

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. via Video-conference, Hon. Chris Van Hollen, presiding.

Present: Senators Van Hollen [presiding], Kaine, Booker, Young, and Rounds.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator VAN HOLLEN. The nominations hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Welcome, everybody, to the committee, and I do want to begin by giving a special salute and shout out to my colleague, Senator Mike Rounds, who is the ranking member of the Global Health and Africa Subcommittee, and look forward to working with him and all our colleagues on the subcommittee and the full committee on the large range of pressing issues that are before the subcommittee and the full committee.

I see we have also been joined by my colleague, Senator Kaine from Virginia, and I am sure others will be joining us as we go.

Let me acknowledge our nominees and congratulations to all of you on your nominations to be ambassadors to these countries, and thank you for your service.

We have with us today Ambassador Larry Edward André, Jr., to be the United States Ambassador to Somalia, Ambassador Maria E. Brewer to be the United States Ambassador to Lesotho, Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi to be U.S. Ambassador to Angola and São Tome and Principe, and Ms. Elizabeth Moore Aubin to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and Mr. Eugene S. Young to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Congo, and finally, last but not least, Mr. Christopher John Lamora to be the United States Ambassador to Cameroon.

Again, welcome everybody, and I am going to give some brief opening remarks, turn it over to my colleague, Senator Rounds, and then we will hear from each of you.

Today's hearing is first and foremost a nominations hearing. But in the broader sense, it is an opportunity for us to reexamine our nation's diplomatic relationships with countries across Africa.

President Biden has made clear his mission to restore America's role on the world stage as a force for democracy, for diplomacy, for human rights, and for international cooperation.

Those principles must be front and center in our ongoing engagement with African countries and with their citizens. The best way to advance that cause is by focusing on the opportunities for action, opportunities to invest in and engage with some of the fastest growing countries and economies in the world.

By 2050, the population of Africa is expected to double and will account for one quarter of the world's population. Africa is also the youngest continent in the world, and 60 percent of Africans are under the age of 25.

These young people will be at the vanguard of the next global generation, helping to lead the charge in innovation, technology, business, and economic growth. Our investment in their futures will help ensure greater prosperity, opportunity, peace, and security, both abroad but also here at home.

That cause holds an added measure of urgency as we confront the reality that many of our biggest threats are interconnected and global.

As we have seen throughout the past year, viruses know no borders and our ability to defeat COVID-19 and tackle future outbreaks as well as outbreaks of other diseases requires our participation and our leadership in a global and coordinated response.

The same is true for taking on the climate crisis, which, obviously, has impact here at home and everywhere in the world. It is a key driver of the plight of displacement in many countries like Somalia.

It also represents a real opportunity at home and around the world for the production of new sources of clean energy, both for Africa and for the global economy.

We are engaging in projects that advance these goals and others through ventures like the Power Africa initiative and President Biden's pledge on the coronavirus fight front to donate now hundreds of millions of doses worldwide and our contribution to COVAX.

So the United States has now pledged \$4 billion to fight COVID-19 through COVAX. Prior to today, the president has announced 80 million doses that we would contribute to countries around the world, and just this afternoon it was indicated that tomorrow the president will announce the United States intends to purchase another 500 million doses to help defeat COVID-19 around the world.

Of the 25 million original doses, the first tranche of doses that the United States will distribute 5 million will be devoted to Africa. So this is an important moment for the United States to take a leadership role in that area, and so many others.

My colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, have been right to also recognize that China is using its mercantilist and debt trap strategies to gain more influence in countries around the world, including Africa, and if we keep up business as usual we will give China a free pass to use that leverage to export its model of authoritarianism to governments in developing countries.

I think we are all pleased that just yesterday the United States Senate passed on a bipartisan basis legislation to significantly in-

crease our competitiveness here at home but also to reassert U.S. leadership in many of these areas overseas.

So, for example, a part of that bill that emerged from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee included an increase of \$100 billion authorization for the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, which we hope will be investing in Africa.

Africa, of course, is not a monolith. All of you know that better than anybody. You are all going to countries that have their own unique histories and own complex issues and challenges.

And so today gives us an opportunity both to address those individual issues as well as a take a look at the broader situation.

So let me now turn it over to Senator Rounds for any opening statement he wishes to give, and then I will introduce our nominees and then turn it over to them for questioning.

Senator Rounds?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROUNDS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA**

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I most certainly appreciate your opening comments, and I think that this is one of those committees where bipartisan agreement can be found and I think we begin today in a very good way.

I am very pleased to see such a qualified panel of nominees before us today, with three previously confirmed by the committee to serve in ambassadorial posts as well as experienced State Department personnel with great records of service.

I want to thank you and your families for your service to our country.

Ambassador André, your deep background with Africa will serve you well if you are confirmed to be our next ambassador to Somalia. I look forward to hearing your views on Somalia, a country struggling to overcome 30 years of instability in order to achieve democratic development and viable national institutions.

Somalia's successful revolution, socially, politically and economically, is vital for our interests in the region to include significant counterterrorism efforts against the violent extremist group al-Shabaab.

If confirmed, it will be critical that you maintain a close relationship with Congress to help assure a prudent way forward.

Ambassador Brewer, if confirmed, your experience as ambassador to Sierra Leone, a small nation where the U.S. relationship focuses on foreign assistance, particularly in the health sector, would make you well placed to serve as our ambassador to Lesotho, and I commend you for your desire to lead a U.S. embassy and a USAID team, a small mission to help mentor the next generation of the Foreign Service.

Given the challenges in fully staffing posts in Africa, seasoned diplomats willing to serve in such a mentorship role are definitely needed. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how USAID programs and trade relations with Lesotho can help that nation advance politically and economically.

Ambassador Mushingi, if you are confirmed, I will be glad that we will be sending such an experienced diplomat with experience

in five African countries to be our next ambassador to Angola and the Democratic Republic of São Tome and Principe.

Seems to me that Angola's reformist President Lourenço continues to provide an opportunity to deepen our relationship with that nation. I look forward to hearing how you, if confirmed, would support those reform efforts.

Ms. Aubin, your experience in Algeria would well qualify you, if confirmed, to be our next ambassador to that nation. I look forward to hearing from you about how you would lead our embassy in Algiers, in context of the problem sets facing the North African region, and Algeria's ongoing political challenges.

Also Of particular interest to me are your views on how we can best meet the challenges of Morocco's unfortunate annexation with U.S. approval, I might add, of Western Sahara, an action which I find deeply troubling.

Mr. Young, your experience in sub-Saharan Africa and as an economic and commercial officer at numerous posts will prepare you well, if confirmed, to be our next ambassador to the Republic of Congo. I look forward to hearing from you about Congo and particularly how you would advance our relationship with that nation in the face of tremendous corruption and increased Chinese influence.

Mr. Lamora, your Africa experience makes you well prepared for the difficult post for which you have been nominated.

I am interested in your views on how the U.S. can work with the Cameroonian institutions as well as with other nations to address violent extremism, as well as the Anglophone crisis affecting the northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon.

I would also like to hear from you on the tremendous challenges to democratic development posed by the government's crackdown on political opposition and press, the president's reelection to a seventh term in 2018 election marred by violence and absence of a clear successor with concerns for further instability should he die or become incapacitated.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Senator, and thank you for providing some background on each of these nominees.

I am going to provide a little more background on each of them because I think it is important that people who are tuning in to the committee recognize the breadth and depth of experience that these diplomats have, and I think we can take great pride in the fact that the president has nominated this distinguished group of individuals.

So Ambassador André, Jr., is currently the chargé d'affaires ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Juba, South Sudan. He is a former ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and to the Republic of Djibouti, which has a majority ethnic Somali population and a peacekeeping contingent in Somalia.

Ambassador André's earlier assignments also include service as the political counselor in Nairobi, Kenya, at which time his section oversaw Somali affairs.

He is the recipient of more than a dozen notable senior State Department awards, including the Director General Award for reporting. So thank you for joining us.

Ambassador Brewer recently served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone. Prior to that role, Ambassador Brewer was the Deputy Director of Career Development and Assignments at the State Department's Bureau of Human Resources, and she also served as the deputy chief of mission and charge ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria.

In Nigeria, she oversaw a \$500 million annual PEPFAR program as part of a global campaign to fight HIV/AIDS. She earned the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award.

Ambassador Mushingi is currently the U.S. ambassador to Senegal and the Republic of Guinea Bissau. Earlier in his career, Ambassador Mushingi served as the United States Ambassador to Burkina Faso and as the deputy chief of mission to the United States Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In Washington, Ambassador Mushingi served as executive director at the Executive Office of the Secretary of State, and in 2017 he received the prestigious Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy.

Ms. Aubin is currently the acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Throughout her three decades of service she has held the posts as executive director of the Joint Executive Office of the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, deputy chief of mission of the United States Embassy in Ottawa, Canada, executive director of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Algiers, Algeria.

Ms. Aubin has received numerous State Department awards, including multiple performance awards for her work in the senior Foreign Service.

Mr. Young is the economic counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, Israel. Previously, Mr. Young was the charge d'affaires and ad interim and deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Vienna, Austria, and counsel and senior civilian representative at the U.S. consulate in Herat, Afghanistan, and deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

He has also served as the economic counselor at the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and U.S. Consul General in Durban, South Africa. His service has been honored with several State Department awards, and I welcome him as well.

Mr. Lamora is currently the deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Accra, Ghana, which is the fifth largest U.S. embassy in sub-Saharan Africa. Previously, he was Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Africa and African Security Affairs.

Mr. Lamora has nearly 30 years of Foreign Service experience, 12 of which has been spent focused on African policy security, economic development, and partnerships, and he has served in three African countries including Cameroon. He is the recipient of numerous State Department awards as well.

So thank you all very much, again, for your prior service. We look forward to the discussion today.

And with that, I call upon Ambassador André to deliver an opening statement.

Ambassador André?

**STATEMENT THE HONORABLE LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR.,
OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN
SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBAS-
SADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF SOMALIA**

Mr. ANDRÉ. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, greetings from South Sudan. I am honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia.

I am grateful to the president and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. My wife, Ouroukou André, and my children, Ruhyyih and Isidore André, are watching online.

I thank all my family, friends, and colleagues for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I first came to Africa in 1983 as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal. I then worked in Chad on post-war reconstruction. I joined the State Department in 1990, intending to continue my focus on Africa. I am now serving my tenth tour on the continent.

My three domestic assignments were also Africa related. I have served at our embassies in each of the countries that border Somalia.

If confirmed, I will draw on these experiences to lead our U.S. Embassy Mogadishu team in advancing our partnership with Somalia's people and their federal and state governments for greater peace and prosperity.

I commit to keep you and your staff informed of our progress.

Mr. Chairman, having spent much of my career serving in dangerous places, I feel deeply the responsibility of an ambassador toward all resident Americans and toward all U.S. government employees in country.

If confirmed, I will promote the safety of American citizens and of my embassy colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, the United States needs a stable Somalia as do the Somali people, East Africa, and the international community. If confirmed, I will work with Somalia's federal and state governments, Somali civil society, regional organizations and like-minded international partners to promote stability through credible elections and governance reforms that advance peace and prosperity.

Mr. Chairman, among other needed reforms, Somalia would benefit from a compromise leading to national consensus on the relationship between the federal government and state governments. The nature of Somali federalism has remained an open question for too long.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Somalia and their neighbors are attacked regularly by al-Qaeda's East Africa branch al-Shabaab. There is a smaller ISIS Somalia presence in the north. Both international terrorist networks threaten our interests in the region and aspire to attack Americans.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of Ambassador Yamamoto, applying the full range of tools to help Somalis defend themselves and rid their country of terrorism.

I will also coordinate with the African Union's peacekeeping operation in Somalia. I will be guided by our shared goal of more operationally capable and professional Somali security forces that respect human rights, protect civilians, and hold accountable those responsible for abuses.

In recent years, Somali security forces have made progress in this direction. The U.S. military, the European Union, and the United Nations has contributed to that progress.

Mr. Chairman, aside from political and security challenges, Somalis also confront a variety of natural calamities, economic dysfunction, and deficient educational and other public services. These difficulties contribute to poverty, hunger, and displacement.

If confirmed, I would support the work of our development, humanitarian, and economic professionals in coordination with Somali authorities and international organizations to provide aid from the American people to Somalis in need and to promote inclusive economic growth.

Ethnic Somali communities around the world are known for their resourcefulness, dynamism, and entrepreneurial spirit. Under the right conditions, Somalia will thrive due to the qualities of the Somali people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I am eager to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Larry Edward André follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, greetings from Juba, South Sudan. I am honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

My wife, Ouroukou André, and my children, Ruhiiyyih André and Isidore André, are watching online. I thank all my family, friends, and colleagues for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I first came to Africa in 1983 as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal, and then in Chad working on post-war reconstruction. I joined the State Department in 1990. I am now serving my tenth tour in Africa. With an additional three domestic Africa-related assignments, my over 31-year diplomatic career has focused almost exclusively on the continent. I have served at our embassies in each of the countries that border Somalia. If confirmed, I will draw on these experiences to advance our partnership with Somalia's people and their federal and state-level governments toward greater peace and prosperity.

The United States needs a stable Somalia, as do the Somali people, East Africa and the international community. If confirmed, I will work with the Somali federal government, Somalia's state governments, regional organizations, and like-minded international partners to promote stability through credible elections that advance peace and prosperity. Mr. Chairman, Somalia's political stability also requires compromise leading to national consensus on the relationship between the federal government and state governments. The nature of Somali federalism has remained an open question for too long.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Somalia and their neighbors are attacked regularly by al-Qaeda's East Africa branch, al-Shabaab. There is a smaller ISIS-Somalia presence in the north. Both international terrorist networks threaten our interests in the region and aspire to attack our country. If confirmed, I will continue the work of Ambassador Yamamoto to bring to bear the full range of tools to help Somalis defend themselves and rid their country of terrorism. I will also coordinate with AMISOM, the African Union's peacekeeping operation. I will be guided by our shared goal of more operationally capable and professional Somali security forces that respect human rights, protect civilians, and hold accountable those responsible for abuses. In recent years, the Somali National Army has made progress in this

direction. The U.S. military, the European Union, and the United Nations have contributed to that progress.

Mr. Chairman, having spent much of my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous places, I feel deeply the responsibility of an Ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. Government employees and contractors. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Somalia to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. Government colleagues while we work with the Somali people, their government, and our international partners to advance shared objectives.

Aside from political and security challenges, Somalis also confront a variety of natural calamities, economic dysfunction, and deficient educational and other public services that contribute to poverty, hunger, and displacement. If confirmed, I would support the work of our development, humanitarian, and economic professionals, in coordination with Somali authorities and international organizations, to provide aid from the American people to Somalis in need and to promote inclusive economic growth.

If confirmed, I will lead our U.S. Embassy Mogadishu team to advance peace and prosperity through diplomacy, defense, and development efforts in partnership with the Somali people and their federal and state governments. I commit to keep you and your staff informed.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I am eager to respond to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

And next, we will hear from Ambassador Brewer.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARIA E. BREWER OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

Ms. BREWER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you as you consider my nomination as U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

I thank President Biden for this opportunity and for the trust that he and Secretary Blinken have shown in my ability to serve our country again as U.S. Ambassador.

If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with this committee as we advance U.S. objectives in Lesotho. I would like to thank my husband, Mark, and our 12-year-old daughter, Arina, for their love and support, along with my parents, William and Maria Pallick, who are watching from their home in Texas. Also, today is my father's 77th birthday. So I would like to say happy birthday, Dad.

Having served nearly 25 years with the U.S. Department of State, I have substantial experience working on African affairs, most recently as the U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone.

My experience has taught me the need to develop diverse teams that reflect the countries we serve and to foster high morale in challenging environments.

If confirmed, I will draw on this experience to pursue U.S. goals and protect U.S. interests in Lesotho. Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we wish to accomplish in Lesotho.

Lesotho seeks to implement reforms to reduce political instability, strengthen its institutions, and professionalize its military. These goals align with our own.

Our embassy has made great strides in promoting the rule of law, civilian control of the Lesotho's military, and government accountability.

If confirmed, I will collaborate with this committee, the inter-agency, and the government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho's institutions, reinforce its ability to meet the needs of its people, and build capacity to be a better partner to us.

Last year taught every country that promoting the health of its people is a core imperative. In Lesotho, health system strengthening is at the center of our assistance.

With one in four adults afflicted by HIV/AIDS, and many children orphaned by it, shoring up the Lesotho's capacity to fight HIV/AIDS will remain a critical component of U.S. engagement.

The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, generously funded by Congress, has transformed the Lesotho. Lesotho is one of the first countries to reach epidemic control, surpassing U.N. AIDS targets and cutting new infections by half. Our health partnerships have also bolstered Lesotho's capacity to confront COVID-19.

