

**NOMINATIONS OF THE 110TH
CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION**

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—
JANUARY 30 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 24, 2008
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
110TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

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JOHN F. KERRY, Massachusetts	CHUCK HAGEL, Nebraska
RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD, Wisconsin	NORM COLEMAN, Minnesota
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BILL NELSON, Florida	JOHN E. SUNUNU, New Hampshire*
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ROBERT MENENDEZ, New Jersey	LISA MURKOWSKI, Alaska
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland	JIM DeMINT, South Carolina
ROBERT P. CASEY, Pennsylvania	JOHNNY ISAKSON, Georgia
JIM WEBB, Virginia	DAVID VITTER, Louisiana

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

KENNETH A. MYERS, Jr., *Republican Staff Director*

*Note: Reassigned to Committee on Finance January 24, 2008.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
110TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

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ROBERT P. CASEY, Pennsylvania	DAVID VITTER, Louisiana
JIM WEBB, Virginia	JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming*

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

KENNETH A. MYERS, Jr., *Republican Staff Director*

*Note: Appointed February 12, 2008.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2008

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

Barrett, Barbara McConnell, to be Ambassador to the Republic of
Finland
Ghafari, Yousif Boutrous, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slo-
venia
McEldowney, Nancy, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria
Urbancic, Frank, to be Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus
Volker, Kurt, to be the U.S. Permanent Representative on the
Council of NATO

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Barack Obama presiding.

Present: Senators Obama, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Lugar, Voinovich, and Barrasso.

Also Present: Senator Kyl.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BARACK OBAMA, U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

Senator OBAMA. This hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations will now come to order. Today, the committee meets to consider the nomination of five important diplomatic positions.

The President has nominated Barbara McConnell Barrett to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, Yousif Boutrous Ghafari to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia, Frank Urbancic—did I say that correctly?—to be Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus, Nancy McEldowney to be Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria, and Kurt Volker to be the U.S. Permanent Representative on the Council of NATO.

I want to congratulate all of you on your nomination. I look forward to hearing from each of you this afternoon, or this morning.

I also want to welcome my colleague Senator Kyl, who has joined us to introduce Ms. Barrett today. And I understand that Senator Casey will be joining us a little later to introduce Mr. Volker.

Senator Levin, who regrets he cannot be here, he has got this little thing he has got to do right now, chairing the Armed Services Committee hearing of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. But he asked me to note his support for Mr. Ghafari's nomination

to be Ambassador of Slovenia. His statement of support will be included in the record.

[Senator Levin's statement appears at the end of this hearing in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section.]

And I just want to welcome our esteemed colleague and the ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Richard Lugar.

I am very pleased to welcome each of our nominees today. Without exception, you bring an impressive range of talents and experience to your assignments, and I look forward to discussing the challenges you are likely to encounter and how you intend to strengthen our Nation and its allies in the course of your service.

Your nominations come at a critical moment in the history of American diplomacy. The challenges we face are formidable—securing our country, revitalizing our alliances, bolstering young democracies, and confronting the common threats of the 21st century, including terrorism and nuclear weapons proliferation, climate change and poverty, genocide and disease.

Turning these challenges into opportunities will require renewed American leadership. It will also require ambassadors who exemplify the principles that make our Nation great. Upon confirmation, each of you will work with countries that are close partners of the United States and share our common faith in the value of self-determination, accountable governments, collective security, and human rights.

And Mr. Volker, if confirmed, will serve as the United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO is the most powerful and most successful military alliance in the history of the world. No organization has done more to promote peace and stability in Europe or to create the protective shield that has allowed the democracies of the North Atlantic to grow into a free and prosperous community.

But as we saw at last week's summit in Bucharest, NATO is not as strong, as capable, or as united as I believe it should be. Afghanistan, NATO's first major mission beyond the borders of Europe, has been overlooked and undermanned by many members of the alliance, including the United States. Success in Afghanistan, I believe, is critical to American national security and to the security of the entire world. And a failure there would not only endanger our Nation and global stability, it would cast serious doubt on the ability of NATO's military and political architecture to uphold our security in the 21st century.

Some new troop commitments to Afghanistan were made in Bucharest, and that is good news. But neither the administration nor our allies have yet done enough to muster the resources that would win the war there and prevent Afghanistan from reemerging as a safe haven for the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The Bucharest summit also left out one of three candidates for membership and failed to provide the young democracies of Georgia and Ukraine with membership action plans.

Mr. Volker, you are a professional diplomat of the first order, and I have confidence that you will represent the United States ably in Brussels. However, ensuring that NATO retains its rightful place as the cornerstone of the Euro-Atlantic alliance will require that

we do more to enlarge NATO to include worthy European democracies and focus more resources on the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Doing so will require adroit diplomacy at NATO headquarters, but it will also mean making the case directly to the citizens of Europe that we must all increase our commitment to global security. We succeeded in coming together to confront the greatest challenges of the second half of the 20th century. We cannot succeed in confronting the challenges of the 21st century unless we do so together.

Mr. Urbancic, if confirmed, you will be serving in Cyprus at a time of new optimism in the long struggle to bring an end to the estrangement of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. After three decades, last Thursday's opening of the Ledra Street crossing in downtown Nicosia was a tangible indication of goodwill on both sides of the island to forge a settlement between two peoples who share a common home, a common history, and a common destiny.

I hope that the day of Cypriot reunification comes in the course of your ambassadorial service and that you will do everything in your power to help the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot community reach a just and lasting peace.

Slovenia has been on the cutting edge of democratic change in Eastern Europe. Since its early success gaining membership in NATO and the European Union, it has been a model for the progress of the Balkans. Despite its small size, Slovenia currently leads the nations of the European Union while it occupies the EU's Presidency. Its citizens are helping to set the agenda for an entire continent.

Slovenians are focusing Europe's attention on the unfinished business of bringing peace and prosperity to the Balkans. The people and Government of Slovenia will need the help of the United States and other partners as they consolidate their democratic gains and seek to extend those gains throughout the region.

Mr. Ghafari, as an immigrant who has truly lived the American dream, you represent the strength found in our country's diversity. Similar strengths should characterize life in the Balkans. In some parts of the region, including Slovenia, it already does. I hope your story and your service will resonate with people throughout the former Yugoslavia.

After a difficult transition from communism and setbacks in the 1990s, Bulgaria has made impressive economic strides in recent years. As a potential hub for oil and gas distribution, the country could play an important role in Europe's future energy security. However, Bulgaria continues to struggle with corruption and the corrosive influence of organized crime. Any failure to address these challenges could jeopardize the country's future cooperation with the European Union and, with it, much of the progress that has occurred in the recent past.

Ms. McEldowney, you will need to work aggressively to assure that the democratic backsliding, which has happened in some other parts of Eastern Europe, does not occur in Bulgaria. The country's institutions and judicial system will need your support and assistance in order to help Bulgaria remain on course toward full Euro-Atlantic integration.

In recent years, the United States has dramatically reduced its financial assistance to Bulgaria, so you will have to be creative. But your exemplary record as a member of the Foreign Service bodes well for your work on these critical tasks.

And finally, Ms. Barrett, you have a different task, as you will represent America in a country that has traveled further down the path of democracy and prosperity. Finland is a world leader in technology and innovation and even outranks the United States in some measures of development. But it still faces challenges in its relationship with Russia and its long-standing position outside of the Euro-Atlantic security institutions.

At some point soon, Finland may move toward membership in NATO. Should the Finnish people and Government choose to pursue that objective, I hope you will be their biggest booster.

All of you are coming before this committee at a defining moment in America's story. Now is not a time for half-hearted diplomacy. We need to raise the bar for our allies, and that must begin with raising the bar for ourselves. Together, with our partners in Europe, I am confident that we can make whole a world that is in need of repair. And I look forward to a more detailed discussion of the challenges and opportunities that await you.

I want to acknowledge that Senator Voinovich has joined us, as well as Senator Cardin. I will now turn it over to Senator Lugar for his opening statement, and I will then allow for brief opening statements from Senator Voinovich and Senator Cardin. We will then turn it over to Senator Kyl for his introduction of Ms. Barrett, and I know he has other things to do as well.

So, Senator Lugar.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

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

I would like unanimous consent that a statement by our Ranking Member, Senator DeMint, be placed in the record at this point.[Senator DeMint's statement appears at the end of this hearing in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section.]

Senator OBAMA. Without objection.

Senator LUGAR. Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for calling and chairing this timely hearing. The need for ambassadors in each of the posts that are represented here today is imperative, and the timeliness of this hearing is extremely important. And we are delighted that our colleague, Senator Kyl, is here today to introduce a candidate, Ms. Barrett, for Finland.

Let me just focus short remarks and really in the spirit in which you have addressed the Bucharest summit, Mr. Chairman. I am disappointed about the lack of progress made at the summit. While additional troop commitments for Afghanistan were secured, it is unclear if any of the national caveats that constrain troop deployment were removed at this point.

And while agreement was found on missile defense, it appears that the cost included the refusal to proceed with membership action plans for Ukraine and Georgia. Lastly, the Greek veto of Macedonia's membership bid is extremely unfortunate and a strategic blunder for European security, in my judgment.

Mr. Volker, you will bear the brunt of many of these questions as we come to you in the lineup at this point. And you are a veteran of the trail, having spent a lot of time with Members of Congress thinking about summits in the past. But I would just say that I have enjoyed working with you over the years. You will make a great ambassador to NATO, but I still am concerned about the progress of the 2006 summit at Riga as well as last summit, and I just will query what lessons were learned at Bucharest that can be applied to next year's 60th anniversary summit.

It appeared to those of us in the Senate the diplomatic spade work got started very late in the process this year, and that by the time the President gauged on the matter, most issues may have been decided by some members. In hindsight, I will query whether you believe it was a wise decision for President Putin to be invited to the summit. He accused the alliance at that point of demonizing Russia. Imagine what he would have said if the alliance had supported Ukraine and Georgia's MAP plans.

I read some press accounts about President Putin's refusal to sign the NATO-Russia communique. Is it your understanding this refusal was linked to NATO's pledge that Ukraine and Georgia will one day join NATO?

I have concluded that Germany's opposition to Ukraine and Georgia's receiving of the MAP plan has been largely based upon Russia and energy. A number of NATO members are currently dependent on Russia for energy. Do Russia's energy reserves provide a de facto veto of NATO's activities?

And I will pose a question to Ms. McEldowney about Bulgaria in due course. Sofia's January 2008 agreement with Russia to host a portion of the South Stream energy pipeline was truly a setback to an independent and secure European security strategy. What was Bulgaria's motivation in concluding this deal? And what role do you believe the lack of progress on the Nabucco pipeline played in the South Stream decision?

Do you believe that there is time or opportunity to convince friends in Bulgaria to change course or, for that matter, for those of you who are serving in Europe to be instrumental in reviving Nabucco as opposed to South Stream?

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity for a preview of some of the issues and questions, and I look forward to participating in this vital hearing.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much.

I would like to acknowledge that we have been joined by Senator Casey, as well as Senator Menendez. What I would like to do is let them, let all of the other members of the committee make a brief opening statement, and then turn it over to Senator Kyl so that he can provide his introduction of Ms. Barrett.

Let us start in the order of people who showed up, with Senator Voinovich.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE V. VOINOVICH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO**

Senator VOINOVICH. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate your holding this committee meeting and thank Chairman Biden for

putting all of these people before us so that we can get on with their appointments.

My first observation is, Mr. Urbancic, you should be going to Slovenia. [Laughter.]

Although, Mr. Ghafari, you and I have met, and you will do well in Slovenia. Slovenia has a role. It is president of the European Union, and it is very much engaged, as you know, in what is going to happen in Kosovo and really understands the need to make sure that it gets done right.

Mr. Volker, you are going on to NATO, and NATO has got some real challenges with operations in Afghanistan, and whether the members are going to come onboard and send troops or lie back. How is that going to work? You have got the KFOR forces in Kosovo right now, the relationship with that, and also the issue that the chairman just brought up about NATO enlargement.

I would be interested to know if our Government is going to take the position of trying to work things out between Greece and Macedonia, and where you think that issue is going, if anywhere.

And Finland—Ms. Barrett, Finland is now in charge of the OSCE ministerial lines, and there are a couple of members of this Foreign Relations Committee that are very interested in the OSCE, particularly in the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Because that is the organization that deals with the issue of Muslim xenophobia and also deals with anti-Semitism.

And right now, the OSCE is at a crucial point because it is going to be appointing a new person to head up ODIHR, and we really would like to make sure that this new person really knows what he or she is doing and is committed—particularly to our issue of anti-Semitism, they call it “the tower incident,” and on discrimination.

Mr. Urbancic, you have got to face the issue of Cyprus and Turkey and how is that all going to work out with the prospect of Turkey joining the European Union?

And, of course, Bulgaria. How is that issue coming? We were successful in getting Bulgaria into NATO. We felt that that would move things along. How are the Bulgarians doing in terms of their niche capabilities, and how are some of the human rights and other changes that need to be made going in there?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much, and thank you, Senator Voinovich, for setting a good example of brevity.

Let me turn it over to Senator Cardin, and if we can try to keep our remarks to 5 minutes or less so that Senator Kyl is not too further delayed and that we have an opportunity to ask as many questions as possible.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. And I thank you for your convening this hearing so that we can move forward on these important positions for the United States in Europe.

I first want to just thank all of the nominees for their public service, their willingness to serve, and I thank your families for al-

lowing this participation and helping our country. And we know it is a family sacrifice. So we thank you all for that.

Europe is very important to the United States. I want to follow briefly on what Senator Voinovich said in regard to the OSCE. I have the honor of being the Senate chair of the OSCE, and there are several issues of concern within the countries that are represented by the nominations today on OSCE issues. You have already mentioned Kosovo, which is—I would be interested in pursuing that.

We have minority issues. In Bulgaria particularly, there is a concern about the Roma population, as well as the Turkish minority. I would be interested to hear your perspective on that. We have the concerns of human trafficking in several of the countries that are represented here. So I look forward to those questions.

And then NATO, I am concerned about the Bucharest summit as to the influence Russia has on the expansion of our NATO allies, and I would be interested in pursuing that during the question period.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 Senator OBAMA. Thank you.
 Senator Menendez.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be even briefer.

I appreciate the service of all of the nominees. My particular questions, when we get to that point, will be for Mr. Volker and Mr. Urbancic as it relates to Greece and the Macedonia, the fire-arm issue, as well as Cyprus. And they are, I think, in my view, important countries. There are some significant issues that are outstanding there, and I will be looking to see your insights on them as it relates to my support for your nominations.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I think I have had the greatest model of expediency.

Senator OBAMA. You have done outstanding.
 Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I am going to be very brief. I am going to be offering, in a few moments, opening remarks by way of introduction to Mr. Volker. So I will defer until then.

But thank you very much.

Senator OBAMA. Good. Well, it is now time to turn to the nominees. I will ask that each of you deliver your statements in the order that you were introduced. You will each have 5 minutes for your statements, and if you are summarizing a statement, the text of your entire presentation will be included in the hearing record.

