, facts, circumstances, and I believe that there is current litigation in a lot of these cases and the Department does not comment on those. So I can follow up with the committee once in the seat, and I look forward to doing that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right.

Let me raise one last case. This is not a U.S. citizen, but it is the case of Ruth Lopez. She is an anti-corruption lawyer. I have met with her before. I recently met with her husband because she has been detained by the government. We do not even know exactly what the charges are, but they are clearly political charges. She is clearly a political prisoner.

Would you work with us to seek to secure the release of political prisoners in El Salvador?

Mr. SEGURA. So Senator, I can commit to working with the committee. I have not been briefed on—it was Ms. Lopez, was it?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes, Ruth Lopez.

Mr. SEGURA. OK. So I have not been briefed on this issue, the facts, the circumstances, but this is a big role of mine, if confirmed, is to come in front of this committee and work with the committee. So I can definitely do that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do have a final question that I would like to ask you, Mr. Segura, because one of the things that I am concerned about, and actually I should back up because I was quite pleased to hear almost all of you talk about your concerns with respect to China and the inroads that China is making, particularly in Latin America.

And one of the things that the minority members of this committee produced a year ago, and have in the last month put out a second version of, is an analysis of what is happening with China post the elimination of USAID and many of the programs that we have had that have been helpful in operating in Latin America.

And what the report is called is, "The Price of Retreat: America Cedes Global Leadership to China." And it points out that in our hemisphere, countries are rapidly looking to diversify their trade relationships with the United States. They are deepening their engagement with China. Right now we have 16 of 26 ambassadorial posts in the Western Hemisphere that are still vacant. Now, hopefully if members of this panel get confirmed, that will reduce that number by a couple, but it still indicates that we have challenges there.

So given that much of what we have used in the past to many of the incentives, many of the options that we have used to work with countries are no longer available, how do you see closing that gap with China and addressing the challenges that we have throughout the Western Hemisphere?

Mr. SEGURA. Well, thank you for that question, Senator.

To your point, the Chinese have infiltrated the Western Hemisphere. They have either controlling interests or large minority interests in a lot of critical infrastructure. They practice predatory lending to the point which challenges at times possibly sovereignty of a lot of our partners in the hemisphere.

And so this is definitely one of the top areas that, if confirmed, I plan to work on. A lot of the challenges that, at least from conversations that I have had and things that I have read, a lot of the challenges that seem to happen is American companies, there was a time where American companies were not showing up. And so a big part of the restructure under the Secretary's leadership that I commend is the fact that we are leading with commercial diplomacy. Our posts in these different countries are identifying tenders. They are working with their counterparts in these countries, and they are identifying opportunities where America can bid on projects, can be a partner on projects. And so that is definitely going to be a huge part of what I hope to focus on, if confirmed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I appreciate that. I think it is easier to do that when we actually have ambassadors in place in those countries and when we also have commercial attachés there who can address the commerce aspect of it. And those are some of the positions that right now are vacant that we just do not have the ability to compete. So I hope you will focus on that and share with the committee, if you are confirmed, what you are seeing in Latin America.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Thank you to our panel and all of you for being willing to serve and for your families to assist in that regard.

And as we close the hearing, I am going to order that any letters of support or otherwise the committee has received will be included in the record. I will also note for the information of members that the record will be open until close of business Monday, June 22, including for members to submit questions for the record. If you get one of those, I hope you will answer it quickly. It will help you as much as us.

And with that, the thanks to the committee, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:26 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JUAN SEGURA BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Inter-American Foundation

Question. The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) requires grantees to match funding with their own cash and in-kind resources, mobilizing \$1.37 on average for every \$1 contributed by the IAF. Do you agree that leveraged investments made by the Inter-American Foundation makes the most of taxpayer funding and to builds regional partnerships, improves economic prospects and mitigates migration?

Answer. The Trump Administration is committed to ensuring that every dollar of U.S. taxpayer funding advances American national interests and delivers measurable results. Questions regarding the IAF's operations and outcomes are best directed to the Foundation. If confirmed to the Board, I look forward to examining the Foundation's performance and ensuring it operates consistently with applicable law, Administration policy priorities, and the appropriations decisions of Congress.

Question. If confirmed for the IAF Board, what is your vision for the Foundation's work?

Answer. If confirmed, I will first seek to familiarize myself with the Foundation's current operations, statutory obligations, and active portfolio before forming conclusions about its direction.

I will approach my role on the Board consistent with the Trump Administration's policy priorities and applicable law.

Question. Do you commit to consult with the Foundation staff about their work?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with Foundation staff as appropriate and consistent with my role as a Board member. Effective oversight requires informed engagement, and I will seek to understand the Foundation's operations and statutory obligations as I carry out my responsibilities.

Question. The IAF is a congressionally established foundation and sustained \$29 million in funding in the fiscal year 2026 appropriations bill. Will you abide by the law, which states "The Foundation . . . shall have perpetual succession unless sooner dissolved by Congress," by committing to not take any action to dismantle or imperil the work of the Foundation, unless dissolved by Congress?

Answer. I will abide by the law. If confirmed, I will carry out my duties as a Board member consistent with applicable law and any court orders in effect.

Venezuela

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing democracy, human rights and the plight of political prisoners?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to making democracy, internationally recognized human rights, and the release of all political prisoners the central priorities of my tenure. The United States has already pressed Venezuela's interim government to pass and implement an amnesty law—resulting in the release of more than 1,000 individuals, including U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. If confirmed, I will advocate for the continued use of U.S. leverage to demand the unconditional release of all remaining political prisoners. I will also press for the return of exiled opposition leaders, reform of electoral institutions, and the conditions necessary for free and fair elections in which all Venezuelans can participate.

Question. Maria Corina Machado recently announced that she plans to return to Venezuela before 2027. How should the United States be involved in facilitating the return of Ms. Machado?

Answer. The United States strongly supports Maria Corina Machado's ability to participate freely in Venezuela's political life and future elections, and her safe return is a key benchmark for a democratic transition. If confirmed, I will press the interim government to guarantee her security and freedom of movement consistent with our demand that all exiled opposition figures be allowed to reengage in public life.

Third Country Arrangements

Question. The U.S. has signed multiple third country national arrangements with countries in the Western Hemisphere. What role does the WHA Bureau play in negotiating, implementing, and overseeing these agreements?

Answer. I understand the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs works closely with other Department bureaus and other U.S. Government partners agencies to negotiate and implement, and oversee third country national arrangements and safe third country agreements with countries in the Western Hemisphere. WHA leads diplomatic engagement across the region, working through U.S. embassies, and coordinates with DHS operational components to ensure removal flights proceed smoothly.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JUAN SEGURA BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

The IAF is currently operating under the following Strategic Goals for 2026–2030:

(a) Build sustained U.S. influence and appeal as the Hemisphere's top economic and security partner by empowering communities to counter Chinese influence and stem engagement in illicit activities led by cartels, gangs, and other destabilizing actors.

(b) Create viable economic opportunities to increase mutually beneficial trade with the U.S., address supply chain issues with U.S. businesses, and reduce migration by fostering prosperous, stable communities in the region.

(c) Address violence and insecurity at the family and community levels to decrease migration, prevent corruption, and create alternatives to recruitment into transnational organized criminal activities.

(d) Integrate migrants and displaced populations into communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, creating opportunities for them south of the U.S. border.

(e) Promote stability, resilience, and long-term recovery in the face of natural disasters and other crises throughout the region to prevent potential spillover effects on the United States and its people.

Question. Would you agree that these Strategic Goals are in line with Administration priorities for U.S. national security in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The Trump Administration's National Security Strategy makes clear that the United States will assert preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, counter extra-hemispheric adversary influence, end illegal immigration, and advance U.S. economic dominance in the region.

Question. How will you help ensure that the IAF meets these Strategic Goals?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with fellow Board members to ensure the Foundation operates consistently with applicable law, Trump Administration policy priorities, and the appropriations decisions of Congress. The Board holds full management authority over the Foundation and is responsible for ensuring accountability in its operations. I will take that responsibility seriously.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JUAN SEGURA BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Assistant Secretary.

Answer. This administration has placed a special focus on commercial diplomacy as a key driver of how America engages with the world and defends our interests internationally. As a previous Secretary of Commerce and Trade for the Commonwealth of Virginia, I have considerable experience engaging foreign companies and governments to attract more foreign direct investment into the US while enabling exponential growth in some of our most important industries like AI and advanced manufacturing.

As Secretary, I negotiated trade deals with governments, convinced international conglomerates like AstraZeneca to make generational investments in the US, and engaged staff globally in our push to set up more trade offices abroad. I believe this experience will be crucial in how we help American companies win projects overseas and compete with non-hemispheric actors to protect our critical supply chains.

Question. Do you commit to only fulfilling the role you've been nominated for, which is Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to fulfilling the roles that I've been nominated for which are both the Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs and to be a board member of the Inter-American Foundation.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. Yes.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. As I shared in my testimony, an America First foreign policy is best reflected in President Trump's National Security Strategy that underscores the critical importance of the Western Hemisphere. The Trump Administration has set an ambitious agenda that includes securing our border, defeating narcoterrorist groups, securing critical infrastructure, and expanding economic opportunities for Americans. The National Security Strategy also outlines the United States will reassert the Monroe Doctrine to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere and push back on the influence of global adversaries and malign actors in the region.

The Trump Administration is aggressively implementing this strategy with regional partners, expanding cooperation bilaterally as well as enlisting partners in new initiatives including the Shield of Americas, the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition, and a Critical Minerals Ministerial to build secure and resilient supply chains.

As a former Virginia Secretary of Commerce, I am particularly enthusiastic about the Trump Administration's prioritization of commercial diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I look forward to employing all available tools to ensure American companies are well positioned to help our regional partners build their economies.

As the National Security Strategy notes, an economically stronger Western Hemisphere is not only a more attractive market for American companies and investment, but increased commercial linkages will benefit both sides and reduce the space and influence of non-Hemispheric actors. This will require closer coordination with the American private sector and this coordination is a role I am eager to embrace drawing on my professional background as a former entrepreneur and investor.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail across Western Hemisphere?

Answer. An America First foreign policy entails securing our border, defeating narcoterrorist groups, expanding economic opportunities for Americans, and rolling back the influence of global adversaries and malign actors.

Question. In the Western Hemisphere, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The Trump Administration works to ensure the United States remains the preeminent partner in our hemisphere by offering a transparent and beneficial alternative to exploitative practices and any malign external actors. This means helping partners understand the risks of predatory lending and opaque deals that undermine sovereignty and leave countries with unsustainable debt.

If confirmed, I will work with colleagues in the Department and interagency to offer viable alternatives as the partner of choice in critical sectors like energy, mining, technology, and infrastructure—areas where American investment can deliver sustainable growth while securing supply chains vital to our national security.