Curbing the spread of these pandemics contributes to global health security, which benefits Americans here at home. To increase internal stability and its ability to be an effective partner, Lesotho needs economic development.

AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, revolutionized Lesotho's economy, creating more than 45,000 private sector jobs. More progress is needed improving work conditions and preparing Lesotho for its post-AGOA future.

I will support economic diversification, continued progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, and overall improvement of the business climate, if confirmed. Doing so not only improves the lives of Basotho, but also improves conditions for U.S. companies seeking to do business with Lesotho.

The Department of State in 2020 ranked Lesotho among the countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The State Department has worked with the government of Lesotho to urge it to devote resources to combating trafficking in persons. Lesotho and its people are receptive to this message and we are seeing real progress.

If confirmed, I commit to pressing Lesotho for increased prevention and prosecution of these crimes and increased protection for victims. I will paramount the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Lesotho and the entire U.S. Embassy team, including U.S. citizen employees, their families, and our Lesotho colleagues.

If confirmed, I would do all within my power to ensure the security of our mission and oversee its operation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I welcome the challenge and privilege of protecting and advancing U.S. interests in Maseru as the U.S. ambassador. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Maria E. Brewer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA E. BREWER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee: It is an honor to appear before you as you consider my nomination as U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. I want to thank President Biden for this opportunity and for the trust that he and Secretary Blinken have in my ability to serve our country again as U.S. ambassador. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with this committee as we advance U.S. foreign policy objectives in Lesotho. I am honored and fortunate to have my husband, Mark, and our twelve-year-old daughter, Arina, here with me today. I thank them for their constant love and support, along with my parents, William and Maria Pallick, who are watching from their home in Texas.

Having served nearly 25 years with the U.S. Department of State, I have substantial experience working on African affairs, most recently as U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone. My experience has taught me the need to develop diverse teams that reflect the country we serve and to foster high morale in challenging environments. If confirmed, I will draw upon this wealth of knowledge and management experience to pursue U.S. goals and to protect U.S. interests in Lesotho.

Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we seek to accomplish in Lesotho. As Secretary Blinken noted, “strong democracies are more stable, better partners to us, more committed to human rights, less prone to conflict, and more dependable markets for our goods and services.” Along with its Southern African Development Community partners, Lesotho seeks to implement reforms to reduce political instability, strengthen its institutions, and professionalize its military. Our embassy has already made great strides in promoting the rule of law, civilian control of Lesotho’s military, and government accountability. If confirmed, I will collaborate with this committee, the interagency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho’s institutions, to reinforce its ability to meet the needs of its people, and to build its capacity to be a better partner to us.

The last year taught every country that promoting the health of its people is a core imperative. In Lesotho, health system strengthening is at the center of our assistance efforts. With one in four adults living with HIV/AIDS and many more children orphaned by it, shoring up Lesotho’s capacity to confront HIV/AIDS will remain a critical component to U.S. engagement. PEPFAR, which Congress generously funds, has transformed Lesotho, which was one of the first countries to reach epidemic control, surpassing UNAIDS targets and cutting new infections by half. Our health partnerships have also bolstered Lesotho’s capacity to confront COVID-19. Curbing the spread of these pandemics in Lesotho contributes to global health security which benefits Americans at home. If confirmed, I will seek to sustain momentum in these areas.

To increase internal stability and its ability to be an effective partner, Lesotho needs economic development. AGOA—the African Growth and Opportunity Act—revolutionized Lesotho’s economy, creating over 45,000 private sector jobs in Lesotho, making it the second largest sub-Saharan supplier of textiles and apparel to the United States. Nevertheless, there is still important progress to be made, particularly improving work conditions and preparing Lesotho for its post-AGOA future once the Act expires in 2025. I will work diligently to support economic diversification, continued progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, and overall improvement of the business climate, if confirmed. Doing so not only improves the lives of Basotho, but also improves conditions for U.S. companies seeking to do business with Lesotho.

The Department of State in 2020 ranked Lesotho among the countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and which are not making significant efforts to comply. The Department has worked assiduously with the Government of Lesotho to urge it to devote resources to combatting trafficking in persons. Lesotho and its people are receptive to this message and making real progress. If confirmed, I will commit to pushing Lesotho for increased prevention and prosecution of these crimes and increased protection for victims.

In addition to these policy aims, I hold paramount the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Lesotho, and the entire U.S. Embassy team, including U.S. citizen employees, their families, and our Basotho colleagues. If confirmed, I would do all within my power to ensure the security of our Mission and oversee its operations.

In closing, I would like to thank you all again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I would welcome the challenge and privilege of protecting and advancing U.S. interests in Maseru as the U.S. Ambassador. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. I think the full committee would like to extend a happy birthday to your father.

And now we will turn to Ambassador Mushingi. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SÃO TOME AND PRINCIPE SÃO

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege, indeed, to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola and to the Democratic Republic of São Tome and Principe.

I thank the president and the secretary of state for their confidence in me. I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

I appear today with unfailing support of my wife of 40 years, Rebecca, who has also served our country, working for 13 years with the U.S. Peace Corps, and of our beloved daughter, Furaha.

My work across Africa, from Mozambique to Morocco, from Ethiopia to Senegal, as well as through various assignments in Washington, D.C., have prepared me to deliver meaningful results for the American people in the role for which I have been nominated.

If confirmed, I will work to foster stronger ties between the United States and Angola and São Tome and Principe.

President Lourenço's economic and political reform agenda aligns with U.S. interests and presents us a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership with this fast-emerging economy and rising African nation.

As the government of Angola fosters a better business climate, U.S. companies seek tremendous trade and investment opportunities, and recently, U.S. companies have achieved major successes in the energy and IT sectors.

Angola's legacy of land mines continues to impede economic development and conservation efforts. Since 1995, U.S.A. has been the largest donor to demining efforts in Angola, investing more than \$145 million dollars to clear land mines.

The 2018 Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act helps to combat wildlife trafficking and to protect land and water resources.

If confirmed, I will reinforce our commitment to help Angola eliminate the threat of land mines and protect its natural resources.

Deep ties bind the United States and Angola. An estimated one-quarter of all African Americans have Angolan roots. In fact, the

first enslaved Africans to arrive in what is now the United States in 1619 were from what is now Angola.

If confirmed, I will look to be honest about this history while sharing the experience of the United States of America as we continue to seek to improve our nation.

Turning to São Tome, São Tome and Principe has a small land footprint but a large and strategically important maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes.

Enhancing the country's ability to monitor its waters and share information on maritime activity and piracy is a key component to improve regional security. São Tome and Principe also has a long tradition of democracy and peaceful transfers of power.

I will focus on these priorities, if confirmed. As the world hopefully emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect to see more Americans coming to Angola and São Tome and Principe. The safety of our staff and U.S. citizens is always paramount.

Finally, American diplomacy works best when our diplomats best exemplify our nation. If confirmed, I will promote an interagency embassy team that reflects the values of our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Tulinabo S. Mushingi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola and to the Democratic Republic of São Tome & Principe. I thank the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence in me. I am equally grateful for this distinguished Committee's consideration.

I appear today with the unfailing support of my wife Rebecca, who has also served our country working for 13 years with the U.S. Peace Corps, and our beloved daughter Furaha.

My work across Africa, from Mozambique to Morocco, Ethiopia to Senegal, as well as through assignments in Washington, DC, has prepared me to deliver meaningful results for the American people in the role I have been nominated for. If confirmed, I will work hard to foster stronger ties between the United States and Angola and São Tome & Principe.

Bilateral relations between the United States and Angola have markedly improved in recent years. President Lourenço's economic and political reform agenda aligns with U.S. interests and presents a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership with this fast-emerging economy and rising African nation.

Angola plays an influential role in Africa and is looking to diversify its ties away from historic alliances. As such, it has attracted high-level U.S. visits and interaction since 2019, and if confirmed, with your help, I will work to deepen the U.S.-Angola partnership.

Angola has made tangible progress towards transparency and good governance, while initiating the fight against corruption and promoting accountability for human rights violations. Angola still faces many challenges as it addresses a stagnant economy, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID pandemic. If confirmed, I will continue to press for political and economic reforms, support the fight against corruption, and buttress Angola's development efforts.

As the Government of Angola fosters a better business climate, U.S. companies see tremendous trade and investment opportunities. Recently, U.S. companies have achieved major successes in the energy and IT sectors. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. interagency team to advocate for U.S. businesses while supporting Angolan efforts to comply with international standards and improve regulatory adherence.

Angola's legacy of land mines continues to impede economic development and environmental conservation. Since 1995, the United States has been the largest donor to demining efforts in Angola, investing more than \$145 million to clear landmines

and other dangerous explosive hazards so the people of Angola can advance a wide range of social and economic development efforts safe from buried bombs. The 2018 Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals (DELTA) Act helps to combat wildlife trafficking and coordinate with transboundary land and water resource governance authorities. If confirmed, I will reinforce our commitment to help Angola eliminate the threat of landmines and protect its natural resources.

Deep ties bind the United States and Angola: an estimated one-quarter of African-Americans have Angolan roots. The first enslaved Africans to arrive in what is now the United States in 1619 were from what is now Angola. If confirmed, I will look to be honest about this history, while sharing the experience of the United States as we continue to seek improve our nation. I will seek to expand our growing people-to-people ties and promote programs focusing on talented Angolan youth.

São Tome and Principe (STP) has a small land footprint but a large and strategically important maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes. Enhancing the country's ability to monitor its waters and share information on maritime activity and piracy is a key component to improve regional security. STP successfully completed a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program in 2011, and further MCC engagement is a priority for the future. STP also has a long tradition of democracy and peaceful transfers of power. I will focus on these priorities if confirmed.

As the world hopefully emerges from the COVID pandemic, we expect to see a resurgence in the number of Americans coming to Angola. The safety of our staff and U.S. citizens is always paramount.

Finally, American diplomacy works best when American diplomats best exemplify our nation. If confirmed, I will promote an interagency Embassy team that reflects the values of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Next, we will turn to Ms. Aubin for her testimony.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Ms. AUBIN. Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

As the Texas-born child of a U.S. Air Force officer, I feel an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my parents, Tom and Virginia Moore, who raised me to put country over self, and I owe them everything for preparing me to take on my chosen vocation 31 years ago as a Foreign Service officer, and to my husband, Daniel Aubin, for his incredible love and support.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria, and I appreciate deeply the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown.

I served in Algeria from 2011 to 2014 as the Deputy Chief of Mission, so I was there for the 2013 terrorist attack at the Amenas gas production facility, and I, along with every member of the embassy, did not stop working until American hostages were released and three deceased Americans brought back to their families.

It was a formative experience. If confirmed, my highest priority will be to keep all Americans in Algeria safe.

If confirmed, I hope to advance three critical priorities: first, strengthening our security cooperation to fight terrorism and pro-

mote regional stability; second, expanding investment opportunities for U.S. companies to deliver economic benefits to the American people; third, advocating for necessary political and economic reforms to foster stability as Algeria navigates a post-COVID economy.

Although it rarely makes the front page, we have an important relationship with Algeria, and I will work to increase the impact of U.S. activities there. I also believe in the enduring value of deepening people-to-people ties. Embassy Algiers supports an ever-growing spectrum of programs that strengthen our security, economic governance, educational, and cultural ties.

Algeria's large youth population is curious about America and wants to learn English. That is an opportunity I hope to make the most of.

If confirmed, I will return to a country that has changed in important ways since I last lived there. Last year, the Algerian government adopted a package of constitutional reforms to strengthen Algeria's political system. Legislative elections will occur in three days. The Algerian public continues to demonstrate peacefully for core civil rights and liberties.

I will continue to press for expanding observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association and space for civil society.

Algeria fought against violent extremism in the 1990s and it has maintained its stability through rigorous counterterrorism efforts, national reconciliation programs, and de-radicalization initiatives.

Algeria has found ways to export this peace dividend in a difficult neighborhood. It played a critical role in brokering reconciliation in Mali with the 2015 Algiers Accord.

Algeria provides security assistance to Tunisia and Niger. It actively participates in the African Union, the Arab League, the OIC, and it hosts AFRIPOL and the African Union Center for Study and Research on Terrorism.

While new investments are essential, Algeria also remains one of the key regional producers of oil and gas, ranking ninth in the world in gas reserves and sixteenth in oil reserves, and has vast promise for renewables.

If confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as they seek to partner with Algerian firms to advance development of this vital energy sector for our mutual benefit.

The United States and Algeria have a rich history on which to continue to build. From the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the U.S. signed in Algiers in 1795 to American troops liberating Algeria in World War II, to the United States being the first country to recognize Algerian independence on July 3rd, 1962 to Algeria playing a role of creative and active mediation to help release the 52 American diplomat hostages from Iran, we have an enduring partnership that can face the opportunities and the challenges of the 21st century together.

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the committee for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, it will be the honor of my life to represent America to the Algerian people and to lead our tremendous and talented mission there.

I look forward to your questions.
 [The prepared statement of Hon. Elizabeth Moore Aubin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Rounds, and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. As the Texas-born child of a U.S. Air Force officer, I feel an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my parents, Tom and Virginia Moore, who raised me to put country over self, and I owe them everything for preparing me to take on my chosen vocation 31 years ago as a Foreign Service Officer; and to my husband, Daniel Aubin, for his incredible love and support.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown in me.

I served in Algeria from 2011–2014 as the Deputy Chief of Mission, so I was there for the 2013 terrorist attack at the In Amenas gas production facility. I, along with every member of the Embassy, did not stop working until American hostages were released, and three deceased Americans brought back to their families. It was a formative experience. If confirmed, my highest priority will be to keep every American safe in Algeria.

If confirmed, I hope to advance three critical priorities. First, strengthening our security cooperation to fight terrorism and promote regional stability. Second, expanding investment opportunities for U.S. companies to deliver economic benefits to the American people. Third, advocating for necessary political and economic reforms to foster stability as Algeria navigates a post-COVID economy.

Although it rarely makes the front page, we have an important relationship with Algeria, and I will work to increase the impact of U.S. activities there.

I also believe in the enduring value of deepening people-to-people ties. Embassy Algiers supports an ever-growing spectrum of programs that strengthen our security, economic, governance, educational and cultural ties. Algeria's large youth population is curious about America and wants to learn English. That's an opportunity I hope to make the most of.

If confirmed, I will return to a country that is changed in important ways since I last lived there. Last year, the Algerian government adopted a package of constitutional reforms to strengthen Algeria's political system. Legislative elections will occur in three days. The Algerian public continues to demonstrate peacefully for core civil rights and liberties. I will continue to press for expanding observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association, and space for civil society.

Algeria fought against violent extremism in the 1990s. It has maintained its stability through rigorous counterterrorism efforts, national reconciliation programs, and de-radicalization initiatives. Algeria has found ways to export this peace dividend in a difficult neighborhood: it played a critical role in brokering reconciliation in Mali with the 2015 Algiers Accord; it provides security assistance to Tunisia and Niger; it actively participates in the African Union, the Arab League, and the OIC; and it hosts AFRIPOL and the African Union Center for Study and Research on Terrorism.

While new investments are essential, Algeria also remains one of the key regional producers of oil and gas ranking ninth in the world in gas reserves and 16th in oil reserves, and has vast promise for renewables. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as they seek to partner with Algerian firms to advance development of this vital energy sector for our mutual benefit.

The United States and Algeria have a rich history on which to continue to build. From the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the U.S. signed in Algiers in September of 1795, to American troops liberating Algeria in World War II; from the United States being the first country to recognize Algerian independence on July 3, 1962, to Algeria playing a role of creative and active mediation to help release the 52 American diplomat hostages from Iran. We have an enduring partnership that can face the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century together.

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the committee for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, it will be the honor of my life to represent America to the Algerian people and to lead our tremendous and talented mission there.

I look forward to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you very much for your testimony.

Next, we are going to hear from Mr. Young.

STATEMENT OF EUGENE S. YOUNG OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it really is an honor to appear before you today as the president's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo.

I am very grateful for the trust and confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. I want to acknowledge my remarkable wife, Zoe, and our two boys today. I know they are watching and I thank them for their enduring support and love.

I believe my mother, Margaret, is also watching from home and I am so grateful to her and my late father, Sanford, for their encouragement, their care, and their rock-solid upbringing. I think my brother, Roland, is out there too, and I am grateful to him as well with his family. So thanks for this chance.

Thanks to the hard work of our diplomats on the ground in Brazzaville and the local staff at the embassy, the United States has built a strong relationship with the Republic of the Congo. We have been able to deepen the ties between our governments, engage in regular and serious dialogue, and work on issues of mutual concern.

Our countries are working together to effectively fight COVID, to protect our shared environmental heritage, and to combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will seek to maintain this improved U.S.-Congo partnership.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as you well know, the Republic of the Congo occupies a vital but tenuous position in Central Africa. Congo itself is stable, but it lies in a region beset with challenges.