Also, if you would like, please feel free to introduce any members of your family that are with you here today because, as Senator Cardin noted, I know that this is a family affair, and we are extraordinarily grateful for their service, as well. And we would like to welcome them all to the committee. I know this is a great occasion for them.

So what I would like to do is to allow Senator Kyl to introduce Ms. Barrett. And then, Ms. Barrett, we will go with your statement.

Senator Casey, I am sorry. Who were you going to be introducing?

Senator CASEY. Mr. Volker.

Senator OBAMA. Mr. Volker. So, Mr. Volker, you are down at the end. So I will make sure that Senator Casey has occasion to introduce you before your testimony.

Senator Kyl, please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JON KYL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA**

Senator KYL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

Got it. Thank you very much for your courtesy in allowing me to formally introduce Ms. Barbara Barrett to you. I want to assure you that mine is more than the obligatory introduction of a constituent.

I calculated that I have known Barbara Barrett for almost 40 years, and we have been good friends during that entire time. And I would also note that Senator McCain strongly endorses her nomination and confirmation, and we have submitted a statement for the record from Senator McCain, as well.

[Senator McCain's statement appears at the end of this hearing in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section.]

Ms. Barrett has a resume, which I can't do justice to, and frankly, in the interest of time, I am just going to highlight a couple of matters from it. But I think it is important to also get a measure of the individual, and I will really close with what I think are her most important attributes in terms of representation of the United States in an important country abroad.

She has served as—nationally, for example, as vice chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board here in Washington, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. In Phoenix, she was a partner in a prominent law firm there. She has served in our community in numerous ways, and I do encourage you to look at the resume to see the breadth of her experience there.

She has also represented interests in Washington, DC, and internationally, as well. She has been a teacher as a fellow at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She served as president of the International Women's Forum. She was Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, which looked very hard at U.S. efforts at public diplomacy and had some significant recommendations to make in that regard. She was senior advisor to the U.S. mission to the United Nations.

One of her current passions, which I really admire—and incidentally illustrates that her travel schedule is, frankly, more robust than mine, and I go home almost every weekend—is working with the Thunderbird School of Management and the U.S. Afghan Women's Council on a program to work with and mentor and train Afghan women as entrepreneurs and effective members of their communities. I know this is a passion because I have talked to her about it on numerous occasions.

I could go on about her resume, but I really want to just tell you about the kind of person that Barbara Barrett is. I can't think of anyone who could more effectively represent the interests of the United States Government in a foreign embassy. She is obviously highly intelligent, has a broad background of experience, great skills, a tremendous personality, huge energy. I talked about her travel schedule. She will work at it very hard. But most importantly, she has the diplomatic skills to represent the United States in an important post abroad.

And so, I urge you to take as quick action as you can in this committee to confirm these nominees and enable full representation of the United States in these important posts around the world, beginning with my long-time friend, Ms. Barbara Barrett.

Senator OBAMA. Well, that is a wonderful introduction, and I would note that my understanding is it is colder in Finland than in Phoenix. So I don't know if you have gone shopping yet, but—

Senator KYL. Anything to sacrifice for the United States. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Kyl, for the very gracious introduction.

Ms. Barrett, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA McCONNELL BARRETT, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Ms. BARRETT. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I consider it an extraordinary privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to the United States ambassador role to Finland. I am grateful to President Bush and to Secretary Rice for their trust.

If confirmed, I intend to demonstrate that their trust is well placed by building upon the excellent existing relationships between our countries and by advancing American interests in Finland.

I thank Senator Jon Kyl for introducing me today and Senator McCain for his written record.

I recognize that it is a demanding responsibility to serve the public as an ambassador of the United States of America. Thirty-three years ago this spring, I began my journey in public service as an intern at the Arizona State legislature. My respect and admiration for government leadership was inspired by observing then-Senate Majority Leader Sandra Day O'Connor. She was a leader among her colleagues, an advocate for transformative legislation, and a champion of meaningful causes.

During my legislative experience, I learned the importance of serving constituents and making practical improvements to people's lives through public service. Meanwhile, in business; I was an executive of two Fortune 500 companies, chairman of the board of a small bank, CEO of the American Management Association, a fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics, and on the boards of two aircraft manufacturers and an airline. Tangential to business, I learned to fly a plane and shoe a horse.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed as ambassador, I will advance the priorities of the United States mission to Finland. The first priority of our embassy is continuing

high-level bilateral cooperation with Finland to combat terrorism. In 2006, Finland was one of the first countries to sign the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, an effort co-established by the United States and the Russian Federation. Additionally, Finland has actively participated in counterterrorism and non-proliferation initiatives sponsored by the United Nations and the European Union.

The Finnish civil aviation authority has fully implemented the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's security directives regarding air carriers operating to the United States. I understand the sensitivity of these aviation cooperation efforts because I am a pilot, and I served on the Phoenix airport boards and the Civil Aeronautics Board and was second-in-command at the FAA.

Serving today at the governance level in defense, technology, and engineering companies, I work with some of the world's most pressing national security issues, starting with terrorism. Ensuring the welfare and safety of American citizens at home and abroad would be among my highest priorities. So, if confirmed, I will continue to advance our high level of coordination between Finland and the United States to deter, detect, and defeat terrorism.

A second mission priority is our cooperation with Finland on peacekeeping and regional stability, especially in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Finland, a long-time advocate for Kosovo, has been instrumental in mustering international support for this new nation and has deployed more than 400 troops with NATO forces there.

In Afghanistan, too, Finns are part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Finland demonstrates its long-term commitment to Afghanistan, not just by contributing troops, but also through development assistance, poppy eradication, and other counternarcotics efforts.

My work with the U.S. Afghan Women's Council inspired Thunderbird's Artemis Project, a program, as Senator Kyl mentioned, that trains and mentors Afghan women entrepreneurs. Working with Afghan students, doctors, business leaders, and American troops on the ground in Afghanistan makes me respect and profoundly appreciate Finland's support.

Having observed circumstances, both in the Balkan States and in Afghanistan, and having met with government officials in both places, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that Finland's important contributions to peace and stability in Kosovo and Afghanistan continue and receive our recognition.

The missions third priority is promoting pro-growth innovation for energy security and the environment. During 2008, as was mentioned, Finland is chairing the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. And Finland is also a global leader in biofuels and renewable energy with a quarter of its total energy consumption derived from renewable resources.

As a sister of a liquefied natural gas supertanker captain, I understand the disparate distribution of petroleum and other fuel reserves and the resultant urgency of diversifying fuel sources. On this and many other topics, Finland and the United States will mutually benefit from an exchange of information gained from research, innovation, and thoughtful leadership.

Through the years, I have instigated, organized, and chaired countless international symposia, large and small. If confirmed, energy and environment will be topics of my focused attention.

Another priority for the mission is to enhance mutual understanding and protect and promote U.S. interests. Finland is a true friend of the United States and a transatlantic advocate for beliefs that we share. As Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, chairman of Thunderbird School for Global Management, and past chairman of the International Women's Forum, I have led delegations to China, Russia, South Africa, Israel, Jordan, and a number of other important nations. I have lectured at the Moscow School of Politics. I have spoken at college campuses and visited medical clinics and elementary schoolrooms in rural villages on six continents.

I know the importance of academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges. And if confirmed, I will foster and sustain our relationship with Finland by energetically engaging personally with the Government and people of Finland to advance our shared values and interests. And I will do my utmost to lead by example and support our embassy's efforts to expand communication and engagement through vigorous public diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, my personal interest, my professional experience in defense, international business, aviation, and public policy and law prepare me well for ambassadorial duties. My life experience has been strengthening political and economic ties with other nations and achieving results through mutual understanding, communication, and collaboration—in short, diplomacy.

If confirmed, I pledge to do everything I can to lead the embassy that represents the finest values of the United States, and I will do my level best to advance American interests by strengthening the bonds between the United States and Finland.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barrett follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA MCCONNELL BARRETT, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee, I consider it an extraordinary privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Finland. I am grateful to President Bush and Secretary Rice for their trust. If confirmed, I intend to demonstrate that their trust is well placed, by building upon the excellent existing relationships between our countries and by advancing American interests in Finland.

I thank Arizona Senator Jon Kyl for introducing me today.

I recognize that it is a demanding responsibility to serve the public as an Ambassador of the United States of America. Thirty-three years ago this spring, I began my journey in public service as an intern in the Arizona State Legislature. My respect and admiration for governmental leadership was inspired by observing then-Senate Majority Leader Sandra Day O'Connor. She was a leader among her colleagues, an advocate of transformative legislation, and a champion of meaningful causes. During my legislative experience, I learned the importance of serving constituents and making practical improvements to people's lives through public service.

Meanwhile, in business, I was an executive of two Fortune 500 companies, chairman of the board of a small bank, CEO of the American Management Association, a fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics and on the boards of two aircraft manufacturers and an airline. Tangential to business, I have learned to fly a plane and shoe a horse.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will advance the priorities of the United States mission in Finland. The first priority of our embassy is continuing high-level bilateral cooperation with Finland to combat terrorism. In 2006, Finland was one of the first countries to sign the Global Initiative To Combat Nuclear Terrorism, an effort coestablished by the United States and the Russian Federation. Additionally, Finland has actively participated in counterterrorism and nonproliferation initiatives sponsored by both the United Nations and the European Union. The Finnish Civil Aviation Authority has fully implemented U.S. Federal Aviation Administration security directives regarding air carriers operating to the United States.

I understand the sensitivity of their aviation cooperation because I am a pilot and served on the Phoenix airports board and the U.S. Civil Aeronautics board and was second in command at the FAA. Serving today at the governance level of defense, technology, and engineering companies, I work with some of the world's most pressing national security issues, starting with terrorism. Ensuring the welfare and safety of American citizens at home and abroad would be among my highest priorities. So, if confirmed, I will continue to advance our high level of coordination between Finland and the United States to deter, detect, and defeat terrorism.

A second mission priority is our cooperation with Finland on peacekeeping and regional stability, especially in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Finland, a long-time advocate for Kosovo, has been instrumental in mustering international support for this new nation, and has deployed more than 400 troops with NATO forces there. In Afghanistan too, Finns are part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Finland demonstrates its long-term commitment to Afghanistan not just by contributing troops, but also through development assistance, poppy eradication, and other counternarcotic efforts.

My work with the U.S. Afghan Women's Council inspired Thunderbird's Project Artemis, a program that trains and mentors Afghan women entrepreneurs. Working with Afghan students, doctors, business leaders, and American troops on Afghan soil makes me respect and profoundly appreciate Finland's support. Having observed circumstances both in the Balkan states and in Afghanistan and having met with government officials in both places, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that Finland's important contributions to peace and stability in Kosovo and Afghanistan continue—and receive our recognition.

The mission's third priority is promoting pro-growth innovation for energy security and the environment. During 2008 Finland is chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Finland is also a global leader in biofuels and renewable energy with a quarter of its total energy consumption derived from renewable sources. As a sister of an LNG supertanker captain I understand the disparate distribution of petroleum and other fuel reserves and the resultant urgency of diversifying fuel sources. On this and many other topics Finland and the United States will mutually benefit from an exchange of information gained from research, innovation and thoughtful leadership. Through the years I have instigated, organized, and chaired countless international symposia, large and small. If confirmed, energy and the environment will be topics of my focused engagement.

Another priority of the U.S. mission is to enhance mutual understanding and protect and promote U.S. interests. Dating back to John Morton, a United States immigrant from Finland and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Finnish people have proven that they understand and share our core values, including an abiding belief that all people deserve freedom, democracy, and human rights. Finland has been recognized for its lack of corruption, respect for democracy, and its consistently high quality, universal education. Finland is a true friend of the United States and a transatlantic advocate of beliefs we share.

As Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Thunderbird School of Global Management, and the International Women's Forum, I have led delegations to China, Russia, South Africa, Israel, Jordan, Ireland, Chile, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Ecuador, and other important nations. I have lectured at the Moscow School of Politics, spoken on college campuses, and visited medical clinics and elementary schoolrooms in rural villages on six continents. I know the importance of academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges. If confirmed, I will foster and sustain our relationship with Finland by energetically engaging personally with the Government and the people of Finland to advance our shared values and interests. And I will do my utmost to lead by example and support our embassy's efforts to expand communication and engagement through vigorous public diplomacy.

A final priority element for the United States mission in Finland that I will mention is expanding economic opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. The potential is vast for enhanced economic cooperation between the United States and

Finland and through Finland to other parts of the European Union, the Baltic States, and Russia. Finland is a leader in research and development with leading edge advancements in technology, biotechnology, telecommunications, and equipment. While practicing law in Arizona, I was Chairman of the Arizona District Export Council, the Arizona World Affairs Council, and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's Export Conference. I worked to advance the market for American goods and services by hosting and leading trade missions, seminars, and other trade advancement efforts. During the Uruguay round of GATT, I was a trade advisor involved in efforts to improve global protection of intellectual property. At the Civil Aeronautics board, I participated in bilateral and multilateral negotiations between the United States and nations in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. If confirmed, I will continue Ambassador Ware's efforts to create opportunities for U.S. companies by expanding our trading and investment relationships.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, my personal interest and my professional experience in defense, international business, aviation, public policy, and law prepare me well for ambassadorial duties. My life experience has been strengthening political and economic ties with other nations and achieving results through mutual understanding, communication, and collaboration—in short, diplomacy. If confirmed, I pledge to do everything I can to lead an embassy that represents the finest values of the United States, and I will do my level best to advance American interests by strengthening the bonds between the United States and Finland.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much, Ms. Barrett.

Next, Mr. Ghafari.

**STATEMENT OF HON. YOUSIF BOUTROUS GHAFARI, NOMINEE
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

Mr. GHAFARI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for recognizing my immigrant status, and with that, I disclose forgive me for my accent.

I would also like to acknowledge this morning the presence of my wife, Mara Ghafari, for 30 years, the mother of our three children; our son, Peter Ghafari, who is here today. Our two daughters are graduating very shortly from college. They could not be here, and you would be happy to know, Senators, they both will be taxpayers very shortly, with a smile.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today as President Bush and Secretary Rice's nominee to represent the United States in Slovenia. I am privileged that they have selected me to represent our country as Ambassador to Slovenia and honored that this committee is willing to consider my nomination.

I believe that my presence here today is a testament to the power of American democracy. I can think of no other country in which the opportunities for education, economic success, and personal accomplishments are so great. I have been extraordinarily fortunate. I came here as a young man with very little means and no family connections. Yet I had the opportunity to receive a good education and establish successful businesses. We are living the American dream. And now I have come to that point in my career where I hope to be granted the privilege of serving my country.

Our bilateral relationship with Slovenia is strong and vibrant, particularly now since Slovenia holds the European Union presidency for the first half of 2008. It is a relationship enriched by generations of Slovene Americans and the enduring ties they maintain with their land of origin, including your honorable colleague, Senator George Voinovich. Thank you for being here, Senator.