Question. Are there opportunities where the United States can present alternatives to PRC influence operations and infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. I understand that embassies throughout the WHA region work to identify commercial opportunities and advocate for U.S. companies, especially in strategic sectors including infrastructure, critical minerals, energy, and technology. The Trump Administration also provides technical assistance through the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and the Transaction Advisory Fund, as well as financing tools from the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and Export-Import Bank of the United States to derisk projects for U.S. companies and offer viable alternatives to malign Chinese investment and financing.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. My approach to situations pertaining to statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress has been and will always be to consult the relevant colleagues, such as the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and other colleagues who may be able to provide helpful insight.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating appropriated funds in accordance with the law. I also commit to working closely with Congress to ensure appropriated resources are used effectively to advance U.S. national interests.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I commit to providing briefings and responses in as timely a manner as possible.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in your position?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advance internationally recognized human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts as core pillars of U.S. engagement in the Western Hemisphere. I will press for the unconditional release of political prisoners in Cuba and Nicaragua, where thousands are detained for exercising fundamental freedoms. I will support the right to freedom of expression, including for members of the press, especially in Nicaragua and Cuba, where civil society and journalists face death and danger. I will also call out censorship by adversaries, consistent with the Administration's position that government censorship is intolerable to a free society.

Finally, I will deploy the full range of available tools including visa restrictions and targeted sanctions to hold corrupt actors, human rights abusers, and those who suppress press freedom to account. I recognize that corruption fuels transnational crime, drives illegal immigration, and undermines democratic governance.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian aid is grounded in making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous while alleviating human suffering. The United States is the world's most generous nation, and must continue to lead, but in a way that directly benefits the American people and promotes our national interests.

As outlined in the Department's Strategic Plan, the Department has refocused its assistance programs into two categories: lifesaving programs and strategic investments. Lifesaving assistance includes time-limited health and humanitarian programs—disaster response, food security initiatives, and efforts to combat deadly diseases.

When Hurricane Melissa struck the Caribbean, the Department deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team and made available \$42.6 million to Jamaica, Haiti, The Bahamas, and Cuba. This demonstrated American leadership in our own hemisphere while strengthening partnerships.

My philosophy, and the philosophy of this Administration, is that humanitarian assistance should also serve American interests and build self-sufficiency rather than dependency.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. Through its new Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response, the Department is leveraging the comparative advantages of multilateral funding mechanisms and direct funding to trusted implementers. Since December 2025, the U.S. has announced a record \$3.8 billion in humanitarian assistance across 21 key countries through the pooled funding mechanisms managed by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This announcement has already led to historic reforms to the bloated U.N. humanitarian bureaucracy, bringing activities under a single U.N. Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, enhancing efficiency and delivering measurable impact, improving accountability and eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, and slashing bureaucracy to spend more on life-saving frontline work and less on overhead. The Department is also complementing this by providing funding to select implementers such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Food Program (WFP), and UNICEF. This direct funding will enable these organizations to deliver assistance where it is needed most, whether responding to sudden-onset disasters or addressing surges in needs within ongoing complex emergencies. By consolidating funding into these awards, these organizations gain the budget predictability needed to pre-position resources, maintain staffing, and respond immediately, bypassing lengthy procurement processes and sustaining a model that can move at the speed that crises demand.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit and who makes that decision?

Answer. The Secretary of State leads U.S. foreign assistance strategy under the President's direction, coordinating resources—including humanitarian assistance—with other departments and agencies to ensure they align with national security priorities. Humanitarian assistance has been and will always be a tool in the United States' national security toolkit. The Department will direct humanitarian assistance to address the most urgent, lifesaving priorities while also ensuring that such assistance can be used efficiently and effectively and not create dependency.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JUAN SEGURA BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. In a January 28 hearing, Secretary Rubio testified that he would provide the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with the agreement that set up an arrangement for U.S.-managed sales of Venezuelan oil. He also committed to coordinating with the Department of the Treasury to provide the document to the Committee, as required by the Case-Zablocki Act. Now more than 4 months later, the Department has not provided the agreement.

What is the specific obstacle to providing this agreement to Congress in accordance with the law and in line with the Secretary's testimony?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department, through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to work with Congress to accommodate oversight information requests, including requests related to the Foreign Government Deposit Fund established consistent with Executive Order 14373.

Question. The Inter American Press Association called 2025 one of the "worst years in the region" for crimes committed against journalists across the Western Hemisphere: 13 journalists were killed during 2025, almost twice as many as were killed during 2024.

If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing the state of press freedom in the region?

Answer. I understand the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs closely monitors the state of press freedom and freedom of expression across the region. If confirmed, I commit to engage through diplomatic channels to advocate for the protection of these fundamental rights as appropriate.

Question. I introduced a World Press Freedom Day resolution that highlighted the cases of detained journalists worldwide, including Yeris Curbelo Aguilera in Cuba and Elsbeth D'Anda in Nicaragua.

If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring your team coordinates with posts to engage on these cases?

Answer. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs has a strong track record of standing up for political prisoners throughout the region, including unjustly detained journalists. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to use all the diplomatic tools available to bring attention to those unjustly detained and advocate for their unconditional release.

Question. According to Dialogo Americas, a USSOUTHCOM publication, China funded 247 journalists from 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries to be trained in producing more favorable coverage of PRC. Chinese state media outlet, *The People's Daily*, has established partnerships with news organizations in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil and funded media summits to promote the publication of pro-China articles and videos.

If confirmed, how would you engage regional media outlets to preserve digital media freedoms and combat the spread of malign PRC narratives in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. I understand U.S. embassies across our Hemisphere employ effective counter-messaging approaches by working with local voices and partners, using research and audience analysis to inform outreach strategies. If confirmed, I will encourage our missions to continue highlighting U.S. partnership benefits through digital messaging and high-level engagement that generates media coverage. If confirmed, I will ensure our missions highlight the long-term positive impact of U.S. economic support and private investments on local economies. In addition, I will ensure our diplomatic posts continue to promote freedom of speech and digital freedom and the American technology stack as an enabler of American and regional liberty, security, and prosperity.

Question. South America has the world's highest rates of commodity-driven deforestation and a region that requires strong U.S. cooperation for Lacey Act enforcement.

If confirmed, how would you increase supply chain transparency to ensure U.S. trade partners are not sourcing commodities from illegally deforested areas?

Answer. Under President Trump, the Department of State is leveling the playing field for American businesses and protecting the U.S. timber industry's critical role in national security. Illegal logging is the third most lucrative form of transnational organized crime, after counterfeiting and drug trafficking, generating an estimated \$157 billion annually for international criminals. To combat organized crime and protect U.S. businesses, the Department supports technologies that help partner countries identify illegal timber origin and species, detecting deforestation-linked supply chains and supporting American competitiveness.

If confirmed, I will mobilize U.S. diplomatic and law enforcement tools to bring criminals to justice. I will also help coordinate across the U.S. Government to ensure our diplomatic engagement reinforces domestic Lacey Act enforcement priorities.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to bolster capacity for Lacey Act enforcement and strengthen the rule of law across the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to protect U.S. industry and combat transnational criminal organization activity through enforcement of the Lacey Act.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JUAN SEGURA BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

Venezuela Oil and Gold Revenue: When the Administration captured Nicolás Maduro, average gas prices were \$2.79 a gallon. Americans were told that taking control of Venezuela's oil and its revenues would lower costs and benefit the American people. And yet today, gas prices continue to hover well above \$4 a gallon—\$5 in Nevada—and months since the Maduro raid there is still no public accounting of where the oil money has gone. Everyone from policy experts to oil companies to the democratic opposition has said that for anything to change, Venezuela needs democratization, institutionalization, and the establishment of rule of law.

Despite this, the Administration has not released the agreements governing Venezuelan oil sales or disclosed how much revenue has been collected, who oversees the funds, or how they are being spent. Potentially bil-

lions of dollars in oil and gold revenues may be flowing through opaque Treasury-controlled and foreign accounts with little transparency.

Question. If you are confirmed, will you commit to briefing this Committee within your first 30 days on the status of all independent audits of Venezuelan oil sales and providing a full accounting of these funds?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress to accommodate oversight information requests working through the Department's Bureaus of Legislative Affairs and Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, including requests related to the Foreign Government Deposit Fund.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BRENDAN HANRAHAN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. In 2026, when [you] were Senior Bureau Official in the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs, the Department of State submitted a report that said there were no "active" Countering Russian Influence Fund grants for the prior year. Why were there no such grants?

Answer. In the "Report to Congress on Programs and Activities Carried Out to Achieve Goals During the Preceding Fiscal Year regarding the Countering Russian Influence Fund (CRIF)" transmitted on 04/08/2026, the Department reported that during fiscal year 2025, we obligated over \$236 million toward the achievement of CRIF goals.

That programing was carried out using the following funds: Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA); International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE); International Military Education and Training (IMET); and Foreign Military Financing (FMF).

Question. For fiscal year 2026, how will you advocate to use money that Congress appropriated for Countering Russian Influence Fund grants?

Answer. For fiscal year 2026, if confirmed, I will advocate for CRIF resources to be used in a targeted, results-driven manner that advances U.S. national interests and the America First agenda. I will prioritize funding toward activities that strengthen energy security, cyber resilience, security cooperation, and economic resilience in countries facing Russian malign influence.

Question. Do you see rule of law issues in Georgia undermining opportunities for U.S. businesses and broader Administration objectives regarding the Middle Corridor and if so, how?

Answer. The U.S. recognizes that political instability does not serve our priorities in Georgia or in the broader region. As economic interconnectivity develops, U.S. investors in Georgia will need a predictable rule of law and economic environment to ensure their investments are secure.

Lifting barriers to opposition parties' participation in the political process will create a healthier and more stable political environment, making Georgia a stronger commercial partner. In addition, recently adopted laws that chill corporate speech and less frequent government consultation with investors are concerning trends Georgia should address if it wishes to participate in investment opportunities.

Question. What do you view as the requirements that need to be met prior to any normalization of bilateral relations with the Georgian government?

Answer. This administration has been clear with our Georgian interlocutors that we want to see the relationship in a better place so that we can get back to cooperating on mutually beneficial objectives: commercial opportunities, trade, security, law enforcement, and immigration.

The Department has emphasized to the Georgian government that a stable political landscape will facilitate success in these areas and is key to renewed partnership. Restoration of our relationship will be based on concrete steps from the Georgian government. These include:

- creating a political environment conducive to opposition participation;
- expelling pernicious Chinese influence from Georgia's infrastructure development;
- cooperating with U.S. immigration policies;
- working with American firms to advance mutual commercial interests.

Question. Do you expect to be part of interagency conversations on force posture and if so, would your message be regarding U.S. force posture in Europe?

Answer. The Department of State fully participates in the interagency policy process.