In the past year, Congo has dealt with a suspected Ebola outbreak from across the Congo River and accommodated refugees fleeing the Central African Republic.

Congo is also home to the Great Congo Rain Forest, an invaluable ecological treasure known as the second lung of the world, but one—I am sorry, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. It is okay. Take your time.

Mr. YOUNG. Congo is also home to the Great Congo Rain Forest, an invaluable ecological treasure known as the second lung of the world, but one that is in danger of imprudent exploitation.

Congo's significant oil reserves, which have boosted its economy but also fueled corruption, will still be crucial to the country's immediate future.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to address these challenges and to ensure the safety and security of American citizens in Congo as well as for our American and Congolese staff at the embassy.

Working with this committee, the various agencies of the U.S. government active in Congo, other donor nations, and multilateral organizations, I will continue the good work our mission is supporting across key economic and social sectors in Congo.

If confirmed, I will focus on encouraging democratic progress, supporting efforts to protect the Congo Basin, working with Congo to protect against this, our current pandemic and future pandemics, as well as encouraging the diversification of the Congolese economy.

And for U.S. business, I will continue the efforts of our embassy team in seeking a level playing field and a more transparent and inviting business environment.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you today.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other interested members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Congo, and I am very happy to respond to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Young follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EUGENE S. YOUNG

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. I am grateful for the trust and confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me.

I would like to acknowledge my wife, Zoë, and our two sons today and thank them for their enduring support and love. I believe my mother Margaret is also watching from home and I am so grateful to her and my late father, Sanford, for their encouragement, care and rock solid upbringing.

Thanks to the hard work of our diplomats on the ground in Brazzaville and the local staff at the Embassy, the United States has built a strong relationship with the Republic of the Congo. We've been able to deepen the ties between our governments, engage in regular and serious dialogue, and work on issues of mutual concern. Our countries are working together to effectively fight COVID, to protect our shared environmental heritage, and to combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will seek to maintain this improved U.S.-Congo partnership.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as you well know, the Republic of the Congo occupies a vital but tenuous position in Central Africa. Congo itself is stable, but it lies in a region beset with challenges. In the past year, Congo has dealt with a suspected Ebola outbreak from across the Congo river and accommodated refugees fleeing the Central African Republic. Congo is also home to the great Congo rainforest, an invaluable ecological treasure, known as the second lung of the world, but one that is in danger of imprudent exploitation. Congo's significant oil reserves, which have boosted its economy, but also fueled corruption, will still be crucial to the country's immediate future.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to address these challenges and to ensure the safety and security of American citizens in Congo as well as for our American and Congolese staff at the Embassy. Working with this committee, the various agencies of the U.S. Government active in Congo, other donor nations and multilateral organizations, I will continue the good work our mission is supporting across key economic and social sectors in Congo. If confirmed, I will focus on encouraging democratic progress, supporting efforts to protect the Congo Basin, working with Congo to protect against this and future pandemics, as well as encouraging the diversification of the Congolese economy. And for U.S. business, I will continue the efforts of our Embassy team in seeking a level playing field and a more transparent and inviting business environment.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other interested members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Congo and I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you for your testimony. And now we will turn to Mr. Lamora. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA OF RHODE ISLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Mr. LAMORA. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon.

I thank the president and the secretary of state for their confidence in me, and I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

While the virtual nature of this hearing precludes my family from joining us in person, I nonetheless want to recognize my husband, Eric, my sister, Michelle, and my nephews, Jack and Patrick, who have all supported and encouraged me over many years and who are watching today from home.

I also want to pay homage to my late parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Lamora, without whose love and support I would not be here today.

The United States was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Cameroon in 1960. Since then, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in Cameroon. It is a country with great cultural and geographic diversity, a capsule of the entire continent: active volcanoes, rain forest jungles teeming with wild-life, broad savannas, and a beautiful coastline.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience much of this personally when I served in Cameroon previously. Unfortunately, this beautiful, warm, and welcoming country that launched my love of Africa nearly 30 years ago also faces significant challenges, as you well know.

The United States is deeply concerned by the continued violence in Cameroon's Anglophone regions. What began as peaceful protests in late 2016 have tragically escalated into a protracted violent crisis with more than 3,000 persons killed and more than 1 million internally displaced.

Children have been threatened and in some places killed for attending school. Schools, hospitals, and religious sites have been attacked. Humanitarian actors continue to face numerous obstacles in carrying out their work.

We condemn violence in all its forms regardless of who is perpetrating it, and call for an end to the suffering of the civilian population, regardless of their location or affiliation.

No one undermining peace in Cameroon has our support or our tolerance, whether members of the security forces or of armed separatists groups. We are acting vigorously to help resolve the crisis and, if confirmed, I commit that that will be my highest priority.

This week, secretary of state established a policy imposing visa restrictions on those undermining efforts to peacefully resolve the situation.

We continue to have discussions about Cameroon with the Cameroonian government and to other Cameroonians, as well as with key international partners to foster greater, stronger, and more unified engagement. This will remain our highest priority in our Cameroon policy.

Cameroon also faces a number of other challenges that are all too common in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, including health, security, and governance.

The Cameroonian people have enormous potential. I have seen it firsthand. If I am confirmed, our embassy team and I will do everything we can to help the people and government of Cameroon make that potential a reality.

The coronavirus pandemic has added a layer of difficulty to reaching that day. As a global health security agenda Phase 1 country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential.

Cameroon also benefits from U.S. assistance through PEPFAR and the president's Malaria Initiative, such that it has reduced its HIV prevalence and is working to achieve epidemic control within the next two years.

On security, the United States continues to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad Basin neighbors in their joint effort to defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS West Africa.

This is a key element of the fight against global terrorism. Our support, however, is neither limitless nor without conditions. Cameroonian security forces must abide by accepted human rights norms and those who violate those norms must be held appropriately accountable.

In the same vein, there is still substantial work to be done to promote democracy, human rights, combat corruption, and ensure accountability of those who violate Cameroonian laws or the citizens' trust.

We must continue to press on all these important issues while helping the Cameroonian government and people, including civil society, to find a path to peace.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you once again for this opportunity to appear before you, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon.

I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Christopher John Lamora follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. I thank the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence in me. I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

While the virtual nature of this hearing precludes my family from joining us in person, I nonetheless want to recognize my husband Eric, my sister Michelle, and my nephews Jack and Patrick, who have all supported and encouraged me over many years and who are watching today from home. I also want to pay homage to my late parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Lamora, without whose love and support I would not be here today.

I'm grateful as well to my Africa Bureau family, whose collegiality, confidence, friendship, and mentoring have sustained me and fostered my personal and professional growth for nearly three decades -- from my first assignment at the U.S. Consulate in Douala, Cameroon from 1992-1993 to my past three years as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana.

The United States was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Cameroon in 1960. Since then, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Cameroon. It is a country with great cultural and geographic diversity, a capsule of the entire continent: active volcanoes, rainforest jungles teeming with wildlife, broad savannahs, and a beautiful coastline. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience much of this personally when I served in Cameroon previously.

Unfortunately, this beautiful, warm, and welcoming country that launched my love of Africa nearly 30 years ago also faces significant challenges, as you well know.

The United States is deeply concerned by the continued violence in Cameroon's Anglophone regions. What began as peaceful protests in late 2016 has tragically escalated into a protracted violent crisis with more than 3,000 persons killed and more than one million internally displaced. Children have been threatened, and in some cases killed, for attending school. Schools, hospitals, and religious sites have been attacked. Humanitarian actors continue to face numerous obstacles in carrying out their work.

We condemn violence in all its forms, regardless of who is perpetrating it, and call for an end to the suffering of the civilian population regardless of their location or affiliation. No one undermining peace in Cameroon has our support or tolerance, whether members of the security forces or of armed separatist groups.

We are acting vigorously to help resolve the crisis. This week, the Secretary of State established a policy imposing visa restrictions on those undermining efforts to peacefully resolve the crisis. We continue to have discussions about Cameroon with the Cameroonian Government and other Cameroonians, as well as with key international partners to foster greater, stronger, and more unified engagement. Working to resolve this crisis is, and will continue to be, the single highest priority in our Cameroon policy.

Cameroon also faces a number of other challenges that are all too common in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, including health, security, and governance. The Cameroonian people have enormous potential; I've seen it first-hand. If I am confirmed, our Embassy team and I will do everything we can to help the people and Government of Cameroon to make that potential a reality.

The coronavirus pandemic has added a layer of difficulty to reaching that day. As a Global Health Security Agenda Phase I country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential. Cameroon also benefits from U.S. assistance through PEPFAR and the Presidential Malaria Initiative, such that it has reduced its HIV prevalence and is working to achieve epidemic control within the next two years.

On security, the United States continues to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad Basin neighbors in their joint effort to defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS-West Africa. This is a key element of the fight against global terrorism. Our support, however, is neither limitless nor without conditions. Cameroonian security forces must abide by accepted human rights norms, and those who violate these norms must be held appropriately accountable.

In that same vein, there is still substantial work to be done to promote democracy, and human rights, combat corruption, and ensure accountability of those who violate Cameroonian laws or the citizens' trust. We must continue to press on all these important issues while helping the Cameroonian Government and people, including civil society find a path to peace.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you once again for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Lamora, and thank you all very much for your testimony. And as somebody who grew up in a Foreign Service family, I understand and grateful you acknowledged that representing United States is a family affair and a team effort.

With that, given my colleague's, Senator Rounds, time constraints, I think I will just turn it over to you, Mike, if you want to begin the questioning. I understood you said you had to leave shortly. So I do not know how much time you have got.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You were cutting out a little bit there. But if you would allow me, I would make quick work of my time and ask a few questions if that is okay with you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Absolutely. No, I want to make sure you have a chance to ask whatever you want. So why do you not lead off?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the courtesy.

Ambassador André, as you know, Somalia is wracked by a political crisis over the September 17th agreement to forego a "one person one vote" election in favor of an indirect selection process similar to that of 2016 and 2017.

However, I am particularly curious about how you see Somalia as a longer-term political situation. Looking past the current political crisis, what are the reasonable benchmarks the United States should expect with regard to Somalia's democratic development?

Mr. ANDRÉ. Thank you, Senator, for that question. Looking forward to the immediate situation, as you said, we need to assist the Somalis to develop a permanent constitution.

They are using a provisional one right now. The Somali political class recognizes that the indirect method that they have used in the past and that they are intending to use this time is a stop-gap measure until they are able to have the "one person one vote" direct elections, which all seem to agree is their ending point.

They do not control all of their territory at this point and they do not want to disadvantage Somalis who, having nothing to do with their own will, are trapped behind the lines and territory controlled by terrorist networks.

So the constitution and getting to that direct election that you refer to.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Aubin, I am very concerned about the recent U.S. policy change to recognize Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.

I have been to the Sahrawi people's refugee camps twice. I was impressed by their strong desire for independence and frustration with the long delay of the time period for a referendum to determine whether Western Sahara should become a part of Morocco or be an independent nation.

Please tell me how you think this change in U.S. policy has impacted U.S.-Algeria relations, and also under what conditions, if any, might Algeria increase military assistance to the Polisario to support it against Morocco?

Ms. AUBIN. Thank you for the question, Senator Rounds.

Algeria has supported the political process led by the U.N. and by the U.N. Secretary General's personal envoy for Western Sahara.

So I think Algeria welcomes the fact that we are resuming active diplomacy and supported of the U.N., and together with our inter-

national partners want to bring a halt to the violence and restart a credible U.N. process.

We are working privately with all the parties involved and discussing the path forward. To your question about military assistance, I do not believe Algeria is providing military assistance. It is not something they highlight.

But, most definitively, they have called for a de-escalation of violence and for the political process to continue.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, I have a couple questions that I will offer for the record. But I appreciate your courtesy in allowing me to move forward first and I thank you, and at this point I will have to step out of the meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all the nominees before us. I most certainly have appreciated your comments today.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Senator, and thank you for your questions, and look forward to working with you. So I am going to also start with Ambassador André.

And, you know, as was referenced earlier in this hearing, we have a continued al-Shabaab presence in Somalia. We also have the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from Somalia, a decision made by the previous president.

How has that decision to withdraw U.S. forces impacted the situation in Somalia, in your opinion?

Mr. ANDRÉ. Well, Senator, in my capacity as ambassador in Djibouti, I was present in January when AFRICOM took on that instruction. It was a repositioning of U.S. forces from Somalia to elsewhere in the region, which has slowed the tempo of our efforts to assist the Somali people with their security but it has not stopped it.

We continue to build the capacity of Somalia security forces, support AMISOM, African Union's peacekeeping force, and to keep the U.S. embassy open and operational.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, I appreciate that. In fact, I was just speaking the other day with the mayor of the city of Salisbury, Maryland, who happens to be a member of the Maryland National Guard and was recently deployed to Djibouti as well, and we talked a little bit about that sort of redeployment, as you said.

I have also heard concerns from others in the region that there has been some vacuum created, although there is, obviously, an attempt to compensate for that.

You referenced in your testimony Somali federalism. So how does the—and we are heading into elections here. Can you just talk a little bit about how the situation in Somalia compares with the regional situation in Somaliland and then Puntland? And I know that Somaliland and Puntland have different relationships than with the national sort of government, at least as seen by Puntland.

So could you just describe that and what the challenges are and what role, if any, the United States should play in mediating this effort, especially in the context of elections?

Mr. ANDRÉ. Yes, Senator.

I want to emphasize, as I said in the testimony, the importance of establishing, through consensus and compromise, a consistent

pattern, a framework, for the relations between the central government and the states.

Twenty years ago, I spent some time in Puntland. I was there looking mostly at fisheries issues, and they have been able to govern themselves well.

They see themselves very much as a part of Somalia. But they are also very interested in having significant control over their own governance.

There are other federal states of Somalia that have different understandings and different relationships. Somaliland, as you know, does not consider itself part of Somalia.

The United States recognizes a single Somalia, which includes Somaliland. So the picture here is a bit confused because there is not a consistent relationship between the center and the states.

That is something for Somalis to work out. They have many international examples to choose from, to consider, as the Somali people build that compromised national consensus on what the nature of Somali federalism should be.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Turning to Ambassador Brewer and Lesotho, you referenced in your testimony the AGOA agreement, which has helped the Lesotho economy. But at the same time, I think Lesotho would like to see greater diversification in its economy outside the textile sector.

Are there things that the United States can do to be helpful to that effort by the government of Lesotho?

Ms. BREWER. Thank you, sir, for that question. Thank you, Senator.

We do see that AGOA has been a massive help to that country. About 12 percent of the GDP in 2019 came from AGOA from the export of mainly textiles, as you note, sir.

But there are many opportunities for U.S. companies, and one of the challenges of serving in Africa, particularly in smaller countries such as Sierra Leone and Lesotho, is how to attract those U.S. companies, how to encourage them that they will have their goods and services treated fairly and they will have a level playing field when they get there.

So one of the issues that, if confirmed, I will be carrying forward with the host nation will be the need to have a welcoming climate, a business climate that encourages international companies, including those from the U.S., to come. That means anti-corruption. That means a rule of law. That means political stability.

All of these are ingredients that lead to, you know, diversification. So, certainly, we see potential in the energy sector through Power Africa, through a whole of U.S. government engagement.

We understand that the government of Lesotho would like to increase their agricultural output.

I am originally from Indiana, a state with a proud agricultural tradition, and I think there is a lot that America can do, certainly, through the commercial sector to be able to help them with goods, services, and equipment.

So I think there is great potential and I believe that the U.S. is there ready to help. We are the partner of choice, we have a great

reputation, and I think we can assist them through a commercial context, not just through foreign assistance.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

And you mentioned also the success of our efforts on HIV/AIDS in Lesotho and we look forward to keeping in touch with you on that, especially the extent to which Lesotho has been able to take ownership of that.

I am told that there are no other committee members on right now. And if that is the case, I will continue asking questions of our nominees.

Ambassador Mushingi, the United States has signed a number of cooperative agreements with Angola in recent years, including engagements with Prosper Africa, the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, Young African Leaders Initiative.

Could you talk about the areas that you think create the most, you know, fruitful opportunities of engagement with Angola and also what you see is our biggest challenges? And I should say a lot of you covered a lot of our questions in your opening statements.

That will cut down on the questions. But I do want to talk to you about some of the issues that do remain.

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator. Clearly, we see an opportunity here to engage now with Angola, especially since the new regime took over about three years ago.

Where we have a big opening here is really on promoting economic recovery, promoting a two-way trade between our two countries, and opening these opportunities to U.S. companies in Angola, a country of more than 30 million people, and we see this desire of the Angolans to move away from their traditional historic alliances and that is where we come in as the U.S.

The majority of the Angolans, as you described in your opening remarks about the youth born in Angola or in many of the other African countries, know what is going on outside of Angola, know what the U.S. can bring to the table.