As the first of the former Yugoslav republics to gain independence, Slovenia plays a key role in the Western Balkans. It has worked long and hard to stabilize the entire Southeast Europe region, was the first of the former Yugoslav States to gain membership in NATO and the European Union, and actively contributes to regional security by deploying more than 350 troops to Kosovo.

In its role as European Union president, Slovenia played a remarkable role in coalescing European support for resolution of Kosovo's status and recognized Kosovo soon after its declaration of independence. The United States and Slovenia share the goal of European Union expansion in the Balkans, believing that it will further regional stabilization and development. As a strong, stable, and economically prosperous member of the Union, Slovenia recognizes that it has both a responsibility and an interest in aiding Western Balkan nations to move toward greater European and transatlantic integration and has undertaken several initiatives to achieve this goal.

One of Slovenia's notable initiatives is the International Trust Fund for demining and mine victims assistance, ITF. Since its inception in 1998, the ITF has raised more than \$220 million in donations, and as of October 2006, the fund had cleared nearly 70 million square meters of mines and aided more than 900 mine victims.

We have also worked side-by-side with Slovenia in the struggle against terrorism. Slovenia has contributed forces to the international missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and elsewhere, recently deployed more than 11 percent of its armed forces abroad. It recently increased its troop contribution in Afghanistan and has contributed equipment and ammunition to the Afghani Armed Forces.

If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to promote continued strong bilateral cooperation in the fight against terror and to encourage the Slovene Government to increase its participation in NATO missions.

Slovenia's strong economy presents many opportunities for United States businesses. There are approximately 40 United States companies with investments and/or sales offices in Slovenia, and it is estimated that United States investment totals more than \$490 million. We should continue to encourage the Slovenian Government to strengthen its market economy through privatization and increase foreign direct investment.

If confirmed, I will work to increase opportunities for U.S. companies and further expand our trade and investment, resulting in benefits to both our peoples.

Finally, if confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to continue to foster and sustain our close relationship by personally reaching out to the Slovene Government, people, and media to explain the United States perspective, to promote United States policy interests, to remind young people of America's constant support for peace, freedom, and human rights in Southeastern Europe and throughout the world. I will continue to support our embassy's efforts to expand academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges, all of which will serve to bring our peoples closer together.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the people of America are diverse in origin, religion, and education. Yet they are almost universally inclusive and generous. Our way of government, even in the harsh light of an imperfect reality, is fair and welcoming and enables its citizens to live in safety and prosperity.

I hope, as a personal mission, even in a small way to serve as a testament to the inclusive and generous spirit of the American people and our way of life. I thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ghafari follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. YOUSIF BOUTROUS GHAFARI, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today as President Bush and Secretary Rice's nominee to represent the United States in Slovenia. I am privileged that they have selected me to represent our country as ambassador to Slovenia, and honored that this committee is willing to consider my nomination.

I believe that my presence here today is a testament to the power of American democracy. There is a reason the opportunities that are possible in this great country are referred to as the "American dream." I can think of no other country in which the opportunities for education, economic success, and personal accomplishments are so great. I have been extraordinarily fortunate; I came here as a young man with very little means and no family connections, yet I had the opportunity to receive a good education, establish successful businesses, marry, and raise a family. We are living the American dream. And now, I have come to that point in my career where I hope to be granted the privilege of serving my country.

Our bilateral relationship with Slovenia is strong and vibrant, particularly now since Slovenia holds the European Union Presidency for the first half of 2008. It is a relationship enriched by generations of Slovene-Americans and the enduring ties they maintain with their land of origin.

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The United States and Slovenia share the goal of European Union expansion in the Balkans, believing that it will further regional stabilization and development. As a strong, stable and economically prosperous member of the Union, Slovenia recognizes that it has both a responsibility and an interest in aiding Western Balkan nations to move toward greater European and transatlantic integration and has undertaken several initiatives to achieve this goal.

One of Slovenia's notable initiatives is the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF). Since its inception in 1998, the ITF has raised more than \$220 million in donations from various countries, the European Union, the U.N. Development Program and more than 70 private companies. More than \$100 million of this total has come from the U.S. Government as part of a program mandated by Congress that matches nearly all donations made by other governments, individuals, and corporations. As of October 2006, the fund had cleared nearly 70 million square meters of mines and aided more than 900 mine victims, most of them coming from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both the Slovene Embassy in Washington and the United States Embassy in Ljubljana have been involved in fundraising efforts for ITF.

We have also worked side-by-side with Slovenia in the struggle against terrorism. Slovenia has contributed forces to the international missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and elsewhere, and recently deployed more than 11 percent of its armed forces abroad. It recently increased its troop contribution in Afghanistan and has contributed equipment and ammunition to the Afghani Armed Forces. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to promote continued strong bilateral cooperation in the fight against terror and to encourage the Slovene Government to increase its participation in NATO missions, particularly in Afghanistan, where it could offer an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team.

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Finally, if confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to continue to foster and sustain our close relationship by personally reaching out to the Slovene Government, people and media to explain the United States perspective, to promote United States policy interests, to remind young people of America's constant support for peace, freedom, and human rights in Southeastern Europe, and throughout the world. I will continue to support our embassy's efforts to expand academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges, all of which will serve to bring our peoples closer together.

Mr. Chairman, the people of America are diverse in origin, religion, and education, yet they are almost universally inclusive and generous. Our way of government, even in the harsh light of an imperfect reality, is fair and welcoming, and enables its citizens to live in safety and prosperity. I hope, as a personal mission, even in a small way, to serve as a testament to the inclusive and generous spirit of the American people and our way of life. I thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much, Mr. Ghafari.

Mr. Urbancic and Ms. McEldowney, Senator Casey, I think, may be constrained by his schedule. So I hope you don't mind if we go a little bit out of order, allow Senator Casey to introduce Mr. Volker and allow Mr. Volker to go ahead and make his statement. And then we will go back to you guys. Okay.

Senator Casey.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.,
U.S. SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and I do want to thank the other nominees who are here for this courtesy.

Mr. Chairman, it is my distinct pleasure this morning to introduce Mr. Kurt Volker to the committee. Kurt with his family appears before the committee as the nominee for one of our most important diplomatic postings, the United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we know as NATO.

The NATO alliance just completed a major summit in Bucharest, Romania, where the alliance agreed to accept two new members, Croatia and Albania, and took action on other issues, including bolstering force levels in Afghanistan. NATO, almost 60 years old following its founding, remains the anchor of the relationship between the United States and Europe. I believe Kurt Volker is the right person to represent the United States at our NATO mission in Brussels.

Kurt was born and raised in Hatboro, PA. He is a proud graduate of Hatboro-Horsham Senior High School. Following high school, he chose to remain in Pennsylvania and attended Temple University in Philadelphia. Following college graduation, he moved to Washington, DC, to earn a master's degree in international relations from the George Washington University.

Kurt then entered the United States Foreign Service as a career officer in 1988, where he served with honor and distinction ever since. I want to note that Kurt is married to Karen Volker, another

Foreign Service officer, and is the proud father of two daughters, Sonja and Katja. Did I pronounce those correctly?

Mr. VOLKER. Very close.

Senator CASEY. Okay. [Laughter.]

Help me.

Mr. VOLKER. Sonja and Katja.

Senator CASEY. Sonja and Katja. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, you have Kurt's CV in front of you, as well as other members of the committee, so I won't recite every detail. But I want to quickly run through some of the highlights of his career, which demonstrate how rapidly Kurt has risen through the ranks of the Foreign Service.

First of all, he served as a special assistant to the United States envoy for negotiations in Bosnia during the 1990s; then as the deputy political counselor at the United States embassy in Budapest, Hungary, from 1994 to 1997; the senior advisor to then-NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson at the beginning of this decade; next, the director on the National Security Council responsible for NATO in Western Europe from 2001 to 2005; and today, Mr. Volker serves as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasian Affairs at the State Department.

He serves as second-in-command for this key regional bureau at State and is focused on U.S. relations with NATO, the European Union, and key European States. Looking at his background, you recognize that Kurt's entire career has helped prepare him for this moment, to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to NATO. He recognizes that NATO retains an enduring value, even though the cold war is a distant memory and that when NATO acts in a unified manner, the entire world benefits.

I am also proud that Kurt represents the very best of the U.S. Foreign Service. A seasoned diplomat who advances the interests of his country without regard to politics or partisanship, Kurt has proudly served four presidential administrations during his career. He played a valuable role in helping Hungary prepare for NATO accession during the Clinton administration, but also was instrumental in spearheading NATO's next two rounds of expansion during the Bush administration.

Mr. Chairman, for all these reasons, I heartily endorse Kurt Volker, a distinguished native of the State of Pennsylvania, to be confirmed as the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, and I thank you for allowing me to speak this morning on his behalf.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much, Senator Casey.

Given that wonderful introduction, I think it is best if, Mr. Volker, you go ahead and proceed. And if you want to introduce—as a father of two daughters, I am a little biased here. But feel free to introduce those exceptional young ladies, as well.

STATEMENT OF KURT D. VOLKER, NOMINEE TO BE U.S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. VOLKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator. After an introduction like that, I think it is best if I don't say anything at all.

But I would like to introduce my wife, Karen, who is here, and my two daughters, Sonja and Katja. Karen—Mr. Chairman, you will be interested—attended Occidental College from 1979 to 1981.

Senator OBAMA. We overlapped.

Ms. VOLKER. We had friends in common.

Senator OBAMA. That is wonderful.

Mr. VOLKER. Friends in common. And my oldest daughter, Sonja, began school in Brussels when I was working for Lord Robertson at NATO and was born there.

Senator OBAMA. Wonderful.

Mr. VOLKER. It is an honor to be here before this committee as the President's nominee to serve as Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and a particular honor also to be introduced by Senator Casey from my home State, Pennsylvania. And I am grateful that you would take the time and offer such words of encouragement. Thank you.

I am also delighted, I should say, to see so many friends from the Diplomatic Corps from European countries here today, and I just want to point out Ambassador Gianni Castellaneta from Italy, who is a good friend. Thank you for being here and for your support.

I have a longer statement I would like to enter into the record. Mr. Chairman, I am especially pleased to be nominated to serve as Ambassador to NATO because I have dedicated my career to building a healthy, secure, democratic transatlantic community. In 20 years in the Foreign Service, I have served four administrations working on our NATO alliance from many angles—the executive branch, I spent a year here in the Senate as a legislative fellow, and at NATO in some of our allied countries.

I have worked closely with this committee and its staff on a variety of issues over the years. And I am grateful for the close cooperation that we enjoy today between the committee and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, which I represent. This career-long commitment to NATO and to our transatlantic partnership with Europe stems from my commitment to the founding principles of our Nation—the values of individual liberty, democracy, market economy, human rights, and the rule of law—which transcend our national borders and define the best hopes of humanity.

We and the other members of NATO are part of a single transatlantic democratic community based on these shared values. We view challenges in the world from this shared perspective, and we need to work together if we are to deal with these challenges effectively and advance these values in the world.

The fact that the cold war is over does not mean that threats to our democratic community have gone away. They have changed from the threat of ground attack in Europe to threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the consequences of failed States. And NATO has done a remarkable job securing the freedom of this community for nearly 60 years while transforming itself as threats have changed. It has added new members, taken on critical operational missions, built partnerships with nations around the globe. NATO is now a frontline alliance dealing with the challenges of the 21st century.

The just-concluded Bucharest summit further advanced the transformation of NATO, renewing our commitment to operations in Afghanistan and in Kosovo, inviting new members, strengthening partnerships, and focusing on the defense capabilities needed for the future. We got a lot done at Bucharest. I think we have a lot more to do as well, and I think we need to keep working on some of the issues that you and the other Senators have raised.

The United States is deeply committed to the effort in Afghanistan and to all NATO missions. We have made enormous investment, suffered serious losses. I honor the service of our men and women in uniform, as well as our diplomats and civilians in the service of NATO.

And I also want to pay tribute to the contributions and sacrifices of our allies and partners. Several allies are fighting hard in Afghanistan and have suffered fatalities. Denmark and the U.K. in recent days. Canada, in particular, has suffered significant losses. And the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Australia as a non-NATO ally. Indeed, all 26 members of NATO and 14 partners have made sacrifices and are making meaningful contributions in Afghanistan.

Though we still need more forces and greater flexibility in the deployments of some, it is important to stress that we respect and honor all of these contributions to our common efforts. At the Bucharest summit, allies and partners such as France, Poland, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and others came forward with contributions to our operations.

NATO faces serious challenges on the ground in Afghanistan, but also in maintaining the political solidarity and the defense contributions needed for a strong and healthy alliance. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to NATO, I will focus my efforts on strengthening support and understanding in Europe for two fundamental ideas. That the prosperity and well-being of our democratic societies still depends critically on security, so we must invest in security. And that the security of Europe and North America remain fundamentally linked, so we must face our modern-day security challenges together. These are the challenges NATO must tackle in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. If confirmed, I will do my very best to serve my country with distinction, and I look forward to working closely with you and this committee in the process. I would be pleased to hear your views and answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Volker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KURT D. VOLKER, NOMINEE TO BE U.S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

It is an honor to come before this committee as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I am grateful for the confidence expressed by President Bush and Secretary Rice through this nomination.

I am joined here today by my wife, Karen, also a career member of the Foreign Service. I am also delighted to see friends here from the diplomatic corps and others with whom I have worked to transform NATO. Their support means a great deal

to me, and I thank them for being here. I am also grateful for the support of my family and others who cannot be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I am especially pleased to be nominated to serve as Ambassador to NATO because I have dedicated my career to building a secure transatlantic community, based on shared democratic values.

In 20 years in the Foreign Service, I have served four administrations, advancing our agenda for NATO—at our embassies in the United Kingdom and Hungary; as a legislative fellow here in the United States Senate; at the U.S. Mission to NATO and in the NATO Secretary General's Private Office; at the National Security Council; and currently as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. In this latter capacity, I am proud to have worked closely with this committee on a variety of issues and am grateful for the close relationship between the committee and the European Bureau.

I am committed to NATO and to our transatlantic partnership because I am committed to the founding principles of our Nation—the values of individual liberty, democracy, market economy, human rights, and the rule of law. These are principles which transcend our national borders and define the best hopes of humanity. We and the other members of NATO are part of a single transatlantic community, based on these shared democratic values.

Those of us who are a part of this community view security challenges in the world from the shared perspective of our values. We know that we need to work together if we are to deal with these challenges effectively, and to continue to advance these enduring values in the world.

NATO's defense of freedom helped to end the cold war. Yet the end of the cold war did not mean the end of threats to our democratic community. The strategic landscape has changed and NATO has changed with it. To be sure, NATO's core mission remains the collective defense of its members. But the means by which NATO goes about this mission have changed dramatically over time.

NATO is now in the process of learning how to defend our transatlantic community against new threats and challenges that are often global in scope—threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the consequences of failed states.

