

NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION—MARCH 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2015

SECOND SESSION—FEBRUARY 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016

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

Anne Hall, of Maine, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania
Hon. Marie L. Yovanovitch, of Connecticut, nominated to be Ambassador to Ukraine
Hon. Geoffrey R. Pyatt, of California, nominated to be Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic of Greece
Hon. Douglas Allan Silliman, of Texas, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq
Hon. Peter Michael McKinley, Virginia, nominated to be Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil
Lawrence Robert Silverman, of Massachusetts, nominated to be Ambassador to the State of Kuwait
Carol Z. Perez, of Virginia, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chile

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m. in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Johnson, Gardner, Cardin, Menendez, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

The CHAIRMAN. I want to apologize to our outstanding Foreign Service people that we are a few minutes late. We had something we were all doing together just a moment ago. We had a couple folks come in late, by we are thankful that people like you want to serve our Nation in the way that you do.

Today's hearing is going to be very brief, out of no disrespect. I know many of you have prepared extensively, and we apologize. You are probably not going to need a lot of the preparation, but we thank you so much for your service. We had the opportunity to meet with many of you individually and we thank you for that. And we look forward to a very successful hearing.

And with that, I will turn to Senator Cardin.

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

Senator CARDIN. And, Mr. Chairman, I met with several of the nominees, and I warned them do not be offended if we do not ask you a lot of questions today.

I was commenting to the chairman I do not think we have had a more qualified group of nominees come before our committee, people who have performed more public service than the seven that are appearing here today. And I thank them all for their public service. These are career diplomats who have served in some of the most difficult places in the world and have served with great distinction. We thank each of you and we thank your families particularly because we know this is a family sacrifice, a family commitment, and we thank you for that.

I just want to make an observation. If my math is correct, the seven nominees here have served in about 25 different important positions as ambassadors, DCMs, or deputy secretaries. That is an impressive list. But just as impressively, if you are going to have to translate this transcript into all the languages they can speak, we are going to have to use 11 different translations, including Portuguese, Mandarin, Arabic, and Russian. So this is a group of people who are well accomplished. They have done great things in very difficult positions and are now willing to take on some very, very key responsibilities, and we look forward to their service. And we look forward to this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. I know that is widely felt throughout the committee. I have a long opening statement, but we have got something on the back end of this that is pressing us.

So without doing that, I would say to each of you when you give testimony, if you would like to introduce family members, whatever, we would welcome that. We thank them for their commitment to our Nation and their support of you, and we appreciate them also being here.

So with that, I guess Durbin and Collins—

Senator CARDIN. Senator Collins.

The CHAIRMAN. We filibustered for just a moment.

Senator COLLINS. I am so sorry.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you for being here. I know you have had something else relative to gun control, but we thank you for being here.

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

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, members of the committee.

First of all, let me express my deep appreciation for your delaying the start of this hearing and my sincere apologies for being late. We all have had those kinds of days and this is one of those for me.

It is my pleasure to introduce the President's nominee to be our next Ambassador to Lithuania, Anne Hall, a career member of the Foreign Service. She not only has a distinguished career in the Foreign Service with the expertise in the Baltic States, but she also has strong ties to the great State of Maine.

Earlier this month, Anne and I discussed her qualifications for this position and the current challenges facing Lithuania, including Russian meddling in the Baltic States. I am impressed both by Anne's extensive experience in the region and her clear-eyed view of the challenges facing this relatively small but critically important NATO ally. I am certain that Anne would do an excellent job representing the United States in Lithuania as she has done throughout her career in the Foreign Service.

Now let me tell you just a bit about Anne's background. She grew up in Orono, Maine and graduated from the University of Maine where she studied international relations. She is now officially a resident of Blue Hill, Maine and spends time there between her oversea tours in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Anne's father was chairman of the geology department and a vice president of the University of Maine. His experiences in geological mapping in Maine, Antarctica, India, Africa, and Eastern Europe inspired Anne to become an exchange student to Chile at age 16 and later to join the Foreign Service.

Anne has extensive experience in the Baltics. She served as the State Department's Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs in that office from 2001 to 2003. This was a critical time for the region as the U.S. worked to support the Baltic countries' entry into NATO and the European Union, both of which they joined in 2004.

Then she served as Consul General in Krakow, Poland from 2006 to 2009, Deputy Chief of Mission in Lithuania from 2010 to 2013, and Director of the Office of Central European Affairs from 2013 to 2014. These experiences have prepared her to lead our mission in Lithuania and strengthen our already close partnership with this country.

Mr. Chairman, I am often called upon to introduce nominees, and I have to say that I cannot think of someone who has a background that is better tailored to the position for which she has been nominated than Anne Hall. And it is a great pleasure to be here today before this distinguished committee.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much for taking the time to be here. As we mentioned before you got here, we are impressed with all of our candidates and thank them for their service.

I know you have other business and you are welcome to go do other business is you wish. Thank you.

So with that, Ms. Hall, why do you not go ahead and begin. I know that you are going to summarize in about 3 minutes, and any written comments that you would like to be a part of the record, without objection—

Ms. HALL. I will try to make it less even.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you so much.

**STATEMENT OF ANNE HALL, OF MAINE, NOMINATED TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

Ms. HALL. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, it is indeed a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania. I am honored by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look

forward to working with you and your colleagues to build on our already close strategic partnership with Lithuania.

With your permission, I would like to acknowledge my mother Rose Anne who is here today from Maine, my father Brad who is watching this in Maine.

The CHAIRMAN. If you all would identify yourselves. Thank you.

Ms. HALL. I am forever thankful to them for their constant support over the years.

I am also delighted to have my sister Sue, her husband Scott, and my niece Emma who aspires to joining the Foreign Service some day, here today from Colorado.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, it would truly be an honor for me to return to Lithuania where I served as Deputy Chief of Mission until 2013.

The United States has long enjoyed a close partnership with Lithuania, founded on the bedrock of the United States' refusal to recognize the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Today we take inspiration from our close cultural ties and shared democratic values, and together we promote security and prosperities for our peoples and around the world.

Lithuania is one of our closest NATO allies. It has warmly welcomed U.S. and NATO reassurance measures, especially the presence of American troops on its soil. Lithuania also has committed to spending 2 percent of GDP on defense by 2018, reaching 1.5 percent this year.

Long a staunch and vocal supporter of Ukraine, Lithuania works to maintain a strict sanctions regime on Russia and full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Outside of Europe, Lithuania supports development of the Afghan National Security Forces and contributes to the counter-ISIL coalition. It has donated humanitarian assistance to Iraqi victims of ISIL and is preparing to deploy police trainers to Iraq.

Over the past few years, Lithuania has reduced its dependence on Russian gas from 100 percent to just about 5 percent today, becoming a model for others seeking to enhance their own energy security.

And Lithuanian policymakers and the private sector welcome American trade and investment and support the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which they see as an opportunity for economic growth, as well as a second anchor in the security partnership.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will seek to deepen our ties across the board from people-to-people exchanges and entrepreneurship to trade, investment, and innovation, energy security, and promotion of our shared democratic values. The success of our efforts in all of these areas ultimately rests on the strong friendship between Lithuanians and Americans. If confirmed, I will make public outreach throughout the country for myself and my embassy team a high priority.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hall follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNE HALL

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania. I am humbled and honored by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee, your staffs, and your Congressional colleagues to build on the already deep and productive partnership between the United States and Lithuania.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to acknowledge some family members who are here today, as well as some who were unable to attend. I am deeply grateful to my mother, Rose Anne, who is here today, and my father, Brad, who will watch this later from Maine, for inspiring me to explore the wider world and supporting me at every step along the way. I am also delighted that my sister Sue, her husband Scott, and my niece, Emma, were able to come from Colorado to be here today.

For 29 years I have cherished the privilege of serving my country as a career diplomat in Europe, Asia, and South America. I believe my experience in our Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs at a critical time as we supported the Baltic states' entry into NATO and the European Union, my service as Consul General in Krakow and Deputy Chief of Mission in Lithuania, and more recently as Director of our Office of Central European Affairs, equip me well to lead our mission in Lithuania.

The United States has long enjoyed a close relationship with Lithuania. It is a relationship built on the bedrock of America's steadfast refusal to recognize the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union and the partnership of the United States with an independent Lithuania in addressing today's global challenges to democracy and security.

Since its re-independence in 1990, Lithuania has taken on increasingly prominent roles in transatlantic and global institutions to meet these challenges—roles that would have been unimaginable just 26 years ago. Since joining NATO and the EU in 2004, Lithuania has chaired the Community of Democracies and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and in 2013 became the first post-Soviet state to hold the Presidency of the European Union. In that capacity it championed democratic principles in other countries of the former Soviet Union and hosted the Eastern Partnership Summit that became an antecedent to the Maidan protests in Ukraine. During Lithuania's 2014-2015 tenure on the U.N. Security Council, it actively partnered with the United States to promote peace, combat terrorism, and advance human rights on a global scale.

Lithuania has long been a staunch and outspoken supporter of Ukraine. Since 2014, it has worked with us to maintain a strong sanctions regime on Russia and press for full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Lithuania has provided generous help to Ukraine in the form of advisors, development aid, and military training and supplies as it assists the Ukrainian government on the path of improved security, transparency, and rule of law. In addition, Lithuania strongly supports the Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia and Moldova.

In Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and aggression in Ukraine, Lithuania sees a threat to its own hard-won independence. Lithuania has warmly welcomed U.S. and NATO reassurance measures, especially the presence of American troops on its soil. Lithuania also has committed to meeting the NATO defense spending benchmark of two percent of GDP by 2018, reaching 1.5 percent this year. The government is using these funds to improve Lithuania's defense capabilities, investing in modern equipment and enhancing NATO interoperability.

A committed ally outside of Europe as well, in Afghanistan Lithuania led a Provincial Reconstruction Team, and its Special Operations Forces served alongside ours without caveat until 2015. Lithuania now provides support for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces and contributes to the Counter-ISIL Coalition. It has donated humanitarian aid to Iraqi victims of ISIL and is preparing to deploy police trainers to Iraq. If confirmed, I will continue our close cooperation in addressing global security challenges.

The strength of any country depends on its economic prosperity as well as its security, and Lithuania's economy has shown both resilience and growth. After a 15 percent drop in GDP in 2009, Lithuania's economy rebounded to become one of the fastest growing in the EU. When Lithuania's primary export market—Russia, contracted last year, Lithuania succeeded in finding alternative markets for its exports. Its GDP now is predicted to grow by 2.6 percent this year. Over the past few years, Lithuania has made impressive progress in diversifying its energy sources, bolstering its own energy security as well as that of the Baltic region. It launched a floating LNG terminal in January, 2015, decreasing its dependence on Russian gas

from 100 percent to approximately five percent today. In close cooperation with the EU it is building gas and electricity links to its European neighbors; and it is creating a competitive regional energy market. Lithuania is rapidly becoming a regional energy hub and a model for others seeking to enhance their energy security.

Against this backdrop of growth and development, Lithuanian policymakers and the private sector support the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP). They see it as an opportunity for economic growth as well as a second anchor in the transatlantic security relationship. The United States is Lithuania's seventh largest trading partner, with more than \$1.5 billion in total bilateral trade in 2015. If confirmed, I will encourage Lithuania's continued support for T-TIP and work to expand our trade and commercial ties, including support for innovation and entrepreneurship. Lithuania has made great strides over the past twenty years in building a vibrant democracy. It has developed strategic plans and passed legislation to fight corruption, combat human trafficking, and reduce domestic violence. It is working to fully integrate linguistic minorities into Lithuanian society and strengthen respect for religious and ethnic diversity. Our Embassy in Vilnius has vigorously supported these efforts, and if confirmed, I will continue this vital support.

Finally, the success of our efforts in all of the areas I have touched upon today ultimately rests on the strong friendship between Lithuanians and Americans. If confirmed, I will make public outreach throughout the country a high priority, promoting increased exchanges and business, educational, professional, and cultural connections.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you for your enthusiasm and willingness to do this.

And with that, the Honorable Marie Yovanovitch, who is on her way to Ukraine.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARIE L. YOVANOVITCH, OF CONNECTICUT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO UKRAINE

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress to continue our strong support for the Ukrainian people, Ukraine's reform agenda, and its sovereignty and territorial integrity. These steps are critical to advancing our shared goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

And with your permission, I would like to introduce my dear friend, Jennifer Parmaley, and my wonderful mother who is sitting here, Nadia.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand Nadia is on her way to Ukraine also. Is that correct? [Laughter.]

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. And I know that my father is also with us in spirit as well.

Like so many in Europe in the 1940's, including those in the Ukrainian American community, my parents survived poverty, war, and displacement. They finally arrived in the United States with me in tow in search of freedom, accountability, and opportunity, the very values that Ukrainians demanded in the revolution of dignity.

If confirmed, I look forward to returning to Embassy Kyiv and continuing the work of my friend, Ambassador Geoff Pyatt, in helping Ukrainians make the dream they fought for a reality.

Ukraine has made more progress on reforms in the last 2 years than it did in its first 23 years of independence. And I am opti-

mistic about Ukraine's reform trajectory, given recent and important achievements such as judicial reform.

However, Ukraine still has much to do, including IMF conditionality, fighting corruption, reforming key sectors, and breaking the hold of the oligarchs.

I want to thank Congress for its commitment to Ukraine demonstrated by approving over \$1.3 billion in assistance since 2014. This includes \$600 million to help Ukraine reform its security sector, better secure its borders, and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukraine has made good faith efforts to implement the Minsk agreements, but the Russians and the separatists continue to fuel the conflict. We need sustained security to further unlock the political aspects of Minsk. This means Russia and the separatists must stop their attacks. Implementation of the Minsk agreements is the best way to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and we will continue to support the efforts of our Normandy format partners and the Trilateral Contact Group.

We have been very clear with Moscow that sanctions will continue until Russia fully implements its Minsk commitments, and I would like to thank you for the recent letter to the European Council urging sanctions rollover and we got some goods new on that today as well from the Europeans.

Finally, we do not and we will never recognize Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea. Our Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until the peninsula is returned to Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Yovanovitch follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MASHA YOVANOVITCH

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee. It is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Ukraine. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to continue our strong support for the Ukrainian people, enhance our already deep bilateral relationship, support Ukraine's reform agenda, and protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. These steps will be critical to advancing our shared goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

I'd like to introduce my mother, who is 88 years young, and has been a constant source of support and inspiration. I wish my father could have been here today also; he would have been so moved. Like so many, including those in the Ukrainian American community, my parents' lives were changed forever by Communist and Nazi regimes. They survived poverty, war and displacement, and finally arrived in the United States, with me in tow, in search of freedom, opportunity, dignity and accountability. The very values that Ukrainians demanded in the 2014 Revolution of Dignity.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the work of my friend and colleague Ambassador Geoff Pyatt in helping Ukrainians make the dream they fought for a reality. I bring 30 years of experience at the State Department and have worked throughout the region, including in Russia as a political officer, Ukraine as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Kyrgyzstan and Armenia as Ambassador. In addition, I served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, where I covered bilateral and multilateral issues affecting our relations with Europe.

Ukraine has made more important progress on reforms in the last two years than it did in its first 23 years of independence. And I am especially optimistic about Ukraine's reform trajectory this year, given several key achievements since the reformation of the coalition and government in April. Ukraine overwhelmingly ap-

proved constitutional amendments to strengthen judicial independence; raised energy tariffs to 100% of market rates ahead of the IMF's schedule; and replaced a Prosecutor General who had lost the trust of civil society with one who has committed to reforming the PGO. Many of you, no doubt, met with the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers who were here in Washington last week and received a first-hand account of the progress Ukraine is making. These reform achievements are all the more impressive given that they have come in the face of Russian aggression. The best defense against Russian aggression is a successful Ukraine.

But of course, much work remains to be done. Ukraine still has to implement difficult changes such as: taking further steps to root out corruption; advancing energy sector reform; recapitalizing and reforming the banking system; working to improve the business climate by levelling the playing field; improving accountability and civilian control in the defense sector; reforming the PGO and justice sector; and breaking the hold of oligarchs over Ukrainian politics and business. Ukraine must also continue to adhere to IMF conditions and ensure that the \$17.5 billion program continues.

I want to thank Congress for its commitment and support by providing assistance to Ukraine. It has been critical to making real changes in the lives of Ukrainians and delivering on the promise of the Maidan. With strong bipartisan support, the United States has provided over \$1.3 billion in assistance since 2014, including over \$112 million in humanitarian assistance, as well as three \$1 billion loan guarantees, the third of which we expect to disburse later this year. We continue to support Ukrainian civil society and independent media, which help Ukrainian citizens hold their government accountable to its reform pledges.

Just as we stand firmly behind the Ukrainian people in their efforts to transform their nation, we stand with Ukraine as it seeks to reform its military, stop further Russian aggression, bring the conflict in the Donbas to a peaceful conclusion via the Minsk agreements, and end the occupation of Crimea.

Thanks to Congress' support, we have been able to devote over \$600 million to helping Ukraine undertake needed security reforms, better monitor and secure its borders, deploy its forces more safely and effectively, and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have trained over 1,700 Ukrainian conventional forces and National Guard personnel and 120 Special Operations Forces (SOF). We have provided counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars, night and thermal vision devices, over 3000 secure radios, 130 Humvees, over 100 armored civilian SUVs, and tens of thousands of medical kits to help Ukrainian troops successfully resist advances and save lives.

The conflict in the East has exacted a heavy toll on Ukraine, resulting in an estimated 10,000 Ukrainians killed and 2.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons. As President Obama has stated, the United States will continue to work for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, until which time sanctions on Russia will continue. We are working with the Normandy powers of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, as well as the OSCE, to make this a reality and restore peace to eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine has lived up to many Minsk commitments already. But Russia and the separatists have not. Violence has spiked in the past two months to reach levels we have not seen since August 2015. Russia and the separatists must end their attacks—they continue to commit the majority of ceasefire violations—and withdraw banned heavy weapons, while providing the OSCE full, unfettered access throughout the conflict zone and guaranteeing monitors' safety. A sustained improvement in security will allow Ukraine to pass a Donbas election law, hold local elections in portions of eastern Ukraine, and implement special status and amnesty. These steps should lead to Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine and restoration of Ukrainian control over its side of the international border.

Finally, as President Obama has stated clearly, we do not and will not recognize Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea. We are working with the Government of Ukraine as well as our partners and allies to highlight Russian abuses targeting Crimean Tatars and others opposed to Russia's illegal occupation as well as ensure that the costs to Russia continue, including through sanctions, until Crimea is returned to Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. And we look forward to at some point in the future a report card on how our next witness has actually done in Ukraine. Our next panel, the Honorable Geoffrey Pyatt, who has distinguished himself by his service in

Ukraine, is nominated to be Ambassador to Greece, and we look forward to your testimony and thank you for your service.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GEOFFREY R. PYATT, OF CALIFORNIA,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO GREECE**

Ambassador PYATT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by thanking you and Ranking Member Cardin for your warm remarks about the career Foreign Service in your opening remarks, and on that I speak, I think, for all of the members of our service. Deeply appreciated.