And each American company, what I call the U.S. model, has these three ingredients that so far have been missing in Angola and that really—Angolans want to take advantage of.

One of them is the transparency, the second one is the transfer of technology, and the third one is creation of jobs. So those are the opportunities that I see for American companies in Angola.

But moving forward as far as extending the cooperative agreement you were talking about, on the security cooperation we see also an opportunity here to get into the door because the history of Angola has been—their security cooperation with Russia has been there for a long time, and now the signing of our cooperative agreement a few years ago between the ministry of defense and our DOD we see an opening where the security forces are eager to be trained by us, are eager to be equipped by us, are eager to see the intelligence technologies and how they can use that for their own security in the region.

Finally is, of course, the security of the region and to everyone that Angola can help us in the region, whether we are talking about southern Africa region but also Central Africa and what is in that, in the Central African Republic, in the DRC—Democratic Republic of the Congo—in Uganda and Rwanda as well.

Over to you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I think you have covered some of this. You mentioned Russia. But I think of all the countries that we are talking about at this hearing, China probably has established the greatest amount of influence and footprint in Angola.

To what extent does China's economic and diplomatic and military influence in Angola impact our interests there?

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

Yes, China and Russia have these traditional relations with Angola. It is no secret to anybody that, indeed, when we look at the major infrastructure projects many of them have been developed by China. But also, when we look at the debt issue, again, China is at the top of the list for that country.

Now, where we come in is, again, as I said, for our U.S. companies, and we saw a few successes that I referred to earlier in my testimony, in the last few months three American companies that have been able to penetrate the market and win over the competition in various sectors.

We have looked at telecommunication, IT, solar energy, but also energy, and both were U.S. companies, the latest three successes we have seen. And I think, for me, the way I see this is for us to talk about what we, the U.S.A, are bringing to the table and let the Angolans decide themselves.

At the end of the day, I am confident that we can compete in this market and, indeed, not only compete, but we can win in this market. Over to you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Ambassador.

Just one question on São Tome and Principe, which is you mentioned their sort of government structure and process, which has been, I think, one that we have encouraged and supported.

With respect to their economy, my understanding is they would also like to diversify their economy a little bit more. What role can the United States play with respect to that objective?

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator.

One role that we can play is, really, to build on what we already have. As I said, it is a small land footprint but the long maritime borders and for us talking about maritime security, that is one thing where, really, we can play the biggest role.

But I was really happy to see that when I looked at the American companies that are on the ground—Kosmos Energy, Caterpillar, Dell—so that gives me an idea of the openness that São Tome has to American businesses with American models and, if confirmed, that is what I will be pushing, and especially many of those companies or agencies that work in the security area when we are talking about maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Over.

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

Ms. Aubin, the United States, as you know, has praised Algeria for its cooperation on counterterrorism issues and regional matters, and you referenced in your testimony its role as a mediator, notably, in Mali in 2015.

At the same time, its close ties to and its arms deals with Russia, especially in the aftermath of the CAATSA legislation passed here in Congress, have been concerning.

So what do you see as the main areas of agreement between the United States and Algeria and some of the areas of friction?

Ms. AUBIN. Thank you for the question, Senator Van Hollen.

I see the U.S. and Algeria having a lot of areas of agreement: regional stability in the Maghreb, the desire to have a more inclusive economic environment, and, certainly, they are very interested in the Human Rights Report—Trafficking in Persons Report and other reports that we do, and they are working to make gains in those areas.

You are right about Russia and Algeria's military relationship. Algeria procured two-thirds of its arms from Russia between 2015 and 2019. So that is an issue, and the sale of C-130s were part of the United States' larger policy goal of deterring Algeria from engaging in sanctionable activity.

And if confirmed, I will prioritize that in my conversations with Algerian officials.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, I appreciate that, because there were the arms sales, as you say, dating back to 2015 and before. But I think more concerning have been some of the arms sales since the CAATSA legislation passed.

What impact, if any, have you seen has that had on the calculations of the Algerian government in terms of purchases?

Ms. AUBIN. So thank you for allowing me to clarify that I think the C-130 sales helped deter that, and I think the United States needs to continue conversations with Algeria to explain what Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act really means and how that will impact our relationship, moving forward.

And so that is something that I will prioritize in my conversations when I get there. Algeria has had a policy of sovereignty and noninterference in domestic affairs and that is how they have moved forward in their bilateral relationships.

But I think this is a really important point and if confirmed, I will continue to raise that with Algerian colleagues.

Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. No, I appreciate that, and Senator Rounds mentioned his opposition to the former administration's policy change with respect to recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara.

You already answered that question. I do want to go on record in agreement with my colleague, Senator Rounds, on that matter.

So let me turn now to Mr. Young, if I may, and a couple questions, because you covered a lot of it in your testimony with respect to the Republic of Congo.

One of the concerns I am sure you have seen expressed here on the Hill, in the United States, and elsewhere, has been the regional impact of weak control over the security sector and abuses committed by Congolese peacekeepers and park rangers.

Can you speak a little bit to that issue and, you know, what role you can play in expressing our concerns and what kind of changes that we can expect?

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think it is really important that we continue to direct dialogue with the government on issues like these that my predecessor and our embassy is still having at this point, to have that regular dialogue, to have an open discussion.

In terms of the peacekeepers that you mentioned, sir, my understanding, and this is one of the positive signs that we have seen, and that is that those peacekeepers that I think you are referring to were, in fact, held accountable for the crimes that they committed.

So that was one plus that we have seen recently. But it is important that we—across this and across all of these issues around democratic progress that we have a dialogue with the government, we have dialogue with civil society, with youth, with the security and maintain some of the training programs we have had with security forces and with law enforcement. I think those can help address the issues that you are referring to, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, right. No, I am referring to the situation in Central African Republic, their troops there, and we do look forward to working with you to make sure that everyone is held accountable in what happened there.

Let me turn to Mr. Lamora. And as you referenced in your testimony, Cameroon has seen significant violence in recent years owing to the Anglophone Conflict as well as the Boko Haram insurgency in the far north.

I represent a very active and engaged and terrific Cameroonian-American constituency in the state of Maryland and I have been engaged with them in conversations about their concerns about what is happening.

Can you talk a little more about what the United States can do to support a peaceful resolution of Cameroon's Anglophone Conflict?

Mr. LAMORA. Thank you, Senator.

Yes. One of the things that we have been trying to do and will try to do with Cameroon is to bring the parties together to get them to talk. There has not been complete willingness on any side thus far to come to the table.

As you are aware I know, sir, the Swiss have led a process of trying to do that and we have supported and aligned ourselves with that. I think an important thing that we have been doing increasingly in recent weeks is to engage the French at higher levels.

France has a long-standing close relationship with the government in Yaounde. Secretary Blinken recently raised his concerns, our concerns, about Cameroon with his French counterpart. I think greater French engagement certainly would help. We are hopeful that we can move that forward.

As I mentioned in my testimony also, following on the resolution that the Senate passed, S.R. 684, that talked about the possibility of sanctions, Secretary Blinken announced these visa sanctions, visa restrictions, earlier this week on those who are impeding peace in the Anglophone regions, in particular.

So I think there is a variety of things that we can do and that our international partners can do. But, ultimately, we can help move them all in the best direction we can.

But it will have to be the Cameroonian government, the parties to the violence, and the Cameroonian people who really commit themselves to finding a peaceful way forward.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Thank you all. I am getting word that another committee I serve on with the attorney general may be wrapping up and I hope to get over there and have a chance to ask him some questions.

So let me thank all of you, again, for your previous service to our country. I look forward to supporting your nominations and, again, thank you for what you do and to your families.

And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:46 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Gulf Influence in Somalia

Question. Countries such as the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are playing an increasing role in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia, though much of their efforts remain bilateral and somewhat opaque. What seems certain, however, is that despite all four of these countries being allies and friends of the United States, their agendas and efforts often do not align with our own.

- What is your assessment of the influence of these actors in the Horn of Africa?

Answer. The Gulf states, particularly the UAE and Qatar, have significant influence in Somalia by virtue of their political, economic, and security engagement.

Our NATO ally Turkey's relationship with Somalia is strong. Turkey has built schools, hospitals, and infrastructure in Somalia. It also provides extensive security assistance focused on the recruitment, training, and equipping of both police and Somali National Army forces.

Question. Are their collective efforts contributing to or taking away from peace and stability in the region?

Answer. The Gulf rift has had a destabilizing impact on Somalia, as Gulf states vied for influence with the Federal Government (FGS) in Mogadishu and Federal Member States (FMS). The dispute distracted the FGS and its FMS from implementing security sector, political, and economic reforms critical to stabilizing the country, including countering the influence of al-Shabaab and ISIS.

Meanwhile, in recent months Turkey joined other countries when the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) issued a joint statement welcoming the May 20 Summit. It did not join statements of concern about President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo's term extension or subsequent violence in Mogadishu, which were issued immediately prior.

Question. If the latter, what is the United States doing to try and bring their efforts more in line with our own?

Answer. The United States repeatedly has urged external actors, including the Gulf states, not to use Somalia as a proxy battleground for bilateral disputes. We hold regular consultations with these governments and demarche them to join us and likeminded partners in seeking political progress and stability in Somalia.

Vision for Somalia

Question. Infighting between Somalia's Federal Member States and the central member states continues to threaten the stability of the country; the United States conducted airstrikes in Somalia against Al Shabab and Al Qaeda for over a decade while Al Shabab continues to carry out major attacks in cities and in the countryside; and Gulf actors compete for influence. Tensions between Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, and Somalia threaten the stability of the entire Horn of Africa.

- What are the United States' goals in Somalia in the short, medium, and long term?

- With the grave potential for instability in yet another country in the Horn of Africa, what will be your priorities if confirmed?
- How do you plan to work with Special Envoy Feltman and other Ambassadors in the region to develop a coherent and integrated approach to U.S. policy in the Horn?

Answer. The United States' near- and medium-term objectives in Somalia are to degrade terrorist groups that pose a threat to U.S. persons and interests; strengthen Somalia's security forces so that they can assume greater responsibility from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); advance political reconciliation and governance reforms necessary for lasting stability; and promote economic growth and opportunity that will reduce Somalia's dependence on U.S. and international assistance, while delivering humanitarian aid to people in need. It is our hope that, over time, these efforts will lead to a peaceful, stable, democratic Somalia that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms and that can provide security and services for its citizens.

If confirmed, I will build on the work of Ambassador Yamamoto to bring to bear the full range of tools to help Somalis defend themselves and rid their country of terrorism. I will support Somalia's completion of a peaceful, inclusive, transparent, and timely electoral process and strengthened cooperation among Somalia's national and federal member state governments. And I will support the work of our development, humanitarian, and economic professionals to provide aid to Somalis in need and to promote inclusive economic growth.

The stabilization of Somalia is an international challenge that requires close coordination with its neighbors and other international stakeholders. I am committed to working closely with our Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Envoy Jeffrey Feltman and our ambassadors in East Africa and in other critical partner capitals to ensure a cohesive and coordinated approach.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR. BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Somalia was identified as a special case due to ongoing conflict, insecurity, and protracted humanitarian crises. Given the complicated security situation and sustained insurgency by Al-Shabaab across the country, how will you work with the host government and U.S. government interagency to help Somalia improve efforts of protection, prosecution, and prevention?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. government's interagency commitment to working with the Somali federal and member state governments to help build the capacity of Somali institutions to prevent trafficking, prosecute those engaged in the illicit activity, and protect victims.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, the Somali government is listed as continuing to discriminate against non-Islamic religions, including Christianity. In addition, Al-Shabaab has committed egregious crimes against those who practice religions other than Islam. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Al-Shabaab's brutal treatment of those whose beliefs differ from their own is appalling. If confirmed, I would condemn Al-Shabaab's ruthless acts and urge that Somalia's laws allow all people to worship in a manner of their choosing. If confirmed, I would engage senior officials in the Federal Government of Somalia, as well as its Federal Member States, to advocate for religious freedom and express concern over actions by authorities against individuals and groups attempting to practice their faith freely. If confirmed, my team will continue to work closely with the Office of International Religious Freedom.

Question. In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Somalia was identified as having committed or baring witness to severe human rights abuses specifically committed by Al-Shabaab.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?
- How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. Al-Shabaab is the leading perpetrator of human rights violations in Somalia. Working with the Somali government, AMISOM, and like-minded partners to degrade al-Shabaab militarily and economically while bolstering Somali governance and institutions should reduce their operational space to commit abuses against Somali and foreign nationals.

If confirmed, I would continue to engage with the highest levels of the Somali government, sub-national authorities, and local communities, members of the diplomatic corps, the U.N., and NGOs to promote respect for human rights for all Somalis.

AMISOM

Question. There is much discussion about AMISOM's mandate in Somalia and potential realignments. If your opinion, what adjustments to AMISOM's mandate are needed to improve its effectiveness?

Answer. AMISOM remains critical to Somalia's stabilization, and its continued presence is necessary to provide time and space to build effective Somali security institutions. The United States supports a smart and deliberate conditions-based transition from AMISOM to Somali security forces. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with the African Union, AMISOM troop contributors, the U.N., EU, and other international stakeholders to support revisions to AMISOM's mandate to enable it to conduct more effective operations against al-Shabaab, while supporting the development of Somali security forces that can ultimately take over the country's security.

Somaliland

Question. What is your perspective on U.S. policy toward Somaliland? Do you think the U.S. has missed an important opportunity over the last several years to support and engage more fully with a more stable and democratic entity at the best of Mogadishu?

Answer. The United States recognizes a single Somalia, which includes Somaliland. Given Somalia's federal system, I believe it is in the U.S. interest to maintain positive engagement with Somalia's national and regional government authorities, while also encouraging those authorities to strengthen cooperation with one another. In June 2020, in my capacity as U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti, I attended Djibouti-hosted talks between senior representatives of Somaliland and Somalia. This experience provided insights into the points of view of both sides and where their interests overlap. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to engage with regional administrations like Somaliland to promote good governance, stability, and economic development, and to explore opportunities to strengthen cooperation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Violence and Instability in Cameroon and Beyond

Question. U.S. relations with Cameroon have been mostly positive, although they have been adversely affected by concerns over human rights abuses, in particular in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions, and the pace of political and economic liberalization. Cameroon plays a key role in regional stability and remains a regional partner in countering terrorism in the Lake Chad Region.

- Last year, I joined with 19 of my Senate colleagues to sign a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Cameroon, and remain deeply concerned by the ongoing violence there. I am curious as to what you think it will take to conclude and uphold a ceasefire, guaranteed humanitarian access, and establish a process of political dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority. Our position remains that all sides must end violence and engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The Government is focused on countering armed separatists in the field and maintains that its convening of a Grand National Dialogue in 2019 and decentralization efforts thus far, including regional elections in late 2020 and the establishment of a special status for the two Anglophone regions, address the root causes of the crisis. I believe the Government must do more to resolve the crisis. Specifically, it must be willing to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The armed separatist groups, as well, must be willing to engage peacefully in such a dialogue and cease human rights abuses, as called for in the Senate resolution.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In 2019, the United States took the relatively rare step of terminating Cameroon's AGOA eligibility due to persistent gross violations of human rights. Unfortunately, this does not appear to have impacted the Government's behavior in the ongoing conflict. If confirmed, what other measures do you plan to take to hold state and non-state actors in Cameroon accountable for human rights abuses?

Answer. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States was taking steps to impose visa restrictions on individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. This decision reflects the continuing U.S. commitment to advance dialogue and promote respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years, and, as you noted, the determination that Cameroon was ineligible for AGOA starting on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground, as well as the Cameroonian Government and people, to identify tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In addition to the internal violence related to the Anglophone Crisis, Cameroon is also facing threats from Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa. How do we square our support for Cameroon's efforts against Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa with our concerns about human rights abuses and political abuses inside Cameroon? In other words, how can the State Department ensure that President Biya does not use foreign counterterrorism assistance to fund its efforts against Anglophone separatists in the Southwest and Northwest part of the country?

Answer. Cameroon has long played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important. Since early 2019, we have significantly reduced security assistance because the Government of Cameroon had not taken sufficient action to investigate credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces or hold the perpetrators accountable. The United States continues to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of respect for human rights. We vet potential recipients of security assistance, consistent with the Leahy laws, and do not provide assistance to Cameroonian security force units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. U.S.-granted assistance is explicitly prohibited from being used in the Anglophone regions. We have made this prohibition clear at all levels of the Cameroonian Government and we carefully monitor the use of U.S. assistance to ensure this commitment is followed. Risk of misuse or potential diversion to the Anglophone regions are key criteria in our security assistance decision-making.

Since our cuts, the Cameroonian Government has taken some limited steps towards holding security forces accountable, including the conviction of four soldiers for murder in August 2020 and the arrest of soldiers believed to be responsible for one case of extrajudicial killings and one case of alleged torture of a detainee. While we hope these steps indicate a willingness to address the problem, abuses by government forces continue.