In its nearly 60-year history NATO has served as:

- Our defense of freedom against the Soviet threat, leading eventually to the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the birth of a Europe whole and free.
- The military force that ended ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and kept the peace so democratic governance could emerge.
- The driver for democratic progress in Central Europe, admitting 10 new allies since the fall of the Berlin wall—and deciding to admit still more at the Bucharest Summit last week.
- A core security organization building partnerships with dozens of nations around the world.
- A front-line alliance in dealing with the 21st century challenges of terrorism and extremism—for example, by conducting counterterrorism operations in the Mediterranean, or running the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan.

The Bucharest Summit further advanced NATO's transformation, by renewing our commitment to operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, inviting new members, setting a vision of future membership for others, strengthening partnerships across the globe, and focusing on the defense capabilities needed for the future, including missile defense.

NATO's most important operational challenge is in Afghanistan. The United States is deeply committed to the long-term effort in Afghanistan. We have made enormous investments in blood and treasure. I honor the service of our men and women in uniform, as well as our diplomats and civilians. I respect enormously the families who sacrifice so their loved ones can contribute to meeting these important challenges.

I also want to pay tribute to the contributions and sacrifices of our allies and partners in Afghanistan. They are fighting hard, especially in the East and South, and have suffered significant casualties—Denmark and the U.K. in recent days, but also Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, and others. All 26 allies, along with 14 non-NATO partners, have troops in Afghanistan. All are playing a vital role, and all are determined to see this mission through to success.

At the Bucharest Summit, allies endorsed a strategic vision for Afghanistan that reaffirms their long-term commitment to build an enduring, stable, secure, prosperous, and democratic Afghan state, free from the threat of terrorism. Many allies backed up these words with deeds by announcing new force contributions.

Most notably, though by no means alone, President Sarkozy announced that France will send a new battalion to Eastern Afghanistan, freeing some United States troops to do more to help allies in the South. In addition to the French contribution and the temporary addition of 3,500 United States Marines, United Kingdom, Polish, Czech and other additions bring the total to about 6,000 new forces so far in 2008.

That said, all allies must do still more to provide the combat troops, helicopters, and trainers crucial to winning this counterinsurgency fight. Allies must also make serious efforts to ensure their citizens understand that the mission matters, success is within reach, and humanitarian assistance is possible only in a secure environment.

NATO faces real challenges, operationally on the ground, as well as politically in Europe. Violence levels are up, particularly in southern Afghanistan where opium production is also largest. Many Europeans are skeptical about the Afghanistan mission—people either believe it does not matter to them, that success is out of reach, or that humanitarian assistance alone should be enough. We are working with our NATO partners to clarify the mission and its importance. As agreed in the common vision statement issued at the Bucharest Summit, we are building a shared NATO counterinsurgency strategy that provides for population security, real economic development, and progress in governance. Civil-military coordination can and should be better, and we welcome the naming of a new U.N. Special Representative, Kai Eide, who will bring greater coherence to our international civilian efforts. The narcotics trade fuels the insurgency and fosters corruption, making all other efforts an uphill struggle. NATO allies can do more to help the Afghans lead their own counternarcotics strategy.

In acknowledging the serious challenges, we also must recognize our achievements. Working with our Afghan allies, NATO forces thwarted the Taliban's much-hyped "spring offensive" last year. Allies and partners are helping the Afghans build capacity so they can improve good governance and increasingly stand themselves at the forefront of security operations.

It is easy to forget the gains made since 2001. Under the Taliban, there were only 900,000 kids in school—none of them girls, because it was illegal. Only 8 percent of the population had access to medical care. There were only 50 kilometers of paved roads. The Taliban imposed a dark and severe regime on the people of Afghanistan, while terrorists were allowed to train and export their violence and extremism to other countries.

Today, there are nearly 6 million kids in school—over 1.5 million of them girls. Over 65 percent of the population has access to medical care, and there are over 4,000 kilometers of paved roads. The government was elected by 8 million Afghan voters, on the basis of a constitution approved through an open process, a Loya Jirga.

To be sure—the challenges in Afghanistan are great, and success will take time. But we are doing the right thing in Afghanistan, we are making progress, and we should continue.

NATO's other major operation is in Kosovo, where NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) remains the ultimate guarantor of peace and stability for all people in Kosovo, with nearly 16,000 personnel from 35 allied and non-NATO troop contributing nations. It was NATO that ended ethnic cleansing not only in Kosovo but in the wider Balkans, and it has kept the peace that has enabled democratic governance to emerge.

At the recently concluded Bucharest Summit, NATO recommitted itself to helping ensure a safe and secure environment and declared its intention to play a key role in the establishment of a new, multiethnic Kosovo Security Force and a civilian agency to oversee it.

NATO has played, and will continue to play other vital operational roles—from its role in securing peace in Bosnia (which has now been passed on to the European Union), to counterterrorist naval operations in the Mediterranean, to offering support for African Union forces in Darfur and transporting humanitarian supplies to Pakistan after a major earthquake, and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.

One of the fundamental principles of the alliance is that the door to membership is open to those European democracies who wish to pursue it. The enlargement process has been and remains a driving force for countries to focus on difficult reforms. The United States must continue to provide leadership and clarity of purpose in expanding the alliance to advance the goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

NATO enlargement has been a historic success—securing freedom, democracy, and burgeoning prosperity for 100 million people in Central and Eastern Europe, and strengthening NATO in the process.

In Bucharest, allies reiterated the importance and success of NATO's open door policy. Membership invitations were issued to Albania and Croatia, marking an his-

toric occasion for security and stability in the Balkans. Allies also determined that Macedonia is ready to receive an invitation as soon as the name issue is resolved. We hope this is done as quickly as possible. We look forward to working in close cooperation with the Senate as we seek its advice and consent to the ratification of the protocols of accession for each of the invitees, which are to be signed by July 2008.

Allies provided an unprecedented commitment to Ukraine and Georgia, stating unequivocally that these countries will become members of NATO. They welcomed their request to participate in the Membership Action Plan (MAP). Allies recognized that the MAP process will benefit reform efforts and authorized foreign ministers to review and take decisions on their MAP participation in December 2008. We must continue to support their aspirations.

Allies also invited Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, to begin an intensified dialog relating to their membership aspirations and conveyed their desire to develop a closer relationship with Serbia. NATO's cooperation with these countries will further increase stability in the western Balkans.

To further secure freedom and democracy, NATO is also strengthening its relationships with partners across the globe and the developing of new capabilities, such as missile defense, energy security, and cyber defense.

When the wall fell in 1989, NATO was an alliance of 16 members and no partners. Today, NATO has 26 members—with 2 new invitees, prospective membership for others, over 20 partners in Europe and Eurasia, 7 in the Mediterranean, 4 in the Persian Gulf, and others from around the globe.

Through the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace, NATO provided the political and practical cooperation necessary to help the newly independent nations of Europe integrate into the transatlantic community.

NATO has also established the Mediterranean Dialog and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to reach out to the Middle East, and reached out to new partners around the world on the basis of shared security interests and democratic values. Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and now Singapore are making valuable contributions to NATO operations, especially in Afghanistan, and the alliance decided at Bucharest to remain open to developing relationships with additional countries.

It is also vital that NATO work effectively with international organizations such as the European Union and United Nations. A capable and united European Union is in NATO's interest. We recognize the value that a stronger and more capable European defense brings, providing capabilities to address common challenges, and support NATO and the European Union working closely together. We also need to work as closely as possible with the United Nations, particularly in U.N.-mandated, NATO-led operations as in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

In Iraq, NATO provides leadership training to Iraqi Security Forces to help establish a more secure environment. The NATO training mission in Iraq is looking to broaden its training mission in response to Prime Minister Maliki's requests. Allies have also agreed to proposals for a structured cooperation framework to develop NATO's long-term relationship with Iraq.

NATO is committed to building a relationship where NATO and Russia can work together to address common interests such as nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and border controls and counternarcotics with respect to Afghanistan. We welcomed Russia's most recent offer of a mechanism for transiting nonmilitary freight through Russian territory in support of ISAF.

On other issues such as Kosovo, missile defense, and the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), serious differences remain. On CFE, NATO has endorsed the U.S. parallel actions package, which we believe can ensure the viability of this important security regime.

We are working hard to develop the capabilities needed for a new century—the NATO Response Force, the C-17 consortium, the Special Forces coordination, and steps toward NATO missile defenses. At Bucharest, allies recognized that ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat; that missile defense forms part of a broader response to counter this threat; and that the U.S. system will make a substantial contribution to protecting alliance territories and populations. NATO will continue its work on missile defense, and also with Russia as well, in order to provide more effective defenses for all alliance territory.

A NATO Cyber Defense Policy, endorsed at Bucharest, enhances our ability to protect our sensitive infrastructure, allows pool experiences, and come to the assistance of an ally whose infrastructure is under threat. I thank Senators on this committee for focusing attention on this issue following the cyber attacks against Estonia.

NATO's role in energy security, noted at Bucharest, will help address threats to energy infrastructure and in order to better safeguard the security interests of the allies. I appreciate the leadership of Senators on this committee for their involvement in energy security and believe NATO is building a response to the concerns you have raised.

NATO faces genuine challenges, as it always has. The strength and enduring character of the alliance comes from our ability to face these challenges together. As Winston Churchill said, "the only thing worse than fighting with allies is fighting without them."

If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to NATO, I will work to strengthen support and understanding in Europe for two fundamental ideas:

- That the prosperity and well-being of our democratic societies still depends critically on security, so we must invest in security.
- That the security of Europe and North America remain fundamentally linked, so we must face our modern-day security challenges together.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. If confirmed, I will do my very best to serve my country with distinction and to work closely with you and this committee.

I look forward to listening to your views, and to responding to any questions you and the members of the committee may have.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much.

Mr. Urbancic.

**STATEMENT OF FRANK URBANCIC, JR., NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

Mr. URBANCIC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me say, too, that I today am honored to be supported here by my wife and lifetime partner, Michelle; our two children, Frank and Arlette; and most importantly perhaps, my father and mother from Indianapolis, who have driven here to join us today. So we are very honored to have the presence of Senator Lugar.

It is also a great privilege for me to be nominated by the President to serve as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Cyprus. And if confirmed, I will do everything in my power to justify that trust as well as that of Secretary Rice in sending forward my nomination.

At the outset, I would also note my intention to heed an admonishment of the ancient stoic philosopher from Cyprus, Zeno of Kition, who said famously that the reason we have two ears and one mouth is that we may listen more and speak less. I will keep my comments brief.

May I also say that I am honored to be here Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for calling us here to speak about our countries.

I personally have spent 27 years in the Foreign Service, deepening my understanding of the issues in the basin of the East Mediterranean and the risks that its people face. I have a deep and abiding interest in Cyprus, and from this background, I have a keen awareness of the role that the United Nations in Cyprus can play and that what a positive role multilateral diplomacy can play in bringing about healing of deep political divides.

In graduate school, I specialized in Byzantine studies, with a particular interest in Orthodox Church history. From that study, as well as my work in the region, I have come to understand the unique position that Cyprus has always held throughout its own history.

There was a time when I could translate Aristotle. Those days are gone, unfortunately, but I will try to get them back. And my time in Istanbul has also given me the opportunity to speak another great language of this region. If confirmed, I intend to use this familiarity with the languages of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to support efforts to reunite the island.

We need to establish there and—we need to work with the leadership of that island to create a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Reunification of Cyprus under these long-agreed principles will allow its communities to realize the full potential of their own history.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with all members of the committee, and your views are very important to me. And I would like to work closely with you in the future to deepen United States-Cypriot—the United States-Cypriot relationship, building upon the work of my predecessors, of course.

The United States and Cyprus have many shared interests and ties. I have learned that Cyprus, for example, is one of the, if not the largest per capita participant in the Fulbright program anywhere in the world. Cyprus was the first European Union country to sign a shipboarding agreement with the United States under the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Our countries are working together to safeguard Cypriot cultural heritage, prevent pillaging, and stop the illegal trafficking in the sale of antiquities. I look forward to seeking new opportunities to expand our partnerships and to further our mutual understanding.

If confirmed, I realize I will be accredited to one government. That is the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. The United States does not recognize any other state on the island. That said, we need to engage the Turkish Cypriot community. We need to help them prepare for reunification by strengthening their NGOs and reducing economic disparities across the island. We also need to urge them to combat money laundering and to counter possible terrorist threats. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. assistance program continues to support one overarching aim, and that is reconciliation between the two communities and reunification.

If confirmed, I will pursue one of the administration's policy priorities—a comprehensive Cyprus settlement. The de facto division of that country pains Greek Cypriots and it pains Turkish Cypriots, and it damages United States strategic interests in the region. The dysfunctional and unacceptable status quo also threatens effective NATO-European Union defense cooperation, and it remains an obstacle for Greek-Turkish relations.

Currently, though, there is room for guarded optimism. Many see 2008 as a year of opportunity for Cyprus. Both community leaders state that they want the same thing. They have the same goal. They want a bizonal, bicomunal federation, and the U.N., with strong American support, is considering reinvigorated settlement efforts.

Negotiating the details of a bizonal, bicomunal federation will be a difficult task, of course. Both sides will need strong leadership, and they undoubtedly will have to make hard decisions and settle for some probably painful compromises. A federation, however,

with a single international sovereignty enjoying European Union membership, peace, and prosperity is achievable, and I hope to help advance it, if confirmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Urbancic follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRANK URBANCIC, JR., NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO
THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be with you here today. It is my great honor to be nominated by President Bush to serve as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Cyprus, and, if confirmed, I will do everything in my power to justify that trust, as well as that of Secretary Rice in sending forward my nomination.

At the outset, I would note my intention to heed an admonishment of the ancient Stoic philosopher from Cyprus, Zeno of Kition, who said, "The reason we have two ears but only one mouth, is that we may learn more and speak less." I will keep my comments brief. May I also say that I am honored to be supported here today by my wife and lifetime partner, Michelle, our two children, Frank and Arlette, and my parents visiting us from Indiana.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent 27 years in the Foreign Service, deepening my understanding of issues in the basin of the east Mediterranean and the risks that its people face. I have a deep and abiding interest in Cyprus, its people, and the politics and history of the region. I served at the U.S. mission to the United Nations during the first gulf war, and, in addition, I was Senior Adviser in that mission for Eastern European Affairs after my return to the United States from the second gulf war. From those experiences, I have a keen awareness of the role of the United Nations in Cyprus and the role that multilateral diplomacy can play in bridging deep political divides.

In graduate school, I specialized in Byzantine studies, with a particular interest in Orthodox Church history. Because of that study, as well as my work in the region, I have come to understand the unique position that Cyprus has always held throughout its history. Cyprus has long played a role as a multicultural crossroad of history and civilization, and this remains true today. There was a time when I could translate Aristotle, and my time in Istanbul has also given me the opportunity to speak another great language of this region. I intend to use this familiarity with the languages of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to support efforts to reunite the country into a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Reunification of Cyprus under these long-agreed principles will allow its communities to realize the full potential that history has long foreseen for this beautiful and historically rich island.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with all members of the committee. Your views are important to me, and I would like to work closely with you to deepen the United States-Cypriot relationship, building upon the work of my predecessors.