I am, of course, honored to appear before you today as nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Greece, the birthplace of democracy.

I would like to begin by acknowledging somebody who is not here today. That is my wife Mary who is back in Kyiv finishing up the school year. Some of you have met Mary over the course of your visits, and I think you can appreciate the key supporting role that she has played during a historic period in Ukrainian and European history.

Mary and I have had the pleasure of visiting Greece as tourists, and while it is striking to visit sites like the Acropolis, you also get a feel for the difficult challenges that Greece has overcome as it tackles the most severe economic crisis of its post-war history.

More recently we have witnessed Greece's struggles play out on the front pages, over a million migrants flowing across Greece's borders, difficult bailout negotiations with European creditors and the IMF, but I believe and I know this administration believes that what happens in Greece matters not just for Greece but for the region, for NATO, for the European Union, and for the United States.

Having just secured a deal with European creditors, Greece can breathe a small sigh of relief that this summer will not be as tumultuous as the last, but the road ahead is far from easy. My friend and colleague, Ambassador Pearce has done great work to promote Greece's entrepreneurial spirit and U.S. investment, and if confirmed, I commit myself to continuing and supporting those efforts.

We also benefit from a strong bilateral defense relationship with Greece. Particularly noteworthy has been our longstanding military presence in Souda Bay, which I should point out is the only place between Norfolk and Dubai where an aircraft carrier can up pier-side and replenish. Greece has also been a steady NATO ally since 1952, and in fact, a U.S. ship arrived just last week to contribute to the NATO reconnaissance, surveillance, and monitoring activity in the Aegean, which brings me to the topic of the migration and refugee crisis.

As millions fled violence and persecution, Greece became a door into greater Europe for those seeking peace and a better future. Despite their own financial hardships, the Greek people have shown tremendous compassion to these migrants and refugees, including over 50,000 who remain in Greece. As a country, we have done what we can to support the Greek Government, including nearly \$44 million in humanitarian aid since the start of the crisis.

And finally, on energy, as I have seen from my time in Ukraine, energy diversification is critical for the future of Europe. Just last

month, Prime Minister Tsipras inaugurated the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, and a Greece-Bulgaria interconnector is also in the works. These projects will inject millions into the economy, put thousands to work, and make Europe more energy secure.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, if confirmed, I will dedicate myself to ensuring we bolster the U.S.-Greek relationship and will represent the United States to the best of my ability. I welcome you to Athens to continue the vital congressional partnership that I have enjoyed so greatly during my time in Kyiv.

And in that regard, I am especially grateful to have Senator Durbin here who has been one of the stalwart supporters of my mission. Thank you again.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Pyatt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEOFFREY PYATT

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Cardin for the honor of appearing before you. I would like to begin by acknowledging someone who could not be here with me today—that is my wife Mary, who is back in Ukraine finishing up the school year as a teacher. Many of you have met Mary in the course of your visits to Kyiv, and can appreciate the key supporting role she has played during a truly historic period in Ukrainian and European history. I would also of course like to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have expressed in me through this nomination.

I am particularly honored to appear before you as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Greece—the birthplace of democracy. I have had the pleasure of visiting Greece as a tourist, and while it's striking to visit sites such as the Acropolis, where the idea of representative government first came to life, one also gets a feel for the difficult challenges Greece has overcome along the way. Today, Greece continues along this path even as it tackles the most severe economic crisis in its post-war history, and the recent wave of irregular migration puts further strain on Greece's limited resources. But I believe, and I know this administration believes, that what happens in Greece matters—not just for Greece, but for the region, NATO, the European Union, and the United States. Greece's success will support a stronger, brighter future for all of us, and my goal—if confirmed—will be to pursue that future.

One of the things I have learned over the past three years is that events sometimes unfold differently from what one expresses in a confirmation statement, and with that in mind I will try to keep this one short and to the point. As Ambassador to Ukraine, I have also learned to respect even more the role that this committee can play in the expression and implementation of American foreign policy. I am deeply grateful for the attention that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has devoted to Ukraine over the past three years and the many Congressional visits that have helped shine a spotlight on our policy—starting with Senators Murphy and McCain's historic visit in December 2013 at the peak of the Maidan and the separate, important visits by Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senators Johnson and Shaheen before, during, and after the 2014 presidential elections that reaffirmed Ukrainian democracy. It is no exaggeration to say that Ukraine would not be where it is today, and would not have been able to resist Russian aggression so effectively, without your consistent Congressional support. With that experience in mind, I assure you that if confirmed as Ambassador to Greece, I will continue the pattern of intensive engagement with the Foreign Relations Committee that has been so essential to my effectiveness in Kyiv.

The success of U.S. policy in Greece hinges on the effectiveness of the U.S. partnership with the European Union. We have witnessed Greece's struggles play out on the front pages over the past year—over one million migrants flowing across Greece's borders and a resulting spotlight on border security concerns, continued economic hardship, and difficult bailout negotiations with European creditors and the IMF. The successful resolution of these issues is critical to the long-term stability of Europe broadly, and Greece's success in many ways is a linchpin to broader European prosperity. For this reason, we depend on the strength of our own partnership with the EU to move forward policy objectives that will support a stronger Greece in the long-term.

The economy is the first thing that comes to mind when we talk about Greece. Having just secured a deal with its European creditors, Greece can breathe a small sigh of relief that this summer will not be as tumultuous as last summer. But the road ahead is far from easy, as the country continues to grapple with unemployment hovering near 25 percent and youth unemployment twice that. Greece has undergone years of budget cuts and tax hikes and must meet ambitious fiscal targets in the months and years to come under its bailout agreement. We need to support Greece's efforts to promote economic growth policies and to attract investment, because fiscal discipline and economic reforms are only part of the puzzle. But there are bright spots too—Greece has a tremendously entrepreneurial spirit. My friend and colleague Ambassador Pearce and his team have done great work to promote start-ups and small businesses, such as this year's initiative to send nearly 30 Greek entrepreneurs to pitch their businesses to investors at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas. If confirmed, I commit myself to supporting these efforts and seeking new ways to help stimulate our economic partnership.

We also benefit from a strong bilateral defense relationship with Greece. Particularly noteworthy has been our long-standing military presence at Naval Support Activity Souda Bay on the island of Crete, from which we conduct around 5,000 flights and hundreds of ship visits annually. As the only place between Norfolk and Dubai where an aircraft carrier can pull up pier-side and replenish, and with Greece being the closest European ally to the seamline between EUROMED, CENTCOM, and AFRICOM, Souda Bay's strategic location has made it an important location for these combatant and strategic commands. Greece has been a steady NATO Ally since 1952, and has participated in missions in Korea, the Balkans, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Through NATO we have reinforced our bilateral defense relationship, and in fact, a U.S. ship arrived just last week to contribute to the NATO reconnaissance, surveillance, and monitoring activity in the Aegean Sea. NATO ships—including our own—are currently sharing information with the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards, as well as the EU's border agency FRONTEX to prevent illegal migrant crossings from Turkey to Greece.

This brings me to the topic of the migration and refugee crisis, which has absorbed so many resources in Greece. As millions have fled violence and persecution in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, Greece became a door into greater Europe for those seeking peace and a better future. Despite their own financial hardships, the Greek people have shown tremendous compassion. We've heard story after story about individual Greeks doing what they can to help people who are vulnerable—providing food and shelter when they needed it most.

Over 50,000 migrants and refugees remain in Greece today. The Greek government is working hard to improve living conditions, more quickly process asylum claims, and coordinate with EU partners and Turkey to implement the March 18 EU-Turkey Migration deal. It hasn't been perfect, but Greece is doing its best alongside the EU, working with NGOs and international organizations. We would like to see even more such cooperation, particularly with UNHCR, which has the experience and expertise to help the Greeks. While Greece's differences with Turkey will not be resolved overnight, Greece has demonstrated effective side-by-side cooperation with Turkey to manage the migration crisis in the Aegean, the front line of the crisis. That daily migration flows from Turkey to Greece have dropped from some 7000 per day in September and October of last year to less than 100 today is a testament to this cooperation. We have also done what we can to support the Greek government, including the State Department's contribution of nearly \$44 million in humanitarian aid since the start of the crisis. We have worked with our DoD colleagues to provide humanitarian assistance items such as beds, blankets, and sanitary items to equip refugees camps. And our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working in close concert with the Greek public health authorities as they seek to ensure the public health and that of the migrant population is effectively safeguarded.

The migration crisis highlighted concerns regarding border security and counterterrorism, but has also given way to opportunities for improving cooperation and coordination on these very important issues. Our bilateral cooperation through agencies like DHS and the FBI is excellent, and we've forged strong partnerships that allow us to counter security threats as a team. Right now, we are working with the Greek government to upgrade its border screening capabilities, and if confirmed, I will continue these efforts to strengthen our security partnership.

Let me conclude with a word on energy. Just last month, Greek Prime Minister Tsipras inaugurated the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, or TAP, at a ceremony in northern Greece. TAP is the final link in the Southern Gas Corridor, a multi-stage project that will bring gas from Azerbaijan to other parts of Europe via Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Albania, and Italy. A complementary project, the GreeceBulgaria Intercon-

necter, would help liberate Bulgaria from its total dependence on Russian gas. These projects will inject millions of dollars into the economy, put thousands of Greeks to work, and make Europe more energy secure. As I have seen from my time in Ukraine, energy diversification is critical for the future of Europe, and I am committed to furthering our efforts to support infrastructure projects such as TAP.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, clearly Greece is an important partner and strategic ally on a range of diverse issues. If confirmed, I will dedicate my time in Athens to ensuring we bolster the Greek-U.S. relationship across the board. I will lead our U.S. government team and represent the United States to the best of my ability, and as I mentioned at the top, I would welcome you to Athens to continue the great Congressional partnership I have enjoyed during my time in Kyiv. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we look forward to you continuing similar types of efforts that you have been displaying in Ukraine in Greece. I know we have some similar issues there, some that are dissimilar.

Senator Durbin is a very wise Senator. He wanted to see how well you propose before he introduced you. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. And so he is now here to do that. Senator Durbin, thank you for being with us.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DICK DURBIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS**

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and Senator Cardin, Senator Menendez. And it is true. I withheld my introduction to see how well he did.

The CHAIRMAN. He did very well.

Senator DURBIN. And Ambassador Pyatt did extraordinarily well.

I will ask that my statement be made a part of the record because I know you have other witnesses prepared to testify.

Just a few words. Geoffrey Pyatt is not a son of Illinois, but I would gladly claim him any day. There was a time in my life when I thought I one day wanted to be in the Foreign Service. I got diverted into another business.

But I will say this. He is my ideal of a person in our diplomatic corps who can tackle the most challenging assignments and do them with aplomb, with integrity, and effectiveness. He proved it in Ukraine. Many of us have been there over and over. Time and again, he gave us timely briefings on what was happening in that country torn by revolution, as well as invasion by the Russians. I cannot think of a person who could have done it better.

I can recall one particular instance where I asked him as a personal favor if he would give me a call on a Sunday afternoon on a speaker phone to a section of Chicago known as Ukrainian Village where 500 people after church on a Sunday had gathered for a last-minute briefing on what was happening in their beloved homeland of Ukraine. He did it willingly and did it professionally.

Now we are sending him to a new challenge in Greece, not only their internal domestic challenge, but also the external forces which are at work with the immigration. He is the man for the job. I am honored to endorse his efforts to become the next Ambassador to Greece.

I would ask that my statement be made part of the record and apologize for my tardiness.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Durbin follows:]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FROM SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to introduce one of our nation's finest diplomats, Geoff Pyatt. I don't often ask for the opportunity to make such introductions, and Geoff isn't even from the great state of Illinois.

But he is exceptional.

You see, he served the last three years representing the United States during a major foreign policy crisis in Europe—one that saw a democratic revolution in Ukraine and then Russia break all norms of established international behavior by forcibly seizing sovereign territory of one of its neighbors.

And he did this with distinction and aplomb.

What also struck me about Geoff was not only his tireless diplomatic skill amid these crises, but that he always, and I mean always, had time to talk with us in the Senate about what was happening and how we could help. When visiting Ukraine on multiple occasions, he always, at all hours and on any day, had time to meet with us.

I think only once in the last three years—and only one time—did Geoff have a scheduling conflict—and that was for his son's graduation from college.

He clearly made the right decision.

I think Geoff's proud State Department career is well known—almost thirty years serving with distinction in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

What I'd like to note instead here today is what he did in recent years in Ukraine.

He worked tirelessly with a fragile yet determined new Ukrainian government to reform its nation while keeping Russia from overrunning the entire nation.

He built strong trusting relations with his Ukrainian and European counterparts that strengthened ties between Ukraine and Europe and that helped maintain EU sanctions against Russia.

And he helped advocate for and direct significant US assistance to help Ukraine succeed.

We of course have many challenges ahead in Ukraine, but I can say without question Ambassador Pyatt's service there made a critical impact in the many achievements of recent years and helped leave Ukraine in a stronger position to succeed.

But let me also say something a bit more personal about what kind of diplomat we have here with Ambassador Pyatt.

As some of you may know, Chicago is home to the Ukrainian Village neighborhood. When events were both euphoric around the Maidan and tense with Russia threatening the entire nation, residents of this community were understandably concerned.

Just after the Russian invasion of Crimea, I hosted a town hall in the Ukrainian Village and Ambassador Pyatt was gracious enough to join by speakerphone from Kiev—on a Sunday no less. I think he thought he might be speaking to a small conference room of interested folks, but it was to hundreds of anxious attendees.

I cannot tell you how valuable and appreciated that was by the Ukrainian Americans at that event who were hungry for timely and credible information at a time of such uncertainty and peril in Ukraine.

Geoff graciously returned to Chicago last March and spoke further on events in Ukraine.

I was recently in Greece where I joined Senators Shaheen, Warren, and Klobuchar in seeing first hand the refugee crisis on the island of Lesbos. The heart-breaking scenes of families coming across the perilous waters in cheap rubber rafts with children's lifejackets were deeply moving—as was the generosity and humanity shown by the Greek people amid their own economic challenges.

It confirmed, the people of the United States and Greece will without a doubt be well served by Ambassador Pyatt. A great American ally such as Greece deserves a great diplomat such as Ambassador Pyatt and, as such, I wholeheartedly endorse his nomination and hope the committee will do so as well.

Let me close by saying that at a time when government and public service is often cynically undermined and denigrated, Ambassador Pyatt reminds us just how many dedicated people are serving around the world advancing America's key interests and trying to improve the lives of others.

The CHAIRMAN. We just thank you for taking the time to be here and speaking so well of someone we respect deeply.

With that, I am going to defer. Our staff had an opportunity to very intensely meet with all of the nominees, and I had a chance to meet with many of them individually. So I am going to defer.

I know Senator Cardin did also, but I am going to defer to you and Senator Menendez.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And once again, we underscore the fact that the nominees that are before us are all experienced career diplomats that have demonstrated their dedication to our country and to foreign service, and we are very proud that they are willing to continue in difficult roles.

And as you know, there are questions that are asked for the record, and I will be asking questions and getting your response to help you deal with an area that is particularly important to me, and that is good governance and anti-corruption and now our committee and the Members of the Senate can help you in your mission to raise attention to these fundamental issues.

That is going to be particularly important in Ukraine, a country that we have invested a great deal. Clearly, the factor of concern in Ukraine is Russia and their aggression and what they continue to do in their violations of the Minsk agreements, and it goes on and on and on. But Ukraine must also deal with its institutional issues and its commitment to fight corruption at every level, and that is going to be critical to their long-term stability. So we will be trying to help in every way we can.

I want to ask all three of you a similar question. And, Ambassador Pyatt, it is relative to your current assignment more so than Greece, and that is Russia's penetration into Lithuania, penetration into Ukraine and its ability to try to influence through propaganda public opinion to cause problems for the stability of these countries. We have seen this in the Baltic countries. We have seen it in Ukraine. And I would just like your observations as to what our role should be in providing accurate information as to what is happening and Russia's involvement in what is happening in so many countries in Europe.

Ms. Hall, if we can start with you.

Ms. HALL. Thank you, Ranking Member Cardin, for raising this important issue.

Lithuania, as its Baltic neighbors, has dealt with a degree of Russian disinformation and propaganda for a long time. The Russians never really stopped targeting the Baltics, but certainly the sophistication and the scale of the disinformation and propaganda aimed at the Baltics has increased exponentially since 2014, and now Russia has a slick and sophisticated media operation that certainly targets Russian speakers, but it can have an insidiously damaging effect to society at large.

We are working with Lithuanians to train journalists in investigative reporting and fact-based reporting. And our embassy in Vilnius is actually overseeing a program for mid-career journalists from all over the Baltics. We include Russian language speakers in those programs. Lithuania is running Radio Free Europe programming, as well as Radio Liberty programming. And the Lithuanian ministry of foreign affairs and ministry of defense operate strategic communications teams with which we coordinate.

Finally, we are at the embassy supporting Lithuanian Government efforts to reach out to their ethnic communities. The ethnic Russian speaking community in Lithuania is about 6 percent of the population, the Polish community about 7 percent. And I would say

in that regard in a country the size of Lithuania, there is nothing like the personal touch, and I have given speeches and reached out to Lithuanian audiences all over the country in Lithuanian, and if confirmed, I would make it a very high priority for myself and my team to reach out throughout the country to Lithuanians, as well as Russian language speakers and Polish speakers.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Ambassador Yovanovitch?

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. I think our efforts are along three lines. One is to make sure that we get our story out, and much like the work that is being done today by the embassy in Lithuania, I think many of those similar efforts are taking place in Kyiv.

We also put a premium on identifying and analyzing and countering the stories that Russia sometimes puts out that are false, and that is an important line of effort as well.

And finally—and in some ways this is really the most important thing that we can do is building capacity, whether it is in Ukraine or other countries that face this threat, building capacity within the journalistic community, within civil society so that they themselves can get their own good news out and they themselves can counter the Russian propaganda efforts. We have a number of programs, but in the interest of brevity, I will stop here.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador Pyatt, what has been our most effective tool that you have found in trying to counter the Russian propaganda?