Between FY 2019 (the last year for which there is full obligation data) and FY 2020 funding, the State Department has obligated approximately \$8.3 million in assistance to support the Cameroonian military. This funding supported professional military education; technical support for unarmed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; small boat training; communications training; and air-to-ground integration training. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that U.S.-provided equipment is not misused by Cameroonian security forces, and would actively and fully address verified reports of such misuse.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Ambassador Andre, The U.S. maintains a very modest embassy on the compound of the Mogadishu International Airport, and our diplomats are extremely limited in their ability to leave the airport complex. What is your perspective on this posture, and what do you believe is its impact on U.S. diplomatic relations with Somalia and our allies?

Answer. If confirmed, the safety of U.S. citizens in Somalia and of U.S. Embassy personnel will be my highest priority. I will work with the Diplomatic Security Service to maximize the ability of our diplomats to advance our goals and interests through engagements throughout Somalia whenever possible through effective risk mitigation and management decisions. I am doing that now in my role as Chargé d'affaires in South Sudan, which can be a dangerous place. I will consider both the security environment in Somalia and specific opportunities to advance the goals assigned to us through an interagency process. I will ensure we remain able to engage effectively with all levels of the Somali Government as well as with our international partners, many of whom are also located on the Mogadishu International Airport compound.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Ambassador Brewer, as you know, Lesotho has been plagued with political instability since independence in 1966, and no prime minister has served a full term for the past decade.

- In light of Lesotho's recurrent political instability, what are some opportunities that you see for the U.S. to support the development of Lesotho's democratic institutions?

Answer. Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we seek to accomplish in Lesotho. Lesotho has a complicated history with several instances of political and armed instability, driven in part by politicians pulling the security services into political disputes and the security sector's inability to remain neutral. In recent years, Embassy Maseru has worked to improve civilian-military relationships, encourage the neutrality of security and law enforcement bodies, and support Lesotho's ongoing efforts to depoliticize its security forces. The mission also collaborates with like-minded partners (including the UK) to advance these goals. Building on existing U.S. Embassy efforts to promote civilian control of Lesotho's military and government accountability, if confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, the interagency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho's institutions, to further promote the professionalization of Lesotho's security forces and to foster improved civilian oversight of the military and law enforcement. I will also continue to work with the interagency to identify ways to reinforce Lesotho's ability to meet the needs of its people and build its capacity to be a better partner to us.

Question. Ambassador Brewer, support to the health sector, mainly through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is a significant element of the U.S./Lesotho bilateral relationship.

- What is your assessment of the importance and effectiveness of U.S. support to combatting HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho, including the COVID pandemic?

Answer. America's interests at home are strengthened by improving lives globally. Investments in preventing disease and improving public health and nutrition are among our best means to articulate and embody our values, while simultaneously pursuing our national security interests. U.S. support to combat HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho is important because it is both the right and the smart thing to do. In Lesotho, our PEPFAR investment has seen a remarkable return in terms of lives saved and increased social stability.

Largely because of U.S. support, Lesotho is one of the first PEPFAR countries to achieve the UNAIDS targets for epidemic control; moreover, it has cut its rate of new HIV infections in half since 2016. These historic achievements lay the groundwork for an HIV/AIDS-free generation and are landmarks in PEPFAR's 18-year history.

U.S. health and development investments in Lesotho, including but not limited to PEPFAR, are important and effective, certainly in terms of controlling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but also in terms of combatting COVID-19, TB and other communicable diseases; confronting health-related issues such as immunizations, clean water, and sanitation; and enhancing health security by preventing, detecting, and responding to infectious disease threats.

If confirmed, I will ensure good stewardship of U.S. taxpayers' investment in health and development in Lesotho. Building on the outstanding success achieved through our previous and existing partnerships with the government and people of Lesotho, I will also work to secure sustainability and help Lesotho move towards self-reliance in meeting the future needs of its population.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP), Lesotho was identified as Tier 3 due to lack of significant efforts by the government to increase prosecution, protection, and prevention. How will you work with the Lesotho Government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. I understand Lesotho was placed on Tier 3 due to chronic poor progress towards addressing our recommendations and credible allegations of official complicity. The Government of Lesotho has taken many steps to combat trafficking in persons since the release of the 2020 TIP Report. The Government convicted and sentenced the first trafficker in four years; closed key legislative gaps in anti-trafficking laws; criminalized all forms of sex trafficking and outlined stringent penalties; increased its investigations into official complicity; and launched a five-year anti-trafficking national action plan. The Secretary will release the 2021 TIP Report with updated tier rankings and updated prioritized recommendations this summer. If confirmed, I will continue to press for progress on recommendations in the TIP Report.

Question. Given Lesotho's enclosure by South Africa, a Tier 2 country, are there connections to be made with South Africa and the U.S. Embassy there to improve trafficking regionally?

Answer. Trafficking is indeed a regional problem that demands a regional response. If confirmed, I will not only lead our bilateral engagement urging the Government of Lesotho to pursue and punish traffickers and better protect victims, but will also work with the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria to encourage regional solutions and inter-governmental cooperation to combat cross-border trafficking.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Lesotho was identified as partially tolerant of religious freedom. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country and expand on the work the U.S. Embassy is currently undertaking to prevent further discrimination of religious minorities?

Answer. As noted in the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, the constitution of Lesotho prohibits religious discrimination and provides for freedom of conscience, thought, and religion, including the freedom to change religion or belief and to manifest and propagate one's religion. Religious leaders of all faiths have told the U.S. Embassy that there is broad religious tolerance among the people of Lesotho.

Some business and government leaders occasionally express distrust of entrepreneurs of South Asian origin, many of whom are Muslim. Nonetheless, the U.S. Embassy is unaware of any act of discrimination targeting Lesotho's Muslims, whether those who have recently immigrated to Lesotho or the longstanding Muslim communities in the north of the country.

If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Embassy's regular contact with religious, government, business, and civil society leaders to discuss religious freedom and tolerance and the need to be proactive in preventing discrimination against adherents of the country's growing minority religions, particularly Islam.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Lesotho was identified as having committed human rights abuses, including using the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown as a façade to stifle freedom of assembly and movement.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. Many observers argued that Lesotho's previous administration used the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to stifle freedoms of peaceful assembly and movement. That was a clear human rights concern, as are ongoing problems such as trafficking in persons, police brutality, and child labor. The United States is also concerned about prolonged pretrial detentions and prison conditions. Some other concerns detailed in the 2020 Human Rights Report include reports of unlawful or arbitrary killings by security forces, arbitrary arrest and detention, and mistreatment while in custody. There are also issues with official corruption, a lack of judicial independence, violence against women, and continued criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

The mission pushes for greater accountability in cases of police abuse and encourages the Lesotho Mounted Police Service to strengthen its police complaints board, with some success. The mission also works to promote better understanding of community-based policing via training programs at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts as I engage the Government of Lesotho to address concerns detailed in the 2020 Human Rights Report.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy maintains excellent relationships with all of Lesotho's major civil society organizations, who rely on us to act as a voice of conscience both in the public sphere and in our private consultations with the government. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with Lesotho's community of civil society organizations. I will also encourage them to focus their attentions on the most pressing human rights concerns and will look for synergistic opportunities to cooperate with these groups to advocate for reform, accountability, and protection of human rights.

Question. In your opinion, is Lesotho a potential target for improved U.S. trade and investment? What tools should the U.S. apply in Lesotho to encourage export diversification and investment by American firms?

Answer. Yes. Several economic sectors in Lesotho have growth potential, including water (hydropower and pipeline infrastructure), diamonds, tourism, agriculture, and power generation. The government has also noted that it seeks to improve transportation and its information technology infrastructure. In 2019, the United States exported about \$1 million in goods to Lesotho, mostly machinery, medical instruments, and aircraft. In the same year, the United States imported around \$325 million in goods, mostly apparel, precious stones, and some machinery.

Lesotho is a long-time beneficiary of trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which has helped create over 45,000 jobs in the textile industry. According to 2019 numbers, AGOA exports accounted for approximately 12% of Lesotho's GDP (\$325 million out of \$2.7 billion). One of the AGOA eligibility requirements is that a country must have established, or make progress towards establishing, a market-based economy. This creates a more-level playing field for U.S. companies and serves as a useful counterweight to actors seeking to influence Lesotho to adopt policies that would be counter to U.S. interests. By creating a more-level playing field for U.S. companies overseas, we contribute to economic prosperity at home, too. Several U.S. brands already manufacture products in Lesotho. If confirmed, I will utilize initiatives such as Prosper Africa to actively seek opportunities to increase reciprocal trade and investment.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Ambassador Brewer, As you know, Lesotho has been plagued with political instability since independence in 1966, and no prime minister has served a full term for the past decade.

- In light of Lesotho's recurrent political instability, what are some opportunities that you see for the U.S. to support the development of Lesotho's democratic institutions?

Answer. Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we seek to accomplish in Lesotho. Lesotho has a complicated history with several instances of political and armed instability, driven in part by politicians pulling

the security services into political disputes and the security sector's inability to remain neutral. In recent years, Embassy Maseru has worked to improve civilian-military relationships, encourage the neutrality of security and law enforcement bodies, and support Lesotho's ongoing efforts to depoliticize its security forces. The mission also collaborates with like-minded partners (including the UK) to advance these goals. Building on existing U.S. Embassy efforts to promote civilian control of Lesotho's military and government accountability, if confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, the interagency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho's institutions, to further promote the professionalization of Lesotho's security forces and to foster improved civilian oversight of the military and law enforcement. I will also continue to work with the interagency to identify ways to reinforce Lesotho's ability to meet the needs of its people and build its capacity to be a better partner to us.

Question. Ambassador Brewer, Support to the health sector, mainly through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is a significant element of the U.S./Lesotho bilateral relationship.

What is your assessment of the importance and effectiveness of U.S. support to combatting HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho, including the COVID pandemic?

Answer. America's interests at home are strengthened by improving lives globally. Investments in preventing disease and improving public health and nutrition are among our best means to articulate and embody our values, while simultaneously pursuing our national security interests. U.S. support to combat HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho is important because it is both the right and the smart thing to do. In Lesotho, our PEPFAR investment has seen a remarkable return in terms of lives saved and increased social stability.

Largely because of U.S. support, Lesotho is one of the first PEPFAR countries to achieve the UNAIDS targets for epidemic control; moreover, it has cut its rate of new HIV infections in half since 2016. These historic achievements lay the groundwork for an HIV/AIDS-free generation and are landmarks in PEPFAR's 18-year history.

U.S. health and development investments in Lesotho, including but not limited to PEPFAR, are important and effective, certainly in terms of controlling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but also in terms of combatting COVID-19, TB and other communicable diseases; confronting health-related issues such as immunizations, clean water, and sanitation; and enhancing health security by preventing, detecting, and responding to infectious disease threats.

If confirmed, I will ensure good stewardship of U.S. taxpayers' investment in health and development in Lesotho. Building on the outstanding success achieved through our previous and existing partnerships with the government and people of Lesotho, I will also work to secure sustainability and help Lesotho move towards self-reliance in meeting the future needs of its population.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What role can the United States play in efforts of the Lourenco administration to root out corruption and repatriate stolen assets?

Answer. The government of Angola needs to continue to improve its public financial management capacity as well as to strengthen accounting, oversight, and auditing capabilities. It should also increase law enforcement and judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption and financial crimes and better coordinate the efforts of public institutions working on the investigations. The government should also ensure that private sector financial institutions are regularly reporting suspicious transactions to the appropriate authorities for action. U.S. engagement includes technical assistance for Angola's Financial Intelligence Unit and Ministry of Finance. If confirmed, I would seek to expand cooperation on potential corruption investigations, capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases, and capacity building in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) reporting mechanisms.

Question. In advance of elections in 2022, what can the U.S. Embassy do to ensure free political expression and the conduct of fair elections?

Answer. The U.S. government has encouraged the Government of Angola to follow through on its commitment to hold local government elections, which would be a

positive step in the democratization process of Angola, giving people direct representation at the local level of government. If confirmed, I will continue to communicate this message.

Question. If confirmed, how will you ensure that Embassy Luanda exercises proper management and oversight of the U.S. presence in São Tome and Principe?

Answer. If confirmed, with your help, I will work to deepen the U.S. partnership with both Angola and São Tome and Principe. I have experience being accredited as ambassador to two countries concurrently, and will draw on that experience to ensure proper management and oversight of the U.S. presence in São Tome and Principe.

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to support democracy and human rights? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights has been a central theme throughout my 30-year career at the Department of State. From my early postings to the current one, I have endeavored to share with host country counterparts the U.S. position on human rights and democracy. My strategy has always been to honestly explain our position showing the benefits of respecting human rights and promoting democratic principles, a winning proposition for the host country as well.

I have supported the conduct of peaceful elections, passing laws on inclusive participation in elections, and raising disability awareness. I have advocated against restrictive LGBTQI+ laws, empowered women's participation in elections, given a voice to civil society, and emphasized the importance of a free press.

As Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, our promotion of free and fair elections with credible and appropriately transparent processes led to the first ever peaceful transition of power between two civilian presidents in the history of the country.

During my tenure as Ambassador in Burkina Faso, I advised against a proposed constitutional amendment to presidential term limits, designed to extend the time in office of an already long-term sitting president. Additionally, I pushed the Government of Transition of Burkina Faso for timely elections during a sensitive time when some voices were considering a delay. Finally, following the free and fair presidential election, Burkina Faso and its people witnessed the first ever peaceful transition of power from one civilian government to another. Previously, in Mozambique I participated as an international observer in the country's first-ever democratic elections and worked closely with the rest of the Embassy team to empower the Mozambican people as they freely elected their leaders.

As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ethiopia from 2009-2011, I encouraged the Ethiopian government to allow civil society and opposition political parties to operate freely. Our Embassy efforts helped provide a path for opposition parties in Ethiopia to publicize their platforms, thus allowing a broader range of Ethiopian citizens to have a voice in their government, resulting in an increase in voter registration and participation.

Based on my dedication to promote and support respect for human rights and democracy during my career, I am honored to have been selected for the AFSA's Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy in 2017. This award is given to members of the Foreign Service, by their peers, for the promotion of U.S. policies focused on advancing democracy, freedom and governance through bold, exemplary, imaginative and effective efforts during one or more assignments.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Angola and São Tome and Principe? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Angola has made tangible progress towards transparency and good governance, while initiating the fight against corruption and promoting accountability for human rights violations and abuses. However, the legacy of corruption, lack of capacity and weak institutions are the biggest challenges, along with the need for increased professionalism in law enforcement. Civil society, press freedoms and political competition exist in Angola, but would benefit from further strengthening.

São Tome and Principe (STP) has a small land footprint but a large and strategically important maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes. Enhancing the country's ability to monitor its waters and share information on maritime activity and piracy is a key component to improve regional security. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage São Tome's support for democracy, human rights, and rule of law and to support its development efforts.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Angola and in São Tome and Principe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The Government of Angola has made significant improvements on human rights-related issues over the last few years, and if confirmed, I will continue to engage with Angolan government officials to support progress in this area. I will work to ensure the United States and Angola hold a human rights dialogue in 2021, which will give the United States an opportunity to assess progress and press on remaining human rights and democracy issues. Finally, the United States has encouraged the Government of Angola to follow through on its commitment to hold local government elections in 2022, which would be a positive step in the democratization process of Angola, giving people direct representation at the local level of government and if confirmed, I will continue to encourage the government to prioritize forward progress in this area.