Question. As this Administration works toward a Strategic Partnership with Azerbaijan, will you request that the Azerbaijani government release political prisoners—including those with affiliations with the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, I will raise the issue of political prisoners with Azerbaijan at the highest levels. I believe that private advocacy for these prisoners will have more success than public statements. I welcome Congress's continued advocacy on these issues.

Question. If confirmed, will you work to convene the Strategic Dialogue between the United States and the Belarusian Democratic Movement?

Answer. The State Department has engaged with the Belarusian Democratic Movement and will continue to do so at the right time and through all appropriate channels.

Question. Will you commit to ensuring that all U.S. supported infrastructure projects in the Europe and Eurasia region, including the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity, have competitive procurement and contracting processes, open tenders, and adhere to anti-corruption best practices?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that U.S.-supported infrastructure projects are carried out through transparent, open, and fully competitive procurement and contracting processes. This includes the use of fair and open competition, clear and publicly accessible tendering procedures where appropriate, and merit-based selection of contractors and suppliers. Where sole source awards are warranted, we will apply them in accordance with established criteria and procedures.

I will ensure these processes are grounded in high standards of accountability and integrity, with strong safeguards against corruption, waste, fraud, and abuse, while advancing U.S. economic and strategic interests and creating opportunities for U.S. companies on a fair and competitive basis.

Question. What is your view on Romania's accession into the OECD?

Answer. Each accession candidate must clear the rigorous and consistent standards of OECD committees. I understand Romania is making progress toward meeting OECD requirements.

Question. As Assistant Secretary, how will you work to advance Romania's OECD accession, including through coordination across the interagency?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the White House and the interagency to ensure an aligned approach on matters pertaining to the OECD, including accession.

Repatriation of Ukrainian Children Cases

Question. Are you familiar with cases of volunteers charged with repatriating Ukrainian children held in Russia?

Answer. As I understand it, the Department is not tracking any cases of volunteers charged with repatriating Ukrainian children held in Russia. The United States' dedication to the safe return Ukrainian children is unwavering. The EUR bureau is working with DRL to implement a \$25M assistance program to aid the return of Ukrainian children forcibly transferred to Russian-controlled territories and to Russia.

Question. What is the EUR Bureau doing to help free individuals facing these charges??

Answer. As I understand it, EUR is not tracking any cases of volunteers charged with repatriating Ukrainian children held in Russia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO BRENDAN HANRAHAN BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Assistant Secretary.

Answer. I bring a depth of experience in commercial diplomacy from my work in the private sector, where I have worked on multinational transactions and have partnered and advised numerous global corporations.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the State Department's career Foreign Service and Civil Service staff, whose deep subject matter expertise will be essential to crafting and implementing effective U.S. foreign policy to advance American interests abroad.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. An America First foreign policy works to prioritize U.S. interests—best understood as optimizing outcomes for U.S. citizens—above other competing demands. Assessing what qualifies as a compelling U.S. policy interest requires testing against the question: 'Does this policymake American citizens and our Nation safer, strong, or more prosperous'?

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail across Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. As I outlined in my opening statement, an America First foreign policy in Europe and Eurasia means focusing on advancing the United States' core national interests. This entails:

(1) First, keeping American citizens safe by working closely with our Ambassadors and missions abroad. This is our highest and most essential goal.

(2) Second, rebalancing our relationship with Europe to better advance our core interests—the security and prosperity of American citizens. In the domain of security, this means advocating for transferring primary responsibility for conventional European defense to our Allies, while simultaneously expanding the U.S. defense industrial base and co-production opportunities with NATO partners. Rebalancing also means enforcing a reciprocal trade and regulatory environment, especially with the European Union, that permits a level playing field for American businesses and workers. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Pentagon, USTR, and the broader interagency on both issues.

(3) Third, I will focus on promoting a peaceful, stable Europe that unlocks the economic potential of the region. I will support President Trump's efforts to secure a durable peace in the Russia-Ukraine war. I will work to solidify the significant gains from President Trump's historical Peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And I will work to further deescalate other regional tensions by empowering local actors to forge local solutions. One of the key tools to advancing this peace and stability is commercial: ensuring Europe and Eurasian countries partner with the United States for their technology and energy.

(4) Fourth and finally, if confirmed, I will work with European counterparts to guard against emerging and future threats to U.S. interests. This will entail enhancing law enforcement cooperation to combat terrorist networks, organized crime, and other bad actors that have exploited unfettered mass migration flows to smuggle fentanyl into the United States. It will also require protecting supply chains by mitigating our collective dependence on adversaries and rivals. If confirmed, I will focus on countering China's abuse of the global trading system by advocating for commercial partnerships between trusted U.S. and European firms to reinforce a secure U.S.-Europe economic partnership.

Question. In Europe and Eurasia, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. Countering China's influence in Europe is one of the Bureau's core priorities. The U.S. works closely with European counterparts to ensure they are aware of the risks of doing business with China, particularly when it comes to the security of strategic infrastructure and countering non-market practices. As I understand it, we collaborate closely with European nations to hold China accountable for its continued support of Russia's war in Ukraine and to strengthen Europe's economic security.

Europeans acknowledge these risks, and some have made progress. Examples of de-risking include establishing investment screening regulations and strengthening research security guardrails to protect sensitive know-how. We continue to push Europe to do more at a quicker pace.

The U.S. is working with Europeans to disrupt the illicit global supply chain of synthetic drugs, coordinating our strategies and messaging to urge China to stop the flow of precursor chemicals that are used to manufacture illicit drugs.

The Department is primarily addressing Russian influence by strengthening European conventional defense through NATO and pressing Europe to sustain support for Ukraine. Europeans have a vested interest in securing peace on their continent.

Question. Are there opportunities where the United States can present alternatives to PRC influence operations and infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. The United States is presenting credible alternatives to PRC influence and investment, ensuring Europeans are fully aware of the risks of Chinese investment, and supporting European partners in developing their own economic security toolkits. Our goal is to create trusted alternatives to Chinese technology and infrastructure investment.

If confirmed, I will prioritize commercial diplomacy on behalf of U.S. workers and firms to pursue opportunities in Europe that advantage American business and provide an alternative to Chinese influence.

Pax Silica, a U.S.-led framework uniting like-minded nations, includes six European countries and the EU. The India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC), the first real competitor to the Belt and Road Initiative, is anchored in Europe. The Critical Minerals Ministerial included 16 European countries and focused on diversifying global supply chains, reducing dependence on non-market actors (primarily China), and establishing the Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE).

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. I commit to following the applicable laws and regulations in consultation with the Department of State's Legal Advisor and Bureau of Legislative Affairs. I also commit to working with the committee on all major issues within its remit.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under my management, in full accordance with the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I am unable to answer this question with a timeframe. The Department receives many different types of inquiries from Congress that require responses that can be emails, letters, reports, briefings, and hearings. Many of these requests require input from several different offices and bureaus. In-person briefings and hearings require scheduling around my responsibility to support the Secretary and Under Secretaries with dates that work with the legislative calendar and schedules of individual Members of Congress.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in your position?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our Ambassadors and overseas missions to press governments on upholding human rights, media freedom, and combatting corruption in the region, both with regard to authoritarian states and to civilizational allies. Freedom of speech means respecting the ability of voices across the region to peacefully challenge the status quo without fear of censorship or reprisal. No one should be threatened or detained or otherwise targeted for repression for exercising human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression. All must be free to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds.

Respecting freedom of speech is critical for democratic governance. I will push back against European over-regulation that limits the freedom of speech of both European and American citizens.

If confirmed I will also work to advance the Trump Administration's priority of combatting high-level corruption and its linkages to drug trafficking.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian assistance should focus on promoting the U.S. national interest and delivering life-saving aid at a reasonable cost, with the goal that eventually countries will no longer require aid.

In countries where humanitarian crises threaten U.S. national security, foreign policy interests, and risk destabilizing allies, humanitarian assistance is key to advancing the United States' interests. Foreign assistance is a tool that can promote good relations, promote U.S. business, and stabilize emergencies that would be more costly later.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. For the Department the advantage of working through multilateral processes (such as pooled funding or global awards to implementing organizations) is the ability to drive reforms to overhaul multilateral foreign assistance, advocate with donor states to increase their contributions, and to streamline—and rapidly scale up—a common humanitarian assistance package across several humanitarian crises. This reduces the potential of duplication, helps minimize administrative costs, and requires fewer U.S. management resources and staff. More tailored bilateral assistance can complement and gap fill for a more specialized, or context-specific humanitarian assistance need, and allow us to act quickly when a new disaster occurs in a country where a multi-lateral mechanism has not been stood up.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit and who makes that decision?

Answer. Secretary Rubio has stated that the United States will no longer bear the cost of global humanitarian aid in perpetuity and is demanding stricter oversight of programs and greater burden shifting to other international donors. The United States is providing humanitarian assistance in circumstances where the needs and U.S. foreign policy priorities overlap, exceeding the response capacity of the host nation. Humanitarian funding and programmatic decisions are made by political leadership with advice from technical subject matter experts in the relevant bureau, and in coordination with other stakeholders like the Office of the Under Secretary for Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs, and Religious Freedom and the new Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response.

Question. Do you commit to only fulfilling the role you've been nominated for, which is Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, if confirmed?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BRENDAN HANRAHAN BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Press reports indicate that multiple U.S. allies have been informed that deliveries of U.S. weapons systems will be delayed, ostensibly due to U.S. reduced inventories.

Question. What are the foreign policy implications of European Allies not receiving weapons systems in a timely fashion, including air defense systems and other capabilities for deterring or defeating Russian forces?

Answer. President Trump has been clear since his first term: NATO must be an alliance of capable partners, not a one-way security guarantee. Europe must take greater responsibility for its own conventional security.

If confirmed, I will work closely with our colleagues at the Department of War to ensure our European allies have the tools and resources needed to defend themselves. Under President Trump, our arms transfer strategy has been overhauled to strengthen the U.S. industrial base while enhancing partner and allied burden-sharing, accelerating innovation, and delivering capabilities at speed and scale.

Question. Do you commit to make the Secretary of State aware of any implications of weapons systems transfers to European Allies from reduced U.S. weapons stockpiles?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to advising the Secretary of State on all issues affecting European foreign policy.

Question. If confirmed, what steps do you intend to take to ensure that the Department of Defense is fully aware of the foreign policy and national security impli-

cations in Europe of delaying the delivery of key military capabilities for deterring or defeating Russian forces?

Answer. I commit to working with the Department of War and the interagency to ensure our European allies have the tools and resources needed to defend themselves. Under President Trump, our arms transfer strategy has been overhauled to strengthen the U.S. industrial base while enhancing partner and allied burden-sharing, accelerating innovation, and delivering capabilities at speed and scale.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BRENDAN HANRAHAN BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. The Government of Georgia accused Maryland constituent and former State Department official Margaret Katz of involving herself in “espionage and/or terrorist activities directed against the interests of the Georgian state,” banning her from entering the country, and causing residual negative impacts on her personally and professionally. At no point during her hearing in March was an explanation provided for this designation, nor did the judge permit Ms. Katz to participate in her own defense. I have sent letters to the Embassy of Georgia and to Secretary of State Rubio, so far without response.