Ambassador PYATT. The truth. I would just make the point I think the one thing I have learned about these issues over 3 years is that the Russian effort is really not about winning an argument. They have weaponized information and used information as part of their military campaign against Ukraine, and you can see that, for instance—I remember vividly in the spring of 2014 when these GRU and FSB teams first started to move into Ukrainian territory in the Donbas. One of the first things they did was pulled down all the Ukrainian television content. So I think I have always said Ukraine's strongest counter to that is success at the reform effort that you alluded to in your remarks.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could just add to that. We spoke briefly yesterday. I think every one of us has walked down the Maidan and witnessed what occurred there. And I think also just the will of the people themselves for change is the number one weapon against Russia.

So, anyway, we are glad of your work there. We thank you for that and look forward to the same taking place in Greece.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank all of you for your service to our country.

Let me start with you, Ambassador Pyatt. I was there in Ukraine when the Russians were invading. I was free to call it an invasion, which it was. And I must say if every ambassador was like you, I would have the highest of regards for the State Department and the Foreign Service. You did an extraordinary job. You were honest and forthright in all of your answers, and you did not use the diplo-

matic speak that sometimes I hear. So I really appreciate your incredible service most recently in Ukraine and beyond.

And I appreciate your opening statement as it relates to Greece because I think sometimes there is a view in the Department that is a little different. Greece has been an extraordinary ally throughout, one of the handful of countries to be with the United States in every 20th century conflict. And the access to Souda Bay is just essential for us. So I appreciate those opening statements.

I want to ask you. We see Greece's central bank governor has publicly called for more debt relief and more realistic budget targets, essentially saying that the agreement Greece has made with its creditors is seriously flawed. That seems to be a lot closer to the position of IMF Director Lagarde and far from where Germany is. Lagarde and the IMF have the best view, I think, on this, which is that Greece needs immediate debt relief and more realistic budget targets.

What role do you see—I mean, this is a European context. I gather that. But with such an important security and other relationship with Greece that we have and a NATO ally, what role do you see the United States playing and yourself as Ambassador to Greece in this regard?

Ambassador PYATT. Thank you, Senator Menendez, both for your comments about my work in Ukraine but also for the important question.

I would make a first point regarding Germany. You know, I have learned in the past 3 years in Kyiv how extraordinarily important the partnership between the United States and Germany is to a variety of U.S. interests in Europe. I have a very strong German counterpart who I consult with as closely as any counterpart in Kyiv today. Chancellor Merkel I think deserves a lot of credit for the leadership that she has exercised, including on the important sanctions role over a decision that happened today.

That said, we have a difference of perspective with Germany on the question of Greece's long-term financial trajectory. I have spent some time with our treasury experts who have been clear in our view that over the long term, there needs to be some form of official debt relief in order to put Greece on a sustainable growth trajectory.

I think it is important also to recognize the very courageous steps that Prime Minister Tsipras has taken already to reform that economy. Lots of work still to be done. It is important that today you have—Juncker is in Athens as I understand. You have a disbursement of over 7 billion euros in additional funding from the EU. So this will be at the very top of my list, if confirmed, as I get to Athens. And my undertaking will be to work as closely as possible with the Greek authorities but also continue the active dialogue with German counterparts that I have enjoyed over 3 years in Kyiv.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, last time we had the chance to engage, I was at the hearing of your former nomination, and you did excellently well except that you were hamstrung by a State Department position on the Armenian genocide. So I appreciate the service that you had, and today will be a lot easier than that hearing was.

But I do want to ask you as a follow-on to the good work that Ambassador Pyatt did—you know, I read the EU's High Representative's Mogherini signaling a broader review of policy later this year. She recently told the German newspaper, quote, EU governance should make a substantive political evaluation on the degree of implementation of the Minsk Agreement and how the way forward toward solving the conflict in Ukraine looks.

Now, many believe that is unlikely that the Kremlin or the separatists will implement every aspect of Minsk II, and some believe the EU is warning Kyiv more than Moscow about implementation of Minsk.

I am concerned that while we certainly have obligations we want to see Kyiv perform in both its transparency and its continuous work on corruption and a whole host of other issues, that there is also an obligation by the separatists and Russia in this regard. And so I am concerned that that is a message of weakening.

What position will you be taking on behalf of the United States upon your confirmation in Kyiv?

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Well, I absolutely agree with you, Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. We can stop the answer there. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. I am just kidding.

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Clearly, you are correct that Russia and the separatists have obligations as well. Ukraine does, and Ukraine has met many of its Minsk Agreement commitments. The Russians and the separatists have not. And I think the first thing that has to happen is a ceasefire, a true and enduring ceasefire. And we are not seeing that. We are, in fact, seeing a spike in military activity in the region, and that is of great concern.

With regard to the Minsk agreements, we believe that this is the only way at this point to move forward. This is the agreement that is on the table that the parties have agreed to. And the Normandy Four countries, France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, are meeting periodically, and we are pressing forward with our diplomacy to support those efforts.

Senator MENENDEZ. I now close, Mr. Chairman. I just hope we do not get to the point that it is a unilateral obligation that the Ukrainians are expected, as we do, to live up to their responsibilities, but the other entities that are involved, the ones who created this process in the first place, have to be kept to those standards as well.

And I look forward to supporting all of these nominees.

The CHAIRMAN. I could not agree more. 35 Ukrainians were killed last month. The weaponry that is being utilized against them no doubt is Russian weaponry being utilized by Russians with the separatists. And I do hope that we will keep the balance that Senator Menendez mentioned.

I think that in our push to hope that Ukraine will deal appropriately with corruption, sometimes it sounds like we are pushing them harder than we are the Russians, but no doubt many people are dying in order to keep Ukraine free and they are dying because of Russian support against them. And I appreciate very much you bringing that point up.

Senator Murphy?

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

Congratulations to all three of you on your nominations. Thank you for being here today.

I want to make three quick points about Ambassador Pyatt's historic tenure as our Ambassador to Kyiv. I had the honor of joining him three different times with Senator McCain, the first of which will be hard to ever forget, sitting through a 70-minute soliloquy from then President Yanukovich on the eve of his ouster on the largest day of the demonstrations. I know you are going to serve us just as well in Greece.

My first point is to commend the chairman on his push to move nominations as quickly as possible through this committee to floor. If we remember, Ambassador Pyatt was nominated just prior to the crisis beginning in Ukraine and had we not then, under Senator Menendez's leadership, moved your nomination quickly to the floor, we would have been left without a leader, without the head of our delegation. And I think the story would have played out very differently. And so at the time, it did not seem critical that we get somebody on the ground in Kyiv, but it turned out that it was very important that Senator Menendez moved quickly to get you in place. And I think it is another reminder of why our work to get ambassadors on the ground, even in places that do not seem mission-critical at the time, is important.

Second, I just think that they are going to use your tenure to teach diplomatic crisis management. I think that the situation on the ground in Ukraine would be fundamentally different if it was not for the decisions that you made and, agreeing with Senator Menendez, your ability to communicate with Congress. We were able to pass, again with the leadership of the three men sitting next to me, emergency support from this Congress in part because we trusted that you were going to tell us the whole story and the full story. So I want to make those three quick points.

And then I just want to ask you, as you head to Greece, about the tools at your disposal and at our disposal to help countries like Greece who are on the fringes, on the edge of the sanctions conversation to stick with us. We are grateful that we have rolled over sanctions once again, but until Russia has left Crimea and eastern Ukraine, we cannot relent. And you are going to be going to a country that has some misgivings about automatic renewal. What are the tools at our disposal to try to keep not just the Greeks with us on course, but others that may be starting to fray?

Ambassador PYATT. Thank you, Senator Murphy, both for your comments and for your strong partnership throughout my tenure.

I would say on the question you pose, I mean, the most important thing for us to remember is why were these sanctions imposed. These sanctions were imposed first in response to the invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea, and following that, in a brutal violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity with the movement of Russian troops, equipment, and weapons onto sovereign Ukrainian territory, which has now produced more than 10,000 casualties.

Chancellor Merkel has been at the forefront in making the point that the only argument for the relaxation of those sanctions is the reversal of the violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity that occa-

sioned the sanctions. And I think we simply have to keep bringing the debate back to that topic. It is important. And I am sure Ambassador Yovanovitch will talk about the obligations that Ukraine undertook as part of the Minsk Agreement. But the fact is the vast majority of steps that have been taken thus far have been on Ukraine's side of the ledger, and it is Russia which has not yet changed strategic direction and has not complied with its obligations under Minsk.

And so the EU took an important decision today with a 6-month rollover, and in the event that 6 months from now the situation remains as it is today, I will look forward, if confirmed, to making the case to my Greek hosts as to why it is very important for Greece to stand by the policy it has followed thus far of upholding the EU consensus.

Senator MURPHY. Ambassador Yovanovitch, let me just drill down on the line of questioning from Senator Menendez. I worry sometimes that we are asking the Ukrainians to make economic reforms in the middle of an invasion that are simply unrealistic, given the very fact that the Russians are occupying territory and attacking along the front lines in order to create an economic crisis that Ukraine cannot dig itself out from under. I do not doubt that we want to press them on these reforms, that we want them to get better on anti-corruption reforms. But I sometimes think that it is patently ridiculous that we are asking them to do something that is impossible in the face of an invasion.

So how do we pace our press for economic reforms, given the fact that so long as the Russians are there, they are essentially making it nearly impossible for them to enact many of the things that we want them to do?

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Thank you for the question. It is a really important question. How do you balance those two issues, security and the overwhelming urgency of defending Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and then the push for economic reform, economic growth.

And the bottom line is that Ukraine has to do both, and it also needs to work on strengthening its democratic institutions as well. And it is hard to do all three, but the three are actually I think mutually reinforcing. So if you work on transparency issues, that helps with the economic piece and it helps with regard to the military and some of the practices in the armed forces. It helps with regard to attracting investment to Ukraine. So it is mutually reinforcing. It is very difficult. No question about it. And as you pointed out, the steps Ukraine takes need to be paced, but they cannot afford basically not to keep on pushing forward.

And what has amazed me, coming back to this portfolio after a number of years—I was DCM in the early 2000s—is how much progress Ukraine has actually made in the last 2 years when it was under threat, as you point out. And yet, they have been able to do things like do judicial reform, macro-stabilization, push out a new public procurement program, and other really important reform programs.

So I am sensitive to the question that you are posing, and I do not have a super good answer as to exactly what is the road map, but I think it is important that Ukraine attack these issues.

Senator MURPHY. I think there are many of us in this Congress who believe that security comes first and worry that pacing out those other reforms too quickly ultimately undermines security. But I understand the balance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

With that, I know a lot of attention has been paid to Ambassador Pyatt because he has been in a country that has been through such turmoil and he has risen to the occasion. As a matter of fact, as I listened to all the complimentary remarks, I think you ought to reconsider going to Greece and maybe think about retiring. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Hopefully you will not mess it up in Greece. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. But I do want to thank all three of you for being here, and we hope that the countries you are going to do not generate as much interest. I know Ukraine is, so we will continue with you. But we thank you for your willingness to serve.

We would ask you—there will be questions that will come in before the close of business on Thursday—if you could promptly answer those so we can move you through the process quickly, we would appreciate it.

Thank you again for your service and for the family members who are with you.

And with that, we will move to the second panel. Thank you very much. If the second panel would come on up. [Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will now move to the second panel. First we have the Honorable Douglas Silliman to be the Ambassador to Iraq. Ambassador Silliman has been in a neighboring country that we have seen him many times in. He currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait, has served with distinction. We appreciate his willingness to move to Iraq.

Also on this panel is the Honorable Michael McKinley who is nominated to be Ambassador to Brazil. Ambassador McKinley currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. I want to thank him for the impactful meeting that we had with President Ghani and Abdullah recently, and I really think it had a huge impact. And I want to thank you for your incredible service there.

Mr. Lawrence Silverman is moving out of the main office to the field—I am sure he is thankful about that—to be Ambassador to Kuwait. He currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department. We thank you for your service, sir.

And lastly, we have Ms. Carol Perez to be Ambassador to Chile. Ms. Perez currently serves as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources at the State Department. We thank you also.

If you could give your testimony in about 3 minutes, any written testimony will be entered into the record, without objection. And why do you not just go in the order that you were introduced? Again, thank you for being here.

And I am going to have to step out unfortunately. Senator Cardin has graciously agreed to chair the rest of the meeting, and I thank him for that.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DOUGLAS ALAN SILLIMAN, OF TEXAS,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ**

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, and I am grateful to the President and the Secretary for the confidence that they have shown in me.

And, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I will submit my longer testimony for the record.

I want to begin by thanking my wife Catherine and my two sons for having endured the sacrifices of a 30-year career in the Middle East. They are in Kuwait and are not able to be with us here today, but I know that I could not be here today if it was not for their love and support.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, I will continue to work to defeat Da'esh. Backed by U.S. and coalition airstrikes, training and equipment Iraqi forces have recaptured about 50 percent of the area Da'esh once controlled. We are pleased by the Iraqi's military progress in liberating the City of Fallujah.

We are also encouraged that with U.S. support, including a new \$20 million announced today, the Iraqi Government, the United Nations, and NGOs are addressing the needs of civilians displaced by the fighting. Prime Minister Abadi is taking measures to ensure that those who have committed crimes against fleeing civilians are brought to justice.

If confirmed, I will have no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of the United States and of Americans in Iraq. I will work with Iraqi leaders to promote political reconciliation and regional integration. And I will encourage economic reform to develop and spread Iraq's wealth among all of its citizens.

The Kurdistan regional government remains a key political, economic, and military partner. If confirmed, I will work to expand our cooperation with Erbil and strengthen our outstanding relationship.

If confirmed, I will promote religious freedom, the protection of minority communities, and the fight against trafficking in persons. And while Iraq has made some progress, I will engage the highest levels of the government to seek greater attention on these issues.

Ranking Member Cardin, as you know from your hearings and visits to the region, Iraq is a challenging country. If confirmed, I look forward to your continued support and encourage you and your staff to come visit us to see the important work of the United States in Iraq.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Silliman follows:]

Prepared Statement Douglas A. Silliman

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the members of this committee to advance U.S. national security interests in Iraq.

I would like to recognize my wife Catherine and our sons for their steadfast support throughout my career. They are all in Kuwait and could not be here with me today, but I certainly would not be here were it not for them.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Ambassador Stuart Jones who has very ably led our Embassy in Baghdad for the last two years. The progress we have made against Da'esh is in large part because of his leadership and hard work. I would also like to express my gratitude to the men and women serving the United States in Iraq: the staff of Embassy Baghdad, our Consulates in Erbil and Basrah, and of course, those men and women serving in uniform who are bravely working to help the Iraqis defeat Da'esh.

If confirmed, I hope to support these great Americans as Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq.

If confirmed, my goals will be clear, even if sometimes the tasks required to accomplish them will be difficult. I will continue the fight to defeat Da'esh. I will seek to enhance the safety and security of the United States and of Americans in Iraq, including the staff of the U.S. Mission, deployed military personnel, and private American citizens living and working across Iraq.

I will seek the political reconciliation and regional integration needed for Iraqis to live with each other and their neighbors in peace and prosperity. I will encourage economic reform and development that can spread the benefits of Iraq's great wealth to all its population, and seek to reduce the corruption and mismanagement that bleeds Iraq's resources from the many to the few.

I will work to further all of America's national interests in Iraq and the region, including continuing our strong partnership with the Kurdistan Regional Government; fighting Trafficking in Persons; promoting human rights; supporting Iraq's ethnic and religious minority communities and its underserved and displaced populations.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am not blind to the realities of Iraq, but I believe I can approach these tasks with the knowledge and experience built up over my 32 years in the Foreign Service. I have already served two years in Iraq, first as Embassy Baghdad's Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, then as Deputy Chief of Mission. I have served nine years in countries that border Iraq: four as Political Counselor at Embassy Amman, three as Deputy Chief of Mission at Embassy Ankara, and, most recently, two years as Ambassador to Kuwait. I have spent most of the rest of my career in the Middle East or South Asia, or working on the Middle East in Washington.

As this committee knows well from your hearings and visits to the region, Iraq presents challenges. I do not believe that those challenges are insurmountable, but they are certainly hard. But Iraq also offers opportunities—on regional security, economic opportunity and human rights—that I hope to take advantage of as well.

Please permit me to address each of my key goals in turn.

If confirmed, my primary responsibility will be to do everything possible to protect the United States from threats emanating from Iraq. I will continue to support the robust security measures at Embassy Baghdad, Consulate General Erbil and Consulate General Basrah that protect our employees where they live and work. I will work to ensure that the best security information and advice available to me is also available to military commanders and force protection personnel. And I will seek to build the relationships within the Iraqi government to strengthen its commitment to protecting all Americans from harm.

If confirmed, I will continue to help the Iraqi Government combat Da'esh. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abadi, Iraq invited U.S. forces to lead an international coalition to support local security forces in the fight against Da'esh. Since the fall of 2014, with our help, the Iraqi Security Forces, including Iraqi Peshmerga and Popular Mobilization Forces, have driven Da'esh back. Backed by U.S. and Coalition air strikes, training, and equipment, Iraqi forces have recaptured approximately 50 percent of the area Da'esh had seized, including the Mosul Dam, Tikrit, Sinjar, Baiji, Ramadi, Hit, and most recently, Rutbah. These victories prove that with U.S. and Coalition support, Iraqi security forces can defeat Da'esh and other insurgent groups. The Iraqi government is grateful for our assistance and wants our continued engagement.

Right now, we are supporting the Iraqis as they seek to retake Fallujah and begin to pressure Mosul. In Fallujah, our Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance assets along with Coalition air strikes are supporting the Iraqi offensive, and the Iraqi military, with the support of the Popular Mobilization Forces, has made great progress. With our Coalition partners and the United Nations, we are helping the Iraqis as they prepare to hold and stabilize the city as well as care for those displaced by the conflict. We are disturbed by allegations of abuse by some of the forces trying to liberate Fallujah against civilians fleeing the fighting. We are, however,

encouraged that Prime Minister Abadi has formed a committee to investigate these allegations, and the investigation has already led to reported arrests of alleged perpetrators.

If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to focus on executing a successful Mosul campaign that simultaneously respects the rights of those both fleeing and unable to flee the fighting. The Iraqis understand how important and how hard this fight will be, and that is why we will work closely with the Iraqis to ensure the necessary political and military plans are prepared just as we will assist the security forces taking part in the operation. Equally critical, we will partner with the Iraqi government to address humanitarian and stabilization challenges attendant to the Mosul campaign to ensure gains are sustained. We have seen what the Iraqi Security Forces can do with our help in Ramadi, Tikrit, and elsewhere. I am confident we will see the same success in Mosul.