São Tome and Principe has a long record of good governance and support for democracy and human rights, and if confirmed, I will work with its government to encourage and support these priorities.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. U.S. government assistance to Angola currently advances democracy and governance through several avenues, including by providing assistance to advance electoral reforms, enhance fiscal transparency and accountability, and promote increased participation by women in the political process. Additionally, the United States supports the introduction and expansion of good governance within financial administration and service delivery systems, which bolsters transparency, citizen participation, and accountability within planning and financial management processes. If confirmed, I will continue to engage within the Department and with inter-agency partners to support the establishment and continuation of complementary and expanded programs that advance U.S. interests in Angola and São Tome and Principe. I also will emphasize the importance of making continual progress on democracy and governance as an element of both countries' AGOA eligibility.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Angola and in São Tome and Principe? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Human rights NGOs—local, regional, and international—are active in both Angola and São Tome and Principe. Civil society organizations, regardless of where they are registered or where they operate, can be critical allies in advancing democratic governance, expanding respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting the United States to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral relationships. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging broadly to help advance these objectives. I will leverage our strong relationships in Angola and in São Tome and Principe to communicate privately or publicly (as the situation dictates) to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize civil society through legal or regulatory measures.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties, and I will advocate openly in support of access and inclusivity for all individuals in Angola and in São Tome and Principe, including women, minorities, and youth. If confirmed, I will work with the host governments, civil society, and like-minded missions to encourage genuine political competition. I will emphasize the importance of promoting diverse viewpoints and supporting an open arena for peaceful, good faith discussions of political differences.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Angola and São Tome and Principe on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in both Angola and São Tome and Principe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with media practitioners, like-minded missions, civil society, government, and international partners to underscore the importance of an independent, professional, and open media to a free and democratic society. I will seek resources to continue support to Angola and São Tome and Principe's media, including professional exchanges, targeted training programs, and seminars to educate journalists and media stakeholders about their rights. Angolan and São Tomean journalists have participated in U.S. Government-sponsored professional exchange programs on investigative reporting, safeguarding freedom of expression, and the media's role in strengthening democratic institutions.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with civil society and government actors on countering disinformation and malign propaganda by foreign state and non-state actors. I also will commit to working with like-minded partners in Angola and in São Tome and Principe to counter disinformation and malign propaganda campaigns.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Angola and São Tome and Principe on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. The United States has a long and proud tradition of supporting the rights of workers, including to form labor organizations, internationally. If confirmed, I will commit to engage with unions, relevant government offices, and the private sector to support labor rights.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Angola and São Tome and Principe, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will strive to defend the human rights and dignity of all individuals in Angola and São Tome and Principe, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Angola and in São Tome and Principe?

Answer. President Lourenço has expanded legal protections for LGBTQI+ persons since he was elected, including decriminalization of homosexuality. However, LGBTQI+ persons in Angola tell us culturally they face resistance in being accepted, even at the family level. While not criminalized, homosexuality is stigmatized in São Tome and Principe. Members of the LGBTQI+ community can face ostracism and violence.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Angola and São Tome and Principe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to defend the human rights and dignity of all individuals in Angola, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. I will seek ways to expand Embassy support for the efforts of LGBTQI+ NGOs in Angola, including through advocacy, leadership development opportunities, and programmatic support. Similarly, I will reach out to the LGBTQI+ community in São Tome and Principe to respond to its concerns.

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff each time you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador to Angola and São Tome and Principe?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to appropriately respond to requests for briefings and information by this committee.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Strengthening Angola and the Region

Question. After decades of corrupt and authoritarian rule under former President dos Santos, Angola has undergone a remarkable transition since President Lourenço came to power in 2017. Under Lourenço, Angola has undertaken an economic and political reform agenda that aligns with U.S. interests and presents a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership.

- Four years into President Lourenço's term, Angola appears headed in the right direction with a growing economy, tangible efforts at political reform, and a focus on combatting corruption. What can the United States do to help Angola as it seeks to diversify its economy, improve governance, and continue combatting corruption?

Answer. Angola still faces many challenges in the form of high debt, a legacy of corruption, lack of capacity, and weak institutions, along with the need for increased professionalism in law enforcement. Civil society, press freedoms and political competition exist in Angola, but would benefit from further strengthening. If confirmed, I will continue to press for political and economic reforms, support the fight against corruption, and buttress Angola's development efforts. Opportunities exist for the U.S. Government to continue providing technical assistance and to cooperate further on potential corruption investigations, and on capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases. As Angola explores options to diversify its economy and to create an environment more welcoming to investors, I will seek to foster continued U.S. investment if confirmed.

Question. Angola has a reasonably strong military, and recently played a helpful role in mediating conflict between Uganda and Rwanda. Is Angola prepared to take more of a leadership role in the region? Do you see potential for Angola increasing its participation in peacekeeping or other stability operations on the continent?

Answer. I understand that under President Lourenço, Angola has systematically raised its level of active participation in international organizations such as the African Union (AU), the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), successfully proposing candidates for leadership roles. Using these leadership roles, Angola has shown a willingness to be at the forefront of resolving some of the continent's most difficult crises, including its current role in encouraging stability in the Central African Republic and Chad.

Angola also recently enacted legislation which provides the structure for its military to be deployed in peacekeeping operations. The United States can better engage Angola to serve as a constructive voice in Southern and Central Africa by consulting with the Angolan Government in Luanda and in Washington, exchanging views and encouraging mutually beneficial courses of action.

Question. Despite Angola's vast natural resource reserves and economic reforms that have pleased international financial institutions, much of the country still lives in poverty and remains in need of assistance? How can the United States help ensure that Angola's wealth and opportunity reach all corners of the country?

Answer. U.S. Government assistance programs in health and landmine clearance improve the health and living conditions for Angolans throughout the country. Our programs stress capacity building within the Angolan Government and reinforce the need to address the issues of all Angolans. In addition, multiple small grant programs target economic development throughout the country. If confirmed, I will continue to engage within the U.S. government to support the establishment and continuation of complementary and expanded programs that advance U.S. interests in Angola.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Strengthening Angola and the Region

Question. After decades of corrupt and authoritarian rule under former President dos Santos, Angola has undergone a remarkable transition since President Lourenço came to power in 2017. Under Lourenço, Angola has undertaken an economic and political reform agenda that aligns with U.S. interests and presents a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership.

- Four years into President Lourenço's term, Angola appears headed in the right direction with a growing economy, tangible efforts at political reform, and a focus on combatting corruption. What can the United States do to help Angola as it seeks to diversify its economy, improve governance, and continue combatting corruption?

Answer. Angola still faces many challenges in the form of high debt, a legacy of corruption, lack of capacity, and weak institutions, along with the need for increased professionalism in law enforcement. Civil society, press freedoms and political com-

petition exist in Angola, but would benefit from further strengthening. If confirmed, I will continue to press for political and economic reforms, support the fight against corruption, and buttress Angola's development efforts. Opportunities exist for the U.S. Government to continue providing technical assistance and to cooperate further on potential corruption investigations, and on capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases. As Angola explores options to diversify its economy and to create an environment more welcoming to investors, I will seek to foster continued U.S. investment if confirmed.

Question. Angola has a reasonably strong military, and recently played a helpful role in mediating conflict between Uganda and Rwanda. Is Angola prepared to take more of a leadership role in the region? Do you see potential for Angola increasing its participation in peacekeeping or other stability operations on the continent?

Answer. I understand that under President Lourenço, Angola has systematically raised its level of active participation in international organizations such as the African Union (AU), the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), successfully proposing candidates for leadership roles. Using these leadership roles, Angola has shown a willingness to be at the forefront of resolving some of the continent's most difficult crises, including its current role in encouraging stability in the Central African Republic and Chad.

Angola also recently enacted legislation which provides the structure for its military to be deployed in peacekeeping operations. The United States can better engage Angola to serve as a constructive voice in Southern and Central Africa by consulting with the Angolan Government in Luanda and in Washington, exchanging views and encouraging mutually beneficial courses of action.

Question. Despite Angola's vast natural resource reserves and economic reforms that have pleased international financial institutions, much of the country still lives in poverty and remains in need of assistance? How can the United States help ensure that Angola's wealth and opportunity reach all corners of the country?

Answer. U.S. Government assistance programs in health and landmine clearance improve the health and living conditions for Angolans throughout the country. Our programs stress capacity building within the Angolan government and reinforce the need to address the issues of all Angolans. In addition, multiple small grant programs target economic development throughout the country. If confirmed, I will continue to engage within the U.S. Government to support the establishment and continuation of complementary and expanded programs that advance U.S. interests in Angola.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Ambassador Mushingi, the election of a new president in Angola in 2017 provided a clear opportunity for the U.S. to support political and economic reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption and human rights. While the Angolan Administration continues to make progress, there continues to be limited U.S.-support for Angola in the democracy and governance space.

- What opportunities do you see for U.S. engagement and assistance in this space?

Answer. The Government of Angola needs to continue to improve its public financial management capacity as well as to strengthen accounting, oversight, and auditing capabilities. It should also increase law enforcement and judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption and financial crimes and better coordinate the efforts of public institutions working on the investigations. The Government should also ensure that private sector financial institutions are regularly reporting suspicious transactions to the appropriate authorities for action.

U.S. engagement in this space will include technical assistance for Angola's Financial Intelligence Unit and Ministry of Finance. Additional opportunities exist for the USG to cooperate further on potential corruption investigations and possible sanctions, capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases/prosecutions in international courts, and capacity building in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) reporting mechanisms.

The Government of Angola has made significant improvements on human rights-related issues over the last few years, and if confirmed, I and the Embassy will con-

tinue to engage with Angolan Government officials to support progress in this area. In 2020, the United States and Angola held their third ministerial level dialogue on human rights, discussing the need for respect for freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression as well as the continued need for training of law enforcement, which the U.S. will continue to support, consistent with Leahy law and Department policy. I understand the United States and Angola are planning the 2021 human rights dialogue, which will give the U.S. an opportunity to assess progress and press on any remaining issues. Finally, Post has encouraged the Government of Angola to follow through on its commitment to hold local government elections, which would be a positive step in the democratization process of Angola, giving people direct representation at the local level of government.

Question. Ambassador Mushingi, China's presence looms large in Angola. Angola is one of China's largest borrowers in Africa, with more than \$20 billion in outstanding debt to some Chinese entities.

- How can the United States help Angola to begin chipping away at that debt and the restraint put on Angola's economy and political system by China?

Answer. As a key condition of its IMF program, Angola cannot hold new oil collateralized debt. The United States supports the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) agreed to by the G-20 which has suspended official bilateral debt payments for 40 countries including Angola since May 2020. Rolling back dependency on oil will require significant investment in other economic sectors to stimulate growth. The Embassy has leveraged U.S. interagency technical assistance and high-level messaging to support Angola's anti-corruption campaign and economic reforms, especially ongoing efforts to improve transparency and compliance in the financial sector. An improved environment will make U.S. firms more competitive in Angola. I understand that the Embassy has successfully advocated for U.S. investors to break into sectors long dominated by Chinese companies, such as telecommunications. President Lourenço lobbied U.S. private sector representatives in a December 2020 virtual roundtable to invest in Angola, demonstrating the high-level desire to attract U.S. investment in various sectors. If confirmed, I will lead the Embassy to continue reporting on opportunities for American companies and advocate for them to compete for tenders and other investment opportunities as the Angolan economy diversifies. Programs such as the DFC and Prosper Africa will also help target alternatives to Chinese investment and commercial interests.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Algeria was identified as Tier 3 due to lack of significant efforts to combat human trafficking in the reporting period. The Government made little to no attempts to improve resources for victims, including punishing victims for crimes their traffickers forced them to commit. What steps would you take as Ambassador, if confirmed, to engage with the host government and civil society organizations on bolstering efforts to improve prosecution and protection efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, improving Algeria's efforts to combat human trafficking will be one of my highest priorities. The Embassy is already working with the Algerian Government to improve its efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers and proactively identify and assist trafficking victims, including by offering technical support. If confirmed, I will urge Algerian officials to pass a standalone Trafficking in Persons (TIP) law this year to bring their legal framework in line with international commitments and to formalize their victim referral mechanism. We will continue to support Algerian efforts to raise awareness of TIP in the law enforcement community, including through trainings for prosecutors and judges.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom Report and the 2021 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report, the U.S. identified Algeria as having poor religious freedom conditions, with the Government continuing its repression of Christian and minority Muslim communities. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Government-led persecution of marginalized minorities, including Christian and minority Muslim and non-Muslim religious groups, continues to be a significant issue in Algeria. Our Embassy is in regular contact with a wide variety of

religious leaders in Algeria and maintains an active dialogue with the Algerian Government on religious freedom issues. The United States Government has publicly and privately stressed the importance of religious tolerance and the equal and transparent application of the laws governing religious organizations. If confirmed, I will raise issues of religious persecution identified by the Office of International Religious Freedom with the Algerian Government and encourage embassy reporting on specific cases.

Question. Algeria was subsequently designated as a Special Watch List country by USCIRF for its actions to systematically repress religious minorities. If confirmed, will you suggest Algeria for the State Department's Special Watch List for engaging and tolerating severe violations of religious freedom?

Answer. USCIRF's Special Watch List (SWL) functions as a warning to avoid possible Country of Particular Concern (CPC) designation by the Department of State. For countries designated as CPCs, the International Religious Freedom Act provides the Secretary of State with a range of policy options to address serious violations of religious freedom. The SWL applies to countries that we deem to have engaged in or tolerated severe violations of religious freedom, but that do not meet all of the CPC criteria. If confirmed, I will prioritize the promotion of religious tolerance and impress upon the Algerian Government the seriousness of the potentiality of a SWL or CPC designation, and actions that could be taken now to preclude these designations.

Question. If confirmed, will you encourage embassy officials to attend public country proceedings on church closures to emphasize USG concern regarding this issue?

Answer. The Algerian Government continues to use COVID-19 restrictions and the status of churches as un-registered associations to justify closures. If confirmed, I will encourage embassy officials to attend public proceedings on church closures, as appropriate, to emphasize U.S. Government concern regarding this issue and to urge the Algerian Government to allow the legalization of religious minority groups by approving their requests to be registered associations.

Question. The constitutional referendum passed in November indicates a further erosion of religious freedom conditions in country. Please describe your potential engagement with the Algerian Government regarding this referendum.

Answer. The Algerian constitution provides for freedom of worship, but religious minorities continue to face difficulty registering as legally recognized organizations. Though the new constitution allows for the creation of a religious organization by declaration, the Government needs to amend the 2012 Law of Associations to implement this change. The State Department's Annual Human Rights and Religious Freedom Reports for Algeria cite this need and, if confirmed, I will continue to advocate for religious freedom.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Algeria was identified as having committed severe human rights abuses, including government sanctioned attacks on freedom of assembly for protestors in early 2020. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize the promotion of human rights and impress upon Algerian leaders the importance of these issues. The annual Human Rights Report regularly garners press attention and is studied carefully in Algeria. If confirmed, I commit to continuing my predecessors' tradition of meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and in Algeria to support their efforts on advancing human rights. Our embassy is in regular contact with human rights activists and journalists in Algeria and maintains an active dialogue with the Algerian Government on human rights issues.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct my embassy to maintain contact with civil society organizations in Algeria to support civil society development. Funding for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and other civil society assistance programs will empower nascent civil society in Algeria, building capacity to better represent citizens' interests and hold the Government accountable. If confirmed, I will also urge the Algerian Government to issue an updated NGO law to ease restrictions on registering and operating civil society organizations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. During the last two years we have seen significant political events in Algeria. These include a mass leaderless protest movement, a contentious election resulting in a successor to the long serving former president and a new constitution. What are your thoughts about how the events of the past two years have affected the U.S.-Algeria partnership and what opportunities do you think it creates for the U.S.?

Answer. The U.S.-Algeria bilateral relationship has remained strong through the momentous events of the last two years. Algeria has taken steps towards political and economic reform and the United States will continue to support efforts that expand observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association. We will also work to facilitate U.S. investment opportunities to deliver economic benefits to the American and the Algerian people. If confirmed, I will also promote the embassy's entrepreneurship programs for youth and women as well as pursue a grant-funded project to expand English language instruction in Algeria to better prepare Algerians for professional and commercial opportunities at home and abroad.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO EUGENE S. YOUNG BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Republic of the Congo was upgraded to Tier 2 due to increased efforts to eliminate trafficking, but the government still lacks adequate resources to screen vulnerable populations and lacks a national action plan and clear understanding of anti-tracking laws. How will you work with the host government and local civil society organizations to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. As you note, the Congolese Government has shown the political will to address trafficking issues. The government has drafted a national action plan against Trafficking in Persons but has yet to ratify it. The Congolese successfully prosecuted seven human traffickers and successfully repatriated eight victims in the past year. If confirmed, I will continue the positive work begun under my predecessor. My team and I will use the resources available from the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to help train and equip the Congolese police, judiciary, and legislators, as well as support the NGOs on the ground doing the heroic day-to-day work of identifying trafficking victims and their traffickers.

Question. The U.S. Embassy is actively engaging with government officials and organizations on religious freedom issues, including supporting virtual events with religious leaders and youths. How will you, if confirmed, continue this work and bolster efforts already underway?

Answer. One of the major components of Congo's stability is the ability of different religious groups to coordinate and work together to promote civil society and meet the needs of the Congolese people. This collaboration dates all the way back to the 1960s at the formation of Congo as an independent country. If confirmed, I will continue our Embassy team's efforts to bring together religious organizations, international partners, private businesses, and members of the government to ensure international religious freedom continues to be a priority of our bilateral relationship.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, the Republic of the Congo was identified as having committed human rights abuses, notably that political activists and civil society members, including human rights defenders, continued to face intimidation, harassment and arbitrary detention by the government or other state actors.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?
- How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. I share your concern about these developments and the treatment of journalists and human rights activists in the Republic of the Congo. This concern is something repeatedly conveyed by our staff at Embassy Brazzaville to the highest

levels of the Government. This focus on human rights is a practice that I will continue if confirmed. While Congo's human rights record is far from clean, we have seen some progress. Congolese peacekeeping troops who were accused of human rights violations while in CAR in 2016 did face consequences, and our ongoing training with the Congo military educates troops about human rights protections. If confirmed I would work alongside civil society organizations to bring increased attention to human rights violations and abuses and to offer what we can in terms of training programs and other resources to promote respect for human rights.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador, how will you engage with the international financial institutions, including the IMF, in the Republic of Congo over their engagement with the Sassou Nguesso administration despite significant corruption and lack of transparency in finances and debts?