What steps have you taken as SBO to address her case, and what will you do as assistant secretary?

Answer. The Department and Embassy Tbilisi are following Ms. Katz’s case closely. Both the Georgia Desk and Embassy Tbilisi have engaged Ms. Katz regularly since she was denied entry to Georgia last July. The Embassy has raised her situation with senior Georgian officials on multiple occasions, and an officer from the Embassy’s political section attended the March 16 hearing of Ms. Katz’s case.

Question. Will the Department formally denounce and protest the unjust charges to the Government of Georgia and demand a fair and unbiased legal process moving forward?

Answer. Before raising specific cases with foreign governments, the State Department first weighs whether such advocacy will do more harm than good. In Ms. Katz’s case, we have concerns that forceful and public advocacy by the United States may further exacerbate Ms. Katz’s circumstances. Despite that, our embassy has privately raised her case on multiple occasions with senior Georgian officials and attended her March court hearing. It is also important to note that Ms. Katz has only been denied entry to Georgia; she does not face prosecution and has not been convicted of a crime.

Question. In January 2026, 23 countries invoked the Moscow Mechanism to examine Georgia’s implementation of its OSCE commitments. The February 2026 report detailed democratic backsliding; a pattern of violence and abuses against protesters, political opposition, and journalists; limited freedom of expression and assembly; and more. It noted “concerns related to the right to fair trial of those facing criminalization on account of their engagement in some form of dissent.”

Do you think that Ms. Katz’s case is illustrative of these concerning trends in Georgia—as reported under the Moscow Mechanism—and does her case represent a harmful escalation in the increasingly troubled bilateral U.S.-Georgia relations?

Answer. The U.S. takes very seriously any actions that host governments might take that would hinder the United States in its conduct of diplomacy and the execution of U.S. foreign policy. To date, we have not seen the Georgian government use this case as a precedent to target other employees or former employees of the U.S. Government.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BRENDAN HANRAHAN BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

Question. What is the status of the State Department’s reported 2025 plan to close consulates in Europe, including in Germany, France, Italy, and Portugal?

Answer. As I understand it, there are no consulate closures in these countries planned at this time. The Department of State routinely reviews its global presence to ensure it reflects current policy priorities, resource considerations, and mission requirements and ensures that it is aligned with the Administration’s National Security Strategy and the Agency Strategic Plan. Any decisions regarding the Depart-

ment's overseas footprint are made deliberately and in close coordination with relevant stakeholders to ensure the United States maintains an effective diplomatic presence where it matters most.

Question. How many staff worked at the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit at the U.S. Consulate in Florence, Italy on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 030 Appendix B.

Answer. Two Foreign Service Officers and five locally employed staff.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Florence, Italy? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. Two Foreign Service Officers and five locally employed staff.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Florence, Italy?

Answer. The ACS unit has responded to an increase in Special Consular Services demand from 2025 to 2026 and continues to prioritize supporting U.S. citizens as it always has.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Rennes, France on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was not an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the American Presence Post in Rennes on January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Rennes, France? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is not currently an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the American Presence Post in Rennes.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Rennes, France?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Lyon, France on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was not an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the American Presence Post in Lyon on January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Lyon, France? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is not currently an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the American Presence Post in Lyon.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Lyon, France?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Strasbourg, France on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was one locally employed staff member assigned 50 percent of the time to the consular section in Strasbourg as of January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Strasbourg, France? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is currently one locally employed staff member assigned 50 percent of the time to the consular section in Strasbourg.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Strasbourg, France?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Bordeaux, France on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was not an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the American Presence Post in Bordeaux on January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Bordeaux, France? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is not currently an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the American Presence Post in Bordeaux.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Bordeaux, France?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Ponta Delgada, Portugal on January 19, 2025?

Answer. One Foreign Service Officer and one locally employed staff member.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Ponta Delgada, Portugal? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. One Foreign Service Officer and one locally employed staff member.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Ponta Delgada, Portugal?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Dusseldorf, Germany on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was not an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the U.S. consulate in Dusseldorf on January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Dusseldorf, Germany? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is not currently an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the U.S. consulate in Dusseldorf.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Dusseldorf, Germany?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Leipzig, Germany on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was not an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the U.S. consulate in Leipzig on January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Leipzig, Germany? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is not currently an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the U.S. consulate in Leipzig.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Leipzig, Germany?

Answer. No changes have been made.

Question. How many staff worked at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Hamburg, Germany on January 19, 2025? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There was not an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the U.S. consulate in Hamburg on January 19, 2025.

Question. As of June 18, 2026, how many staff work at the ACS unit at the U.S. Consulate in Hamburg, Germany? Please specify by number of staff holding each position outlined in 7 FAM 030 Appendix B.

Answer. There is not currently an ACS unit, nor any consular staff, at the U.S. consulate in Hamburg.

Question. Since January 20, 2025, what, if any, changes have been made to the services offered by the ACS unit in Hamburg, Germany?

Answer. No changes have been made.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BRENDAN HANRAHAN BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine:

You have been nominated for one of the most important positions in the State Department—one that manages our day-to-day bilateral and multilateral relationships with our European partners and allies.

Question. Do you believe that Russia violated international laws and Ukrainian sovereignty when it invaded Ukraine in February 2022?

Answer. Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, violating its sovereignty. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize President Trump's objective of ending the Russia-Ukraine war.

Question. And do you also believe that Russia illegally invaded and annexed Crimea in 2014?

Answer. Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. This includes attempts to unilaterally annex Crimea. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize President Trump's objective of ending the Russia-Ukraine war.

Question. Would you characterize Russia as an adversary?

Answer. The United States approaches Russia with a focus on protecting U.S. security and prosperity and those of our allies where they are directly affected. At the same time, we work closely with partners to strengthen collective resilience and ensure that regional actors play a leading role in addressing shared security concerns. If confirmed, I will continue our America First approach to Russia in line with the President's vision. The President is willing to meet with and engage with anybody. As the Secretary said in his testimony to Congress in early June, "we have to have conversations [with Russia] whether we like what they are doing or not," because that is mature diplomacy.

Protests in Albania: Tens of thousands of protestors have taken to the streets across Albania over corruption concerns surrounding Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump's planned \$1.6 billion luxury resort. The scandal, and legitimate worry of corrupt and undue influence, has even created a rift between the EU and Albania.

Question. As the EUR Senior Bureau Official—essentially acting Assistant Secretary—or in any personal or official capacity, did you ever advocate on behalf of this project or for any member of the Trump family to any foreign government?

Answer. No.

Question. In your role as SBO, or at any other time, were you made aware of anyone in the Administration—or in the Department—who advocated for this \$1.6 billion resort project on behalf of Mr. Kushner or Ms. Trump?

Answer. No.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ANDRÉ BAUER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. What is your assessment of the current gaps in U.S. security assistance to Belize and if confirmed, how would you engage with the Government of Belize to reduce the flow of drugs through its territory?

Answer. Belize faces significant and well-documented security challenges that create vulnerabilities exploited by narcotraffickers. Traffickers exploit porous borders with Guatemala and Mexico. I understand there is a need to strengthen Belize's security architecture to keep pace with a significant increase in narcotrafficking activity in recent years. If confirmed, I will work to ensure U.S. assistance is targeted

at closing these gaps and building durable Belizean capacity to interdict and prosecute narcotraffickers.

If confirmed, I will prioritize engagement with the Government of Belize to address these gaps.

Question. What is your understanding of the individuals or groups transiting drugs through Belize and what steps has Belize taken to address this issue?

Answer. Belize serves as a transit country for narcotics, primarily cocaine, moving north toward the United States. Public sources report various Mexican trafficking organizations use Belize as a transit point for cocaine and precursor chemicals and rely on local Belizean criminal organizations to facilitate drug transshipment via air.

Belize's progress is constrained by limited resources, persistent corruption, and inadequate judicial capacity. If confirmed, I will work to ensure U.S. assistance is targeted at closing these gaps and building durable Belizean capacity to interdict and prosecute narcotraffickers.

Question. What is your assessment of Belize's existing immigration system and if confirmed, how would you address concerns that the safe third country agreement between the U.S. and Belize represents a threat to the security and sovereignty of Belize?

Answer. The United States and Belize signed a Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) on October 20, 2025. The agreement was ratified by the Belizean Senate on November 11, 2025, and entered into force on April 15, 2026. Under the agreement, Belize accepts asylum seekers from Central American and CARICOM countries, excluding Guatemala.

Concerns that the STCA threatens Belize's security or sovereignty are not borne out by the agreement's terms, as safeguards were negotiated to ensure it is implemented in a controlled, manageable manner within the scope of Belize's capacities.

Question. What is your understanding of the financial and practical efficacy of the safe third country agreements generally?

Answer. Safe Third Country Agreements (STCAs) are a central tool of the Trump Administration's strategy to deter illegal immigration, reduce abuse of the U.S. asylum system, and share the burden of migration management with regional partners. For Belize, given its more limited institutional capacity, I understand the United States has committed to assist as necessary to ensure Belize is equipped to handle the challenges it faces.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ANDRÉ BAUER BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. Throughout more than two decades of public service, I had the privilege of representing the people of South Carolina in positions requiring leadership, relationship-building, and engagement with domestic and international partners. I served as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, the South Carolina Senate, and as South Carolina's two-term elected Lieutenant Governor.

As Lieutenant Governor, I frequently represented South Carolina on international trade and diplomatic missions. In that capacity, I met with foreign presidents, prime ministers, cabinet officials, and other senior government leaders to discuss trade, investment, economic development, and opportunities to strengthen international partnerships. These experiences gave me firsthand insight into the importance of diplomacy, cultural understanding, and advancing shared interests through respectful dialogue and personal relationships.

Throughout my public service, I have also had the opportunity to engage with senior U.S. Government officials, Ambassadors, and international leaders on matters affecting economic development, public policy, and international cooperation. These experiences strengthened my ability to build relationships, communicate effectively across cultures, and represent the interests of those I serve with professionalism and integrity.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Belize, I will draw upon my executive and legislative experience, my international engagement, and my commitment to public service to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives, deepen the longstanding partnership be-

tween the United States and Belize, promote economic opportunity and regional security, and protect the interests of American citizens abroad.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our bilateral relationship with Belize?

Answer. The most pressing challenges in our bilateral relationship with Belize include mitigating the risks generated by malign actors, both extra-hemispheric and regional, as well as threats posed by transnational criminal organizations.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Belize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests by utilizing all the USG tools at my disposal. The U.S. private sector is also an invaluable tool for advancing our interests because every commercial diplomacy win for a U.S. company creates prosperity here at home and keeps our rivals at bay.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. An America First foreign policy works to prioritize U.S. interests—best understood as optimizing outcomes for U.S. citizens—above other competing demands. Assessing what qualifies as a compelling U.S. policy interest requires us to determine if that policy will make our Nation safer, stronger, or more prosperous.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in Belize?