The United States and Cyprus have many shared interests and ties. I was pleased to learn that more than 3,000 Cypriots have studied in the United States under U.S. Government-sponsored academic exchange programs, including the Fulbright Program—one of the largest, if not the largest, per capita rate in the world. Cyprus was the first European Union country to sign a ship boarding agreement with us under the Proliferation Security Initiative—a significant provision given that Cyprus has the eleventh largest merchant fleet in the world. Our countries are working together to safeguard Cypriot cultural heritage, prevent pillaging, and stop the illegal trafficking and sale of antiquities. I also expect that the nearly 15,000 American citizens who transited Cyprus in the summer of 2006, as they were evacuated from Lebanon, will long remember the generosity and gracious reception they were given by the Cypriot people. I look forward to seeking new opportunities to expand our partnerships and further our mutual understanding.

If confirmed, I realize I will be accredited to one government, that of the Republic of Cyprus. The United States does not recognize any other state on the island. That said, we need to engage the Turkish Cypriot community. We need to help them prepare for reunification by strengthening their NGOs and reducing economic disparities across the island. We also need to urge them to combat money laundering and counter possible terrorist threats. For all our programs, I will ensure U.S. assistance continues to support one overarching aim—reconciliation and reunification.

If confirmed, I will pursue one of the administration's policy priorities—a comprehensive Cyprus settlement. The de facto division of the country pains Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and damages United States strategic interests in the re-

gion. The dysfunctional and unacceptable status quo also threatens effective NATO-European Union defense cooperation and remains an obstacle for Greek-Turkish relations. Furthermore, I am sure both communities would agree that Turkey, a key NATO ally, would be better off anchored to Europe through European Union membership. Yet the continued impasse on Cyprus negatively affects all these considerations. Many outside observers have increasingly asserted that in the absence of a settlement in the near future, the world will accept a de facto division ad infinitum. This would be a bad outcome, and one we should all strenuously seek to avoid.

Currently, though, there is room for guarded optimism. Many see 2008 as a year of opportunity for Cyprus. Both community leaders state they want the same goal—a bizonal, bicomunal federation, and the U.N., with strong American support, is considering reinvigorated settlement efforts. Negotiating the details of a bizonal, bicomunal federation, such as governmental structure, administrative and territorial jurisdictions, security considerations, and property disputes will be a difficult task. Both sides will need strong leadership and undoubtedly have to make hard decisions and settle for some possibly painful compromises, but the goal will be worthwhile—a federation, with a single international sovereignty, enjoying European Union membership, peace, and prosperity. That goal is achievable, and I hope to help advance it, if confirmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to answering any questions.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you.

Ms. McEldowney.

**STATEMENT OF NANCY E. McELDOWNEY, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

Ms. McEldowney. Good morning. I am very pleased to state that I am joined today by family members who have traveled to visit me all over the world in the course of my Foreign Service career. They have also traveled here to Capitol Hill from Philadelphia today. My sister and brother-in-law, Heidi Hayes and Richard Johnson, their son, Nicolas Johnson, as well as family friend, Elaine Jones.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to Bulgaria. I am grateful for the confidence expressed by President Bush and Secretary Rice through this nomination, and I ask today, with respect and humility, for your confidence, as well.

If I am confirmed, I pledge to validate your trust by advancing our Nation's interests in Bulgaria and throughout the region. I also pledge to work closely with this committee and your congressional colleagues in pursuing our common objectives and shared agenda.

My appearance before this committee today is the culmination of more than two decades of public service as an American diplomat. Patriotism and service to Nation have shaped my life and the lives of my entire family. My father was a member of the United States Marine Corps. My husband served 26 years as a pilot in the United States Air Force. And my younger brother, now a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, recently concluded a deployment to Afghanistan.

I have spent my entire adult life working to protect and advance our country's interests as a professional diplomat. I have served overseas in Europe, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. Here at home, I have worked in the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and on the staff of the National Security Council.

I have served as deputy chief of mission in two embassies and have frequently functioned as acting chief of mission. These experi-

ences have helped prepared me for the responsibilities and challenges that I will face if confirmed for this position.

Since this committee voted 3 years ago to confirm our current ambassador, a number of important developments have taken place. Bulgarian and American soldiers are now exercising together inside Bulgaria, and we are now deployed side by side in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Bulgaria is now a member of both the European Union and the NATO alliance, following the achievement of important domestic reforms and sustained economic growth, fueled in part by the generous assistance allocated by this Congress as well as by the active involvement of United States companies.

These are impressive accomplishments, and they illustrate the vibrancy and potential of our bilateral relationship. But as many members of this committee have noted, there is still more to be done. Bulgaria still suffers from pervasive corruption and organized crime that undermines public confidence in its institutions. The Balkan region is still burdened with instability. European energy supplies still lack sufficient diversity and security. And there is still more that the United States and Bulgaria can do together to advance our common strategic interests.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priority will be to protect the security of the United States and our citizens, including American facilities and personnel in Bulgaria. I will work together with a talented team of civilian and military professionals at our embassy in Sofia to advance American interests in five key areas.

We will deepen our cooperation in combating terrorism, proliferation, and other forms of transnational crime. We will advance stability throughout the Balkans to help this long-troubled region enjoy peace and prosperity as part of an undivided Euro-Atlantic community. We will promote the security and diversity of energy supplies, building upon Bulgaria's strategic location as a key transit route across the European continent. We will catalyze unfinished legal and judicial reforms, supporting the Bulgarian Government's own efforts to combat corruption and promote the rule of law. And finally, we will expand our trade and economic cooperation, increasing commercial opportunities for U.S. companies.

This is an ambitious agenda. But I believe it is one that can be achieved through concerted effort and joint action. Bulgaria is a government that is firmly committed to the principles and practices of democracy and free market economy. It has made significant progress in domestic reform in international engagement and is determined to continue these efforts.

As a bilateral partner, a NATO ally, and a genuine friend to the United States, Bulgaria is a country of great importance and bright promise. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will do my utmost to maintain the distinguished record of service by the men and women who held this position before me. I will strive unceasingly to advance American interests and promote American values.

I thank you again for the honor of appearing before you today, and I look forward to answering any questions that you may wish to pose.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McEldowney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NANCY E. MCELDOWNEY, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO
THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to Bulgaria. I am grateful for the confidence expressed by President Bush and Secretary Rice through this nomination. I ask today, with respect and humility, for your confidence as well. If I am confirmed, I pledge to validate your trust by advancing our Nation's interests in Bulgaria and throughout the region. I also commit myself to work closely with this committee and your congressional colleagues in pursuing our common objectives and shared agenda.

Mr. Chairman, my appearance before this committee today is the culmination of more than two decades of public service as an American diplomat. Patriotism and service to the Nation have shaped my life and my family. My father was a member of the United States Marine Corps. My husband served 26 years as a pilot in the United States Air Force. And my younger brother, now a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, recently concluded a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

I have spent my entire adult life working to protect and advance our country's interests as a professional diplomat. I have served overseas in Europe, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. Here at home, I have worked in the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and on the staff of the National Security Council. I have served as Deputy Chief of Mission in two embassies and have frequently functioned as Acting Chief of Mission. These diverse experiences have helped prepare me for the responsibilities and challenges that I will face if confirmed for this position.

Since this committee voted 3 years ago to confirm our current ambassador, a number of important developments have taken place:

- In April 2006, the United States and Bulgaria signed a defense cooperation agreement authorizing United States military units to train at specified Bulgarian bases. The first exercise under this agreement took place in September 2007. This summer, approximately 1,000 United States and Bulgarian land forces will train together. Over the next 12 months, the U.S. Air Force will conduct three training events with approximately 250 U.S. service members each.
- In January 2007, Bulgaria became a member of the European Union. This followed Bulgaria's entry into the NATO alliance in March 2004. Taken together, these represent the culmination of a process of democratization and reform that began over 19 years ago with the fall of communism and single party rule in 1989.
- Bulgaria is a member of the coalition in Iraq and a contributor to the NATO effort in Afghanistan. Bulgarian soldiers are deployed side by side with us at Camp Ashraf in Iraq; and in ISAF operations in Kandahar, Kabul and Herat, Afghanistan. Bulgarian soldiers also participate in NATO, European Union and U.N. peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Liberia, and Ethiopia.
- With the support of United States assistance monies generously allocated by this Congress, Bulgaria has accomplished important reforms in economic development, local governance, and national institutions, including the establishment of the American University in Bulgaria and the National Institute of Justice, one of the premier Eastern European training centers for judges and prosecutors.
- Trade and investment between the United States and Bulgaria has surged, as the Bulgarian economy has grown more than 5 percent annually for the past 5 years. In 2007, bilateral trade totaled almost \$1 billion and cumulative investment by American companies is estimated at more than \$5.5 billion.

These are impressive accomplishments that illustrate the vibrancy and vast potential of the bilateral partnership between our two countries. But there is still more to be done. Bulgaria still suffers from pervasive corruption and organized crime that undermines public confidence in its institutions. The Balkan region is still burdened with instability, as we have seen recently in Serbia and Kosovo. European energy supplies still lack sufficient security and diversity. And there is still more that the United States and Bulgaria can do together to advance our common strategic interests.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priority will be to protect the security of the United States and our citizens, including American facilities and personnel in Bulgaria. I will work together with the talented interagency team of civilian and military professionals at our embassy in Sofia to advance American interests in key areas:

- We will broaden and deepen our cooperation in combating terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trafficking in persons and narcotics, and other forms of transnational crime.
- We will work to advance stability and security throughout the Balkans, to help this long-troubled region enjoy peace and prosperity as part of an undivided Euro-Atlantic community.
- We will promote the security and diversity of energy supplies, building upon Bulgaria's strategic location as a key transit route across the European continent.

We will catalyze unfinished legal and judicial reforms, supporting the Bulgarian Government's own efforts to combat corruption and organized crime, and to promote good governance, public trust, and the rule of law.

- We will expand our trade and economic cooperation, increasing commercial opportunities for United States companies and stimulating sustainable growth in the Bulgarian economy.

This is an ambitious agenda but one that can be achieved through concerted effort and joint action. Bulgaria is a country that is firmly committed to the principles and practices of democracy and free market economy. It has made significant progress in both domestic reform and international engagement, and the government is determined to continue these efforts. As a bilateral partner, a NATO ally and a genuine friend of the United States, Bulgaria is a country of importance and promise.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will do my utmost to maintain the distinguished record of service by the men and women who held this position before me. I will strive unceasingly to advance American interests and promote American values.

I thank you again for the honor of appearing before you today. I would be delighted to answer any questions that you may wish to pose.

Senator OBAMA. Thank you very much, all of you, for your opening statements.

What I would like to do now, we have approximately an hour, and we have six Senators present. So what I would like to do is allocate 7-minute rounds to each Senator. And if we have sufficient time afterwards, then we can maybe go to a second round, if that is agreeable to other members of the committee.

Well, let me start with you, Mr. Volker. Obviously, a lot of your work is in the newspapers or will be in the newspapers. People are paying a lot of attention to what is happening in NATO right now.

Secretary Gates said in February that lingering European anger over Iraq has undermined our efforts to marshal allied support to win the war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Obviously, we made some—the President was able to make some progress in Bucharest, but as Senator Lugar noted, some of the constraints that continue to be placed on the operations there are of continuing concern.

Certainly, we appreciate all the work that has been done by our NATO allies. But it does appear as if we continue to be resource-strapped in Afghanistan. I am curious, do you agree with the assessment of Secretary Gates that Iraq still is causing turbulence within the NATO alliance and our actions in Afghanistan? If so, do you have any thoughts on how we might correct that?

Mr. VOLKER. Thank you, Senator. Yes, I share Secretary Gates's view that public opinion in Europe, I think, has in some ways conflated the conflict in Iraq and the conflict in Afghanistan. They see the violence. They see the extremists, the terrorist attacks, IEDs, suicide bombers, and they do see that this is a terrible thing to be involved in. And I think that it is difficult for many of our European allies and their governments to build and sustain public support for their participation in Afghanistan.

That said, I would say the resources dedicated to Afghanistan have grown considerably as NATO has expanded the mission. In

2003, NATO took over ISAF when it was only in Kabul and only about 4,000 people. We currently have ISAF throughout the whole country with about 47,000 people. So every time we have expanded the mission, we have expanded the requirements, and then NATO allies have contributed more toward meeting those requirements. We have never made 100 percent, but we have seen a significant progress over time.

I think that what is critical is to remind people that Afghanistan has its own storyline that is an important and compelling one, and that the security and the well-being of our societies actually depends upon what we do in Afghanistan. And the Afghan people want us there and want us to help. The last poll I saw showed 75 percent of Afghans supporting the presence of foreign troops there to help provide security so they can get on with the business of building a stronger, more stable country.

And then, finally, we are making progress in Afghanistan, and I think that is visible. So when you look at health care, education, road building, the economy, there has been a lot of progress made in Afghanistan since the Taliban was in power. We faced daunting challenges in Afghanistan with the insurgency, with narcotics, with governance. We have to focus on these, and we do need more resources and to work more with the allies. But I think we need to recapture and reexplain the storyline a little bit about what is going on with Afghanistan and why it is critical that our mission there succeed.

Senator OBAMA. While I think that Senator Lugar is probably going to pursue this further, because I know he mentioned it in his opening statement, I would like for you also to just comment on the apparent or potential influence, at least, of Russia in putting a pause button on MAP for two important actors in the region. Can you comment at this point in terms of how you see that playing itself out? Do you get an impression that the other NATO members will be more open to the moving forward of those two countries next year?

Mr. VOLKER. Well, let me state clearly up front that we strongly support a membership action plans for Ukraine and Georgia and work very hard within the alliance to try to gain consensus on that. There wasn't consensus in NATO. There were some allies who objected to that, and we were concerned about the very issue that you and Senator Lugar are raising, that Russia somehow is either exercising a veto or at least intimidating NATO out of making decisions.

So there were two things that NATO did, I think, to make clear that we reject that idea of a Russian veto. The first was in the NATO communique that was issued at Bucharest. There was a clear statement that decisions on enlargement are for NATO itself to make and made that very clear. The second thing is that while not offering a Membership Action Plan, NATO made an unprecedented statement simply to say that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO.

And as someone who has worked on previous rounds of NATO enlargement—the Madrid summit in 1997, Prague in 2002—we had always reserved our position about invitations until the actual moment. And in order to make clear that Russia is not exercising

that kind of influence, the alliance decided that it would state very forthrightly that Ukraine and Georgia will become members.

Senator OBAMA. Good. My final question I am going to direct to you, Ms. Barrett. And that is, as we noted, Finland—although there is extraordinary cooperation between the two countries and they are a strong ally—is one of the few countries that is in the European Union, but not in NATO. And I am wondering if you want to comment on where the NATO debate in Finland stands now? Should the United States be trying to move or encourage Finland's membership in NATO or off the status quo? What is your take on that?