Answer. Across Africa our goal is to increase debt transparency. Debt transparency is vital for maintaining debt sustainability, facilitating resolutions when necessary, and minimizing corruption. The Republic of Congo is in debt distress in part due to non-transparent Chinese lending. We can't always stop governments from excessive and corrupt borrowing, but setting the standard of transparency makes it harder to borrow corruptly and unsustainably. In fora such as the IMF where we can better control the terms of loan and financial programs, if confirmed, I will seek to engage in the process to insist on the inclusion of transparency measures.

Question. The Congo River Basin is one of the major focuses of U.S. supported conservation and environment programming, including through the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). How can the U.S. better engage with the Republic of Congo these efforts?

Answer. Our embassy in Brazzaville has been hard at work ramping up our environmental cooperation with the Congolese. Thanks to the team's efforts, Congo's Minister of Tourism and Environment was the first African to speak at the international round table discussion before the recent Leaders' Summit on Climate. Our embassy is also working with the Congolese to develop side events focusing on the Congo rainforest for the upcoming COP 26 conference. Finally, a new USAID position in Brazzaville is set to come online later this summer. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to engage Congo on this important area of bilateral cooperation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO EUGENE S. YOUNG BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. As you know, Congo's president is one of Africa's longest serving leaders with power vested in him and a network of family and associates. One result has been prolific corruption in the oil sector. I'm curious about your thoughts on what tools you think you would employ as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Congo to encourage anti-corruption and democratic development in one of the most kleptocratic and closed political and civic environments in Africa?

Answer. Corruption inhibits economic and democratic development and runs counter to American values. It damages trade, guts institutions, and destroys citizens' confidence in their government. Recent calls for more American investment in Congo to counter malign influence show me the Congolese people want to address this problem as well. If confirmed, I will push hard for that investment, and the transparency and fair dealing it brings. In addition, I will work with international partners such as the World Bank and IMF to increase transparency in Congo's borrowing, procurement, and financial systems.

Question. Congo has seen a rapid accumulation of debt over the past decade—much of it owed to China. Given this increase in China's influence, what opportunities do you think there are for us to increase our engagement with the Republic of Congo, both to support development in line with American values and to counter China's role in the country?

Answer. China's investment in the Republic of Congo is considerable. Chinese debt of over \$4 billion risks permanent damage to Congo's future growth. However, there are important strengths in the U.S.-Congolese relationship that we can focus and build on to help counter Chinese influence. America's continued appeal as a country of ideas, future trends, and freedom resonates with the Congolese, especially the youth. Drawing a distinction with China by highlighting and demonstrating America's strengths is our best way of countering China's influence over

the long term. Our areas of collaboration with the government of Congo include environmental protection, human rights, and health development, among many others. These are areas where we believe the United States can do the most good for the American and Congolese people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Politics and Economy

Question. How do you intend to capitalize on the heightened attention Secretary Blinken and recent sanctions have brought to the Anglophone crisis, and how will you advance engagement with the French to work toward a peaceful resolution?

Answer. The Secretary's decision to impose visa restrictions on those involved in undermining peace in Cameroon reflects the U.S. commitment to advance dialogue to peacefully resolve the Anglophone crisis and support respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years and the determination that Cameroon was ineligible for AGOA starting on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. government's resolve to back up words with actions. The United States will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions.

We continue to engage other UN member states, particularly the French, in bilateral and multilateral fora and at all levels on the importance of rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and to explore ways we can work together to move towards a resolution of the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority and will engage in discussions with France and other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. What have been the impacts on Cameroon's economy and U.S.-Cameroon commercial ties of the termination of Cameroon's AGOA eligibility, and how would you seek to expand and protect U.S. commercial interests there?

Answer. Cameroon was found ineligible for AGOA in 2019 and lost AGOA benefits starting on January 1, 2020 under the criterion that excludes countries that engage in gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. Cameroon can regain AGOA eligibility by preventing such violations, by strengthening human rights protections in the law, and by impartially and transparently investigating reports of such violations and holding accountable those responsible.

In 2018, Cameroon exported roughly \$220 million in goods and services to the United States; of that figure, \$63 million was exported under AGOA, over 90 percent of which was crude petroleum. The United States will continue to pursue robust and diverse commercial ties, deploying other tools at our disposal toward realizing the enormous potential of this relationship for our mutual prosperity and economic growth. More than any government program, however, the entrepreneurial initiative of Cameroonian and American businesses and a business climate that helps them flourish will be the key to stronger commercial ties between the United States and Cameroon. If confirmed, I will urge the government to take tangible steps to improve the business climate, advocate on behalf of U.S. companies, and direct our embassy to continue to look for opportunities to expand commercial ties, using all the tools and resources that we have at our disposal.

Question. It was recently reported that most of a \$335 million loan to fight COVID-19 from the IMF could not be accounted for. How will you address endemic corruption and work to increase transparency and accountability of the Government of Cameroon?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges in the fight against corruption in Cameroon. The United States is concerned about allegations about misuse of funding aimed at helping Cameroon respond to the pandemic. The Embassy provides financial and technical support to the fight against corruption. The Department of Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance assists the Ministry of Finance, specifically the Taxation Directorate, to identify and manage compliance and institutional risks and facilitate the efficacy of internal audit and employee anti-corruption investigations. Another transparency and good governance activity is the Fiscal Transparency Innovation Fund (FTIF). In 2018, the Department of State, through the FTIF, granted \$276,500 to a financial auditing firm to train financial practitioners in the public and public sector on modern financial reporting norms and develop a plan for the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards.

If confirmed, I would continue to explore opportunities like these to address endemic corruption in Cameroon and engage other diplomatic and international missions with a view to leveraging our resources and voices to advocate for change. I would also urge the government to take meaningful steps to hold those complicit in corrupt practices accountable, change institutional practices that facilitate corruption, and do so transparently to help restore public faith in governance practices.

COVID-19

Question. How has COVID-19 impacted our health programs, and how do you intend to leverage U.S. government bilateral global health program platforms to help the people of Cameroon respond to and address the impacts?

Answer. Cameroon has made significant efforts in managing the COVID-19 outbreak, despite challenges around national coordination, resurgence of cases fueled by limited adherence by the general population to mitigation measures, and concerns about mismanagement of COVID-19 funds. The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted routine immunizations and service delivery across Cameroon's health sector, but we continue to support recovery of health systems and sustain gains made through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Global Health Security Agenda, the President's Malaria Initiative, and other global health programs.

Across U.S. agencies present in the health sector, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Defense (DOD), and Peace Corps, we have invested over \$600 million since 2010 to strengthen the health system and fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases, including COVID-19. U.S. public health experts have worked hand-in-hand with Cameroonian officials on COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts, helping to build capacity for emergency management, surveillance, laboratory testing, case management, and infection prevention and control. If confirmed, I will ensure that health diplomacy remains a priority. I will encourage the government of Cameroon to increase spending on health, support efforts to improve accountability in the provision of health care nationwide and continue to work towards reaching epidemic control of HIV/AIDS within the next two years.

Democracy & Human Rights

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to support democracy and human rights? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have spent most of my career as a consular officer, focused on the protection of U.S. citizens and the application and enforcement of U.S. immigration law. I also served as an election observer in both Cameroon (1992) and the Central African Republic (1993), and I worked to improve prison conditions in the Dominican Republic (2002-05). In Ghana, where I was Deputy Chief of Mission (2018-21), we dedicated significant effort to combatting child labor in the fishing and cocoa sectors, addressing trafficking in persons, and promoting respect for the human rights of all individuals in Ghana. Through our DOJ Resident Legal Adviser, we also worked with the Ghanaian Ministry of Justice and court system to implement reforms on pre-trial detention, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and strengthening the public defender corps, all of which gave Ghanaians greater and more equitable access to justice.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Cameroon? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Many Cameroonians and outsiders perceive poor governance to be the root of most problems in the country. They view the bureaucracy as slow-moving and suffering from internal competition, cite corruption as an endemic problem, and point to the ongoing investigation into the alleged misused of funds aimed at helping Cameroon to combat the COVID-19 pandemic as a tangible example of the issue. There are also concerns about the lack of space for political opposition leaders, human rights defenders, journalists, and others to operate in if they espouse views that run counter to the Cameroonian government's views and policies. Cameroonians are also frustrated with lapses or failure of delivery of public services, deteriorating infrastructure, poverty, and lack of progress on decentralization. They hope that the government will address the root causes of extremism in the Far North and those that led to the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, and address allegations of human rights violations and abuses by security forces.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Cameroon? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Building the capacity of civil society to promote respect for human rights and democracy is a top priority for our mission in Cameroon. The United States provides funding to local organizations focused on supporting dialogue and peace initiatives related to the crisis in Anglophone regions, strengthening the rule of law, improving the legislative process, promoting access to justice, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, monitoring elections, and promoting civil engagement and human rights.

Civil society actors focused on the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy and good governance operate in a difficult political environment. They often face consistent harassment and arrests for exercising their oversight role and exposing human rights violations and abuses committed by the Government.

If confirmed, I will continue to advance opportunities to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, encourage the government to collaborate with these organizations for the betterment of Cameroon, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with diplomatic and international missions. Strengthening civil society will allow them to better advocate for change to improve the lives of ordinary Cameroonians.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. Supporting democracy and governance is a priority for our mission in Cameroon. Through a \$550,000 grant from the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, we conducted programming from August 2019 through December 2020 that sought to strengthen civil society's capacity to support dialogue and peace initiatives related to the crisis in Anglophone regions. Each year, we support organizations with an estimated \$400,000 through Africa Regional Democracy funding, with projects focused on strengthening the rule of law, improving the legislative process, promoting access to justice, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, monitoring elections, and promoting civil engagement. We use Ambassador's Special Self-Help Funds, approximately \$75,000 each year, to support grassroots community organizations to find local solutions to basic problems.

In 2019, USAID launched for the first time the Civil Society Sustainability Index (CSO SI) in Cameroon. The CSO SI assesses the capacity of civil society to serve as both a short-term partner in implementing development solutions and a long-term actor in ensuring that development outcomes are sustained. To further bolster the capacity of the civil society sector, USAID designed a new Civil Society Strengthening and Community Resilience program. The anticipated program will primarily focus on strengthening civil society capacity to deliver services and promote citizen engagement.

If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to bolster Cameroon's civil society capacity, exploring all potential funding options that could help us achieve this objective. I will also assess what additional resources we can tap and programs we can undertake to advance democracy.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Cameroon? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. The promotion of respect for human rights is a central pillar in our relations with Cameroon. If confirmed, I will continue and strengthen the relationships built by the mission and the Department of State more broadly with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Cameroon. I will continue to advance opportunities to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, encourage the government to collaborate with these organizations for the betterment of Cameroon, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with diplomatic and international missions.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continue and strengthen the relationships our mission has built with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties. I will strive to support the efforts of these figures and parties to develop a more inclusive political environment in Cameroon, including their efforts to advance electoral reform. I will urge the government to ensure the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly for all political actors, even those who do not agree with the government. Through public statements, small grants and other programming, and direct engagements, I will advocate for a political environment that is inclusive of women, youth, minorities, and Cameroonians who might otherwise be marginalized.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Cameroon on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Cameroon?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Cameroon on press freedom issues. I will call on the government to prevent and stop the harassment and arrests of journalists whose reporting is critical of the Cameroonian government's policies, which has a negative impact on press freedom. I will also underscore the need for the government to be transparent as doing so would make independent media outlets better positioned to share accurate information with ordinary Cameroonians. We will also continue to prioritize providing training and other capacity building opportunities for journalists. If confirmed, I will commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Cameroon.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue and, as appropriate, expand upon the Embassy's ongoing engagements with civil society and government counterparts to promote the importance of countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Cameroon on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to actively engage with Cameroon on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions, and call out incidents when this right is restricted.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Cameroon, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy is a priority for our mission in Cameroon. If confirmed, I will use all diplomatic tools at my disposal to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Cameroon, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Cameroon?

Answer. Cameroonian society is conservative, with many Cameroonians vehemently opposed to the idea that basic civil, legal, and human rights extend to Cameroon's LGBTQ+ citizens. The constitution provides for equal rights for all citizens, but Cameroonian laws do not explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons in housing, employment, and access to government services such as health care. Since 2020, there has been an uptick in arrests of LGBTQ+ individuals. The overwhelming majority of these cases do not meet basic due process standards. Defendants have been accused and convicted based on their manner of walking or appearance, as well as unsubstantiated rumors. The recent sentencing of two transgender women to five years in prison for "attempted homosexuality" highlights the threats and stigma LGBTQ+ Cameroonians face.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Cameroon?

Answer. Promoting the basic human rights of LGBTQ+ people is a challenging endeavor in a society as conservative as Cameroon. It is, however, a priority of the Biden-Harris administration, and, if confirmed, I commit to carrying out the President's mandate. It is critically important that we remain aware and take account of the local context in carrying out this mandate. As I saw most recently in Ghana, the embassy's overriding principle must always be "First, Do No Harm." Even as we have the best intentions, we must not inadvertently make the situation worse.

For instance, it may not always be appropriate to issue public statements in response to a given arrest, but to engage in quiet, closed-door diplomacy that minimizes additional risks to LGBTQI+ people. In gauging how, when, and whether to engage on this topic, it is invaluable to understand the local LGBTQI+ community, and I commit that, if confirmed, the Embassy team and I will engage with the LGBTQI+ Cameroonians and their allies.

Congressional Consultations

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff each time you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador to Cameroon?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to appropriately respond to requests for briefings and information by this committee. As a former Pearson Congressional Fellow, I firmly believe that Congress has an important role to play not only in foreign policy legislation but also during the implementation process. It cannot be a one-way street in which the State Department merely advises Congress after the fact of the actions we have undertaken. Our foreign policy is stronger when the two branches of government coordinate.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Anglophone Crisis Negotiations

Question. In January, the Senate passed a bipartisan resolution (S.Res.684), which calls on the State Department to engage other partners in helping end the Anglophone conflict, and specifically calls out the French, whom the Senate believes could get all the parties to the table. Secretary Blinken reportedly raised Cameroon with his French counterpart at a recent G7 meeting.

- How is the Department mobilizing other partners to assist Cameroon to find peace and justice, and how do you plan to lead such an effort once in-country?

Answer. The Secretary's decision to impose visa restrictions on those involved in undermining peace in Cameroon reflects the U.S. commitment to advance dialogue to peacefully resolve the Anglophone crisis and support respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years and the removal of Cameroon's AGOA eligibility on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions. The United States will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions.

We continue to engage other U.N. member states, particularly the French, in bilateral and multilateral fora and at all levels on the importance of rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and to explore ways we can work together to move towards a resolution of the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority and will engage in discussions with France and other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. What is your stance regarding U.S. leadership in mediating an end to the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon and do you classify it as an armed conflict at this stage of the crisis?

Answer. The United States has an important role to play in pushing for a resolution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Swiss Government's efforts to advance dialogue with all sides and explore ways with the international community to move this effort forward. I will also support other meaningful initiatives that could advance peace on the ground, including local initiatives, and to amplify the voices of Anglophones who support peace. The United States stands ready to provide additional support if asked to do so and if appropriate.

Per the Geneva Conventions, which the United States has ratified, the International Committee of the Red Cross has the purview to designate a conflict as a non-international armed conflict. To date, they have not done so.

Question. Why do you think the Government of Cameroon has not heeded the U.S. calls for cessation of hostilities and a negotiated resolution of the conflict in the North West and South West regions?

Answer. The Cameroonian Government continues to focus on neutralizing the armed separatists through combat in the field and to advance disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts in both regions to put an end to the violence and insecurity. The Government also believes that implementation of the recommendations offered during the Grand National Dialogue held in 2019 will address the grievances held by many Anglophone Cameroonians. This includes advancing decentralization, such as by holding regional elections in December 2020. If confirmed, I will continue to call for an inclusive dialogue without preconditions and for all parties to end violence.

Question. Would you support mediation or accountability efforts by international organizations such as the U.N. Security Council or the African Union?