Answer. An America First foreign policy in Belize entails taking actions that make the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous. For example, this means degrading the capacity of transnational criminal organizations to smuggle drugs into our country, expanding bilateral military cooperation, and increasing opportunities for U.S. commercial investment in infrastructure and energy. This approach benefits both the people of America and Belize.

Question. In Belize, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The United States is working to push back against all malign actors in Belize. The most effective strategy to push back is by pushing forward on our own interests, which maintains the position of the United States as Belize's partner of choice. I understand the Department's counter-CCP efforts entail multiple lines of effort, one of which involves ensuring that Belize can make its own sovereign choices with respect to its bilateral relationship with Taiwan, free from coercion.

Question. Are there opportunities where the United States can present alternatives to PRC influence operations and infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. I understand the Department is actively engaging with Belize on multiple infrastructure investments, including ports, telecommunications, and energy.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. My approach to situations pertaining to statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress has been and will always be to consult the relevant colleagues, such as the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and other colleagues who may be able to provide helpful insight.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under my management, in full accordance with the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I commit to providing briefings and responses in as timely a manner as possible.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in Belize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts by contributing to congressionally mandated reports like the Trafficking in Persons and the Human Rights Report, both of which entail Belize's efforts to protect human rights as well as the Department's actions in country. The Department regularly receives and responds to press inquiries regarding Belize, by which it maintains an open relationship with the press. The Department engages with senior Belizean contacts on corruption as it pertains to U.S. interests.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian assistance should focus on promoting the U.S. national interest and delivering life-saving aid at a reasonable cost, with the goal that eventually countries will no longer require aid.

In countries where humanitarian crises threaten U.S. national security, foreign policy interests, and risk destabilizing allies, humanitarian assistance is key to advancing the United States' interests. Foreign assistance is a tool that can promote good relations, promote U.S. business, and stabilize emergencies that would be more costly later.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. For the Department the advantage of working through multilateral processes (such as pooled funding or global awards to implementing organizations) is the ability to drive reforms to overhaul multilateral foreign assistance, advocate with donor states to increase their contributions, and to streamline—and rapidly scale up—a common humanitarian assistance package across several humanitarian crises. This reduces the potential of duplication, helps minimize administrative costs, and requires fewer U.S. management resources and staff. More tailored bilateral assistance can complement and gap fill for a more specialized, or context-specific humanitarian assistance need, and allow us to act quickly when a new disaster occurs in a country where a multi-lateral mechanism has not been stood up.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit and who makes that decision?

Answer. Secretary Rubio has stated that the United States will no longer bear the cost of global humanitarian aid in perpetuity and is demanding stricter oversight of programs and greater burden shifting to other international donors. The United States is providing humanitarian assistance in circumstances where the needs and U.S. foreign policy priorities overlap, exceeding the response capacity of the host nation. Humanitarian funding and programmatic decisions are made by political leadership with advice from technical subject matter experts in the relevant bureau, and in coordination with other stakeholders like the Office of the Under Secretary for Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs, and Religious Freedom and the new Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than “political purity” tests?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ANDRÉ BAUER BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. If confirmed, will you support strategies that increase resiliency such as debt-for-nature programs that conserve coral reefs, coastal ecosystems, and tropical forests?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the full range of tools available to advance Administration priorities in environmental resilience, that deliver tangible outcomes.

Question. If confirmed, will you support efforts to set aside large scale marine protected areas in the high seas under the framework established in the Agreement on the Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction?

Answer. Any U.S. engagement with frameworks established under that agreement, to which the United States is not a party, will be guided by whether they advance and protect American interests, including U.S. navigational freedoms.

Question. If confirmed, will you support coordination and collaboration for Belize's efforts to manage Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease, to prevent the loss of their reefs, and the further spread of the disease in the region?

Answer. I recognize that Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease poses a threat to reef ecosystems across the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will work with the relevant bureaus and agencies to assess if and how the United States can most effectively support regional coordination and science-based management efforts to address this disease.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KARI LAKE BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Jamaica

Question. How can Jamaica incorporate recommendations from the Trafficking in Persons Report to effectively combat human trafficking?

Answer. The Trafficking in Persons Report calls on countries to take decisive action against forced labor and sex trafficking. Jamaica should prosecute traffickers, impose serious fines, penalties, and prison sentences, and finalize a fully funded national anti-trafficking policy. Jamaica should also take steps to strengthen victim identification, expand trauma-informed services, treat children in forced criminality as trafficking victims, and build the data systems needed to measure results and drive accountability.

Question. Per public reporting, the U.S. and Jamaica have signed a third country deportation agreement under which Jamaica will receive deportees from the U.S. temporarily before sending them onward. If confirmed, do you commit to conducting oversight of this arrangement including whether the principle of no refoulement is upheld?

Answer. The Administration takes seriously any reports of a lack of compliance with diplomatic assurances, including Third-Country National Arrangements, containing such assurances. The receiving country is responsible for compliance with the assurances provided. If the Department becomes aware of allegations regarding noncompliance with the assurances provided, they review those allegations and take appropriate steps, which varies depending on the circumstances, but could include diplomatic outreach or a reconsideration of the assurances.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to keeping the Committee informed of third country deportation operations in Jamaica?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

U.S. Agency for Global Media

Question. During the period when you were a Senior Adviser at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, did you take any steps to represent to Agency personnel that you were the final decisionmaker on key decisions, including decisions related to determining the statutory minimum?

Answer. Following President Trump's Executive Order 14238, I instructed career staff including the General Counsel of USAGM to evaluate the statute and determine what was USAGM's statutory minimum requirements. This was a collaborative process, and I asked for input from career staff.

Question. Did you execute or advocate for executing any actions necessary to achieve a so-called "statutory minimum"?

Answer. After the staff led determination of USAGM's legal requirements, the agency then conducted a full assessment and review of all positions before implementing a reduction in force. This process was led by career staff including H.R. and the Office of General Counsel, and guided by the agency's determination of what is statutorily required.

Question. Did you ever leverage or advocate for leveraging access to transmission capabilities to change the editorial content of the grantees and if so, when and why?

Answer. USAGM has a statutory responsibility to ensure that all broadcasting is consistent with the broad foreign policy goals of United States. USAGM transmissionsites have limited broadcast capacity, and the agency has a responsibility to make decisions that prioritize coverage to meet our mission. My conversations with network heads regarding this reality have been productive.

Question. Did you ever withhold or delay the obligation or expenditure of funds or engage in an action or inaction that effectively precluded the obligation or expenditure of funds, including but not limited to the funds noticed to Congress for reprogramming on June 20, 2025?

Answer. USAGM did not withhold appropriated funds. Although certain grants were initially terminated and there were delays in obligating or disbursing funds while legal and administrative issues were being resolved, those termination actions were rescinded and all funds authorized by Congress were ultimately provided to the grantees.

Question. Please provide a complete list of those with whom you consulted regarding the notified closure of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Hungarian language service.

Answer. The Department of State's Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy was consulted by USAGM D/CEO Lake on the change to the Hungarian Language Service.

Election Integrity

Question. Who won the 2020 election for U.S. President; the 2022 race for Governor of Arizona; the 2024 race for U.S. Senate from Arizona; and the 2024 election for U.S. President?

Answer. Joe Biden was certified as President in 2020; Katie Hobbs was certified as Governor in 2022; Reuban Gallego was certified as Senator in 2024; and President Donald Trump was certified as President in 2024.

Question. Do you believe journalists who reported on the 2020 election should be imprisoned, as you stated in a speech on August 27, 2021?

Answer. I believe journalists should fully report on factual information, without any bias. As is a core foundation for a democracy, a fair press is paramount.

Question. Do you condemn efforts to overturn the 2020 election on January 6, 2021?

Answer. I always have and always will support the rule of law and condemn political violence of any kind.

Past Payments and Legal Fees

Question. What percent of money raised by the Save Arizona Fund goes to legal fees to overturn election results?

Answer. I have no insight into or involvement with the Save Arizona Fund.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KARI LAKE BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. My career has given me firsthand exposure to international affairs and the importance of strategic communication in advancing U.S. interests. Over the years I have traveled to Jamaica dozens of times, and I have engaged directly with Caribbean diaspora communities, cultural leaders, and regional representatives here in the United States. These interactions have deepened my understanding of the shared values and mutual interests that bind the United States and Jamaica.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our bilateral relationship with Jamaica?

Answer. One of the most pressing issues for Jamaica in recent decades has been gang-related violence fueled by the island's status as a major transit point for illicit drugs, as well as a destination for firearms trafficking. Jamaica works closely with U.S. law enforcement on crime impacting U.S. citizens, including drug and firearms trafficking, lottery scamming, and cybercrime. Jamaica joined the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition in March.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Jamaica?

Answer. Jamaica is a strong U.S. partner, advancing regional security and economic cooperation while aligning with U.S. priorities. Alignment via the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition and engagement on economic opportunities are high priorities. If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. private sector through commer-

cial diplomacy to expand its ties to Jamaica, ensuring that strategic resources remain integrated into our supply chains and not those of our strategic competitors.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. As I outlined in my opening testimony and in the context of serving as Ambassador to Jamaica if confirmed, the first priority of an America First foreign policy is keeping Americans safe, especially given the roughly two million Americans who visit each year.

Second, it is strengthening security cooperation and working closely with the Jamaican government to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, disrupt drug trafficking, and combat lottery scams that target and defraud vulnerable Americans.

Third, it is advancing American economic interests by working to address trade barriers and promoting American investment—especially as Jamaica continues to recover from Hurricane Melissa.

Finally, it is countering adversaries growing economic influence less than 500 miles from our shores and working to ensure that Jamaica continues to choose transparency, sovereignty, and partnership with the United States over dependence on actors whose interests do not align with our shared values. In a region this close to the United States, those efforts are not just economic—they are strategic.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in Jamaica?

Answer. Jamaica's geographic proximity and access to shipping lanes, strong commercial and cultural affinity for the United States will be maintained to keep it an attractive country for U.S. investors to make America more prosperous. Security cooperation through the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition will make Americans safer in Jamaica and at home.

Question. In Jamaica, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The United States leverages robust disaster response, strong trade partnerships, security cooperation, private sector engagement, and cultural affinity for the United States to reinforce the value of the U.S.-Jamaica partnership. If confirmed, I will counter the nefarious activities of our strategic competitors and ensure that Jamaica knows the United States is its best and most reliable partner.