If confirmed, I will press for political reconciliation and improved Iraqi relations in the region and around the world. Security assistance can only take Iraq so far: reconciliation will be needed to heal the country. We believe that the most effective approach to reconciliation is to start at the local level, building confidence in local security forces and improving access to basic services. When people feel safe in their homes and can provide their families with the essentials, trust can develop between the people and their government. On security, we have emphasized the importance of involving locally-recruited forces in operations to liberate and hold territory freed from Da'esh, and we have supported the efforts of the Iraqi government to enroll, arm, and train volunteers in Anbar and Ninewa—including tens of thousands of Sunnis. These forces have been critical to victories in Ramadi and Hit and will play a significant role in the Mosul campaign. We are also working with the Iraqis to reconstitute local police forces, so that when hostilities subside, citizens will have capable police forces drawn from their communities.

For all of their troubles and difficulties, Iraqis want a real voice in governance and are committed to a democratic process. Power has transitioned peacefully between national and provincial governments following elections since 2003 and elections have been largely open and fair, both remarkable achievements in the Middle East. The political upheaval and protests we have seen in Baghdad over the past few months are in part the public manifestations of a people hungry for reform, improved government services, and economic growth. There are also spoilers in both the political arena and among the protesters. Spoilers who seek to further their self-interest by disrupting the political process and committing violent acts. We strongly support the rights of the people to assemble peacefully and protest, but we must also condemn the destructive actions of some protesters in the storming of Parliament on April 30 and a brief second breach of the International Zone on May 20. Prime Minister Abadi has shown his willingness to address the people's demands for change, and we support him in these efforts. But we see also self-interested parties undermining the efforts for reform.

If confirmed, I will urge the restraint, compromise, and unity that are all fundamental to solving Iraq's many daunting problems. Prime Minister Abadi is a valuable partner and a strong ally. Yet our support for a strong, stable, democratic, and unified Iraq is broader than our relationship with any one leader and we seek a partnership with the lawfully-chosen government based on mutual respect and shared objectives. I will continue the work of my predecessor and keep open lines of communication with Iraqis of all political, ideological, and ethnic backgrounds, excluding only those with known links to terrorism.

Looking outside Iraq's borders, further integration of Iraq with its neighbors in the region and the broader international community will yield political, economic, and security dividends. One of the achievements I am most proud of from my time in Kuwait—along with Ambassador Jones on the other side of the border—was helping the Iraqis and Kuwaitis expand an already strong bilateral relationship. Kuwait's economic and humanitarian support for Iraq have been vital, including \$4.6 billion in delayed compensation payments and \$210 million pledged and delivered humanitarian assistance. Saudi Arabia's generous \$500 million humanitarian contribution in 2014 and the reopening of its embassy in Baghdad in 2015 were important signals of solidarity against Da'esh. UAE and Qatar have both pledged or provided stabilization support and humanitarian assistance. These were welcome steps, but there is great need for more. The Government of Iraq has been clear that it seeks improved and constructive relations with all its neighbors. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to encourage the Government of Iraq to expand its engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and the broader Arab world.

We must also acknowledge the relationship between Iraq and Iran. These countries share a long border, a long history, and a complex relationship, including significant economic ties. We must continue to work within this framework as the fight against Da'esh pushes forward, and ensure that Iran respects Iraqi sovereignty and does not enflame sectarian tensions.

If confirmed, I will press economic reform and development, while continuing our efforts to ensure Iraq has the resources needed for its fight against Da'esh. The global collapse of oil prices has devastated Iraq's revenue, triggering an acute fiscal crisis. Corruption, a bloated public sector, and an over-reliance on oil revenue have exacerbated these problems and highlighted the deep need for Iraq to reform, decentralize, and diversify.

If confirmed, I will seek to enhance our economic and commercial engagement with Iraq. Iraq has the fifth largest proven conventional oil reserves in the world and the second largest in OPEC. Helping the Iraqis to get these resources to market is critical, and Iraqis want the help of American companies. It will also be important to help Iraq to diversify its economy, decentralize economic decision-making and put in place reforms to encourage the development of a viable private sector. This means that decision making must devolve to localities and provinces. While economic reforms are important, a top priority for our mission in Iraq will be to strengthen our commercial ties and promote U.S. companies, products, and services. I will work to ensure that our companies are competing on an even playing field. I will work tirelessly to promote U.S. exports and ensure that government tenders, such as the recent tender for nearly 100,000 tons of rice awarded to U.S. growers, give our companies full and fair consideration.

And this may not be as hard as it now appears. The Iraqi economy grew at 7 percent annually before the arrival of Da'esh, and Iraq can regain an upward trajectory with wiser management and a real effort to reduce corruption. Here too, we see a desire on the part of Iraqis for continued U.S. and international engagement to strengthen the private sector in order to spur economic growth for all Iraqis.

If confirmed, I will promote the other crucial U.S. national interests in Iraq. It is important for me to highlight that the Kurdistan Regional Government remains a key and trusted political, economic, and military partner. Erbil, like Baghdad, also faces a daunting slate of economic issues. The Kurdish Parliament has not met since October of last year, and the Kurdistan Regional Government's fiscal crisis is also dire. Like Baghdad, the KRG faces economic strain from low oil prices as well as an unprecedented humanitarian emergency. To help alleviate some of these issues, the Department of Defense recently announced up to \$480 million in stipend and logistical support for the Peshmerga, and we were all happy to see the central government in Baghdad commit to share some of its security assistance with the KRG. While these measures will provide immediate relief, the KRG needs to take more permanent reform measures. Like Baghdad, the KRG also has too many employees and too much corruption. Our USAID colleagues are on the ground, providing advisory support as the KRG undertakes structural economic reform and support for the private sector. If confirmed, I will work to expand our cooperation with Erbil and protect the outstanding relationship we have developed over years of close cooperation.

I want to stress that while Mosul Dam remains a top concern, Iraq has come a long way in taking responsibility for the issue. Our goal is to prevent a catastrophe from taking place, but if it does occur, we have plans in place to evacuate our people and deal with the humanitarian crisis likely to be caused by the massive flooding. We continue to engage the international community on this issue because a dam breach would literally and figuratively change the landscape of Iraq during our fight against Da'esh.

It will also be a priority to uphold our long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of religious freedom and ethnic minorities. We are focused on the dire situation of all Iraqi communities, including Christians, Shabak, Yazidis, Kakai, Sabean-Mandeans, Turkmen, Shia, Sunni, and members of other groups, who have suffered at the hands of Da'esh. We see the first priority in this effort as assisting Iraqi Security Forces, including Peshmerga, in defeating Da'esh. This is essential to the protection of human rights and religious diversity in the region. The U.S. response to Da'esh atrocities, however, involves more than military action. We will be supporting efforts to collect, document, preserve, and analyze the evidence of atrocities, including through forensic evidence in mass graves, and we will do all we can to see that the perpetrators are held accountable. On April 8, Secretary Kerry announced an additional \$155 million in humanitarian assistance to help vulnerable Iraqis inside Iraq and across the region. That brings the total to \$778 million since FY 2014. We continue to work with the Government of Iraq to make sure its institu-

tions are more representative and inclusive, and to promote security and freedom for religious minorities in Iraq, including areas liberated from Da'esh.

Once security is established, we will continue to support Iraqi-led local efforts to establish the conditions that will allow for the safe and voluntary return of displaced citizens. Working with the U.N. Development Program, the United States and 18 international partners have funded a stabilization mechanism that emphasizes quick projects that help restore basic services like water and electricity, reopen schools and health clinics, and provide grants to businesses trying to reopen. Our support has helped contribute to stabilization efforts that have allowed nearly 700,000 displaced Iraqis—including 95 percent of the families from the Sunni city of Tikrit—return to their homes, and we are seeing the same effort underway in Ramadi. To make the stabilization efforts more sustainable, we have provided technical assistance to the effort, championed by the Prime Minister, to decentralize federal authority over many government services. Empowering local governments with responsibility over these services gives communities a greater stake in their governance and has the potential to improve service delivery. The implications of decentralization go far beyond liberated areas—greater local authority will improve governance throughout Iraq.

Finally, I will press forward the Department's efforts to combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP), which has been a longstanding personal commitment. Iraq has taken notable steps to fight trafficking, despite the fact that its abilities to do so were severely hindered by extreme security challenges and budget constraints.

The Government of Iraq has targeted both labor and sex traffickers. It sharply increased its investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, resulting in 119 prosecutions in 2015 compared to 39 in 2014. The GOI assigned more police officers to TIP enforcement in every province. The government's inter-ministerial anti-TIP committee met throughout the year, provided anti-TIP and shelter management training, and lobbied to pass bylaws to improve implementation of the anti-TIP law. The government also provided training to military officers on child soldier issues. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement and, if confirmed, I will engage with Iraqis at the highest levels to press for greater attention and effort to this issue.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to your continued support and invite you to come see the good work that American civilian and military personnel are doing to further U.S. interests in Iraq. I thank you for the opportunity to testify, and look forward to answering your questions.

Senator CARDIN [presiding]. Thank you for your testimony.
Ambassador Mckinley?

STATEMENT OF HON. PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is my distinct honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Brazil. I deeply appreciate the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in nominating me for consideration by the Senate.

I am also profoundly thankful for the support across my career of my wife Fatima and our three children, Claire, Peter, and Sarah who could not be with us today.

Having spent part of my youth in Brazil and having served as U.S. Ambassador to Peru and Colombia, I am well aware of Brazil's importance to the United States and to the region. If I am confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your Senate colleagues to continue developing our vibrant relationship with Brazil.

Brazil and the United States have a rich history of collaboration. Our engagement is firmly rooted in shared democratic values. We are collaborating to facilitate trade, encourage investment, create jobs. We are deepening our defense and security cooperation. We are standing together in defense of human rights.

If I am confirmed, I will do my utmost to continue advancing on all these fronts. Job number one will remain to ensure the continued safety and security of U.S. citizens in Brazil. Our mission to Brazil is currently working to support the Brazilian Government's efforts to stage a safe and successful 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, which more than 100,000 Americans are expected to attend.

Another key focus would be to continue developing our commercial ties with Brazil. Annual two-way trade and investment between our countries reached \$100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. And if confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to advancing our leaders' vision of doubling trade within 10 years.

If confirmed, I would also seek opportunities for our two countries to continue to partner in exchanging information about our experiences promoting transparency and accountability and confidence in the rule of law.

Finally, if confirmed, I would work to secure support for our regional, global, and multilateral priorities. Whether we are seeking to promote respect for democracy in the hemisphere, defend freedom of expression, build global peacekeeping capacity, combat global health threats like zika, or confront climate change, we can accomplish more when we work together with Brazil than we can on our own.

Ranking Member, thank you once again for your consideration of my nomination. And it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to have spoken earlier today, and I remain open to and welcome any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador McKinley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF P. MICHAEL MCKINLEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is my distinct honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Brazil. I deeply appreciate the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me by sending my name to the Senate for consideration. I am also profoundly thankful for the support of my family, particularly my wife Fatima and my children Claire, Peter, and Sarah.

Having spent part of my youth in Brazil, and having had the good fortune to serve as U.S. Ambassador first to Peru and then to Colombia, I am well aware of Brazil's importance to the United States and to the region. If I am confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your Senate colleagues to continue developing our vibrant relationship with Brazil.

Brazil and the United States have a rich history of collaboration. The United States was the first nation to recognize Brazil's independence in 1822, and our troops fought side-by-side as part of the Allied effort during the Second World War.

Today, the United States and Brazil are pursuing a comprehensive agenda with a breadth and depth that befits the size of our countries and the diversity of our peoples.

Our engagement is firmly rooted in our shared democratic values and determination to promote peace and prosperity for all our citizens. We are collaborating to facilitate trade, encourage investment, and create jobs. We are deepening our defense and security cooperation to promote peace and stability in the region and across the globe. We are standing together in defense of human rights. Our citizens are traveling between our two countries in impressive numbers, and our extensive people-to-people contacts are producing advancements in science, technology, and innovation.

If I am confirmed, I will do my utmost to continue advancing on all these fronts. Job number one would be to ensure the continued safety and security of U.S. citizens in Brazil. Our Mission to Brazil has established an excellent foundation by

working to support the Brazilian government's efforts to stage a safe and successful 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, which more than 100,000 Americans are expected to attend. If I am confirmed, I will build upon this foundation so that U.S. citizens who choose to travel, work, and live in Brazil in the future may do so safely and securely.

Another key focus of mine would be to continue developing our commercial ties with Brazil. Annual two-way trade in goods and services between our countries is already considerable, having reached \$100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to advancing our leaders' vision of doubling trade within ten years. The United States is already the number one source for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Brazil, with over \$70 billion in FDI stock, and Brazilian direct investment in the United States already supports over 70,000 jobs in the United States, but again, we can do even more. If confirmed, I will work with Brazil to lower trade barriers and spur additional growth in our trade and investment relationship.

If confirmed, I will also support Brazil's ongoing efforts to promote transparency and confidence in the rule of law. As Secretary Kerry has made clear, rooting out corruption, reducing impunity, and promoting good governance need to be among our top priorities in the hemisphere, and Brazil shares that view. Strong, transparent, and independent Brazilian institutions benefit us all. For this reason, I would seek opportunities for our two countries to continue to partner in by exchanging information about our experiences promoting transparency and accountability.

In addition, if confirmed, I would work to secure Brazil's support for our regional, global, and multilateral priorities. Whether we are seeking to promote respect for democracy in the hemisphere, defend freedom of expression, build global peace-keeping capacity, combat global health threats like Zika, or confront climate change, we can accomplish more when we work together with Brazil than we can on our own.

In conclusion, and if confirmed, I will faithfully execute my duties as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil and dedicate all my energies to deepening the robust partnership between the two largest democracies and economies in the Americas.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you once for your consideration of my nomination. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your testimony.
Mr. Silverman?

STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE ROBERT SILVERMAN, OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF KUWAIT

Mr. SILVERMAN. Ranking Member Cardin, I am honored to appear before you today and gratified by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown by nominating me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the State of Kuwait.

I would like to thank my family for their support. My wife Vicki, a former Foreign Service officer herself, my daughter Lina and my son David are here with me today.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and others in Congress to enhance a close, mutually beneficial bilateral relationship that helps us cope with regional conflicts, combat terrorism, promote commerce, and human trafficking, on which we are making some progress in Kuwait. And I would have no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of all Americans in Kuwait.

In my office, I keep a reminder of Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait over 25 years ago, a license plate he issued to pretend that Kuwait was a province of Iraq. It is also a reminder to me of our soldiers' bravery in ending that occupation.

Today, Kuwait is a key member of our counter-Da'esh coalition. It hosts the headquarters of the combined joint task force and is

a world leader in aid to the Syrian refugees. Kuwait has also provided invaluable help to stabilize Iraq economically and is hosting the Yemen negotiations.

Da'esh's June 2015 bombing of the Imam Sadiq Mosque in Kuwait City increased Kuwaiti resolve to combat terrorism and stop terrorist financing. We believe more can be done, and we are helping build Kuwait's capacity in this regard.

Kuwaitis are major investors in the United States economy, creating jobs for Americans. There are opportunities for American business and technical assistance in oil, petrochemical, and renewable energy technology, and Kuwait's investment in power generation, health care, and other areas present enormous opportunities for American business.

In the region, Kuwait stands out for its relatively open political environment. There is a relatively free press and the elected parliament is independent. But there is room for improvement.

Five generations of Kuwaitis have studied in the United States. If confirmed, I will prioritize our engagement with these generations.

Ranking Member Cardin, I believe my experience working on regional conflicts and counterterrorism and promoting commerce and American values would help me advance U.S. interests in Kuwait. If confirmed, I would look forward to welcoming you in Kuwait to enhance our valuable relationship.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Silverman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE R. SILVERMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you, and gratified by the trust President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown by nominating me to serve as U.S. ambassador to the State of Kuwait. If you will permit me, I would also like to thank my family for their support throughout my career. My wife Vicki, a former Foreign Service Officer herself, my daughter, Lina, and my son, David, are here with me today.

I would also like to acknowledge the exemplary service of my colleague, Doug Silliman, as the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait. Some of our best and brightest in the Foreign Service have served as Ambassador to Kuwait. I have learned from them and hope to build upon the strong U.S.-Kuwait bonds they have forged.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and others in the Congress to sustain and enhance our close, productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Kuwait. For the past 25 years, Kuwait has prospered under the security and stability afforded by our relationship, and the United States has been able to work closely with Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council partners in addressing threats to our interests because of that same relationship. Today, our partnership serves as a cornerstone of U.S. national security interests in the region and helps us find solutions to destabilizing regional conflicts, combat extremism and terrorism, promote commerce, advance cooperation on global issues such as eliminating human trafficking—on which we are making some progress in Kuwait. Moreover, we are working to further strengthen the investment and education ties between our countries.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will have no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of all Americans in Kuwait—those in our Mission, deployed military personnel and the large number of private Americans.

From the beginning of the campaign to defeat Da'esh, Kuwait has been a key member of the coalition we have led. It has provided strategic access and logistical support to coalition forces deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, and is a member of the Coalition's Small Group, in recognition of its significant role across several lines of effort in this campaign. Indeed, Kuwait has been a leader amongst the GCC countries in providing humanitarian assistance to the millions of

individuals displaced by conflicts across the region, and we look forward to Kuwait continuing this vital support.

Almost exactly one year ago, Kuwait was a direct victim of Da'esh's terrorism. The June 2015 bombing of the Imam Sadiq Mosque resulted in 27 deaths and 227 injured. None of us can reverse what happened that day or in other terrorist acts and bring back the lives lost, but we can redouble our efforts to prevent further attacks. Kuwait has drawn exactly that lesson from the tragedy at the mosque, increasing its resolve to combat terrorism, including steps to stop money laundering and terrorist financing. With our help, it is building its capacity for such efforts and has successfully prosecuted several Kuwaiti nationals and expatriate residents on terrorist financing charges. We look forward to further cooperation to stop terrorist financing, especially as there is more than we believe Kuwait can do in this regard.

Since its liberation by a U.S.-led coalition in 1991, Kuwait has been a uniquely close defense partner, generously hosting a major U.S. military presence, including the regional headquarters of U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) and the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force for operations in Iraq and Syria. Kuwait is committed to advancing cooperative defense efforts. If confirmed, I promise to lead my team in doing all we can not only to maintain this unique and strategically important defense relationship, but also to help it further evolve so as to meet present day challenges. I will also do all I can to support our men and women in uniform serving there.

I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the sacrifice of U.S. soldiers who helped liberate Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. I arrived at my first posting in the Foreign Service, Amman, Jordan, one week after Saddam Hussein invaded and occupied Kuwait, and met people fleeing that invasion near the Jordan-Iraq border. In my office, I keep on the wall a reminder of that occupation—a license plate the Saddam regime issued to pretend that Kuwait was a province of Iraq—and of the bravery of our soldiers in ending that occupation. While U.S.-Kuwait bonds were forged in war now over a quarter century ago, we are working every day to forge further bonds in peacetime. Even more significantly, under the leadership of Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Kuwait has prioritized improved ties with the Iraqi people, supporting their efforts to defeat Daesh. Kuwait has provided practical help to stabilize Iraq, previously postponing billions of required reparations payments by Iraq for the occupation of Kuwait and , pledging an additional \$200 million in assistance to help Iraqis internally displaced by violence in their own country. We welcome this support, which reflects the important strategic recognition that the security of Kuwait and our GCC partners is linked, in part, to Iraq's success in defeating Daesh.