Ms. BARRETT. The Americans with great respect for NATO, we think it would be beneficial for Finland and for NATO for Finland to be a part of it. But it will be a choice of Finland and the people of Finland whether or not they would become a part of NATO.

It is something that the Finns have demonstrated some attention to. We think it would bring greater strength to NATO if they were a part of it.

Senator OBAMA. Okay. Mr. Volker, do you have any comments on that?

Mr. VOLKER. I would just add to what my colleague said. Finland is making substantial contributions to NATO missions already. They are very valuable contributions. I think if the Finns chose to become allies, they would make great allies. But it is a choice for the people and Government of Finland to make.

Senator OBAMA. Good. Okay. I will actually give up 15 seconds just to set a good example.

Let me turn it over to Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Urbancic, I am delighted that you have strong Hoosier representation here today and great Hoosier roots. And therefore, I will direct my first questions to you.

You are a veteran of service on Cyprus. You very carefully in your statement said that you were accredited to one government there. But at the same time, you pointed out the imperative that you would pursue the administration's goal of trying to bring about a comprehensive Cyprus settlement.

Since this is not a new subject for you and your entire career has informed you, really, of the dilemmas here, how do you intend to proceed? Really, what are the avenues that might lead you to optimism that during your tenure these objectives might advance?

Mr. URBANCIC. Thank you, Senator. And yes, I am a very strong Hoosier, and we still live there, and I am really glad that my parents were able to join us. We take the kids back as often as we can.

I think that the great thing is that we are truly at a point where there may be a true opportunity for a final settlement of this terrible problem. Yes, there is one government, which is recognized internationally, and that is the government that the United States deals with. But there are two communities, and it is those two communities that have to overcome their own estrangement, one from the other.

The truly great story is that they are doing that. They are doing that on their own because it is important to them and because reunification is something that they think is in their interests. And

I think that the best that we can do and what I would certainly do, if confirmed, is to continue to support that effort, them directly, then the United Nations supporting them. And the United Nations is, as you know, undertaking an assessment right now to see how the U.N. can best contribute. And then us, with our other allies, supporting that U.N. effort.

But the most important thing is that the two sides themselves are intimately engaged. There will be times when our own good offices, I think, will be valuable. And at those points, I will hope to have established good relationships with the leadership on both sides to allow them to make the tough decisions that they are certainly going to have to make on behalf of their two communities.

Senator LUGAR. Well, I hope in those good offices that you will encourage appropriate citizens in the United States to be helpful to you, obviously including the State Department, Members of Congress, and others. This is an important objective, both for Cyprus as well as for our ongoing relationships with Greece and with Turkey.

This is well known to you, but I just wanted to take this opportunity at the confirmation hearing to underline the importance for all three countries—Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. We look forward to your leadership in that regard.

I wanted to ask you, Mr. Ghafari, to follow up on an important point that you made, and that is that recently Slovenia has deployed more than 11 percent of its armed forces abroad. This is an abnormal percentage for most European countries. As a matter of fact, many of us have visited with NATO allies and regretted that they have such a small expeditionary force. And therefore, even as we exhort them to do more in Afghanistan or elsewhere, the where-withal to do so in terms of personnel quite apart from logistics is not present.

What explains this? Why this boost to 11 percent? And is this a special reach-out to the rest of Europe, to the United States, or how would you explain this activity?

Mr. GHAFARI. Senator, thank you for this question. I believe that the reason Slovenia—and that is my understanding at this point, is that they really want to be a good example for the rest of the region. And I think they have demonstrated that economically and fiscally, and what they have done with the armed forces, I think, is just an extension of that.

They are a strong ally of ours. They believe in the global agenda, the issues we face as it relates to terror and what that has to do with the world. And I think that is what they have tried to do with expanding their troops to the 11 percent that you just mentioned, Senator.

Senator LUGAR. A year ago, the Aspen Institute congressional seminar was held in Slovenia. We had an opportunity to note the point that you have made that 40 United States companies are now operating in Slovenia. While it is a fairly small country in terms of population and size, \$490 million has been invested there as you mentioned. Has there been a special outreach either way by Slovenia to Americans or Americans to finding very talented people there in that country?

Mr. GHAFARI. If I am confirmed, that would be one of my top priorities.

Senator LUGAR. Yes.

Mr. GHAFARI. I understand that there is some reform that has taken place. There is more to be done in that regard, and I understand that now that they are preoccupied with the European Union Presidency, that maybe had they waited a little from that economic reforms. They have elections coming up this fall, and hopefully that will become an agenda item that we as an embassy and myself can work on to help expand the business entry between our two nations.

I have to date, in preparing for my departure, talked to my colleagues in the business, and I said we have this wonderful friendly country. What can we do together? And they all are expressing interest and are impressed by the success they have made to date. They are impressed by the quality of the people, the Slovenian people, and their technical capabilities. So that would be something that I will definitely put on the top of my list to do.

And at the same time, I think I am going to encourage and we have got some—actually some leads on there that the Slovenes are willing to come here and invest, as well. With the strength of the euro, they need to manufacture in this country for some of their customers. So that would be a two-way deal that, hopefully, we can work on together.

Senator LUGAR. Well, I think we all hope with your business background, you will be very successful.

Mr. GHAFARI. Thank you very much.

Senator LUGAR. And we applaud that.

Mr. GHAFARI. Thank you.

Senator LUGAR. Ambassador Volker, let me ask you a quick question. You mentioned that NATO's commitment in the Bucharest Communique that Georgia and Ukraine will join NATO at some point in the future has led to some speculation that action extending membership action plans to Tbilisi and Kyiv at the upcoming foreign ministers meeting of NATO representatives. Describe really how that procedure works so that Americans understand how that type of momentous decision could occur.

Mr. VOLKER. That is correct, Senator. The summit leaders, when they got together and agreed a formal NATO statement expressing NATO's position, said not only that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of NATO, they also welcomed their aspirations for participating in the membership action plans and stated in the declaration from NATO itself that the foreign ministers are authorized to decide on this issue when they meet in December of 2008.

Senator LUGAR. And so, December of 2008 is the approximate time in which all of this might arise again?

Mr. VOLKER. Yes, indeed. We will be certainly pursuing and encouraging their aspiration for Membership Action Plans, and we hope that we can reach a consensus within NATO to grant that to them.

Senator LUGAR. Well, we will be cheering you on at that point.

Mr. VOLKER. Thank you.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator OBAMA. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ghafari, you mentioned that you had some concern about the investment by the United States in Slovenia. My suggestion to you would be to spend some time with the Slovene Diaspora here to try and get them involved, and they have talked about it, but they really have never done it.

I brought Goodyear to Slovenia a long time ago, and since that time, the government has been reluctant about privatizing some of their—in fact, they are slower than most in that region. And it might be something that you could try to nudge them on.

Mr. GHAFARI. Thank you, Senator. One of my things I would like to do before I leave to Slovenia is to visit with the American Slovenian community in Cleveland and maybe a couple of other places around the country just to get the pulse of what is going on there and get a better understanding of what they would like to do with that country, as well. Thank you.

Senator VOINOVICH. Bulgaria is in an area that is right now, I think, most people are not aware, will be affected if the election goes the wrong direction in May in Serbia. That would be a real setback for the whole region.

One of the things that I suggested is to—and hopefully, you will be there—is to try to get Bulgaria and Romania and some others that belong to the European Union to get over to Serbia to talk about how important European Union membership is to the future of Slovenia. Are you updated on that issue on where we are and how thin the situation is?

Ms. McELDOWNEY. Thank you very much, Senator. I have, indeed, been following the issue and, in particular, have been watching the Bulgarian Government try hard to work both with the Serbs, as well as with other neighbors in the region, to try to moderate Serbian policy, to try to bring about an outcome that will advance stability throughout the region.

If confirmed, this is one of the issues that I look forward to making a priority as we go forward and face this very key election, and as Kosovo's independence proceeds and Bulgaria continues to serve as a moderating, stabilizing force throughout the region.

Senator VOINOVICH. And Mr. Volker, one of our problems in Afghanistan is that many of the countries that are involved have these national caveats, and many of us are concerned that they are still in effect. Some of our allies are saying that if some of those countries don't remove take them, then they will be more reluctant to participate. We have taken a position, I think, of publicly knocking some of them that haven't done what they are supposed to do.

I would be interested to know your perspective and how you, through your great diplomatic skills, are going to try and work this out.

Mr. VOLKER. Well, thank you, Senator. We are very concerned about the issue of caveats on the forces deployed in Afghanistan and anywhere in NATO operations. That is a matter that we raise privately with the governments concerned and also we have discussed publicly.

I do want to say that the contributions that allies make are valuable, all of them. So those countries that have caveats are, none-

theless, performing important roles where they are in Afghanistan or elsewhere. But it does create problems.

It creates problems for the commander on the ground, who has less flexibility in his ability to use forces where they are most needed. And it creates political dissension within NATO. Those countries who are taking on the hardest burdens and fighting and facing casualties, and those countries that are operating in relatively safer areas with limitations on the deployments that will keep them in safer areas.

So we have to chip away at this problem. We have been working at it. We have seen, around the time of the Riga summit, some caveats lifted. We have not seen much more progress on it since then. It is something we need to stay focused on.

I would say in terms of addressing this there is one critical thing that we need to do, and this is what I discussed when answering the chairman's question about getting the story right in Afghanistan. Reassuring European publics that we are there for the right reasons and doing the right things, and that their forces that are contributing in Afghanistan are in a good cause and, therefore, should be fully part of the NATO mission and fully contributing as equal allies, sharing the burdens equally.

Senator VOINOVICH. Do you share the opinion that we need to bring more of our troops into Afghanistan to help out?

Mr. VOLKER. I do. I do. I know that Secretary Gates and the President, have announced our intention to deploy about 3,500 Marines, and that was announced in advance of the Bucharest summit. We are the leader of NATO. We need to be making a substantial contribution to alliance operations to ensure their success. And in doing so, we need to encourage other allies to increase their contributions as well.

We currently have a situation where of about 47,000 troops within ISAF, the United States is contributing less than half of that. I think we need to be doing our share in leading the charge and then encouraging the allies to make their contributions.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Ms. Barrett, you—I mentioned that you are working with Finland, and you know that the Ahtisaari plan, he was president of Finland, and so they are real interested in Kosovo.

Ms. BARRETT. Absolutely.

Senator VOINOVICH. But the issue that I am concerned about is the issue of this Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. I don't know whether you are familiar with it, but I will tell you this, that there are many people here in this Congress that worked very hard to get the Office of Nondiscrimination and Tolerance on the core budget of the OSCE.

And right now, we are in the midst of hiring someone to take the place of a man by the name of Christian Strohal, and I would really appreciate your looking into it. And I would like to spend some time with you on the phone talking about perhaps a role that you might play because Finland is in charge of that ministerial effort right now. I think if we don't do that, we may lose a wonderful opportunity to continue to make a difference in the area of dealing with discrimination.

Ms. BARRETT. Mr. Chairman, Senator Voinovich, I would look forward to working with you on that. I also consider it an urgent matter in the limited time during which the Finns will be in the leadership role would be an important time to make good things happen there.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Senator OBAMA. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Volker, let me follow up a little bit on first Afghanistan and then Georgia and Ukraine. In regards to Afghanistan, OSCE does have a mission there. And NATO, of course, is the lead group as far as international involvement with the United States, but we do have OSCE. There is an important mission on the border. And of course, Afghanistan is a partner within OSCE.

Just curious as to your views as to whether we cannot—couldn't expand OSCE's mission, which would broaden European participation in dealing in Afghanistan?

Mr. VOLKER. Thanks, Senator. Yes, we agreed with the other members of the OSCE to launch the border training and development effort that the OSCE is putting in Afghanistan. We deliberately decided to start small to make sure that it could get in there effectively, that it could operate in the environment in Afghanistan, and to see whether it could bring about a success in its developments training on the border.

And presuming that that is successful, then we would look toward expanding the mission depending on the resources that nations are able to bring. But we do think that is a possibility based on success in the initial phases.

Senator CARDIN. And I look forward to continuing to work with you on that. I do think it is just in our interests, the United States interests to broaden the participation, and OSCE gives us an opportunity to do that.

I do want to compliment you on your diplomatic skills and your response on the question regarding Georgia and Ukraine. I was only aware of two steps that could be taken. One was the membership action plan. The other was being admitted. You have now given us a third level, I guess, of moving forward.

I would just be interested as to whether you see a change that we can get NATO expansion in countries such as Georgia and Ukraine without a changed position with some of our NATO allies on Russia's influence here?

Mr. VOLKER. Well, clearly, we did not succeed in getting a membership action plan approved for Ukraine and Georgia, something that we sought. Membership action plan, you will recall, was launched at the Washington summit in 1999 at a point when NATO was not ready to offer invitations to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and so we said, well, we are not going to just say no. We are going to help you. We are going to create a plan to work with you so that you can present a stronger candidacy in the future.

What happened—

Senator CARDIN. Which seems to be what should have been offered as the U.S. position was—

Mr. VOLKER. Yes.

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. With regard to Georgia and Ukraine. I guess my question is, will we be able to get to that point with countries such as Ukraine and Georgia without a changed relationship between our NATO allies and Russia?

Mr. VOLKER. I believe that we can. I believe that the statement that was made about these countries will become members of NATO—a very forceful, clear statement—sort of cuts right through the heart of the membership action plan question. It is kind of ironic that the debate about offering a MAP was, well, is this going too far? And then we make a strong political commitment that goes even further.

So I think that, based on that, we should be able to do the diplomatic work underneath, then proceed with the Membership Action Plan and get a consensus within NATO for that.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you, and again, I look forward to working with you on that.

Let me follow up on Senator Voinovich's point in regards to the OSCE's mission not just in fighting discrimination, but also on the human rights agenda. The four countries that are represented at the table all have important issues involving commitments to the OSCE.

In regards to Bulgaria, as I mentioned earlier, the issues concerning minorities, whether it is the Turkish or the Roma population, is a major concern to us. On human trafficking, there are—Bulgaria is a Tier 2 country. There is a problem in Cyprus. They are on the watch list because of concerns as a recipient state to human trafficking. Slovenia has a problem with the Muslim community that just recently mushroomed. And of course, as pointed out, Finland has the chair in office.

I would welcome brief responses as to your concerns in regards to these issues, and I certainly look forward to working with each of you in making progress in these countries. Who would like to start?

Ms. McELDOWNY. I would be happy to start. Thank you very much, Senator.

I appreciate you highlighting those issues. Those are issues of concern—both human rights and the issue of vulnerable populations. You mentioned the Turkish minority. The Turkish minority in Bulgaria, which represents just under 10 percent of the population, is well represented in the political process, but there are still concerns. The Roma, which you mentioned, is a smaller minority, approximately 4 to 5 percent. This is a vulnerable population. It is a group that much of the U.S. Government's assistance monies have been focused on trying to provide services to, but we still need to do more.