Question. Are there opportunities where the United States can present alternatives to PRC influence operations and infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. Absolutely. If confirmed, I will work to identify commercial opportunities and advocate for U.S. companies, especially in strategic sectors including infrastructure, critical minerals, energy, and technology. Needed infrastructure investments in the wake of Hurricane Melissa offer a prime opportunity for U.S. companies to present alternatives to predatory Chinese investment and financing.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. My approach to situations pertaining to statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress has been and will always be to consult the relevant colleagues, such as the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and other colleagues who may be able to provide helpful insight.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating appropriated funds in accordance with the law. I also commit to working closely with Congress to ensure appropriated resources are used efficiently and effectively to advance U.S. national interests.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I commit to providing briefings and responses in as timely a manner as possible.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in Jamaica?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advance internationally recognized human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts as key facets of our engagement globally. Working in concert with the Department and interagency partners, I will work to deploy the full range of available tools, including visa restrictions and targeted sanctions, to hold corrupt actors to account, including those engaged with malign foreign actors who threaten U.S. national security objectives.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian aid is grounded in making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous while alleviating human suffering. The United States is the world's most generous nation, and must continue to lead, but in a way that directly benefits the American people and promotes our national interests.

When Hurricane Melissa struck the Caribbean, the United States deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team and made available \$42.6 million to affected countries, including Jamaica. This demonstrated American leadership in the Western Hemisphere while strengthening partnerships.

My philosophy, and the philosophy of the Trump Administration, is that humanitarian assistance should also serve American interests and build self-sufficiency rather than dependency.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. Through the Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response, the Department is leveraging the comparative advantages of multilateral funding mechanisms and direct funding to trusted implementers. Since December 2025, the United States has announced a record \$3.8 billion in humanitarian assistance across 21 key countries through the pooled funding mechanisms managed by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This announcement has already led to historic reforms to the bloated U.N. humanitarian bureaucracy, bringing activities under a single U.N. Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, enhancing efficiency and delivering measurable impact, improving accountability and eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, and slashing bureaucracy to spend more on life-saving frontline work and less on overhead. The Department is also complementing this by providing funding to select implementers such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Food Program (WFP), and UNICEF. This direct funding will enable these organizations to deliver assistance where it is needed most, whether responding to sudden-onset disasters or addressing surges in needs within ongoing complex emergencies. By consolidating funding into these awards, these organizations gain the budget predictability needed to pre-position resources, maintain staffing, and respond immediately, bypassing lengthy procurement processes and sustaining a model that can move at the speed that crises demand.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit and who makes that decision?

Answer. The Secretary of State leads U.S. foreign assistance strategy under the President's direction, coordinating resources—including humanitarian assistance—with other departments and agencies to ensure they align with national security priorities. Humanitarian assistance has been and will always be a tool in the United States' national security toolkit. My understanding is the Department directs humanitarian assistance to address the most urgent, lifesaving priorities while also ensuring that such assistance can be used efficiently and effectively and not create longer term dependency.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. This Administration has restored the promotion of Federal employees based on merit, and if confirmed, I commit to maintaining that approach.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KARI LAKE BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Ms. Lake, you have dismissed the reality of climate change. In an interview with Garret Lewis for The Afternoon Addiction, you said, "don't tell me

what we're in some sort of weird heating trend, I don't believe that for a minute." In other instances, you called record-breaking temperatures in Arizona "mass hysteria." Jamaica is highly exposed to climate impacts, including natural disasters and drought.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to bolster Jamaica's climate resiliency?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make hurricane preparedness a top priority because a strong Jamaica is a stable partner for American interests in the Caribbean. Hurricanes Beryl in 2024 and Melissa in 2025 caused over \$12 billion in damage, nearly 57 percent of Jamaica's GDP. I will push Jamaica to own its preparedness with targeted U.S. support, not open-ended dependency, ensuring every dollar is accounted for. The U.S. response after Melissa—133 relief flights and \$24.5 million in assistance—showed America's leadership on behalf of one of our greatest friends in the region.

Jamaica received significant support from USAID focused on disaster risk-reduction, partnerships with the Government of Jamaica for reducing youth violence, and response to global health threats.

Question. Given the Administration's dismantling of USAID and associated civil society improvement programs, what tools will you utilize to maintain support for Jamaican-led initiatives that focus on maintaining citizen security and the rule of law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use every tool this Administration has put in place to keep Jamaica safe and secure—because a stable Jamaica is a stronger partner for America. Under the Trump Administration, foreign assistance is more targeted; it builds Jamaican capacity rather than dependency. I will deepen cooperation on countering transnational crime, arms trafficking, and narcotics trafficking—threats that harm both Jamaican citizens and Americans.

During your tenure as Senior Advisor for the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), you unlawfully dismantled the Voice of America and utilized remaining Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts to advance partisan rhetoric, including false allegations of fraud during the 2020 elections. You also misrepresented your position at USAGM, falsely referring to yourself as "acting CEO" of the agency. Following that incident, Judge Royce Lamberth of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia described you as "plainly ineligible to serve."

Question. How has your experience in appointed office prepared you to represent the best interests of the United States as Ambassador to Jamaica?

Answer. It is an honor to be appointed by President Trump to serve the American people in any capacity. During my time at USAGM, I worked closely with both political and career staff at the State Department which has provided me with an in depth understanding of the United States foreign policy objectives and priorities. I have also developed a deep understanding for the importance of having dedicated career staff to help inform policy decisions. If confirmed I look forward to utilizing what I have learned to enhance the United States bilateral relationship with Jamaica.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KARI LAKE BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

In June 2025, you said of the U.S. Agency for Global Media: "President Trump wants to eliminate the agency. The agency itself is not needed. It's proven that it does not know how to manage and does not know how to be respectful of this country and the American taxpayer's dollars. And so, I think President Trump is absolutely right in eliminating this agency. We can roll in things that are valuable, that are worthwhile, bring it under the Department of State, where it once was, by the way. Voice of America, back when it was effective, back when—many of you talk about the glory days of Voice of America—it was under the Department of State, where there were guardrails on what the story of America was being told. It wasn't anti-American, it was in line with our foreign policy, and I think that's probably where it should end up."

The Voice of America (VOA) Charter from 1976, however, makes clear Congress' intent that VOA should not be mouthpiece of U.S. foreign policy,

but rather, that “(1) VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive. (2) VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions. (3) VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies.”

In March 2026, President Trump appointed State Department Deputy Secretary Michael Rigas as USAGM’s acting CEO and nominated State Department Undersecretary of Public Diplomacy Sarah Rogers as the next CEO.

Question. Is the Trump administration undertaking a plan to incorporate USAGM and its networks into the State Department?

Answer. In the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget USAGM is zeroed out and a new International Communication Activities (ICA) account is created at the Department of State. The budget requests \$238 million for the ICA. The proposed budget is now being debated and amended by Congress.

Question. Would you support such an effort?

Answer. I am in full support of President Trump’s proposed budget.

In March 2026, a Federal judge ruled that “Lake satisfies the requirements of neither the statute nor the Constitution” and declared all of your actions null and void, including your efforts to lay off 1,400 journalists and staffers at USAGM.

Question. What are the administration’s plans for these 1,400 employees illegally laid off under your leadership?

Answer. The administration has applied Judge Lamberth’s ruling and USAGM was granted a stay with regards to bringing employees back from administrative leave. USAGM intends to follow the law and all court orders.

Question. If USAGM moves under the State Department, are there plans for additional lay-offs?

Answer. Under Secretary Sarah Rogers has been nominated to be the CEO of USAGM. Any future re-organization will be her decision.

Prior to your arrival at USAGM, the Biden administration negotiated the agency’s move from an aging government building into new offices that would, according to officials, save taxpayers \$150 million over the course of the lease. The March 2026 Federal court decision specifically cited your cancellation of the lease as one action you undertook while illegally acting as CEO, in violation of the Vacancies Act.

Question. How much has it cost, and how much will it cost, taxpayers in penalties and legal fees for you to break the lease in 2025 on the new property?

Answer. USAGM has not spent any taxpayer funds on the lease. Currently, USAGM is in negotiation with other Federal agencies to take control of the lease.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KARI LAKE BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. My career has given me firsthand exposure to international affairs and the importance of strategic communication in advancing U.S. interests. Over the years I have traveled to Jamaica dozens of times, and I have engaged directly with Caribbean diaspora communities, cultural leaders, and regional representatives here in the United States. These interactions have deepened my understanding of the shared values and mutual interests that bind the United States and Jamaica.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our bilateral relationship with Jamaica?

Answer. One of the most pressing issues for Jamaica in recent decades has been gang-related violence fueled by the island’s status as a major transit point for illicit drugs, as well as a destination for firearms trafficking. Jamaica works closely with U.S. law enforcement on crime impacting U.S. citizens, including drug and firearms trafficking, lottery scamming, and cybercrime. Jamaica joined the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition in March.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Jamaica?

Answer. Jamaica is a strong U.S. partner, advancing regional security and economic cooperation while aligning with U.S. priorities. Alignment via the Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition and engagement on economic opportunities are high priorities. If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. private sector through commercial diplomacy to expand its ties to Jamaica, ensuring that strategic resources remain integrated into our supply chains and not those of our strategic competitors.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. As I outlined in my opening testimony and in the context of serving as Ambassador to Jamaica if confirmed, the first priority of an America First foreign policy is keeping Americans safe, especially given the roughly two million Americans who visit each year.

Second, it is strengthening security cooperation and working closely with the Jamaican government to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, disrupt drug trafficking, and combat lottery scams that target and defraud vulnerable Americans.

Third, it is advancing American economic interests by working to address trade barriers and promoting American investment—especially as Jamaica continues to recover from Hurricane Melissa.

Finally, it is countering adversaries growing economic influence less than 500 miles from our shores and working to ensure that Jamaica continues to choose transparency, sovereignty, and partnership with the United States over dependence on actors whose interests do not align with our shared values. In a region this close to the United States, those efforts are not just economic—they are strategic.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in Jamaica?

Answer. Jamaica's geographic proximity and access to shipping lanes, strong commercial and cultural affinity for the United States will be maintained to keep it an attractive country for U.S. investors to make America more prosperous. Security cooperation through the Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition will make Americans safer in Jamaica and at home.

Question. In Jamaica, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The United States leverages robust disaster response, strong trade partnerships, security cooperation, private sector engagement, and cultural affinity for the United States to reinforce the value of the U.S.-Jamaica partnership. If confirmed, I will counter the nefarious activities of our strategic competitors and ensure that Jamaica knows the United States is its best and most reliable partner.