Our relationship with Kuwait is much broader than security, and so are the mutual benefits. This will be reflected in the inaugural U.S.-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, which we look forward to hosting in July. Kuwaitis are major investors in every sector of the American economy, from real estate to IPOs, and we want to see our economic ties grow. Separately, Kuwait has committed to participate in a new ministerial-level economic dialogue that the President and GCC leaders announced at the U.S.-GCC Summit in April. It will focus on U steps Kuwait and other GCC partners can take to diversify their economies, increase economic cooperation, and also support reforms that could make available additional resources for Kuwait to help meet the economic and social aspirations of their young people and all of their citizens.

And regionally, Kuwait has been a staunch supporter of our mutual interests. It has been at the forefront of supporting Iraq and its government, and of welcoming the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, while remaining concerned about Iran's activities destabilizing the region.

Today, Kuwait is hosting the UN-mediated Yemen negotiations. The Amir has personally urged the parties to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Kuwaitis have also been a world leader in humanitarian assistance for the Syrian crisis, pledging \$1.4 billion through the United Nations, hosting three pledging conferences, and co-hosting a fourth this past February. As Secretary Kerry has said, "We appreciate the strong partnership in trying to deal with the troubles of the region."

In the all-important energy field, Kuwait is the world's eighth largest oil producer, the fourth largest in OPEC. Our Mission in Kuwait is promoting U.S. technical assistance to the oil and petrochemical industry. There are commercial opportunities for American renewable energy technology leaders, as Kuwait seeks to generate 15 percent of electricity production from renewable energy by 2030.

Commercial ties between our countries expanded by over 42 percent between 2009 and 2015—to \$7.5 billion. U.S. exports to Kuwait grew by 29 percent, making Kuwait our fifth largest export market in the Middle East-North Africa region. Ku-

wait's multi-billion dollar investment in major power generation, transportation, oil and gas, and health care infrastructure projects presents American contracting firms and vendors with enormous business opportunities. As one example, our Embassy in Kuwait just hosted the largest U.S. trade delegation ever to Kuwait, focused on health care.

Within the region, Kuwait stands out for its relatively open political environment, vibrant civil society, and tradition of constitutional participatory governance. There is a relatively free press, and the parliament is freely-elected and independent. Women are represented in the Cabinet; their participation in the public sector reached 54 percent in 2015. There is, however, room for improvement, and we will continue to encourage democratic, economic and social development.

The U.S.-Kuwaiti relationship is between peoples as well as governments. We want to continue investing in those ties. Five generations of Kuwaitis have studied in the U.S., and the number of those studying here has grown to 9,000. With a quarter of the population under the age of 25, our educational opportunities are a vital part of sharing American principles. If confirmed, I will prioritize our engagement with this new generation to ensure that our bilateral ties continue to remain strong into the future.

For me, if confirmed, this assignment would represent coming full circle since my first tour in Jordan, where I saw the effects of the occupation of Kuwait. I believe my experience working on regional conflicts and counter-terrorism, and the promotion of commercial relations of American values, would help me to effectively protect and advance U.S. interests as Chief of Mission in Kuwait. I have made a concerted effort to offer advice to and encourage the development of the skills of those with whom I have had the privilege of serving. I have also been fortunate to have mentors who emphasized that each Mission—including all the agencies represented—must function as a team for us to succeed in advancing U.S. interests.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, if confirmed I look forward to the opportunity to welcome you and your staff in Kuwait to continue building our important relationship. Thank you very much again for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to responding to your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your testimony.

Ms. Perez?

**STATEMENT OF CAROL Z. PEREZ, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE**

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Ranking Member Cardin. It is an honor and a privilege to appear today to seek your confirmation as Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Chile.

I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of my family: my mom and dad, Irene and John Zelis, who are at home in Chicago; and my husband Al; son Michael; daughter Caroline and her husband Jacob; and my daughter Marisa, who are here with me today. They stood by my side as I proudly represented the United States overseas and in Washington.

I would be proud to lead our U.S. mission in Santiago, which has representatives from more than a dozen Federal agencies and terrific locally employed staff, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

Chile is one of our closest hemispheric allies. Shared values and mutual interests anchor our bilateral and regional cooperation in almost every sector. It is a nation that supports free markets, human rights, rule of law, and respect for the environment. It is a contributor to global peacekeeping missions and supports shared priorities in security and military cooperation.

Our bilateral trade has quadrupled to almost \$28 billion per year since our Free Trade Agreement went into effect in 2004. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing

in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries.

Our cooperation in the sciences and on the environment is second to none. U.S. and Chilean scientists collaborate to uncover the mysteries of outer space, conserve our oceans, and advance scientific research in seismology and clean energy.

Our people-to-people relationships are robust and wide-ranging. 50,000 Americans live in Chile, and in 2015, a record 220,000 Americans visited there.

Our shared focus on education, entrepreneurship, opportunities for women and children, and collaborative research projects make the United States and Chile natural allies, able to take on global challenges together.

Ranking Member Cardin, if confirmed, I will work with you, your colleagues, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our two countries. I would work every day to ensure the safety and security of our embassy staff and all American citizens. This will always be my number one priority.

Thank you, and I would be pleased to answer your questions.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Perez follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CAROL PEREZ

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor and a privilege to appear today to seek your confirmation as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Chile. I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination for this position.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of my family—my mom and dad, Irene and John Zelis, who are at home in Chicago, and my husband Al, my son Michael, daughter Caroline and her husband Jacob, and my daughter Marisa, who are here with me today. They stood by my side as I proudly represented the United States overseas and in Washington.

For over 28 years, I have had the privilege to advance U.S. interests and values by leading interagency colleagues committed to serving our country. I advocated on behalf of U.S. businesses interested in entering Europe's energy markets, led efforts to counter violent extremism, and supported business, cultural and educational exchanges during my tenure as Consul General in Milan and in Barcelona.

I worked to advance the rule of law and combat corruption in Haiti, Ukraine and the South China Sea during my tenure as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. In my current position as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources, I have led efforts to ensure our diverse 73,000 plus workforce is prepared to meet global challenges and advance U.S. foreign policy interests.

I am prepared to take the next step and serve as Ambassador—and would be very proud to lead our U.S. Mission in Santiago, which has representatives from more than a dozen federal agencies, and terrific locally employed staff, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

Chile is one of our closest hemispheric allies. Shared values and mutual interests anchor our bilateral and regional cooperation in almost every sector. Chile stands as a testament to the transformational possibilities of democratic governance and inclusive economic policies. It is a nation that supports free markets, human rights, rule of law and respect for the environment. It is a contributor to global peace-keeping missions and supports shared priorities in security and military cooperation.

Chile is a valued trading partner. Our bilateral trade has quadrupled to almost \$28 billion per year since our Free Trade Agreement went into effect. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries. This economic cooperation is a win-win.

Our cooperation in the sciences and on the environment is second to none. Indeed, U.S. and Chilean scientists are collaborating to uncover the mysteries of outer-space, conserve our oceans, and advance scientific research in seismology, and clean energy.

Our people to people relationships are robust and wide-ranging. 50,000 Americans live in Chile, and in 2015, a record 220,000 Americans visited there. The number of Chileans studying in the United States has grown by 40 percent in the last five years to over 2,500. And Chile has one of the largest Fulbright programs in the Hemisphere.

Our shared focus on education, entrepreneurship, opportunities for women and girls, and collaborative research projects makes the United States and Chile natural allies able to take on global challenges together.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with you, your colleagues, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our two countries. I would work every day to ensure the safety and security of our embassy staff and all American citizens. This will always be my number one priority.

Thank you and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Well, once again, we do thank all four of you for being here today and your willingness to continue in public service. As I said earlier, we also thank your families.

As I mentioned a little bit earlier, I will be asking questions for the record in regards to human rights and your commitment to keep this committee informed on the challenges that you face in each of your countries and where we could be helpful in advancing international human rights values.

Mr. Silverman, I would like to get your input here. Kuwait is a very important strategic country for the United States, and at times, the State Department can put the strategic importance of the relationship ahead of advancement on human rights. Kuwait has been designated by the State Department Trafficking in Persons report for 2015 tier 3, the worst level, for the eighth year in a row. They passed a law, but there has been no demonstrated significant effort to prosecute or convict trafficking offenders.

So can you just assure me that this will be a priority of your mission—trafficking in persons is modern day slavery. We have international commitments on this. Kuwait must do better—that you will use your office to make sure that the host country is aware of these concerns and our willingness to work with them to improve their record?

Mr. SILVERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I, indeed, have made this a priority throughout my career in the others countries that I served in trying to combat trafficking in persons, and it will be a top priority for me in Kuwait.

I will say, Ranking Member, that over the last year, we have maybe belatedly seen progress in the area, including prosecutions. So now we have a number of prosecutions just within the last year. We set ourselves roughly 11 goals, areas where we thought Kuwait needed to improve between last year and this year, and we think they have improved in nine of those areas. But prosecutions are extremely important. They have now begun, and we will certainly encourage them to continue because they send an enormously important signal beyond taking those people out of commission as traffickers, running slavery rings, the message that it sends that this should not be allowed. And if I am confirmed, I will certainly make this a top priority, my constant and the mission's constant engagement with the Kuwaiti authorities.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that. It is just important that we underscore this. I have done that on my visits to different countries, and I know that our missions are targeted with the assessments, their recommendations, but it is helpful the more engagement you have with Kuwait on this issue.

Mr. Silliman, one of our challenges in Iraq has been establishing an effective unitary federal state. It is fundamental to our long-term success. And we have conflicting problems with whether we provide direct funds to the Kurds, whether we work through a central government, the protection of the Sunni areas and the involvement of the Shiite militia. How do you see unfolding the U.S. objective of establishing—not just the U.S. objective—I hope it is the Iraqi objective—of a functioning federal state that can protect all of the ethnic communities?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Senator Cardin, thank you very much.

It is a very important issue that Prime Minister Abadi himself has addressed when he took office by seeking to find a functional federalism in the Iraqi Government, which is to say an effective central government that is able to carry out the functions of a central government, but decentralization of a lot of decision-making to provincial authorities, governors and provincial councils, to deal with more of the day-to-day issues that are more easily dealt with closer to the people that the government serves.

So I think, Senator, our goal is to do both of these things at the same time, to increase the efficiency of the government in Baghdad for the things that it must do, distributing oil revenue, figuring out how to defend the country, but continuing Prime Minister Abadi's desire to decentralize decision-making for a number of ministries and giving the authority directly to the people elected to serve the people in their own provinces.

Senator CARDIN. I think that is the right blueprint. It is going to take a lot of attention, and there are going to be a lot of bumps along the way. So we have invested a great deal in Iraq, and clearly we have seen some military success on reclaiming territory. But we know if we do not have the ability to hold on through good governance these areas, we are just going to see a repeat of what has happened in the past. So it has got to be a focus of our priority in the mission. I thank you for your answer on that.

Ms. Perez, Chile, of course, is a partner of the United States. We have a free trade agreement, and yet they are on the watch list on trade issues. Their intellectual property protection has been unacceptable to us. How do you see your role in dealing with the concerns that we have had with Chile in the enforcement of our free trade agreements?

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

I do agree that our trade relationship with Chile has been very strong. As I mentioned, it has quadrupled since 2004, and it is almost \$28 billion a year now.

I believe we have an opportunity. Chile is a TPP country, and all the TPP countries do understand that they need to make the agreement commitments a reality before this will go into effect. And so I think that using this will allow us to move forward on the regulatory changes that need to take place to protect IPR, both under the FTA and under TPP. And if confirmed, I look forward to work-

ing with highest levels of the Chilean Government to have political will to make sure that those changes do move forward.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I would ask you to keep us informed on that issue. Of course, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is under consideration. It is not expected to come up for at least a few months. And I agree with you. We are looking at a country like Chile that we have an agreement with as to what steps they are taking in order to protect intellectual property, other issues involved. But in Chile's case, that seems to be one of the dominant issues. So we appreciate you reporting back to us as to how that is progressing in your conversations.

Ms. PEREZ. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador McKinley, you and I just talked earlier today, but I want to just underscore a point that we talked about that I think is important on the record. And that is, we know the problems in Brazil today. They are well understood. It is a democratic country using its institutions dealing with an impeachment of its leader, with a temporary or acting president at the present time. Our relationship with Brazil has gotten stronger, I think we all would agree, in the last year or 2.

So how do you see your role, working with the realities in Brazil today, an economy that has been challenged and a political system that is dealing with a serious corruption issue? How do we use the current circumstances and continue to be able to build a stronger tie with Brazil?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, the crisis of the past 2 years has actually required us to respond to a working relationship with Brazil on a host of levels because we do historically have extremely close ties working on economic issues, security issues, on advancement of human rights concerns. And the foundation for what we are dealing with now was set last June when President Rouseff and President Obama met here in Washington and agreed on a host of bilateral dialogues, which are continuing with the interim administration.

These dialogues provide an extraordinarily strong foundation to deal with our trade concerns, to deal with our concerns about international telecommunications, Internet governance, energy security, climate cooperation, law enforcement cooperation, countering terrorism, and dealing with a variety of people-to-people exchanges that are extremely important to both nations.

So regardless of the current political situation, Brazil is facing a difficult moment. It is a mature democracy. It is the second largest economy in the hemisphere, one of the 10 largest in the world. And we are confident that the country has both the maturity and the strength to come through the current crisis and for us to continue developing a very firm relationship between us.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator KAINE?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good to have these witnesses here. Congratulations on your nominations. I look forward to supporting these nominations.

Maybe I will just kind of start with Ambassador Silliman. You were a very gracious host to us when we were in Kuwait last year, arriving just within a few hours after the bombing of the Shia

mosque in Kuwait. And one of the things that was so impressive to us—the CODEL that I was with—was how the royal family decided, look, the right thing to do is to open up the largest Sunni mosque in Kuwait and invite the family members of those who lost their lives into a Sunni mosque and to have the community come and pay their respects to them. And that was a very powerful thing, and it was good that we were able to go and to be part of that.

And now you are going to move into this new country that has its own sectarian challenges. Senator Cardin asked you about this. I am curious about the pace of reforms in the sectarian issues and divides within Iraq also. My surmise has been that some of the battlefield success against ISIL can have a positive and energizing effect in terms of people feeling good about the government. But I would just like to ask you your perception of the degree to which the Abadi government is reaching out to create an Iraq that is more inclusive of all. That has been such a huge problem under the previous prime minister. I am curious about your thoughts now.

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Well, Senator Kaine, thank you for the question.

I think you are exactly right. It has been clear now to Iraqis that they are much more effective in fighting Da'esh together than they are separately, and it has helped the development of a much more tight military structure.

However, we also believe that it is going to be very important to engage in what we call bottom-up reconciliation, which is essentially forming local security forces to help the military take territory back from Da'esh, compose local police forces to hold the territory after Da'esh, reinsertion of elected local governments and insertion of some money to get the power going, the water going, schools open, and hospitals working to build again the confidence of local populations in their local governments and in the ability of Baghdad to manage the funds.

Key to this is going to be, as I mentioned to Senator Cardin, decentralization of authority from Baghdad to the provinces. Prime Minister Abadi thankfully has done this and has already pushed three of seven ministries that have been asked to decentralize out to the provinces. We think this is a very good sign that will help functional federalism and integration of the various sects in Baghdad, in Iraq in a positive way in the future.

Senator KAINE. When we were with you last year in Kuwait, we went to Iraq immediately after, and one of the concerns we had, after our time in Erbil, was that the relationship between the Kurdish government and the central government at that time was pretty low. There were big disputes about oil revenue allocation and kind of an unwritten contract and how do we interpret it and a lot of suspicion and hostility. We had just come out of an NDAA proceeding here where there was an effort promoted by the Kurds to have a basically separate arming relationship with the United States rather than going through the central government.

My perception about reports from Iraq in the last maybe 4 months or so is that President Barzani and the current prime minister had had a little bit of a rapprochement without necessarily solving the oil revenue allocation issues. There seemed to be a

tighter relationship, and this was maybe 3 or 4 months ago. Is that your perception today, or is this still kind of a day-by-day issue in terms of the relationship between the Kurds and the central government?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Yes, Senator Kaine. In fact, I think it helps prove your initial point that the fight against Da'esh was one of the initial reasons that Prime Minister Abadi and President Barzani spoke, and there has been much more military cooperation between the Peshmerga and Iraqi security forces. But in general, this has broadened to a more positive relationship. If confirmed, Senator, I am hoping that I can work with both the Erbil and Baghdad to improve this relationship and to deal with things like a final oil agreement.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ambassador McKinley, welcome back to the western hemisphere. I know that this is like your passion. You have taken a number of other posts, but to come back in Brazil, you know, they just thought they would give you an easy little post back in your neighborhood. It is great to have you going there.

What a challenging time. I mean, I think of the challenges we deal with here, and then I think about corruption and economic challenges and then impeachment and the Olympics and Zika. I mean, if you wrote it, people would say it is too unbelievable. It has to be fictional. But that is the truth that you are dealing with.

The one thing I really wanted to ask about is sort of on the corruption side. There was a "Washington Post" report recently about testimony about I guess one of the former directors of Petrobras that really implicates a whole range of Brazilian officials, including the interim president, in some pretty massive corruption. What do you think the appetite or likelihood will be in terms of those that are in governing positions to tackle the question of what, if anything, can the U.S. do to be of assistance in that?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, frankly, what has been extraordinary, Senator, about the last 2 years is just how transparent the process of addressing the corruption scandals has been in Brazil. They have been dealing with rule of law, a strong constitutional process, civil society, an extraordinarily active media that has covered every aspect of this, police, federal investigators, court systems that are allowed to do their work largely unimpeded, the issues being discussed in the heart of government openly by politicians, and significant actors across the range of Brazilian society being brought to account. And so if you look at the process as it has evolved, it actually demonstrates the underlying strength of Brazilian democracy and the ability of that democracy to respond to the demands of its people for more transparent and accountable government.

Going forward, obviously, I am not in a position—I do not think anyone is—to predict what a next set of revelations will be, but on the basis of the track record thus far, it is a very strong example of a society taking the corrective measures to set itself back on course. And Brazil over these past 20 years has been a country that has transformed itself, becoming not, as I have already mentioned one, of the largest economies in the world, but created a new middle class adding 50 million to the middle class, creating world-

beating companies that compete globally, and becoming a much more active partner for the United States and the broader international community on transnational concerns. So not withstanding the current crisis, there seems to be a very strong foundation for being able to carry forward not just the bilateral relationship but to be optimistic about Brazil's future.