Human trafficking is also an issue of great concern. The Bulgarian Government has taken a number of steps, including the establishment of a national antitrafficking commission as well as some targeted efforts to set up centers in the tourist areas along the Black Sea coast where trafficking is most prevalent. But we need to do more. And we are working in partnership with the Bulgarian Government to try to do that. I welcome your advice and the involvement of members of the committee as we go forward and try to make those things happen.

Senator CARDIN. And I think we do have now regional strategies to deal with this, and we look forward to your active work in that regard.

Ms. McELDOWNEY. Yes. Excellent. Thank you very much.

Mr. URBANCIC. Senator, the same thing for the United States role in dealing with Cyprus. Cyprus is more on the receiving end, but it is a country where trafficking in persons is something of very great concern. We have engaged the Cypriots on this, and certainly, if confirmed, I will continue to make it a priority.

They understand U.S. law, and they understand the implications that this has for them. So it is a human rights question, which is of very great interest and profound concern for us.

Senator CARDIN. The issues in Slovenia are a little bit different. There is some concern about lack of sensitivity with the Muslim community, and I would just urge you to be mindful of this as we go forward.

Mr. GHAFARI. Thank you, Senator. I look forward to working with you on that. And I am very sensitive. With my ethnic background, I think I could help in that regard.

Senator CARDIN. I think so.

We already talked a little bit about Finland, and Finland has had a real leadership role in regards to the OSCE, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in that regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator OBAMA. Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be rather brief.

I did want to note something I should have mentioned before—that Barbara McConnell Barrett is also a Pennsylvania native. I appreciate that, and I also heard that in Ms. McEldowney's reference to her family, we have got family from Philadelphia here today.

I hate to keep coming back to a commercial for my State, but I think it is important to do that. But I will be very brief.

I wanted to direct my broader general question to Mr. Volker. With regard to the relationship between NATO and Russia, you spoke to it before. I wanted to broaden that a little bit.

The NATO-Russia Council, which was established in 2002 and is the principal forum for NATO to engage Russia. But we know from the recent history and the news just in the last couple of months, that the relationship faces a lot of challenges when you think about democracy and human rights, missile defense, energy, Kosovo, or the CFE treaty—all of those.

I guess I wanted to ask you, though, just in a broad sense, can you give us a sense of the state of play between Russia and NATO and anything you think we could do constructively to engage and to be cognizant of that important relationship?

Mr. VOLKER. Thank you for the question, Senator. We have been disappointed in the NATO-Russia Council ourselves. We launched this in 2002 with hopes of overcoming suspicions, division, sense of concern, mutual concern between NATO and Russia, and it has not developed in the positive, cooperative, strong way that we had hoped at the time.

I think the most important thing that we can do is to undermine, to cut, to remove any kind of zero sum mentality that still exists.

The idea that there is a zone of, sphere of influence in Europe, this is part of the Russian fear of influence or any gain for NATO, that any NATO enlargement is somehow a threat to Russia or that missile defense is somehow a threat to Russia.

We need to put aside these kind of cold war notions within Russia, within Europe, and instead say that the fundamentals—building democratic societies, market economies, rule of law, integration of countries into a larger community—these don't threaten anybody. And they build a healthier community and they are good neighbors and good neighbors for Russia.

So if we can develop that sense that we are actually creating a common good through NATO enlargement, through security, through missile defense—we want to work together with Russia. We certainly don't want to be putting ourselves in a position of confrontation and conflict with Russia, even though we have serious disagreements with Russia. What we want to do is try to work together on areas where we find common ground.

Senator CASEY. Thank you very much.

I will conclude with this. I want to commend all of the nominees who are here for your service prior to this and your willingness to take on another assignment. And we wish you all of Godspeed in your families as well.

Thank you.

Senator OBAMA. Senator Menendez

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I appreciate all of your service. And now that I know that in order to be an ambassador you have to live in Pennsylvania—
[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. I will maybe cross the border in the future. Who knows?

Let me focus my questions on a certain line that I am interested. Mr. Volker, I have seen that Greece has always taken a position that they seek to find a mutually acceptable solution before NATO accession. And I am glad to see, at least as I read it, that the NATO summit communique basically has that same position as well. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. VOLKER. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. It is. Let me ask you with reference to that, what do you see the role of NATO in trying to—working, of course, with our own U.S. ambassador in the region, but what do you see the role of NATO in trying to bridge that gulf and come to a successful resolution?

Mr. VOLKER. In the first instance is the United Nations. The U.N. negotiator, Matt Nimitz, has the lead in trying to reach a negotiated settlement to the issue of the name. Beyond that, we have tried, as the United States and through our ambassador to NATO and through Assistant Secretary Fried and through others, to encourage both countries to work together and try to reach some solution.

We did some fairly extensive diplomatic work in advance of the Bucharest summit, trying to get the point where they could reach an agreement. They were unable to reach an agreement, and so NATO did leave the issue open, as you indicated, hoping that they

would reach a mutually acceptable solution as quickly as possible, at which point Macedonia could then be invited.

NATO itself I don't see playing an active role in trying to facilitate negotiations. I see that as something we can do diplomatically, and I see that as something the U.N. has the lead on.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you a different question. There has been some reports that as it relates to Afghanistan, NATO—some of our NATO allies have been less than willing to engage in a way that makes me concerned about picking and choosing.

My understanding of one of the strengths of NATO is that upon its decision to enter into an engagement, all member countries are committed. And yet in Afghanistan, we have seen reports of some of the member countries balking at that commitment. That is a slippery and dangerous slope, is it not?

Mr. VOLKER. It is. I agree with that, Senator. This is the issue of caveats that has come up repeatedly. Every NATO ally is contributing in Afghanistan. Every contribution is important. We need the forces there, whether it is in the north, the west, and so on.

But we are concerned that some allies place limitations on the use of their forces, which has, in the first instance, an operational effect. It reduces the flexibility of the forces and puts the commander in a more difficult position and actually increases the requirement for more forces if he needs them in places where those forces won't go.

It also has an effect of creating political dissension within NATO, as allies are concerned that the burdens aren't being shared equally. And some allies, who are fighting hard in the south of Afghanistan have had casualties, look at others who have not done that and say that this is not fair. And they want to see greater solidarity.

So our effort, as we work on this, and we will need to continue to work on this, is to increase the political solidarity that allies put into the mission—that is one mission for all of us—and to increase the operational flexibility that they give their forces on the ground so they could be used most effectively.

Senator MENENDEZ. That is critical if the alliance is to truly achieve its goals.

Mr. Urbancic, let me ask you a couple of questions about Cyprus. First of all, I appreciated your opening statement, and it was very diplomatic. I understand about listening more than speaking, and I guess it served you well. Let me try to explore with you a little bit more some of your thoughts in that regard.

You know, since 1974 when Cyprus was invaded and has been divided, since then, we have sought to promote a bicameral, bizonal federation. I want to get a sense from you whether you think the solution—and I know there is a lot of optimism right now, a new administration in Cyprus. But do you believe that solution emanates from the Cypriots or emanates from the U.N.? How do you see that happening?

Mr. URBANCIC. I think it emanates from a history of experience between the two communities, and I think that this is their realization that this is where they best think that their island can become a fully functioning, reunified state. It is not from the U.N. in that the U.N. is imposing it. It certainly is not from the United States

in that we are imposing it, but I think it is where they realize they are going to have to find that common ground.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, so there are those who believe in Cyprus and received an overwhelming rejection that the Annan plan was an imposition versus a negotiated agreement between the parties that deserved support. So is it our view, as an American Government, that we are seeking to have this solution come from the Cypriots?

Mr. URBANCIC. Yes, sir. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this. In that respect, we have an incredible militarized element in Cyprus. Yet we have had nearly 13 million crossings since 2003, back and forth without incident. There was an attempt recently in good faith to open the Ledra Street crossing, and it ended up being closed on the same day it was opened because of the Turkish military intervened in the occupied zone, and the agreement was not to do that.

Are we going to be more direct? If we want to have a solution here, we can't have the Turkish military imposing itself between Greek and Turkish Cypriots?

Mr. URBANCIC. Senator, I think the good news is that that crossing is open. And there are going to be hiccups no matter what happens and no matter who goes forward and whose plan it is, but they will do it themselves. They were able to do it themselves. They have done it themselves. And I think that is where we have to focus from now into the future.

Senator MENENDEZ. But clearly, the Turkish military has engaged here in a way that is beyond the civilian powers that exist. Is that a concern for us?

Mr. URBANCIC. The military presence is a concern for everybody, and it is going to have to be part of a comprehensive solution that they are going to work out among themselves, first of all, the Cypriots. But of course, they have partners, and they have supporters, and they will have to be part of that solution.

Senator MENENDEZ. Finally, there is, as you aptly put when you would be accredited if you were to be approved by this committee and by the Senate, only one country for which we both, as a Nation as well as the international community recognizes, which is the Government of Cyprus. And in that respect, there is a concern, and as the subcommittee chair on all of our foreign assistance, I am concerned about our engagement of foreign assistance, particularly on the Turkish Cypriot side, without the appropriate consultations of the Government of Cyprus.

Do you not believe that it is appropriate—now consultation doesn't mean that the Government of Cyprus dictates anything as far as I am concerned. No one dictates anything to us in terms of our assistance abroad. But do you not believe that significant consultation in order to pursue the ultimate goal of reunification with the Government of Cyprus is appropriate?

Mr. URBANCIC. Yes, sir, I do. I think that the entire aid program is designed to support reunification and to support the establishment of a single state. I absolutely agree that our aid program must be transparent to both sides. There should be no surprises in this subcommittee. There should be no surprises on the Hill. And

there should be no surprises to the Government of Cyprus or to Turkish Cypriots.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I personally believe that we should have a memorandum of understanding with the Greek Cypriots, and I will be pursuing that in the days ahead with the States Department. As the very possible next ambassador there, I hope that you will engage actively with us in that regard.

Mr. URBANCIC. Senator, I am always available. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator OBAMA. Senator Barrasso.

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

I want to congratulate each and every one of you on these nominations. I would like to follow up with Senator Menendez's questions, specifically Mr. Volker. Senator Menendez talked about the picking and choosing that goes on by our NATO allies in Afghanistan.

I have just returned from Afghanistan. I wanted to thank the Wyoming troops who are there. We heard from them exactly how they felt things were going and also talked to our own ambassador as well as other leaders.

In your statement, you mentioned that many Europeans are skeptical about the Afghanistan mission, and my question is what can you tell them to demonstrate that Afghanistan is very important in this war against terrorists?

Mr. VOLKER. Yes, thank you, Senator. I think that is a critical issue, in fact, to build public support and understanding for the mission in Afghanistan. Several things, I think, are important to lay out. One of them is that the security and the well-being of our societies depends on success there.

If you look at the September 11 attacks on the United States, they were applauded in Afghanistan. If you look at the bombers who were arrested in Barcelona in January of this year, they had their financing and their training on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area, and they were planning to spread out throughout Europe to attack buses and subway systems. So there is a direct impact on our own security.

There is also a drug impact, so that 90 percent of opium reaching Europe is coming out of Afghanistan. So there is a direct interest in that.

I think one of the things that they see is the images of twisted metal and bloody bodies that they see in the media of the fighting in Afghanistan and terrorist bombers and improvised explosive devices. We need to make sure that they see the other images of Afghanistan.

In 2001, there were 900,000 kids in school. Now it is over 5 million. In 2001, it was illegal for girls to go to school. And now it's over 1.5 million. There is greater access to healthcare. There is road building. There is an economy. There is a democratically elected government.

So I think if the European public gets the whole picture of what we are doing in Afghanistan, we can broaden support for that. And that is critical for then empowering the governments to be more forthcoming with the contributions and the way that their forces are used.

Senator BARRASSO. Because it did seem that there were different rules of engagement from one nation to another instead of a unified rules of engagement for all of our NATO allies, when troops are deployed in various provinces. Do you want to comment?

Mr. VOLKER. Sure. In terms of there is a joint operational plan, there is a common operational plan that NATO has agreed. There are also rules of engagement that apply with that plan.

But on top of that, some nations have applied political limitations on their forces. You know, a caveat that says we don't have night vision goggles so we won't go do things at night. Well, that is understandable. But a caveat that says we won't allow our forces to move from this part of the country to that part of the country because there is fighting there or they can't engage in certain combat roles, well, that is damaging to the political solidarity of NATO. It makes the commander's job on the ground harder. So we have to keep working away at it to try to strengthen the operational flexibility and the political solidarity of NATO.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Ms. Barrett, if I could, I noted that you had been a member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, and I am wondering if you could tell me a little bit about your work there and if there is anything you have learned that we can apply, both in Iraq and in Afghanistan?

Ms. BARRETT. Thank you, Senator. One of the things that we learned was that women, as well as men, can contribute significantly to our defense and that women as well as men are sacrificed for their country and women as well as men can perform great duty for their country. And I note that among the Senators on our panel, there are fathers of daughters, and it is often fathers of daughters who are most aggressive in realizing the capability that women bring to military as well as other roles.

So through the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, we learned a great deal about unfairness and opportunity at that point, inchoate opportunity that we could open new job roles and new privileges to women, and it was an extraordinary eye-opener to me.

Senator BARRASSO. If I could now ask specifically about your comments about Finland. You mentioned that Finland is a global leader in biofuels and renewable energy. I think 25 percent of the energy there is renewable. And you talked a little bit about some of Finland's cooperation with other countries in this area.

How do you see that unfolding from an energy state, given that we have lots of renewables as well as unrenewable resources? How is it that you see us working in a more cooperative way?

Ms. BARRETT. I think that their research, their development, their efforts so far have produced results. Just about 100 percent of their forest products, industry is fueled by the byproducts of the industry. So woodchips, for instance, are fueled by their own product. And we can learn a lot from that.

They are looking at biofuels, as I indicated, but also at alternate resources. They also have a close link to the pipeline ideas that would bring fuel from Russia into Europe. So they are looking at technologies and also transport issues in fuels. We can learn from

them, and they can learn from us. I think it is an opportunity for nuclear alternate fuels as well as transportation in fuels.

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

Senator OBAMA. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso, we had said that we were going to do a second round. Do you have any further questions?

Senator BARRASSO. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator OBAMA. Okay. If not, I just have one last question that I have for you, Mr. Volker, and I wanted to get a sense of whether you could characterize the transit agreements that we concluded with Russia at the Bucharest summit and whether there is some overlap there in terms of what that will facilitate or allow NATO to do? In what way does it enhance NATO's forces' abilities to send supplies and so forth?

Mr. VOLKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The idea of working together with Russia on logistical support for Afghanistan is one that we supported for over a year. Just before the Bucharest summit, the Russians came forward and said, okay, we can do something on this. What was agreed at the Bucharest summit was for ground transport of nonlethal supplies. So we are talking about logistical support for the forces in Afghanistan. It is not air transit. It is not lethal materials.

Is it a help? Yes, it is a help. It is good for our forces and others there to have multiple routes of access, multiple ways to go. Cross-road transport through Russia is helpful. There is more that could be done, and as I mentioned, we could open up to other areas if we had agreement with Russia to do that, and it is something we could continue to talk about.