Question. Are there opportunities where the United States can present alternatives to PRC influence operations and infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. Absolutely. If confirmed, I will work to identify commercial opportunities and advocate for U.S. companies, especially in strategic sectors including infrastructure, critical minerals, energy, and technology. Needed infrastructure investments in the wake of Hurricane Melissa offer a prime opportunity for U.S. companies to present alternatives to predatory Chinese investment and financing.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. My approach to situations pertaining to statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress has been and will always be to consult the relevant colleagues, such as the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and other colleagues who may be able to provide helpful insight.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating appropriated funds in accordance with the law. I also commit to working closely with Congress to ensure appropriated resources are used efficiently and effectively to advance U.S. national interests.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I commit to providing briefings and responses in as timely a manner as possible.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in Jamaica?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advance internationally recognized human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts as key facets of our engagement globally. Working in concert with the Department and interagency partners, I will work to deploy the full range of available tools, including visa restrictions and targeted sanctions, to hold corrupt actors to account, including those engaged with malign foreign actors who threaten U.S. national security objectives.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian aid is grounded in making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous while alleviating human suffering. The United States is the world's most generous nation, and must continue to lead, but in a way that directly benefits the American people and promotes our national interests.

When Hurricane Melissa struck the Caribbean, the United States deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team and made available \$42.6 million to affected countries, including Jamaica. This demonstrated American leadership in the Western Hemisphere while strengthening partnerships.

My philosophy, and the philosophy of the Trump Administration, is that humanitarian assistance should also serve American interests and build self-sufficiency rather than dependency.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. Through the Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response, the Department is leveraging the comparative advantages of multilateral funding mechanisms and direct funding to trusted implementers. Since December 2025, the United States has announced a record \$3.8 billion in humanitarian assistance across 21 key countries through the pooled funding mechanisms managed by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This announcement has already led to historic reforms to the bloated U.N. humanitarian bureaucracy, bringing activities under a single U.N. Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, enhancing efficiency and delivering measurable impact, improving accountability and eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, and slashing bureaucracy to spend more on life-saving frontline work and less on overhead. The Department is also complementing this by providing funding to select implementers such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Food Program (WFP), and UNICEF. This direct funding will enable these organizations to deliver assistance where it is needed most, whether responding to sudden-onset disasters or addressing surges in needs within ongoing complex emergencies. By consolidating funding into these awards, these organizations gain the budget predictability needed to pre-position resources, maintain staffing, and respond immediately, bypassing lengthy procurement processes and sustaining a model that can move at the speed that crises demand.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit and who makes that decision?

Answer. The Secretary of State leads U.S. foreign assistance strategy under the President's direction, coordinating resources—including humanitarian assistance—with other departments and agencies to ensure they align with national security priorities. Humanitarian assistance has been and will always be a tool in the United States' national security toolkit. My understanding is the Department directs humanitarian assistance to address the most urgent, lifesaving priorities while also ensuring that such assistance can be used efficiently and effectively and not create longer term dependency.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. This Administration has restored the promotion of Federal employees based on merit, and if confirmed, I commit to maintaining that approach.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KARI LAKE BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

Connect to Hungarian Former Prime Minister Viktor Orban: Full financial transparency is critical. It not only allows the American people to trust their elected and appointed leaders—but it also helps prevent undue influence from foreign actors. With that in mind, I think it's important to highlight your many on-the-record statements in support of the last Hungarian government, led by Viktor Orban, including two speaking engagements at Hungary's CPAC in 2023 and 2024.

Question. To ensure you have an opportunity to be fully transparent before we vote on your nomination, have you ever received money—including in the form of travel or speaking fees—or anything of monetary value—from the Hungarian government, persons or entities that receive funding from the Hungarian government, or individuals connected to Viktor Orban?

Answer. No, I have not received money—including in the form of travel or speaking fees—or anything of monetary value—from the Hungarian government, persons or entities that receive funding from the Hungarian government, or individuals connected to Viktor Orban.

Question. Can you confirm that you have fully disclosed all payments, donations, or receipt of any good or service of value from any foreign actor or organization on your SF-86 and on all other required Federal financial disclosure forms?

Answer. Yes, I confirm that I have fully disclosed all payments, donations, or receipt of any good or service of value from any foreign actor or organization on my SF-86 and on all other required Federal financial disclosure forms.

Unpaid Debts and Liabilities: Any government employee who holds a security clearance knows that one of the biggest risk factors for espionage is significant unpaid debt. Our adversaries would welcome the opportunity to exploit the financial distress of someone with a Top-Secret security clearance to obtain classified information.

Question. What is the total amount of debt you currently owe to creditors—including, but not limited to, debt associated with your unsuccessful campaigns for Governor and the U.S. Senate?

Answer. The total amount of debt currently owed to creditors—including, but not limited to, debt associated with my campaigns for Governor and the U.S. Senate has been fully, accurately, and publicly disclosed, as required by law.

Question. In 2025, it was reported that you owed more than \$1 million in unpaid campaign debt and unresolved credit disputes. What is the current status of those obligations?

Answer. The \$1 million referenced was the result of an unauthorized expenditure. My campaign committee and the vendor reached an agreement to resolve the obligation. I am not involved in the execution of that agreement, nor does it place any contingency on any action or decision of mine.

Question. Can you confirm that you have fully disclosed all outstanding debts and financial liabilities on your SF-86 and on all other required Federal financial disclosure forms?

Answer. Yes, I can confirm that I have fully disclosed all outstanding debts and financial liabilities on my SF-86 and on all other required Federal financial disclosure forms.

Unproved Claims Against Senator Ruben Gallego: You have previously suggested that Senator Gallego is "controlled by the cartels" and asked him how it felt to be "bought and paid for by the cartels."

Question. Do you stand by those comments today? If so, please provide evidence to support your claim.

Answer. My concern throughout my campaign for Senate was the impact of an open border that imposed cartel violence and drug trafficking on Arizona families. Congressman Gallego and I had significant disagreements about border and immigration policy. If confirmed as Ambassador, my responsibility will be to represent the United States and advance the President's foreign policy agenda, not domestic politics.

Question. Do you believe making unsupported allegations that a sitting U.S. Senator is controlled by criminal cartels reflects the judgment and temperament required for this diplomatic post?

Answer. I believe my judgment and temperament throughout my childhood, as the youngest of nine children, and throughout my three-decade long career in news are nothing short of diplomatic. While I am proud of my grassroots campaigns' work, I am excited about the opportunity to be the best diplomat the United States has ever sent to Jamaica, if confirmed.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MICHAEL VANCE BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Nonpartisan Work

Question. Do you commit maintain INR's nonpartisan and unbiased work focus?

Answer. Yes. INR's value to policymakers depends on its analysis being objective and free of political influence, and if confirmed I will work to keep precedent.

Question. How will you aim to do that, specifically?

Answer. If confirmed, I would do this in several concrete ways. First, I would protect analysts from any pressure to alter their judgments. Second, I would hold INR's products to the IC's analytic tradecraft standards. Third, I would safeguard analysts' ability to dissent and ensure senior consumers were made aware. INR's credibility rests on its reputation as an honest broker.

INR's Polling Responsibilities

Question. What is your view of the role that INR's work on polling serves for intelligence analysis?

Answer. INR's polling strengthens intelligence analysis by grounding assessments in measurable public sentiment, reducing reliance on anecdotal or elite-level reporting alone and exposing trends that are difficult to detect through other means.

Polling data helps analysts assess whether foreign governments enjoy genuine popular support or are vulnerable to instability. This is critical for forecasting political transitions, protest movements, or electoral outcomes—all of which directly inform U.S. foreign policy decisions.

Tracking foreign attitudes toward the United States gives policymakers a clearer picture of the operating environment for U.S. diplomacy. Understanding what narratives resonate with foreign publics also helps the Department and interagency partners craft more effective strategic communications.

Ukraine

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to maintaining our intelligence-sharing relationship with Ukraine and communicating within the interagency the importance of this intelligence-sharing relationship to safeguard U.S. national security interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure INR continues to present policymakers with independent, all-source analysis on the implications of Russia's war against Ukraine for U.S. national security interests, including the role that intelligence sharing plays in the conflict. As you are aware, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence manages national intelligence sharing policy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MICHAEL VANCE BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Assistant Secretary.

Answer. Since joining the Vice President's team in January 2025, I have regularly interacted with senior foreign officials to communicate U.S. priorities and intentions. My interactions have included a broad array of partners, including our Asian and European allies. I have also supported engagements with foreign leaders, providing briefings and advice as needed to support U.S. involvement in critical negotiations.

Prior to my time in the Office of the Vice President, for nearly two decades I was a regular participant in Intelligence Community engagements with second- and third-party partners, working to deepen mutual understanding and information sharing. I also provided analytic support to senior U.S. negotiators on issues of critical interest, including North Korea's nuclear program. As a former INR China ana-

lyst specializing in strategic forces issues, I worked closely with policy bureaus focused on advancing U.S. interests in East Asia and in the arms control space.

Should I be confirmed to the role of INR Assistant Secretary, I hope to bring my experience advancing and supporting U.S. diplomacy to ensure INR's continued effectiveness in supporting the Secretary and other Department customers.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. As the President and the Secretary of State have also made clear, an America First foreign policy prioritizes the interests of the United States and its citizens. Under an American First framework, U.S. policy actions should produce practical benefits for Americans, including contributing to their shared security and prosperity. It does not preclude alliances but does demand that foreign partnerships be mutually beneficial.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail across the Bureau of Intelligence and Research?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure that INR continues to deliver exemplary intelligence analysis and support to the Department of State in its ongoing implementation of the Administration's America first foreign policy. In alignment with the President's National Security Strategy, I will lead INR to support and protect the United States' core, vital national security interests. I will work to ensure that INR's intelligence analysis and support help the Secretary and the Department of State effectively formulate and implement policies that advance U.S. national interests, peace through strength, deterrence, and retaining global and regional balances of power. I look forward to working with stakeholders across the Department, the executive branch, and Congress to achieve this mission.

Question. Congress and the Executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate for compliance with the law and full participation in the accommodation process that respects Congress's oversight authority. INR's job is to provide objective, independent analysis—to call the intelligence as it is seen, regardless of whether it lines up with any administration's policy preferences—and protecting the honest-broker role is something I take seriously.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. I commit to obligating appropriated funds in accordance with applicable law. If confirmed, I will ensure that funds under my management are obligated consistent with applicable appropriations law and any statutory requirements governing those programs. I understand that the power of the purse rests with Congress, and I take seriously my responsibility to faithfully act consistent with applicable appropriations law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure INR, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, responds to your inquiries promptly and as fully as possible. Effective oversight through the accommodations process depends on a steady exchange of information, and if confirmed, I will work with the Committee, Legislative Affairs, and IC colleagues to meet your requests while protecting sources and methods.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. A reasonable timeframe depends on the complexity of the request, but for routine questions I would aim to respond as expeditiously as possible. For questions requiring interagency coordination or classification review, I would provide an interim response explaining the status and offering a realistic timeline for the complete answer, while keeping your staff informed. My practice will be to respond promptly to the Committee's and its staff's requests for briefings and information, consistent with my duty to protect classified information and intelligence sources and methods and the Department's responsibilities regarding third agency information and records and the Processes of the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Question. Do you commit to only fulfilling the role you've been nominated for, which is Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed for the role of INR Assistant Secretary I intend to dedicate myself to that role.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than “political purity” tests?