Senator KAINÉ. Mr. Chair, I am over, but I have one question for each. Could I continue or would Senator Markey want to come in?

Senator CARDIN. It looks like you may continue.

Senator KAINÉ. Great. Thank you.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask kind of picking up on the way I intro'd it with Ambassador Silliman on Kuwait. I mean, we were there very briefly, and I had been there once before. But I was impressed in this time of tragedy that there was an effort to really stop it from being a sectarian point of division, but to pull together. What are the issues, kind of current status of civil society issues and human rights issues, in Kuwait that you will be kind of paying the most attention to in your post, should you be confirmed?

Mr. SILVERMAN. Thank you, Senator, for the question. The ranking member raised the question about trafficking in persons, which is very high up on our agenda. And I would like to give credit to Ambassador Silliman and his staff for all the work that they have done in this regard.

Freedom of expression remains an issue that has had some ups and downs in Kuwait, but something that we are very much promoting and we are working with civil society as well. We have the role of women. Of course, there were female members of parliament in the past. There is a female member of the cabinet. But the parliament is often boisterous and we are really looking to promote across the board of those freedom of expression and freedom of speech issues.

Senator KAINÉ. Thank you.

And then, Ms. Perez, I have followed the fortunes of Chile for a very long time but have never visited. An issue that I am kind of interested in now is the role that Chile plays regionally sort of beyond its borders in terms of leadership with a lot of challenges in neighboring countries. Talk a little bit about the role that Chile plays in regional organizations. I think they are doing a number of things well. They have their own challenges certainly. They are doing a number of things well. Are they playing a good role in trying to export good practices elsewhere?

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Senator, as you noted, Chile is really a success story for the hemisphere, and after the Pinochet era, they have really become a beacon in the area. And they do a lot of really good work, and I think we have the opportunity to do much more.

So, for example, they took over the presidency of the Pacific Alliance July 1st. One of the things that President Bachelet has said is that she would like to reach out to MERCOSUR to try to re-engage with that alliance, which I think would be a good thing both for the Pacific Alliance and for MERCOSUR.

They have been very vocally recently on Venezuela starting with the statements in the OAS on May 20th, which the Chilean foreign minister wrote himself and then had that statement co-signed by

the Argentines and the Uruguayans. And they have been with the United States asking for an active dialogue.

They also are working with us in Central America, and they support various kinds of civil society and governmental reforms in places like El Salvador and Guatemala. And in Honduras, they have actually worked with both police and judicial systems on rule of law.

Senator KAINE. Excellent.

Ms. PEREZ. So I really think there is an awful lot that is being done now, and I do think that there are opportunities for the future. And if confirmed, I look forward to the opportunities to see how we might continue to work together and partner. Again, I think they have a lot to offer, and sometimes it is good to hear from somebody in the region about what they might do and to model the kinds of successes that they have had.

Senator KAINE. Yes. I would venture to say that Chile speaking out about need for reforms in Venezuela is in some ways a much more powerful thing than even us speaking out. And I know there have been frustrations expressed on this committee before about other nations in the Americas kind of going *sad a voce* when it comes to critiques of Venezuela, but having regions in the region do is it powerful. And I am glad to hear what you say.

And with that, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Markey?

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

Ambassador Silliman, we are now nearly a month into the Iraqi ground offensive to defeat ISIS in Fallujah. During the first 3 weeks, Iraqi forces appeared to be bogged down by obstacles and bombs that ISIS planted on routes into the city. But this week, the Iraqi counterterrorism service entered the city center, and reports say that ISIS fighters are mostly withdrawing without a fight. This appears to be a tactical success, but I am concerned about whether Iraq's government is repeating patterns that could lead to strategic failure.

On June 9, Dan de Luce and Henry Johnson wrote in *Foreign Policy* magazine that the battle plan for Fallujah would follow what, quote, American officials call the Tikrit Rules in informal agreements that Iranian-backed Shiite militias will not enter Sunni cities reclaimed from the Islamic State as the condition under which the U.S. will support Iraqi forces by bombing ISIS targets from the air. But time and again, it has appeared that the Iraqi Government cannot or will not uphold their end of this bargain.

Since its liberation—Tikrit itself—Shia militia within the city have menaced Sunni civilians while ISIS continues to launch attacks from the outskirts.

In Ramadi, the city center was largely destroyed to push ISIS out, but fighting continues outside the city.

During the current operation in Fallujah, Shia militias are located outside the city center, apparently in technical compliance with the so-called Tikrit Rules, but they are in an ideal position to launch shells into the city and to intercept people trying to escape the violence. At the end of May, they were even visited by Iranian General Soleimani.

Over the past month, we have heard very credible reports of indiscriminate shelling and that Shiite militia and Iraqi police have detained, tortured, and killed Sunni civilians who were detained while trying to flee to safety.

Ambassador Silliman, what is your perspective on the so-called Tikrit Rules that appear to ban Shia militias from entering city centers during an offensive, but allow them to take up positions where they can attack Sunni civilians?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Senator Markey, thank you very much for the question.

If you look at what has been happening in the past few weeks in Fallujah, you see both good and bad. There has been, in fact, a tactical military victory, and it appears that the Da'esh forces have now been sequestered in one or two neighborhoods on the outskirts of Fallujah.

We were very concerned, Senator, by the same reports that saw about atrocities taking place against civilians who were fleeing the fighting in Fallujah. But we think that Prime Minister Abadi and the Iraqis have done a relatively good job of reacting to that.

Senator MARKEY. So are we pushing Abadi to back these Shia away, and is Abadi doing that?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Well, we are pushing Abadi to condemn the abuses, and Abadi has formed a high level commission headed by the deputy governor of Anbar Province to investigate some of the abuses. And there have already been arrests based on this investigation in a very short time.

One other issue that we have—

Senator MARKEY. He has arrested Shia leaders?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Yes, sir. He has arrested people who were individually alleged to have committed abuses following the fighting in Fallujah.

Senator MARKEY. So are you convinced that Abadi is putting in place then a set of judicial procedures that are going to give confidence to the Sunni majority in Tikrit or these other cities that in fact there is a process that will protect their rights?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. The answer is we have been pressing him to do so. It appears that he has actually reacted in a very positive way. As I said, having as the chair of the committee looking into the investigation, the deputy governor of the province where that occurred is a very important message to the Sunni population that the investigation will be serious. It is in the very early stages now, but we will continue to press this investigation. And as I said, I believe that the prime minister understands why it is necessary for him to reduce sectarian tensions and to bring all the communities of Iraq—

Senator MARKEY. Do you think that the 2005 constitution provides a framework to give actual protections that are credible to the Yazidis, to the Kurds, to the Christians, to the Sunnis, and that they can credibly rely upon those provisions in order to give them protections given the last 11-year history in that country?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Well, Senator, one of my priorities, if confirmed, will be to continue the American press to help minority communities across Iraq. We have provided more than \$100 million worth of assistance since 2008 to help minority communities.

We also believe that the decentralization of decision-making to the provinces will go a long way to providing communities themselves the ability to make the decisions to—their own development decisions and their own security decisions. This is an initiative that we have supported but has been done by Prime Minister Abadi.

We are in the early stages of all of this, and we will continue and I will continue, if confirmed, to press this to its natural conclusion.

Senator MARKEY. Now, Mosul is going to be a much more difficult military proposition than Tikrit or Fallujah or Ramadi. And a lot of it is going to be dependent upon whether or not the Sunnis in that city actually believe that they are going to be given their rights and that they then have sufficient reason to go against ISIS in that city.

And so I cannot tell you how important this is going to be from a political perspective. That is what we are. We are politicians here. That is the one thing we do know, that constituencies know very quickly whether or not you are on their side or you are not on their side. Mr. Silverman comes from Massachusetts, so he knows that we understand politics that way.

So I urge you very strongly to send that message very clearly.

And if I may, I just have one final question, if it is possible.

Ambassador McKinley, I wanted to ask you about the state of Brazil's health care system. We all saw the call by some pretty prominent health experts to cancel the Olympics in Rio because in their view Brazilian authorities would not be able to manage the threat of zika. Just 7 weeks before Rio, set to host the Olympics, Rio's state governor said that the state government may not be able to provide basic services. And then Brazil's new health minister, Ricardo Barros, said that the country in the future may be unable to uphold all the rights guaranteed by the constitution, such as universal access to health care given fiscal constraints.

This is of concern to many of us here today, not only for the millions of Brazilians who are facing a failing health system in the midst of a real public health crisis caused by zika and the brain disorders which it is linked to, but also for us here in the United States as zika becomes a real danger to the United States.

So my question to you is, is Brazil's health care system in store for a collapse or a major shakeup? How able is the government to deal with the satiation given the current political crisis and the deepest recession in generations? How does universal health care compare to other social spending priorities of Brazilians, and are they investing enough right now in zika prevention in order to protect not only their own citizens but those of the rest of the region and in fact the hemisphere?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. That is a broad question, Senator, and thank you for it. But if I could take in turn the issues you have raised.

Brazil, in fact, over the last 20 years has developed a system of health care for the broader population, a population of 200 million people, which is the envy of the developing world. And the question now in the context, as you rightly point out, of a major fiscal crisis, what the future holds not just for health services but other services inside the country.

The immediate concern is how they respond to the zika crisis. And the fact of the matter is that since it came on the scene, the government has mobilized on a very significant level in terms of hundreds of thousands of health workers throughout the country, security personnel as well to address everything from awareness campaigns to controlling the mosquito vector, to expanding international cooperation particularly with the United States in exploring how to develop new vaccines, how to deal with the analysis and diagnosis of zika, the Guillain-Barre syndrome, the microcephaly cases that have appeared. The cooperation with CDC is ongoing with HHS. But Brazil historically has also led in response to other crises, particularly HIV/AIDS, and has the infrastructure, the medical knowledge, know-how to respond forcefully to what is happening now.

Senator MARKEY. Do you think Brazil will have the resources in place to be able to protect its population during the Olympics and beyond?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Yes, I do. And in fact, the views both of CDC, the World Health Organization—today there was an article by the head of the Global Health Institute at Harvard—all believe that the risk of infection from zika during the Olympics is extraordinarily small. And we are entering the winter period when the mosquito vector is much less of a threat.

But more importantly are the proactive steps that are being taken: the \$300 million the Brazilian Government has committed to addressing zika, the mobilization of health services, the coordination with CDC on developing vaccines, carrying out trial studies on case control in different Brazilian states. There is a very significant effort underway to address this. But for the concern of the athletes and American citizens who will be visiting Brazil, as I said, CDC, WHO have made clear that at this time they do not believe that should be a major concern except for women who are pregnant.

Senator MARKEY. So thank you and thank each of you for your service to our country. You will all be excellent representatives.

And thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate the responses that all the witnesses have made to the questions and to the information our committee has requested.

As Chairman Corker indicated, the record will stay open till the close of business on Thursday for questions that members may have. We ask that you respond to them promptly so that the committee can complete its work in a timely way.

I want to underscore the point that Senator Murphy made earlier about Senator Corker and the leadership of this committee moving nominations as promptly as we can to the floor. We know that there is a shortened calendar this year. So your cooperation will certainly help us a great deal.

Again, thank you all very much.

The committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ANNE HALL, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

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

- ◆ What are the most pressing human rights issues in Lithuania?
- ◆ What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Lithuania?
- ◆ What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. I am pleased to highlight my efforts to promote human rights and democracy during my career, focusing on my accomplishments over the last ten years.

During my 2006-2009 tenure as Consul General in Krakow, I broadened our outreach on tolerance and Holocaust legacy issues. Our "Bridges to the East" program brought dozens of Ukrainian journalists to Poland over a three-year period for capacity building programs on democracy and human rights, with an emphasis on tolerance. I also helped the founder of the Raphael Lemkin Center for Genocide Prevention to secure its initial location in space provided by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

While I served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge d'Affaires in Vilnius (2010-2013), our engagement with civil society strengthened the hand of Lithuanian human rights NGOs through the establishment of an umbrella organization called the Human Rights Coalition. The coalition included the Lithuanian Gay League, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, the Human Rights Monitoring Institution, and organizations dedicated to women's rights. Together, these NGOs were able to promote democratic values and human rights more forcefully and effectively in Lithuania than they could on their own.

During my tenure as DCM, Embassy Vilnius also contributed significantly to the passage of legislation criminalizing domestic violence in Lithuania. Through a series of roundtables and meetings, we provided the venue for stakeholders to join forces to press for the legislation. We also provided training for police and prosecutors to ensure their support for the new law. Civil society members told us that U.S. Embassy efforts were key to passage of this important legislation.

The Embassy engaged equally deeply on Holocaust legacy issues in Lithuania. In 2010, Embassy Vilnius became the first U.S. embassy to receive a grant from the International Task Force on Holocaust Education to develop a three-year "train-the-trainers" program on Holocaust studies. We also worked closely with the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, and members of parliament to facilitate the passage of ground-breaking legislation to compensate the Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

Lithuania has made significant progress in institutionalizing and prioritizing human rights. Achievements in recent years include passage of legislation to deinstitutionalize childcare for orphans, reduce domestic violence, and reconstitute Jewish communal property. Lithuania has also developed strategic plans to reduce corruption and fight human trafficking.

Work remains to be done to increase tolerance toward minorities and to improve aspects of the justice system and children's welfare. Intolerance includes anti-Semitism as well as prejudice against LGBTI persons and ethnic minorities. Roma, in particular, continue to experience poor living conditions and face social exclusion and discrimination. In the justice system, conditions are substandard in a number of prison and detention facilities, and lengthy pretrial detention is a problem. The continuing practice of institutionalized child care is often detrimental to the children's health and makes them more vulnerable to delinquency, trafficking, and prostitution.

If confirmed, I will press the government to enact meaningful reforms that address these human rights issues, and I will work to foster dialogue between government and civil society to implement those reforms. I will also work to connect Lithuanian reformers with U.S. practitioners who can share their best practices and experience.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges

will you face in Lithuania in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The primary obstacles to addressing human rights issues in Lithuania are insufficient government coordination and financial assistance for NGOs. There is frequently a lack of coordination between the national government and the municipalities, which are the chief executors of key reforms. NGOs and civil society groups also often cite a shortage of government funding, and Lithuania lacks a developed culture of philanthropy. As such, civil society organizations depend on a shrinking pool of assistance from foreign governments and international organizations. If confirmed, I will work with civil society to identify creative new funding mechanisms to promote bottom-up change.

If confirmed, I will also continue the work of Embassy Vilnius in pressing the Lithuanian government to address these challenges to protecting human rights, as the Embassy has successfully done to improve government coordination in the fight against human trafficking.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Lithuania? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Embassy Vilnius has actively engaged with civil society in promoting the full spectrum of human rights issues in Lithuania. The Embassy's small grants program has funded a variety of projects to build civil society capacity, raise awareness of the need to protect human rights, and encourage change. If confirmed, I will continue our strong support of human rights and civil society groups to advance those rights that need greater protection.

Thankfully, in Lithuania's brief history of restored independence, there have been no gross or systematic abuses of human rights that have warranted assistance restrictions for units of the security forces subject to the Leahy Law. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce the importance of promoting accountability in the security forces by encouraging the host government to bring perpetrators to justice when there is credible information that a gross violation of human rights has been committed. My commitment to upholding our legal requirement under the Leahy Law and to the core belief that assisting foreign governments to strengthen accountability mechanisms and respect for human rights, will help promote our goal for a Europe that is whole, free and at peace.

Question. Will you engage with Lithuania on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Defending human rights is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will look forward to continuing our embassy's active engagement with the Lithuanian government to promote our shared values of human rights as an important driver of democracy and a key ingredient of a thriving society.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Lithuania to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Lithuania?

Answer. Lithuania is a liberal democracy and EU member state with no political prisoners. If this situation were to deteriorate, my embassy team and I would quickly and assertively engage the Lithuanian government, civil society, and likeminded embassies to address the situation and achieve an outcome befitting Lithuania's legacy as a resilient, liberal democracy.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. In March 2016 before the Senate Armed Services Committee General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander of U.S. European Command stated that "Russia has chosen to be an adversary and poses a long-term existential threat to the United States and to our European allies and partners." Do you agree with General Breedlove's assessment that Russia poses a "long-term existential threat" to the U.S. and its allies, including Lithuania?

Answer. At this time, our bilateral relationship with Russia, as well as Russia's relationship with our European allies, has suffered due to Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, its occupation of Crimea, and its destabilizing behavior and rhetoric. We have repeatedly conveyed our concerns about Russian aggression to Rus-

sian officials, and we will not return to “business as usual” with Russia as long as it continues to undermine European security and international norms and principles. In coordination with our NATO Allies, including Lithuania, we are responding effectively to this challenge. We continue to increase the capability, readiness, and responsiveness of NATO forces to address any threat and deter further destabilizing activities.

Russia’s significant strategic nuclear capabilities have long posed a threat to the United States and its allies and those capabilities will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. That is why it is so important that we develop effective channels of communication and arms control mechanisms to provide transparency and predictability and to avoid miscalculation. It is also why we continue to invest in a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. While we have downgraded our bilateral relationship with Russia due to its continued aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere in Europe, the New START treaty and its implementation mechanisms have been key to ensuring a measure of stability at the strategic level.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALL’S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. In 2015, Lithuania supported an EU proposal to re-settle 120,000 refugees and migrants currently in Italy and Greece to the other member states. Lithuania agreed to accept 1,105 refugees, mainly from Syria—a process which has been slow to actualize. What are your views on the agreement to accept this number of refugees? Do you have any thoughts on how we can find a remedy for the delay? How do we contend with the lack of popularity from the Labor Party and the Order & Justice Party within the coalition government?

Answer. In 2016, Lithuania pledged to accept 921 relocated asylum seekers from Greece and Italy and to resettle 70 refugees from Turkey as part of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, updating its previous commitments under the EU resettlement and relocation mechanisms approved in 2015.

To date, Lithuania has relocated 21 asylum seekers from Greece and resettled five Syrian refugees from Turkey. Currently, Lithuania is not a major destination or transit country for migrants. Authorities say it is difficult to find asylum seekers who want to relocate to Lithuania.

On June 10, 2016, the leaders of Lithuania’s ruling coalition parties, including the Labor Party and the Order and Justice Party, signed a non-binding political agreement underlining that while Lithuania will meet its current resettlement/relocation commitment with the EU, Lithuania must not agree to additional mandatory refugee resettlement quotas. The agreement reflects opinion polls which show that the Lithuanian public is divided in attitudes toward immigration.