It is an example of something that is being done positively in the NATO-Russia Council, the ability to look at what we can do together on something such as supporting the effort in Afghanistan.

Senator OBAMA. Good. Okay, well, I thank all of you for your responses, for your service, and for your testimony here today in these important positions.

The record will remain open for 2 days so that the committee members may submit additional questions for the record. I ask that each nominee respond expeditiously to any of these queries.

And I again want to thank the members of the families of all of you because I know that it is an extraordinary burden that is placed on them, and they are providing a service to this country, as well.

If no one has any additional comments, then this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:20 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN MCCAIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding today's hearing. I would like to express my strong support for the swift confirmation of Barbara McConnell Barrett as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Finland. I commend the President for nominating such an outstanding candidate for this important post.

Barbara has a long history of service to Arizona and our Nation. During her professional career, she has amassed an impressive and diverse resume, ranging from serving as the first female deputy administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration and acting as chairwoman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, to being an executive at two Fortune 500 companies. Throughout this time, Barbara has distinguished herself as a respected leader in both the civic and business communities.

Her professionalism, thoughtfulness, and diverse experience will make her an effective diplomat and representative of the United States abroad. I have every confidence that, if confirmed, Barbara will contribute greatly to the continuation of our warm relations with the Republic of Finland.

I urge the committee's expeditious action in moving this nomination to the full Senate and ask my colleagues to support her prompt confirmation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JIM DEMINT, U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today so we could move forward with these ambassadorial nominations. To our nominees and your families, thank you for taking the time to serve. Public service is never easy and I wanted to let you know how appreciative we are that you would be willing to take on the tasks for which you have been nominated.

As we all know, Europe is filled with our closest allies and friends in the world. While friends sometimes disagree, we find ways to overcome these challenges through our long history together.

However, all of your countries of assignment share a role in the strategic security of Europe. Obviously, Bulgaria and Slovenia are members of NATO. Cyprus is the reason Turkey pulled out of NATO's military council, and Finland borders on the Russian Federation, which is trying to dictate terms to NATO.

I was discouraged by Russia's influence to prevent even larger efforts to expand NATO. I do not believe their posturing should stand in the way of NATO's efforts to expand freedom to countries that want an opportunity to side with the West, that is the countries sovereign choice. Mr. Volker, I hope you will work diligently to correct this situation.

Despite this disappointment, I was encouraged by NATO's endorsement of missile defense and its willingness to move forward with providing a blanket of protection for all of Europe—not just NATO members. It is a strong signal that the United States is still intimately concerned with European security.

I was also pleased by NATO's renewed pledge to the long-term fight in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the first military engagement outside Europe's boundaries. Europe has experienced more terrorist attacks than the United States, and the threat of Islamic extremism throughout Europe is just as large as the risk to America.

However, while European leaders may understand the importance of Afghanistan and the threats posed by terrorism, the citizens of these nations do not. It will be important for all of you to talk with the people of your countries and help them understand the crucial link and why it is important that all of Europe support and remain engaged in NATO's activities in Afghanistan.

Many European nations want to play a larger role in the affairs of Africa, but success in Afghanistan is critical to the future of NATO and if the alliance cannot succeed there, then the hopes of more engagement in Africa will never become a reality.

While these many not seem like issues for your individual concerns, they are at the heart of Europe's position in the world and each of your countries will play a part. All of you will have to tackle these daunting tasks, and you will be in very crucial positions to help foster the trans-Atlantic relationship. Your willingness to listen and be passionate advocates is vital.

Often European leaders express how the United States and Europe share a common set of values. It will be important to remind them that we have a long history of common values that include the ideals of freedom and economic opportunity, and that these values serve as the foundation to our prosperity. American culture is loved in Europe, but the same is not always true of American policy. However, the two cannot be conveniently separated.

As a final note, I encourage you to spend more time outside of the embassy and government offices in your respective capitals than inside. Successful diplomacy is no longer an activity just between heads of state, but between the people of each nation. If you are committed to fostering even stronger relations and want to be successful American advocates, you will need to deliver your messages directly to the people of your countries.

I look forward to working with each of you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARL LEVIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN

I want to begin by thanking the Chairman and ranking member of this committee for holding this hearing today.

I regret that I am not able to deliver these remarks in person. I am chairing a hearing before the Armed Services Committee with Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus. I thank the Foreign Relations Committee for taking up this nomination so quickly, and I am pleased to support the nomination of Yousif Ghafari to serve as Ambassador to Slovenia.

Born in Lebanon in 1952, the eldest of seven children, Mr. Ghafari immigrated to the United States in the early 1970s to pursue his education at Wayne State University in Detroit. He successively earned three degrees from Wayne State—a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics in 1974, a master of arts in applied mathematics and computer applications in 1975, and a master of science in chemical engineering in 1977. In 1992, he returned to school to receive his master of business administration from the Michigan State University Advanced Management Program.

Soon after leaving Wayne State, Mr. Ghafari founded GHAFARI, Inc., a highly successful global architectural, engineering, and consulting firm. Established in 1982, he built GHAFARI, Inc. on a foundation of responsive client services and the utilization of the latest technology in order to improve quality. The success of his business has been acknowledged by national trade publications such as INC. magazine and Engineering News Records.

Mr. Ghafari has done a tremendous amount of work to give back to the communities he has come from. As a founding partner of the United States-Lebanon Partnership Fund, he has helped to raise money and awareness of the effort to provide resources and infrastructure repair to parts of Lebanon damaged by war. In 1995, he was named one of the top 100 "executive heroes" in southeastern Michigan, and is a member of the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit's "Hall of Fame." In 2005, Wayne State University acknowledged his longtime generosity and support by renaming a residence building Yousif B. Ghafari Hall. Mr. Ghafari also currently serves on the board of trustees of the College for Creative Studies and Oakwood Healthcare, Inc. He additionally is on the board of directors for the Automobile Club of Michigan, Dura Automotive Systems, Inc., the Economic Club of Detroit, and the Wayne State University Foundation.

If confirmed, this would not be the first time that Mr. Ghafari has served the United States in the international arena. In 2004–2005, he served as a public delegate designate at the U.S. mission to the United Nations for the 59th United Nations General Assembly. He has served on the J. William Fulbright Foreign Service Scholarship board since 2005, being elected vice chair this year.

Mr. Ghafari is a prominent member of the Detroit community and a successful businessman who will serve as an excellent representative of our Government in Slovenia. I thank the committee for allowing me to enter this introduction into the record.

RESPONSES OF NANCY E. McELDOWNY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD

Question. Have you read the cable ref: 04 STATE 258893—Peace Corps-State Department Relations?

Answer. Yes, I have read this cable concerning Peace Corps-State Department Relations.

Question. Do you understand and agree to abide by the principles set forth in this cable?

Answer. Yes, I understand and, if confirmed, will abide by the guidelines as conveyed in 04 STATE 258893.

Question. Specifically, do you understand and accept that "the Peace Corps must remain substantially separate from the day-to-day conduct and concerns of our foreign policy" and that "the Peace Corps's role and its need for separation from the day-to-day activities of the mission are not comparable to those of other U.S. Government agencies"?

Answer. I agree that the Peace Corps, in order to effectively carry out its mandate, needs to be distinct from the United States mission in Bulgaria, as in other countries.

Questions. Do you pledge, as Secretary Rice requests in 3.B of the cable, to exercise your chief of mission "authorities so as to provide the Peace Corps with as much autonomy and flexibility in its day-to-day operations as possible, so long as this does not conflict with U.S. objectives and policies"?

Answer. In line with Secretary Rice's guidance on this issue, if confirmed, I intend to allow the Peace Corps to operate with as much autonomy as possible, bearing in mind my responsibility to provide for the safety and security of the volunteers and to coordinate United States objectives and policy in Bulgaria.

RESPONSES OF KURT VOLKER TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JIM DEMINT

Question. Have you been briefed on all of the negotiations from the Bucharest Summit last week?

Answer. Yes, I have been fully briefed on all of the negotiations from the Bucharest Summit.

Question. Did the United States offer France anything in return for their pledge of increased forces for the Afghanistan mission?

Answer. In our diplomatic exchanges with France, the United States urged France to increase its contributions in Afghanistan, but we did not offer anything in return.

Question. Has the State Department entered into formal discussions with Paris regarding the possible entry of France into NATO's integrated command structure?

Answer. The State Department has not entered into formal discussions with Paris regarding the possible entry of France into NATO's integrated command structure. French President Sarkozy has made general statements about France's intention to reintegrate fully into the NATO integrated military structure by the time of the April 2009 NATO Summit meeting. The French have not, however, followed up with detailed proposals at NATO or bilaterally with the United States. The French have indicated that they prefer to use the term "normalization" rather than "reintegration" when discussing France's rejoining NATO's integrated military structure.

Question. If so, what is France requesting from the United States in return?

Answer. We have not entered into formal discussions with Paris regarding possible French reintegration into NATO's military structure.

Question. What is your opinion about how the United States should respond if France formally requests United States support for an independent European Union defense structure within NATO?

Answer. We do not support an independent European Union defense structure within NATO. We support stronger European defense capabilities, which can support NATO or European Union operations. In supporting stronger European defense capabilities, we must avoid the creation of duplicative or competing structures that could waste resources, divide the United States and Europe politically, undercut NATO, or impede the development of effective military forces.

In his speech in advance of the Bucharest Summit, President Bush said, "Building a strong NATO Alliance also requires a strong European defense capacity. So at this summit, I will encourage our European partners to increase their defense investments to support both NATO and European Union operations. America believes that if Europeans invest in their own defense, they will also be stronger and more capable when we deploy together."

RESPONSES OF WILLIAM TODD TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

Question. What are the primary United States foreign policy objectives related to Brunei?

Answer. Our foreign policy objectives in Brunei mirror those for the Asia-Pacific region in general:

- **Regional Security:** Strengthening regional security by garnering Brunei's support for enhanced United States relations with ASEAN and encouraging expansion of its contributions to peacekeeping operations in the region and to other multilateral undertakings;
- **Stability:** Safeguarding Brunei's long-term stability by helping to improve its counterterrorism and defense capabilities through law enforcement and mili-

- tary-to-military cooperation and by encouraging broader popular participation in the political process through development of the country's legislative council;
- Outreach: Improving perceptions of the United States among Brunei's largely Muslim population and its decisionmakers through outreach, exchange programs, and promotion of United States education;
 - Sustainable Development: Increasing opportunities for United States firms to compete in Brunei through an expanding trade dialog focused on improving protection of intellectual property rights and opening markets for United States goods and services, while contributing to sustainable development through conservation of Brunei's tropical forests.

Question. How many students from Brunei have studied in the United States during the past 7 years? Does the United States Government, or American colleges and universities, actively recruit Brunei students?

Answer. There have been approximately 136 students who have studied in the United States during the past 7 years. The year-by-year breakdown is given below.

Year	No. of students
2006/07	24
2005/06	12
2004/05	18
2003/04	13
2002/03	17
2001/02	27
2000/01	25

Source: International Institute of Education (IIE) Open Doors statistics.

The embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan actively promotes United States higher education as part of our foreign policy objective of creating a greater understanding of United States society and policies by Brunei's majority-Muslim population. Embassy officials often speak to target audiences of prospective students to encourage study in the United States. They and other State Department officials also helped arrange a visit in 2007 by Brunei's Deputy Minister of Education to several leading United States universities to establish contact with Islamic studies programs. The Minister of Education plans to visit the United States in 2008 to build partnership relations between United States universities and the University of Brunei Darussalam, which the embassy expects will result in increased student exchanges—both short and long term—between the United States and Brunei.

The embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan worked to place United States institutions of higher learning on a list of Ministry of Defense-recommended schools, as part of the embassy's campaign to promote United States schools to Bruneians, who historically have looked to the United Kingdom and Australia for foreign study. As a result, five students entered U.S. universities through this new track for the current academic year and our embassy anticipates four more will enter in the 2008/09 academic year. The embassy is also working with the Ministry of Education to allow students to use other Brunei Government scholarship programs to attend United States educational institutions.

In the past year, the embassy also assisted the following American colleges or universities visiting Brunei to recruit students:

- Tufts University (Fletcher School)
- Upper Iowa University
- Portland State University
- State University of New York—Binghamton
- Creighton University
- University of Denver
- Eckerd College
- Herkimer Community College

Question. What is the present level of Brunei investment in the United States? Do you anticipate an increase in such investment in the future?

Answer. Exact figures for the present level of Brunei's investment in the United States are difficult to obtain, because the United States does not require the registration of investments and the level of Bruneian direct investment flows are small.

According to industry estimates, Brunei holds substantial foreign assets globally, estimated at \$30 billion dollars, through its Brunei Investment Agency (BIA), a sovereign wealth fund. Brunei's investments in the United States include luxury hotels

in New York and California. Other financial assets are believed to be managed by U.S. financial institutions.

The current value of the United States dollar would appear conducive to growing Bruneian investment in United States equities and bonds, but we are not aware of any plans for Brunei to acquire controlling interests or direct equity stakes in additional United States companies. Traditionally, the BIA has preferred passive, indirect investments to direct equity investments.

Question. During the past 5 years, what cabinet or subcabinet level United States officials have visited Brunei? What United States military leaders have visited Brunei during the same time period?

Answer. Assistant United States Trade Representative Barbara Weisel visited Brunei in May 2007. In December 2002, the Sultan of Brunei met with President Bush at the White House, and with Secretary Powell. In addition, the President has met the Sultan of Brunei every year at the annual APEC leaders meeting. Brunei hosted APEC in 2000, which President Clinton attended, and the ASEAN Regional Forum in July 2002, which Secretary Powell attended.

The following United States military leaders have visited Brunei in the last five years:

- April 2008: Pacific Commander Admiral Keating
- May 2006: Deputy Under Secretary for Defense Lawless
- March 2006: Pacific Commander Admiral Fallon
- March 2005: U.S. Army Pacific Commander LTG Brown

RESPONSE OF HON. BARBARA M. BARRETT TO QUESTION SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH

Question. The issue that I am concerned about is the issue of this Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. And I don't know whether you are even familiar with it. But I will tell you this, that there are many people here in this Congress that worked very hard to get the Office of Nondiscrimination and Tolerance on the core budget of the OSCE.

And right now, we are in the midst of hiring someone to take the place of a man by the name of Christian Strohal, and I would really appreciate your looking into it. And I would like to spend some time with you on the phone talking about perhaps a role that you might play because Finland is in charge of that ministerial effort right now. And I think if we don't do that, we may lose a wonderful opportunity to continue to make a difference in the area of dealing with discrimination.

Answer. Finland's OSCE Chairman-in-Office has actively promoted the work of the ODIHR's tolerance and nondiscrimination unit, which is funded by the OSCE core budget. If confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Finland, I look forward to working closely with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to support Mr. Strohal and his successor. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and to hear your views on how we can improve our antidiscrimination efforts in the OSCE.