Answer. Should I be confirmed to the role of INR Assistant Secretary, I commit to fostering an organization that rewards professional excellence and rewards individual hard work and dedication, consistent with the Department’s values and all relevant Intelligence Community tradecraft standards, in accordance with applicable personnel rules and statutes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MICHAEL VANCE BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

When you were asked about the outcome of the 2020 U.S. Presidential election during your hearing before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence last week, you responded that former President Biden was “certified as President” following the election.

Question. Who was the winner of the 2020 election?

Answer. As I noted during my hearing, President Joe Biden was certified President of the United States in January 2021.

Question. If confirmed, how will you remain nonpartisan in your role as part of the intelligence community?

Answer. For nearly two decades I have served in the U.S. Intelligence Community. During that time, I have served both Republicans and Democrats. I have never allowed my personal political opinions to influence my analysis and have received numerous awards for excellence in tradecraft. I was a DNI Exceptional Analyst and later served as a tradecraft reviewer at the National Ground Intelligence Center. I have authored hundreds of intelligence products, ranging from agency assessments to finished intelligence products utilized at the highest levels of the U.S. Government. Should I be confirmed to the role of INR Assistant Secretary, I will bring with me a commitment to analytic objectivity and political neutrality.

Question. During your tenure as Special Advisor for Asian Affairs to Vice President Vance, the administration softened its stance on Burma. President Trump exchanged letters with Myanmar leader Min Aung Hlaing, while the Treasury Department lifted sanctions on four individuals and their companies. What specific changes were made to justify this sanctions decision?

Answer. I would refer you to the Treasury Department on matters pertaining to U.S. sanctions policy. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring top quality intelligence products are provided by INR to executive branch policymakers who will be working on these matters.

Question. What are the objectives of this U.S. policy shift?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring top quality intelligence products are provided by INR to executive branch policymakers who will be working on these matters.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MICHAEL VANCE BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. As Special Advisor for Asian Affairs to the Vice President, you shaped the Trump administration’s policy in Asia, including Burma. In 2017, the Trump administration determined that Burma’s military junta was committing ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya community. In 2022, the Biden administration determined that the junta’s actions constituted genocide.

Do you agree that these atrocities against the Rohingya constitute a genocide? What steps has this administration taken to ensure the military junta is held accountable for it?

Answer. The United States stands in solidarity with Rohingya victims and survivors of mass atrocities, just as it does with all other ethnic and religious minorities facing repression and escalating violence. The Administration is supporting international efforts to promote accountability for human rights violations and

abuses and has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities that enable violence against its people.

Question. Burma's military junta has been aggressively pursuing a charm campaign through lobbyists and businesses, in the hopes the United States will adopt a new approach and drop its sanctions, and neighbors will welcome the country back into regional cooperation, particularly driven by business opportunities in critical minerals.

If confirmed, will you ensure the unvarnished truth of the junta's atrocities against its own people informs our policy and sanctions against them?

Answer. If confirmed, my chief priority would be to safeguard the integrity and independence of INR's analysis—regardless of topic—while ensuring it continues to meet the needs of policymakers.

Question. How will you ensure your bureau does not soften intelligence unfavorable to the junta, despite pressure from lobbyists and business interests, and enable Burma's criminal leadership to act with impunity?

Answer. INR's value to policymakers depends on its analysis being objective and free of political or outside influence, and if confirmed I will work to keep it that way. First, I would protect analysts from any pressure to alter their judgments to match a preferred policy position. Second, I would hold INR's products to the IC's analytic tradecraft standards. Third, I would safeguard analysts' ability to dissent and ensure those views reach senior consumers rather than being filtered out. INR's credibility rests on its reputation as an honest broker.

Question. I recently introduced the bipartisan Bringing Real Accountability Via Enforcement in (BRAVE) Burma Act in the Senate, which expands sanctions against the military junta and creates a special envoy coordinate U.S. policy toward Burma—increasing focus on implementing America's diplomatic tools to help end the violence, protect human rights, and facilitate democratic governance in Burma.

If confirmed, how would you ensure the intelligence your office provides is useful in strengthening our sanctions regime targeting the military junta, in order to constrain their ability to attack Burma's people and pressure them to seek an alternative path forward for their country?

Answer. INR draws on all-source intelligence from a wide range of sources to ensure its analysis meets the highest tradecraft standards. If confirmed, I would ensure INR is working closely with State policymakers and across the Intelligence Community to deliver analysis that is relevant, comprehensive, and actionable—ensuring policymakers have the intelligence they need to make well-informed decisions on all U.S. foreign policy and national security matters.

Question. Would you support expanding these sanctions in order to increase pressure on the junta? As a leader in the administration on Burma, would you support the BRAVE Burma Act?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring top quality intelligence products are provided by INR to executive branch policymakers who will be working on these matters.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MICHAEL VANCE BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

Integrity of INR: The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research has a reputation within the intelligence community for its integrity and resilience in the face of political pressure, such as when they did not cave to pressure to falsely affirm there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Question. As this Administration faces credible reporting suggesting that it has pressured career members of the intelligence community to change assessments—including on Venezuela—how will you stand up against undue political pressure to ensure the U.S. Government makes important national security decisions—often life-and-death decisions—based on facts, not political whims?

Answer. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, it would be a tremendous privilege to lead the Bureau of Intelligence and Research—an organization with a proud tradition of analytic rigor, independence, and service to U.S. foreign policy. INR plays a unique and indispensable role within the Intelligence Community. Its officers provide objective, policy-relevant, all-source intelligence analysis and support rooted in

deep expertise and an understanding of diplomacy, ensuring policymakers receive assessments that are candid, timely, and free from political influence.

At a time of increasing global competition, persistent conflict, and rapidly evolving technological challenges, the demand for high-quality intelligence has never been greater. If confirmed, my chief priority would be to safeguard the integrity and independence of INR's analysis, while ensuring it continues to meet the needs of the Secretary and the Department.

Submitted by Senator Jeanne Shaheen



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 5, 2026

The Honorable
Jeanne Shaheen,
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Shaheen:

Thank you for your March 27 letter to Secretary Rubio regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The Administration remains committed to the Dayton Peace Agreement and to the security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of BiH. The Department is working with the White House and the Department of the Treasury to evaluate and implement recent legislation regarding the Western Balkans. We look forward to continued coordination with Congress as this process moves forward.

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Guaglianone".

Paul D. Guaglianone
Senior Bureau Official
Bureau of Legislative Affairs

Submitted by Senator Tim Kaine

POLITIFACT

The Poynter Institute

<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2024/oct/03/kari-lake/in-arizona-senate-race-kari-lake-fabricates-link-b/>

Kari Lake

stated on September 27, 2024 in a TV interview:

Rep. Ruben Gallego is “controlled by the cartels. His own father was a Colombian drug trafficker, and so he’s got links to the cartel.”



Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., speaks at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on Aug. 22, 2024. (AP)



By [Caleb McCullough](#) October 3, 2024

In Arizona Senate race, Kari Lake fabricates link between Ruben Gallego and drug cartels

IF YOUR TIME IS SHORT

- When U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., was a child, his father was arrested for possessing cocaine and marijuana with intent to distribute, according to

Gallego's 2021 memoir.

- As an adult, Gallego has had scant contact with his father — who is from Mexico, not Colombia — and there's no evidence the relationship means Gallego is connected to foreign criminal organizations.
- The campaign of Republican Kari Lake, Gallego's Republican U.S. Senate opponent, gave no evidence to support her accusation.

[See the sources for this fact-check](#)

Republican Senate candidate Kari Lake drew an unfounded connection between her Democratic opponent and Mexican drug cartels during a recent interview, accusing U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego of being "controlled by the cartels."

Speaking Sept. 27 with [Newsmax host Greg Kelly](#), Lake theorized a connection between Gallego and drug cartels because his father was arrested for drug crimes when Gallego was a child.

"I want to confront the cartels," [Lake said](#). "He is controlled by the cartels. His own father was a Colombian drug trafficker, and so he's got links to the cartel."

Gallego's father has a criminal history, but Lake gets the facts wrong, and her claim that Gallego is connected to foreign criminal organizations lacks evidence.

First, Gallego's father is not Colombian. He was originally from Mexico, and he emigrated to the U.S. as a teenager, according to Gallego's 2021 memoir, "They Called Us 'Lucky.'" Gallego's mother's family came to the U.S. from Colombia when she was a teenager, Gallego wrote.

Gallego's parents divorced when he was in junior high school. Gallego wrote that his father was almost entirely absent from his life after the divorce, making Lake's accusation that Gallego has "links to the cartel" through his father dubious.

We asked Lake's campaign to provide evidence for her claim about Gallego, and we got no response.

A spokesperson for Gallego's campaign said in a statement the claim was a "disgusting, false attack."

"Ruben has a clear record of fighting to crack down on illegal drug trafficking and address the fentanyl crisis," the campaign spokesperson said.

After his parents divorced, Gallego wrote that he [rarely saw his father](#), and that his mother raised him and his siblings. He said he later learned his father and his father's cousin had been "dabbling in the drug trade." The book makes no direct mention of cartels.

"If my father was making any money from his involvement, we never saw it," he wrote. "Eventually, my father was busted and found guilty of felony possession with intent to sell cocaine and marijuana. My uncle made out worse — he was shot and killed in Mexico. I never found out the details, and don't care to."

PolitiFact couldn't independently verify Gallego's account of his father's background and criminal history.

Gallego provided another anecdote later in his book about his fraught relationship with his father. Gallego joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 2000, and after he completed boot camp, his father attended his graduation ceremony — the first time they'd seen each other in years.

"Seeing him at the graduation enraged me, and still does," Gallego wrote. "I felt as if he'd come to steal some portion of my achievement, as if he was responsible for all the work I'd done to get this far. ... I avoided him, staying close to my mom and sisters, avoiding any possibility of contact. I've barely heard from him since."

Gallego wrote that he changed his last name from his father's surname to his mother's maiden name after leaving the Marines. He said he changed his name because he "didn't want to be associated with my father, even symbolically," and he was "ashamed of his crimes, and angry at him for abandoning us."

Our ruling

Lake said Gallego is "controlled by the cartels. His own father was a Colombian drug trafficker, and so he's got links to the cartel."

Gallego's father was an immigrant from Mexico, not Colombia. He was "dabbling in the drug trade," according to Gallego's 2021 book, and he was arrested for possessing cocaine and marijuana with intent to distribute when Gallego was a child.

But Gallego's father has been largely absent from Gallego's life since Gallego was in junior high school and his parents divorced. Gallego's book makes clear that he has little contact with his father, and he wrote he had "barely heard from him" as an adult.

There's no evidence that Gallego has "links to the cartel" because of his father's criminal history. Lake's campaign provided no evidence to support that claim.

We rate this statement **Pants on Fire!**

PolitiFact Researcher Caryn Baird contributed to this fact-check.