In addition to agreeing to accept approximately 1,000 asylum seekers and refugees under the 2016 EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, Lithuania has also contributed 25 escort officers to Greece and €5.2 million to the Turkey Refugee Facility. These funds follow other forms of assistance as follows:

- ◆ In 2015, €100,000 to the EU regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis; €150,000 to the Migrants and Refugees Fund of the Council of Europe Development Bank; €50,000 to the U.N. Global Food Program for Syria; and €60,000 to the U.N. Refugee Agency.
- ◆ In 2016, a humanitarian aid shipment worth €61,000 to Greece for refugees; and a pledge to allocate €70,000 in humanitarian aid through the U.N. to support Syrian refugees.

The United States commends the commitment the EU and its member states have demonstrated in seeking a comprehensive and coordinated response to the influx of migrants and refugees from Syria and other nations. Lithuania’s commitment to fulfill its obligations under the EU relocation and resettlement mechanisms is an important step in addressing this challenge facing our European partners.

If confirmed, I will encourage Lithuania to continue to support a coordinated EU response that focuses on saving lives, providing timely humanitarian assistance, ensuring the human rights of all migrants are respected, promoting orderly and humane migration policies, and ensuring that proper screening and registration procedures are in place to facilitate appropriate assistance and provide protection to those in need.

Question. With the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), the United States has provided an augmented force presence, increased exercises, and pre-positioned assets in order to bolster security within the Baltic States. In June 2015, U.S. Sec-

retary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that the U.S. would pre-position equipment (i.e. Abrams tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and self-propelled howitzers) in the Baltic and Central European countries in order to support the activities of rotational forces. In your opinion, is this enough to ensure Lithuania's security? If not, what more would you like to see, particularly in Lithuania, in terms of the adequate number of NATO troops and type of equipment?

Answer. Since March 2014, the United States has taken action, both bilaterally and through NATO, to reassure Allies, including Lithuania, of our solemn commitment to their security and territorial integrity as members of the NATO Alliance.

The United States has used the \$1.06 billion in FY 2015 European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funding that Congress appropriated to increase the number of exercises, training sessions, deployments, and broader security assistance to our European Allies and partners, including Lithuania. All 28 NATO Allies have been participating in NATO's assurance measures.

We hope to enhance our presence in the coming year to transition from assurance measures to active and sustained deterrence, which is why President Obama has requested \$3.4 billion to fund ERI in FY 2017. These funds will be used to deploy an additional rotational Armored Brigade Combat Team to Central and Eastern Europe; the prepositioning of combat equipment; and additional trainings and exercises in Europe.

I believe that with the measures we are taking, we are already on the right path to upholding our Article 5 commitments to Lithuania and the broader NATO Alliance.

Question. On June 22nd, the commander of U.S. ground forces in Europe, General Ben Hodges, stated that "Russia could take over Baltic States faster than we would be able to defend them" and that Russia could "conquer the capitals of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia within 36 to 60 hours." Do you agree with this assessment? If so, what actions, military and economic, should Lithuania take now to prepare for this possible type of action from Russia?

Answer. I believe that all of the measures the United States and NATO Allies have committed to taking assist in strengthening our deterrence and defense posture in the region and demonstrate our ironclad commitment to Article 5.

I would also like to point out the measures that Lithuania itself has been undertaking to enhance its national defense capabilities for both conventional and hybrid warfare.

Lithuania has pledged to meet the NATO defense spending benchmark of two percent of GDP by 2018, reaching 1.5 percent this year. The government is using its increased defense budget to invest in modern equipment and improve NATO interoperability. Among its defense acquisitions are anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems, infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, precision and sniper weapons, and air-space surveillance.

The Lithuanian government has also introduced a series of security reforms to reintroduce limited conscription (discontinued in 2008), to define legal authorities that subsume the country's security institutions under the authority of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) during marshal law or declaration of war, and to establish a national cyber security authority and strategy.

If confirmed, I will encourage Lithuania to continue down this path, increasing its value as a NATO ally as it enhances its ability to deter aggression and defend itself.

Question. Litgrid, the operator of Lithuania's electricity systems, has been constructing the LitPol link connection with Poland and the undersea NordBalt cable connection with Sweden in order to integrate the country's power grid into the wider European electricity market? What is the status of these two projects? How would you advise President Grybauskaitė to deal with interference from Russian naval vessels that seek to prevent Lithuania's energy independence?

Answer. LitPol Link and NordBalt, two EU co-financed electricity interconnectors with Lithuania, have come on line this year. For the first time Lithuania is directly plugged into the EU power grid: LitPol Link connects Lithuania to the Continental Europe electricity grid in Poland; NordBalt, to the Nordic power network in Sweden. These interconnectors are projected to reduce Lithuania's dependence on Russian electricity from 70 percent to less than 25 percent, and to lower the price of electricity by 12 percent.

In the spring of 2015, the governments of Sweden and Lithuania conveyed their concerns to Russian authorities regarding several incidents in which the installation of NordBalt was interrupted by Russian warships under the guise of protecting their

military exercise zones in the Baltic Sea. By June 2015, such interruptions had stopped, and NordBalt came on line as scheduled earlier this year.

Question. In your view, what are the United States' strategic interests in Lithuania? How are NATO and the U.S. ensuring Lithuania's security?

Answer. The primary U.S. interests our embassy has been working to advance in Lithuania are the following:

- ◆ Keeping Lithuania a strong provider of security. Lithuania is a good friend and NATO Ally. It works with us closely on a range of regional and global issues of paramount importance to U.S. national security. We welcome Lithuania's commitment to increase defense spending to the NATO benchmark of 2 percent of GDP by 2018, and we are working together to modernize Lithuania's defense capabilities and enhance NATO interoperability. Accordingly, Lithuania has supported the implementation of NATO's Readiness Action Plan to respond to security challenges 360 degrees around Alliance territory. Lithuania is also contributing to other operations key to U.S. security, such as the Counter-Da'esh Coalition and the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Additionally, the United States has taken action, both bilaterally and through NATO, to reassure Allies, including Lithuania, of our solemn commitment to their security and territorial integrity as members of the NATO Alliance. One example of how this is being done includes that the United States has used the \$1.06 billion in FY 2015 European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funding to increase the number of exercises, training sessions, deployments, and broader security assistance to our European Allies and partners, including Lithuania. All 28 NATO Allies have been participating in NATO's assurance measures.
- ◆ Forging stronger bilateral economic ties. To advance the President's National Export Initiative as well as assist in maintaining the economic resilience of our NATO Ally, we promote export and investment opportunities for U.S. companies in Lithuania, encourage Lithuania's support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and work to advance innovation and entrepreneurship ties between Lithuania and the United States. We have also promoted increasing transparency in government tenders, the protection of intellectual property rights, and flexibility in the labor code.
- ◆ Promoting democratic values abroad and in Lithuania. Since 2010, Lithuania has taken on increasingly prominent roles in transatlantic and international organizations (the Community of Democracies, the OSCE, the EU, and the U.N. Security Council), a trajectory we have supported, especially with regard to Lithuania's use of its leadership to advance democratic reforms in the former Soviet states and beyond. We also support the efforts of Lithuania's young democracy to advance human rights at home. We promote tolerance, accountability, and inclusive domestic policies in our dialogue with the government and civil society, highlighting the need to confront ethnic, religious, and other forms of intolerance in our outreach programs.

If confirmed, I will continue the good work of our embassy in advancing U.S. security, economic, and democratic interests with Lithuania both locally and on a global scale.

Question. How do you assess the various ways Russia could threaten or put pressure on Lithuania: energy dependence, "information warfare," attempts to influence Lithuania's ethnic Russian minority or other elements of the political system, cyber attacks, and military activities including airspace incursions and the proximity of forces in Kaliningrad? Which of these pose the most serious threats to Lithuania's security and independence?

Answer. We view Russia's use of disinformation, energy as a political tool, incursions into Baltic airspace, and increased snap exercises along Lithuania's borders with concern. In response to these actions, we have engaged with Lithuania to enhance the strength of its military defense, including in concert with NATO Allies, build the media literacy of its population, and advance the diversification of its energy supply.

Allies have demonstrated solidarity in supporting the assurance measures of NATO's Readiness Action Plan and have pledged to correct a long-term decline in defense investment. The United States has contributed bilaterally through ERI to the initiatives of Allies, particularly the Baltic States, to secure and safeguard their own defense. This support complements national efforts by Lithuania.

With a well-funded and sophisticated propaganda machine, Russia has portrayed the West, NATO, and the United States as adversaries of the Russian people. The United States has taken a comprehensive approach to addressing Russian disinformation by working closely with our Baltic partners to build societal resil-

ience, support a robust independent media, and provide an alternative narrative by building closer ties between Americans and Baltic citizens of all stripes.

Although ethnic Russian Lithuanians make up only six percent of Lithuania's population, Russian speakers account for 15 percent. We have supported the Lithuanian government's efforts to reach out to this linguistic community to overcome societal tensions and feelings of marginalization. Our embassy in Vilnius also conducts extensive outreach to Russian speakers in Lithuania, engaging students, journalists, and other members of this group to share U.S. perspectives.

Europe's dependence on Russian energy remains one of its greatest vulnerabilities to political and economic coercion. The United States has been supporting EU efforts to advance the diversification of energy sources and routes in the entire Baltic region to reduce vulnerability to Russia's use of energy as a political tool. Over the past few years, Lithuania has made impressive progress in this area. It launched a self-financed LNG terminal in January 2015, decreasing its dependence on Russian gas from 100 percent to approximately five percent today. It also inaugurated two EU-financed electricity links to its European neighbors early this year, which are projected to reduce Lithuania's dependence on Russian electricity from 70 percent to less than 25 percent. As such, Lithuania is a model for others seeking to enhance their security of energy supply.

Question. What do you think are the aims of Russian policy toward Lithuania and the other Baltic countries?

Answer. We can only infer what Russia's current policy is toward the Baltic states from the recent actions it has undertaken towards them. Russia's use of hybrid warfare in the Baltic region, along with its attempted annexation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine, has sown anxiety among Lithuania's populace, many of whom perceive such behavior as a threat to the country's hard-won independence.

Question. How would you, as ambassador, promote the expansion of U.S.-Lithuania trade and investment ties? How does Lithuania view the prospective Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) under negotiation between the United States and the EU?

Answer. Lithuania is a strong advocate of transatlantic economic ties. Polling shows high public support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) at approximately 78 percent. Policymakers and the private sector have realized that TTIP not only promises economic benefits but is also of strategic importance as a second anchor to the transatlantic security relationship.

Lithuania's economy is one of the fastest growing in the European Union with GDP predicted to grow 2.6 percent this year. In spite of this growth in GDP, unemployment stands at close to 8 percent. Lithuania is grappling with an emigration "brain drain," mostly to the UK, Scandinavia, and Ireland. An estimated one million Lithuanians have departed the country since independence in 1991.

To staunch this population loss, Lithuania is already doing many of the right things to increase trade and investment. Lithuania offers investors a diversified economy, EU rules and norms, a well-educated multilingual workforce, comparatively low wages, advanced IT infrastructure, and a stable democratic government. The country joined the Eurozone in January 2015 and is ranked 20th in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings. To further improve its investment climate, the Lithuanian parliament recently passed a new labor code that increases flexibility in hiring practices.

In 2015, the United States was Lithuania's 7th largest trading partner, with more than \$1.5 billion in total trade. Well-known U.S. firms such as Western Union and ThermoFisher have established a presence in Lithuania. To expand opportunities for Lithuania's talented youth (whether of Polish, Russian, or Lithuanian descent) that will also benefit U.S. companies, Embassy Vilnius has been fostering collaboration between the tech sectors in Lithuania and the United States. The embassy has sponsored speakers on innovation and entrepreneurship and connected Lithuanian entrepreneurs with SelectUSA. Embassy Vilnius is also supporting the efforts of the American-Lithuanian Business Council and the Baltic-American Freedom Foundation to launch a Lithuanian American Innovation Award to recognize a Lithuanian innovator for his/her collaborative work with a U.S. academic or business interest.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Vilnius' efforts to encourage innovation-focused networking and partnerships among U.S. and Lithuanian business, industry, and educational institutions both within Lithuania and in the United States.

RESPONSES OF HON. MARIE L. YOVANOVITCH, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO
UKRAINE, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOVANOVITCH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

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

Answer. Throughout my career I have actively promoted human rights and democracy. For example, as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, I actively encouraged reform and worked to expand the capacity of civil society and the media through programming, public events, and private advocacy. A speech I gave on the need to continue democratic reforms in Armenia in March 2011 catalyzed a public conversation on a sensitive subject and continues to be a reference point today. Our advocacy for an imprisoned whistleblower not only reversed her conviction, but activated a government investigation into the wrongdoing that she had exposed. After a number of individuals were arrested following contentious 2008 presidential elections, we pressed for due process, transparent investigations, and an improved electoral process. For my work regarding these political prisoners, the State Department awarded me the Diplomacy for Human Rights Award, which is presented to a U.S. Chief of Mission who has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to defending human rights and advancing democratic principles of government in his or her host country. If confirmed, I look forward to continue promoting human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Ukraine.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Ukraine? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Ukraine? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and Russia's occupation of Crimea are the root causes of the most pressing issues in Ukraine, including human rights issues. Pressuring Russia and the separatists to implement the Minsk agreements in full and to end the occupation of Crimea is the best way to restore peace in Ukraine and improve respect for human rights in these regions. In eastern Ukraine, separatists, supported by Russian military and civilian officials, continue to control parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions by force of arms, as self-proclaimed "people's republics." Separatists systematically engaged in abductions, physical ill treatment, and unlawful detention. Separatists also have restricted humanitarian aid. Rule of law has been severely undermined in separatist-held territories. Separatists act with complete impunity, and residents are reluctant to turn to local authorities for fear of reprisals.

In Russian-occupied Crimea, the human rights situation has deteriorated dramatically, with mounting repression and harassment of individuals from minority communities, particularly Crimean Tatars, those of non-Russian-Orthodox Christian faiths, independent journalists, and those who oppose Russia's occupation. Occupation authorities have systematically denied individuals their fundamental freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and religious expression. Local residents have been detained, interrogated, and, in many cases, been subjected to forced disappearances. NGOs and independent media have been driven out of the peninsula. Russian occupation authorities have also banned the Mejlis, the legislative body of the Crimean Tatars.

To a much lesser extent, there are also reports of abductions, torture, and unlawful detention by Ukrainian government forces, as well as government-imposed restrictions on freedom of movement. Ukraine faces other human rights issues such as the abuse of persons in custody, in particular beatings and alleged torture of detainees and prisoners, harsh conditions in prisons and detention facilities, and harassment against LGBTI persons.

While Ukraine has made more reform progress in the wake of the Revolution of Dignity than in all previous years since the restoration of Ukrainian independence, many challenges still remain. Corruption, especially in the judicial system, remains a serious concern and erodes citizens' trust in their government. Ukraine's media sphere, though vibrant and diverse, is still beset by non-transparent ownership structures and oligarchic influence. In the face of Russian propaganda, we have encouraged the Ukrainian government to ensure respect for freedom of expression and the media.

If confirmed, I will continue to press for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and for Russia to end its occupation of Crimea. Until Ukraine regains

full control of its territory as lawful sovereign nation, we must continue to highlight Russia's and the separatists' abuses and push for international access to the territories under their control.

At the same time, I will press the Government of Ukraine to ensure a prompt, thorough, and transparent investigation and appropriate prosecution of all persons responsible for alleged incidents of abuses perpetrated by its forces. I will also raise such human rights issues as prison conditions and violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons with the highest levels of the Ukrainian government in order to seek justice for those abused and to improve the lives of others who face discrimination. I will also work closely with Ukraine's vibrant civil society and independent media sectors to strengthen these critical pillars of democratic governance that help citizens hold their government accountable.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Ukraine in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and Russia's occupation of Crimea represent the most significant obstacles to advancing human rights in Ukraine. The United States and the international community must maintain pressure on Russia to end its aggression in eastern Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea, which will enable Kyiv to better address human rights issues in its territory.

In territories under Kyiv's control, Ukraine continues to suffer from corruption and deficiencies in the administration of justice. Human rights groups and the United Nations noted there were few investigations into human rights abuses committed by security forces, and corruption in the Prosecutor General's Office and the judiciary was of particular concern. Breaking the hold of oligarchs over Ukrainian politics and business is also a key part in transforming Ukraine.

The departure of Ukraine's previous Prosecutor General and the passage of legislation to reform the judiciary signal progress in combating corruption. The new Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko has already made arrests of former high level officials for corruption, which must be followed with credible and transparent investigations and prosecutions. More remains to be done, however; and we continue to press the new government for real, credible, and transparent investigations into human rights abuses. Questions for the Record Submitted to

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Ukraine? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I am committed to meeting with human rights activists, members of civil society, other non-governmental organizations, and religious and ethnic groups, including Crimean Tatars, in the United States and in Ukraine. These institutions and organizations have proven to play a key role in advancing human rights in countries where I have served and throughout the world.

If confirmed, I will ensure Embassy Kyiv continues to work proactively to implement the Leahy Law. We will continue to vet Ukrainian units receiving U.S. security assistance according to the Leahy Law, in addition to providing training on the protections of human rights and international law. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce the importance of promoting accountability in the security forces by encouraging the Ukrainian government to bring perpetrators to justice, when there is credible information exists that a gross violation of human rights has been committed.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Ukraine to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Ukraine?

Answer. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will remain committed to promoting the human rights of all individuals. The current Ukrainian government has not engaged in unjustly detaining individuals on politically-motivated grounds; however, I will continue to engage with Ukrainian leaders to ensure that all individuals are treated equally under the law.

Question. Will you engage with Ukraine on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Defending human rights, including the freedom of expression, is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy. I plan to consistently engage with Ukrainian officials at the

highest level to promote our shared values of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and the freedoms of speech, assembly, and association.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, how will you push the Ukrainians to make greater progress on anti-corruption reforms? Would you advocate for the U.S. to use tools, such as indictments in U.S. courts, to pursue corrupt figures in Ukraine?

Answer. The Ukrainian government is implementing an ambitious anti-corruption and rule of law reform agenda. Although Kyiv has made tremendous progress, much more must be done. Our highest priorities are improving the effectiveness of the operations of the new anti-corruption institutions, reform of the prosecutorial and judicial system, and police reform. New anti-corruption institutions are up and running and continue to receive our support. With U.S. government financial support and technical assistance, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) was established with a special anti-corruption prosecutor and is currently conducting investigations. The PGO's new Inspector General Unit is also now functioning with a regulation in place that was drafted with U.S. government assistance, and we are hopeful that the prosecutorial reform process will be rejuvenated now that a new Prosecutor General has been appointed.