Answer. The United States regularly engages U.N. Security Council member states and other countries regarding the need to resolve the Anglophone crisis. We also regularly raise the Anglophone crisis with the Secretary General's Special Representative and Head of the U.N. Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) François Fall. The United States supports UNOCA's role in promoting inclusive political dialogue in Cameroon and the resolution of the Anglophone crisis. We will continue to encourage UNOCA to engage the Government of Cameroon and encourage other U.N. member states, specifically including our P3 partners France and the UK, to play a constructive role to resolve the crisis. The United States has engaged and will look to increase our engagement with the African Union on Cameroon. If confirmed, I will highlight the need for efforts by international actors to be complementary and not compete with one another.

Sanctions

Question. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States would impose visa restrictions on individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. While I did applaud this important first step, I believe additional accountability measures are needed.

- What is your view regarding the use of sanctions to bring those responsible to account for their abuses and undermining of peace in Cameroon?

Answer. The decision to impose visa restrictions on those involved in undermining peace in Cameroon reflects U.S. commitment to advance dialogue to peacefully resolve the Anglophone crisis and support respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years and the removal of Cameroon's AGOA eligibility on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions. The United States will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Trafficking in Persons

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, the U.S. downgraded Cameroon to Tier 2 Watch List for recruiting child soldiers, a lack of standard operating procedures and convicting fewer trafficking crimes. Additionally, the Government has not passed anti-trafficking legislation to conform to international law. Yet, the Government did investigate more trafficking cases and identify more victims.

- If confirmed, how will you build on Cameroon's successes and strengthen their weaknesses, most notably, aiding in establishing a national framework for anti-trafficking?

Answer. The United States regularly engages with Cameroon on the issue of human trafficking. We have provided training to government and civil society stakeholders through the International Visitors Leadership Program and presented draft language for anti-trafficking legislation that would bring national law in line with international norms. We will continue to work with the Government of Cameroon to ensure that its security forces do not violate their internal regulations and recruit or use child soldiers. We will also encourage the Government to urge vigilance committees to refrain from doing so.

If confirmed, I will ensure that we will continue to engage constructively with the Inter-ministerial Committee on trafficking in persons and encourage the Government to make progress in the fight against human trafficking by focusing on milestones that need to be achieved on key deficiencies and by engaging more robustly with civil society.

International Religious Freedom

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom Report, the Department noted Cameroon as having poor religious tolerance, including threats of non-state actors like ISIS-WA and Boko Haram.

- What is your assessment of this particular issue, and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Religious leaders wield significant influence and are potential allies in bringing peace to the Northwest, Southwest, and Far North Regions where persistent violence from non-state actors, armed separatists, and government actors infringes upon religious freedom and all aspects of life in the affected communities. The United States will continue to work with religious leaders and the Government to encourage greater cooperation and respect for the right to practice religion freely and unencumbered.

If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to resolve the ongoing conflict in the Anglophone regions through a framework that supports an inclusive peace process. Peaceful resolutions to the many ongoing conflicts in Cameroon will be pivotal in reducing the incidence of abuses against religious freedom. Under my direction, if confirmed, the embassy will also engage with the Office of International Religious Freedom and other key offices to determine how best we could assist religious leaders.

Human Rights

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, the Department identified Cameroon as having committed severe human rights abuses. Amnesty International categorized the state-sanctioned behavior as "Security forces and armed groups continued to commit human rights violations and abuses. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced due to violence; and gender-based violence against women was widespread."

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. Promotion of human rights remains a key element of our bilateral relations with Cameroon. While we have seen some progress in this area with specific cases, we would like the Government of Cameroon to share information about what it is doing to address human rights violations by security forces and to take steps to address violations writ-large beyond training. If confirmed, I will continue to call for accountability and transparency related to allegations of human rights violations committed by the Government. I will direct the embassy to look for opportunities to work with the Government to reduce incidences of human rights violations and urge them to hold accountable those found responsible for these violations.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. Building the capacity of civil society is a top priority for our mission in Cameroon. We provide funding to local organizations focused on supporting dialogue and peace initiatives related to the crisis in Anglophone regions, strengthening the rule of law, improving the legislative process, promoting access to justice, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, monitoring elections, and promoting civil engagement and human rights.

If confirmed, I will continue to advance such opportunities to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, encourage the Government to collaborate with these organizations for the betterment of Cameroon, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with diplomatic and international missions.

Question. In December 2019, the Trump administration curtailed U.S. military assistance to Cameroon because of gross human rights violations, including women and children's extrajudicial killings. To date, has there been an improvement in the Cameroon military's human rights record? If confirmed, how do you intend to work with the Government of Cameroon and its military leadership to improve on this issue?

Answer. Since early 2019, the United States has significantly reduced security assistance due to the Government of Cameroon's unwillingness to share information in response to credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces. The Government has since taken some steps towards holding security forces accountable, which we commend. These include the murder conviction in August 2020 of four soldiers for the 2015 killing of two women and two children in the Far North, the arrest and ongoing prosecution of soldiers believed to be responsible for

the February 2020 extrajudicial killings in Ngarbuh, Northwest Region, and the arrest of soldiers involved in a case of alleged torture of a detainee in early 2021. However, the United States would like to receive more information from the Government of Cameroon on actions it has taken and plans to take to address allegations of human rights violations and to put measures in place that advance human rights that go beyond human rights training.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Government to provide updates on investigations into allegations of human rights violations and continue to work with Cameroonian armed forces on areas of mutual interest. I will continue to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of human rights, and U.S. law requires those receiving our security assistance be vetted prior to receiving assistance.

Biya Succession

Question. If confirmed, you will arrive in Cameroon at a time when there is a lot of speculation about the wellbeing of the country's president, Paul Biya, who is 88 years old and has been in power for four decades. Does the State Department have a contingency plan in place should the country be thrust into a succession battle during your tenure?

Answer. President Biya's current term of office doesn't end until 2025, and Biya has not made clear whether he intends to run for reelection at that time. The State Department has a plethora of experience responding to various political transitions around the world, should such a scenario arise. We will draw on that experience, and our regularly updated emergency plans for all scenarios, including natural disasters or other major events. If confirmed, I will ensure that crisis management planning will remain a top priority for our Mission.

Question. In several Francophone African countries—Togo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, and recently Chad—dying and long-serving presidents have manipulated fragile constitutions to pave the way for their sons to replace them should they pass away while in office. Is such a scenario likely in Cameroon, and if so, what should be the U.S. position if this occurred?

Answer. The United States supports peaceful, timely, and civilian-led transitions of power to a democratically elected government throughout the world. We advocate for free, fair, and secure elections that reflect the will of the people in all countries, including Cameroon. President Biya is serving a seven-year term, and the next elections are to be held in 2025. The Cameroonian constitution outlines a democratic process in the event of a succession. If confirmed, I will advocate for good governance, peace, prosperity, and the promotion of human rights in Cameroon, as well as for efforts by Cameroon to support stability in the region despite the ongoing conflicts within its borders.

Security

Question. Another crisis that confronts Cameroon is in the Far North region, where the country is part of the multinational Task Force battling Boko Haram and other violent extremists in the Lake Chad Basin. In the past year, Boko Haram attacks on civilian populations have increased. Some analysts believe that Cameroon may have moved military equipment and personnel initially assigned to this region of the country into the Anglophone areas of the North West and South West.

- To what extent is this divided focus undermining Cameroon's contribution to fight against Boko Haram and broader counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel?

Answer. Cameroon has always played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important.

Cameroon has been a leader in both the efforts to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the fight against terrorism and has contributed troops to the United Nation's peacekeeping mission in the Central Africa Republic since 2014. The ongoing violence in the Anglophone regions and the Far North, along with insecurity on its eastern border, could put at risk Cameroon's ability to continue to lead these efforts to ensure the security of Central African region.

If confirmed, I will continue to push for the Government to pursue dialogue with separatists armed groups in order to end the violence in the Northwest and Southwest. We will also continue to push the Government hold those found responsible for violations of human rights accountable for these violations.

Question. While restrictions currently exist, which security assistance, if any, should the U.S. prioritize to Cameroon in the future?

Answer. All U.S. security cooperation activities with Cameroon take place in full coordination with the Government of Cameroon. The United States works with Cameroonian armed forces on areas of mutual interest. If confirmed, I will ensure that our security assistance will continue to focus on assisting the Cameroonian military in its efforts against ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram as part of the Multinational Joint Task Force, maritime security, training, and assistance to develop professional military forces, and health security through disease vector research and HIV/AIDS assistance.

Regional Impact

Question. Do you agree that a further escalation of the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon contributes to greater instability in neighboring Nigeria and could soon jeopardize vital U.S. interests in the Gulf of Guinea and most of West and Central Africa?

Answer. Cameroon has always played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in achieving and maintaining stability in the region is even more important, despite the continuing crises within the country's borders.

Cameroon has been a leader in both the efforts to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the fight against terrorism. The country has also contributed troops to the United Nation's peacekeeping mission in the Central Africa Republic since 2014. The ongoing violence in the Anglophone regions of the country, combined with the need to address the continuing threats posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-WA in the Far North Region and insecurity on its eastern border, could put Cameroon's ability to continue to lead these efforts to ensure the security of the Central Africa region at risk.

If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government to pursue dialogue with separatist armed groups in order to end the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will also continue to call on the Government to hold those found responsible for violations of human rights accountable for these violations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Anglophone Crisis

Question. The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon has killed thousands, displaced more than 800,000, and kept more than one million children out of school. In January, the Senate passed S.Res.684, which I introduced with Senator Risch, calling on the Government of Cameroon and separatist armed Anglophone groups to end all violence, respect the human rights of all Cameroonians, and pursue a genuinely inclusive dialogue toward resolving the ongoing conflict. The resolution also called on the U.S. Government to help bring about and support that dialogue.

- If confirmed as Ambassador to Cameroon, what steps would you take to help initiate the dialogue process, and how would you ensure that all relevant stakeholders are represented?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to urge all parties to end violence and to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. I would make clear U.S. support for the Swiss Government's efforts to advance mediation between the Government and separatist armed group leaders and encourage the Government to take concrete steps to move this effort forward.

The United States regularly engages U.N. Security Council member states regarding the need to resolve the Anglophone crisis. We raise the Anglophone crisis regularly during briefings by the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the U.N. Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) François Fall. We will continue our engagement with France and other key allies both bilaterally and in multilateral fora to find ways to work together to achieve tangible progress towards peace. The U.S. Government will continue to consider all the tools at our disposal aimed at promoting a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence, which has resulted in much suffering.

Question. I appreciate Secretary Blinken's recent decision to impose visa restrictions on some of those responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon. Are any financial measures, such as Global Magnitsky sanctions, also being considered?

Answer. The recent decision to impose visa restrictions on some of those responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon is one of many possible approaches we can take to push for peace and dialogue. It is yet another sign of our commitment to back up words with actions. The U.S. Government will continue to consider all the tools at our disposal to encourage a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Question. How could we be better engaging our international partners, especially France, to address this conflict?

Answer. The United States remains closely engaged with France and other international partners regarding the crisis in Cameroon, including at the highest levels. For example, Secretary Blinken discussed Cameroon in May with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Undersecretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland discussed Cameroon in high-level meetings with the French. We continue to support the efforts by the Swiss-led process to encourage dialogue between the Government and the armed separatist groups. We also support efforts by the U.N. Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) to advance peace in Cameroon.

If confirmed, I will engage with all of these actors and determine how best we can work together to make a positive difference on the ground. Advancing peace in Cameroon will be my top priority.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. As you know, the U.S. has limited leverage with Cameroon regime, particularly since the suspension of security assistance. With these limitations, I am curious about your view on potential U.S. leadership in mediating an end to the crisis in the Anglophone regions?

- If this is even feasible, are there resources you think could help mediation?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned about continued violence in Cameroon and condemn all attacks against civilians. There is no military solution to this crisis; dialogue is needed to restore peace and improve respect for human rights. The United States appeals to all parties to enter into a broad-based dialogue without pre-conditions.

The United States has an important role to play in pushing for a resolution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Swiss Government's efforts to mediate dialogue and explore ways with the international community to advance this effort and other meaningful efforts. I will also review the different tools, including the implementation of appropriate measures under U.S. law such as the visa restrictions that the Secretary recently announced and coordinating with appropriate Department of Justice prosecutions of those inciting violence. We have to press for a resolution to this crisis, including through discussions with French government officials and P3 counterparts. The United States has provided and will continue to provide strong support for peace, but the responsibility for the resolution of the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions ultimately lies with the Cameroonian people.

Question. In the north of Cameroon, terrorism has accelerated. Meanwhile, in other regions, violence between security forces and armed separatists claiming to represent the Anglophone minority has spurred concerns over Cameroon's territorial unity.

- Do you think the U.S. is adequately leveraging diplomatic and assistance tools, both with Cameroonian stakeholders and our European and African allies, to address these challenges as well as challenges to democratic development?

Answer. I understand we continue to engage Cameroonian stakeholders and key international actors bilaterally and multilaterally on the importance of the rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and to explore ways we can work together towards a peaceful resolution of the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, and advance good governance and promote respect for human rights nationwide.

Our diplomatic engagement is deployed at various levels, including at the most senior level of the U.S. Government. For example, Secretary Blinken discussed

Cameroon in May with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Undersecretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland discussed Cameroon in high-level meetings with the French. We also engage regularly with U.N. Special Representative François Fall who heads the U.N. Office for Central Africa.

The United States regularly reviews our assistance to ensure that we do no harm, that we support civil society, human rights defenders, and humanitarian workers, and that we comply with Leahy laws. We have consistently said all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses must be held accountable, and we have taken actions to back up this principle. If confirmed, I will continue to consider what more can be done to address Cameroon's complex challenges, always with a view to benefit the Cameroonian people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Violence and Instability in Cameroon and Beyond

Question. U.S. relations with Cameroon have been mostly positive, although they have been adversely affected by concerns over human rights abuses, in particular in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions, and the pace of political and economic liberalization. Cameroon plays a key role in regional stability and remains a regional partner in countering terrorism in the Lake Chad Region.

- Last year, I joined with 19 of my Senate colleagues to sign a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Cameroon, and remain deeply concerned by the ongoing violence there. I am curious as to what you think it will take to conclude and uphold a ceasefire, guaranteed humanitarian access, and establish a process of political dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority. Our position remains that all sides must end violence and engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The Government is focused on countering armed separatists in the field and maintains that its convening of a Grand National Dialogue in 2019 and decentralization efforts thus far, including regional elections in late 2020 and the establishment of a special status for the two Anglophone regions, address the root causes of the crisis. I believe the Government must do more to resolve the crisis. Specifically, it must be willing to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The armed separatist groups, as well, must be willing to engage peacefully in such a dialogue and cease human rights abuses, as called for in the Senate resolution.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In 2019, the United States took the relatively rare step of terminating Cameroon's AGOA eligibility due to persistent gross violations of human rights. Unfortunately, this does not appear to have impacted the Government's behavior in the ongoing conflict. If confirmed, what other measures do you plan to take to hold state and non-state actors in Cameroon accountable for human rights abuses?

Answer. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States was taking steps to impose visa restrictions on individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. This decision reflects the continuing U.S. commitment to advance dialogue and promote respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years, and, as you noted, the determination that Cameroon was ineligible for AGOA starting on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground, as well as the Cameroonian Government and people, to identify tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In addition to the internal violence related to the Anglophone Crisis, Cameroon is also facing threats from Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa. How do we square our support for Cameroon's efforts against Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa with our concerns about human rights abuses and political abuses inside Cameroon? In other words, how can the State Department ensure that President

Biya does not use foreign counterterrorism assistance to fund its efforts against Anglophone separatists in the Southwest and Northwest part of the country?

Answer. Cameroon has long played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important. Since early 2019, we have significantly reduced security assistance because the Government of Cameroon had not taken sufficient action to investigate credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces or hold the perpetrators accountable. The United States continues to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of respect for human rights. We vet potential recipients of security assistance, consistent with the Leahy laws, and do not provide assistance to Cameroonian security force units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. U.S.-granted assistance is explicitly prohibited from being used in the Anglophone regions. We have made this prohibition clear at all levels of the Cameroonian Government and we carefully monitor the use of U.S. assistance to ensure this commitment is followed. Risk of misuse or potential diversion to the Anglophone regions are key criteria in our security assistance decision-making.

Since our cuts, the Cameroonian Government has taken some limited steps towards holding security forces accountable, including the conviction of four soldiers for murder in August 2020 and the arrest of soldiers believed to be responsible for one case of extrajudicial killings and one case of alleged torture of a detainee. While we hope these steps indicate a willingness to address the problem, abuses by government forces continue.

Between FY 2019 (the last year for which there is full obligation data) and FY 2020 funding, the State Department has obligated approximately \$8.3 million in assistance to support the Cameroonian military. This funding supported professional military education; technical support for unarmed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; small boat training; communications training; and air-to-ground integration training. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that U.S.-provided equipment is not misused by Cameroonian security forces, and would actively and fully address verified reports of such misuse.