The constitutional amendments required to bolster judicial independence have been adopted, opening the door for judicial reform. The most visible and celebrated reform has been the establishment of the U.S. government-supported new patrol police that replaced the notoriously corrupt traffic police in all oblasts. Government transparency will be enhanced by new laws on e-procurement, public officials' asset disclosures, and openness on media companies' ownership.

All of these reforms indicate a strong political will on behalf of the Government of Ukraine to make greater progress, and our programs will continue to support anti-corruption measures in almost every sector where we are involved, whether it is transparency in education management, budgeting methods in public finance, the new public procurement system, or specifically strengthening the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption. There is much yet to be done, especially in the customs, taxation, energy, and justice sectors, and we will be there providing financial support, expertise, and encouragement in all these areas. These reforms are critical to Ukraine's future and have been valiantly fought for by ordinary Ukrainians. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to press for and provide assistance to support further anti-corruption reforms.

If corrupt individuals in Ukraine are alleged to have committed crimes over which the United States can exercise jurisdiction, then the appropriate U.S. authorities can investigate those allegations and, depending on the outcome of those investigations, initiate prosecutions. However, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will make it a priority to work with Ukraine to help Ukraine develop a judicial system that is capable of credibly investigating and prosecuting corrupt individuals.

Question. How will you work with the Ukrainians to advocate for greater progress deinstitutionalizing this marginalized community?

Answer. Persons with developmental disabilities belong in families and should be a part of the fabric of Ukrainian society. The approximately 82,000-200,000 children institutionalized in state-run orphanages, many of whom have a developmental disability, are especially vulnerable to trafficking. If confirmed, I will be committed to helping to identify ways to integrate this vulnerable population into Ukrainian society and combat their being made victims of trafficking. My efforts will include meeting with NGOs working with persons with developmental disabilities and highlighting these issues with the appropriate authorities in the Government of Ukraine. I will also look for opportunities to share the U.S. experience of de-institutionalizing persons with developmental disabilities and transitioning them into the community as well as identifying creative solutions to help the developmentally disabled in Ukraine.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOVANOVITCH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. In February, Ukrainian activist, Roman Sohn wrote that Minsk-2 is essentially a "farce" because "while Russia does nothing to implement the agreement, the U.S. and EU are forcing Minsk-2 down the throat of Kyiv and that Putin knows that it is much easier for the West to put pressure on Ukraine to accept bad terms than to forge a consensus on keeping the pressure, including sanctions, on Russia." Do you share Mr. Sohn's views?

Answer. We believe the Minsk agreements are the only way to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine peacefully. We are working closely with the Normandy partners to support their efforts to accelerate the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Ukraine has made a good faith effort to implement its Minsk commitments. We believe that it is unrealistic to expect Ukraine to pass the remaining political aspects of Minsk while combined Russian separatist forces continue to attack Ukrainian positions, intimidate or shoot at SMM monitors, refuse to provide the OSCE full, unfettered access to separatist-controlled areas, and shoot down the organization's UAVs.

We continue to press Russia to stop the violence, as it has shown in the past it is capable of doing, and to stop providing the separatists with the arms, training, and command-and-control support that fuel the conflict. We have also pushed to maintain transatlantic unity on sanctions. We and our partners must continue to be clear with Moscow that our sanctions on Russia will remain in place until it fully implements its Minsk commitments.

Question. As Ambassador, would you support the provision of lethal assistance to the Government of Ukraine?

Answer. I would not rule out sending lethal weapons to Ukraine and strongly support our ongoing efforts to strengthen and build the capacity of Ukraine's forces. We continue to believe that there is no military resolution to the crisis, but Ukraine has the right to defend itself. We remain committed to supporting full implementation of the Minsk agreements, and our diplomatic efforts focus on supporting discussions in the Normandy format and in the Trilateral Contact Group to expedite their full implementation.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOVANOVITCH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR SHAHEEN

Question. Ambassador Yovanovitch, as Ukraine rightly takes steps to ensure that corrupt officials from the Yanukovich-era are held to account for their crimes against the Ukrainian people, are you satisfied that sufficient due process protections remain in place for these prosecutions?

Answer. Ukraine has a legal system of due process protections that, unfortunately, have not always been implemented in a credible, transparent, and consistent manner.

In our assistance, we have made it a priority to help support Ukraine in legally holding any corrupt officials to account for their crimes, while safeguarding each suspect's due process rights. For example, in our assistance to help Ukraine set up new bodies like the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU), we have insisted that they reinforce due process protections. Our backing for these anti-corruption bodies will help Ukraine apply Western standards to due process protections when applied to any such prosecutions.

If confirmed, I will continue to press the need for Ukraine to safeguard basic human rights, including transparency and the right of due process for all of its citizens.

RESPONSES OF GEOFFREY R. PYATT, NOMINATED TO BE UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR TO GREECE TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PAYATT'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

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

Answer. Human rights have been a central aspect of my Foreign Service career going back nearly 25 years to when I was a political officer in Delhi and wrote the Human Rights Report for India. In my opinion, the most important impact of my actions came in the winter of 2013-2014, when Ukrainians struggled to build their democracy and rose up against former president Viktor Yanukovich. From the morning of December 20, 2013, after students who had been beaten on the Maidan fled to St. Michael's Monastery. I made it a priority to ensure that the U.S. govern-

ment was seen as standing with the Ukrainian people in defense of freedom of speech and their right to make their own sovereign choices about the future.

During the events on the Maidan, I spoke out forcefully and consistently for a non-violent resolution of the crisis in a way that upheld Ukrainian democracy. After the revolution, I led the U.S. government effort to ensure democratic elections for President and the Rada and to ensure Ukraine moved towards European standards of democracy, rule of law, and anti-corruption. These actions have given rise to the best chance since independence in 1991 to build a Ukraine that lives up to European rules and norms and is embedded in European institutions. Now the work lies with the Ukrainian people to capitalize on this opportunity, but I am proud of the role the United States has played in giving Ukraine the chance it deserves to be fully part of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, I look forward to continue promoting human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Greece.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Greece? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Greece? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Despite their own financial hardships, the Greek people have shown tremendous generosity and compassion toward the hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees who have entered Greece since the start of the migration crisis. However, the most significant human rights issues in Greece this year were related to the at times overcrowded and poor conditions facing the greatly increased numbers of migrants and asylum seekers who arrived in the country in an unprecedented wave of migration. This included occasional lack of sufficient food, potable water, and adequate shelter at some reception and registration sites. Other human rights problems reported during the year included some limitations on access to the asylum application process along with inadequate capacity to provide legal aid and social support for asylum seekers and refugees.

More than one million migrants and refugees have entered Greece since January 2015, and more than 57,000 migrants and refugees remain in Greece. The Greek government has taken important steps to respond to the needs of the migrant and refugee population, including access to services and asylum protection; however, demand has overwhelmed Greek capacity. The Greek government is working to increase resources to process asylum claims more quickly. EU member states have also provided much-needed assistance by deploying border guards, asylum experts, and interpreters to facilitate the processing of asylum claims. The March 18 EU-Turkey agreement on migration set out specific action items to discourage the use of smuggling networks and facilitate returns of irregular migrants from the EU to Turkey. A vital part of the March 18 EU-Turkey statement is safeguarding that those in need of international protection receive it. To that end, we press Greece, EU member states, and Turkey to ensure access to asylum procedures. We are also encouraged by language in the Joint Action Plan affirming that all refugees deserve access to protection and that the agreement will be implemented in full accordance with EU and international law.

If confirmed, promoting human rights in Greece will be one of my top priorities. The State Department has been engaged at all levels of the Greek government, with international partners such as UNHCR, and with other EU member states to work toward this comprehensive and coordinated approach to managing the migration and refugee crisis in Europe. This includes the nearly \$44 million in humanitarian aid the State Department has provided throughout Europe in FY 2016. If confirmed, I will look to continue and bolster this excellent cooperation. By doing so, I hope we can help migrants and refugees in Greece not only receive international protection in the short term, but also help improve their access to the work and educational opportunities that are vital over the long term. Questions for the Record Submitted to

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Greece in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to addressing the human rights challenges posed by the migration and refugee crisis in Greece is the sheer scope and scale of the problem. More than one million migrants and refugees entered Greece between January 2015 and March 2016, and more than 57,000 migrants and refugees currently remain in Greece. Approximately 79 percent of those who have arrived after the EU-Turkey agreement took effect on March 20 have applied for asylum. Processing the significant influx of new asylum cases would be a challenge for any gov-

ernment, and Greek asylum officers are reportedly working around the clock to process the extraordinary caseload. EU member states have pledged support but they, too, have limited numbers of asylum experts, interpreters, and other specialists they can contribute.

The numbers of new arrivals have dropped precipitously since March 20, and in May were less than 50 per day compared with a daily average of 870 in the first half of March. This means the process is slightly more manageable than it was earlier this year, which has given the Greek government some space to improve the quality of accommodation facilities throughout the country. Greece has made efforts to relocate migrants and refugees from informal sites to established facilities, is constructing new facilities, and is also working to upgrade existing facilities that do not meet international standards. If confirmed, I will work to promote improved conditions for migrants and refugees in Greece and seek opportunities where we can encourage better coordination and cooperation with international organizations such as UNHCR. Despite years of budget cuts, the Greek government has demonstrated time and again its tremendous compassion and willingness to seek solutions to tough problems, and I believe we will be able to make progress on human rights concerns.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Greece? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other NGOs both in the United States and in Greece if confirmed as the next Ambassador to Greece. Throughout my career I have made it a priority to engage with civil society organizations on a range of issues, and my time in Greece will be no different. The U.S. Embassy in Athens has benefitted from tremendous partnerships with a range of Greek NGO actors, including many that work with minority and underrepresented populations. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to promote the important work they do to advocate for the rights of minority groups including religious minorities, women, abused or neglected children, and the LGBTI population.

I am also committed to upholding the Leahy Law and ensuring that all recipients of U.S. assistance have been properly vetted according to the law. Greece has an excellent record as confirmed by previous vetting. Specific to the vetting of military personnel, the Office of Defense Cooperation in Athens frequently visits training sites and has observed that soldiers are properly trained on human rights interests. If confirmed, I will ensure we have the proper procedures in place at U.S. Embassy Athens to vet all training candidates and encourage continued site visits to report on observations from the field. If human rights concerns arise, I will act immediately to respond. Questions for the Record Submitted to

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Greece to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Greece?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to promote values of freedom of speech and assembly, which are actively defended in Greece. There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Greece last year, and such targeting by the Greek government is not a pervasive problem. There have been some reports of the prosecution of public officials for political purposes and the harassment of journalists; however, there were no reports of censorship or content restrictions in 2015. If confirmed, I will ensure the embassy team continues to monitor political persecution closely and bring to my attention any cases of unjust targeting so that we may respond accordingly.

Question. Will you engage with Greece on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Engaging with the Greek government on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance will be a top priority should I be confirmed. I also know that these are priorities for Greece, and that we have a willing partner in promoting our shared values of respect and tolerance. Greece has taken important steps this past year to prevent discrimination, including the passage of a law adopted last December to establish a National Council against Racism and Xenophobia. This law also stiffened penalties for individuals convicted of crimes motivated on these grounds. Also in December, the Greek government adopted legislation providing same-sex cohabitating couples the right to enter into civil union partnerships. And in October, the Greek government hosted a conference on religious tolerance and cultural pluralism in the Middle East, a clear effort on behalf of the foreign ministry to promote a culture of tolerance and acceptance. These examples all illustrate concrete actions

Greece has taken to promote human rights, civil rights, and governance. If confirmed, I will commit to furthering these efforts through our ongoing bilateral engagements.

Question. Russian President Putin was in Greece last month to meet with Prime Minister Tsipras. Reports surfaced that Putin offered to increase investment in the country if Greece were to vote against extending the EU's Russia sanctions. PM Tsipras has already repeatedly voiced reservations about the sanctions. How would you characterize Greece's relations with Russia? Would PM Tsipras break ranks with the EU and dissent to renewing sanctions against Russia? As U.S. Ambassador to Greece, how would you work to counter Russian influence there?

Answer. Greece has a long history of close ties with Russia, in part due to their affinity as predominately Orthodox nations. The two countries maintain regular high-level engagement. Russian President Putin visited Greece in May to celebrate the Greek-Russian Year of Friendship and 1,000 years of Russian Orthodoxy in Greece. Putin's visit resulted in several bilateral agreements for cooperation in the fields of tourism, transport, renewable energy, shipbuilding, mining, petroleum trading, and pharmaceuticals, reflecting the two countries' close work on developing commercial and tourism ties.

Notwithstanding the ties between Greece and Russia, we have observed Greece definitively turn toward the West on security and energy issues, most recently demonstrated by the groundbreaking of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in Greece, which will bring gas from Azerbaijan to other parts of Europe. The Tsipras government has stressed the importance it places on Western investment at the same time it seeks investment from other countries such as Russia and China. While Russia has shown interest in expanding its energy and economic ties to Greece and its military presence in the Mediterranean, the Greek government has made important strategic decisions to support energy projects such as TAP, which will reduce European dependence on Russian gas. Nevertheless, the Greek government has continued to signal support for a "multi-dimensional" energy policy that includes the construction of new routes through Greece for Russian gas. It is important that we remain vigilant about Russian avenues to exercise influence and project power in the region.

Despite concerns over the economic impact of sanctions on Greece's fragile economy, particularly its agricultural and tourism sectors, Greece has never broken EU consensus on Russian sanctions over Ukraine, and has repeatedly confirmed its support for Ukraine and its concern for the more than 150,000 Ukrainian citizens of ethnic Greek origin residing near Mariupol. We have no reason to believe that Greece will diverge from its position in support of EU consensus. Having spent the past three years working to counter Russian aggression in Kyiv, I am intimately familiar with the strategies and tactics used by Russia to wield influence, including Russian use of misinformation as a weapon. The best response to countering Russian influence is to tell the truth. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out and ensure the Greek people are hearing the truth about both Russian and U.S. activities in the region.

Question. According to the UN, there are now more than 56,000 refugees and migrants in Greece, many living in very poor conditions, including around 8,000 who have essentially become stranded on Greek islands. At the same time, the Norwegian Refugee Council decided to suspend its programs for Syrian refugees on the Greek island of Chios due to the institution of "detention-like conditions" since the EU-Turkey agreement was signed. The medical aid organization Doctors Without Borders announced that it would no longer accept funding from EU institutions and EU member states in protest over the conditions that have been created by EU-Turkey agreement.

- ◆ How is the U.S. supporting Greece's efforts to manage the refugee and migrant flow and to fairly and effectively cope with asylum claims? Is the condition of Greek holding and processing facilities an issue that has been raised by the Embassy? At what level?
- ◆ What U.S. assistance and/or assets are being utilized bilaterally in this regard?
- ◆ What more can the United States do, and what plans are in place, for the United States to help improve the protection of refugees and asylum seekers and humanitarian conditions in Greece?

Answer. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has contributed nearly \$44 million to the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) to support provision of emergency assistance throughout Europe, including Greece. Of this, \$2 million supports the International Federation for the Red Cross/Red Crescent in Greece, and \$500,000 is for the U.N. Population

Fund activities in Greece to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In addition, we have provided small grants to organizations such as Doctors of the World and local Greek NGOs working with migrants and refugees in Greece.

The Department of Defense donated essential humanitarian supplies for migrants and refugees in Greece on behalf of the U.S. government in April 2016. EUCOM provided \$150,000 worth of beds, sleeping bags, blankets, pillows, diapers, and other necessities to the Hellenic Republic First Reception Service for distribution at accommodation sites across Greece. Additional excess materials are being shipped from EUCOM logistical sites, specifically Camp Darby in Pisa, Italy.

In April, a team of public health experts from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) visited Greece to conduct a rapid needs assessment of the current public health situation. The CDC's top recommendation out of that trip was to start a vaccination campaign—something the Greek government has already begun following the visit. If confirmed, I will continue working closely with the Greek authorities on what more we can do.

A U.S. Naval vessel is also now participating in the NATO Aegean activity to help stem the flow of “illegal trafficking and illegal migration” by working with our Allies to provide reconnaissance, surveillance, and monitoring information about migrant vessels to the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards, as well as the EU's FRONTEX border agency. We will continue to look for ways to do more. If confirmed, I will seek ways to bolster our assistance.

On the issue of registration facilities on the Aegean islands, we are also concerned about the welfare of migrants and refugees and want to be sure that they have access to asylum screening and are treated with dignity, and that their rights are respected. In practical terms, Greece has followed its own legal requirements not to detain migrants arriving at hotspots on the Aegean islands for more than 25 days. Greek authorities often detain migrants for fewer than 25 days, as asylum seekers generally are allowed to leave the hotspot registration facilities once all identification and registration procedures are completed. However, under the terms of the March 18 EU-Turkey agreement, migrants are not permitted to leave the island, pending the examination of their asylum applications. Greece has also made efforts to identify vulnerable individuals such as minors and pregnant women to ensure they receive appropriate care and assistance. If confirmed, I will continue to support Greece's efforts to improve these processes.

We laud the work of organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, and their dedication to helping those in need. We also share the desire to eliminate the deadly smuggling of desperate people across the Aegean Sea. Far too many innocent lives have been lost to line the pockets of criminals who profit from the desperation of vulnerable people. We expect all nations to uphold their international obligations and to not send individuals with legitimate protection needs back to their countries of origin, and to conduct any returns of individuals who do not qualify for international protection safely, humanely and with dignity. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to urge the European Union, its member states—including Greece—and Turkey to continue to work together to address concerns raised by humanitarian groups to ensure proper refugee protection safeguards consistent with international obligations and commitments. We also urge the European Union and its member states to swiftly implement assistance measures to which member states have already agreed. This includes the relocation of asylum-seekers already in front-line European States, resettling more refugees from first countries of asylum into Europe, and providing increased humanitarian assistance to refugees in Turkey.

Both the Department and the U.S. Embassy in Athens regularly engage with the Greek government and international and non-profit organizations at all levels on issues related to migration, including the welfare of migrants and refugees. If confirmed, I commit to doing the same to ensure the dignity and rights of all individuals are upheld.

If confirmed, I will also continue to seek ways to improve the protection of refugees and asylum seekers and humanitarian conditions in Greece and around the world. President Obama is hosting a Leaders' Summit on Refugees during UNGA 71 high-level week to focus on this global refugee crisis. The United States is organizing this Summit with a global approach because we believe that Greece and other European countries should not have to shoulder the burden of this crisis alone. The United States is undertaking a vigorous, sustained diplomatic effort over the coming months to drive new and significant contributions from a broader universe of countries in three critical areas: 1) increased funding for U.N. humanitarian agencies and appeals, 2) greater opportunities for resettlement and other legal channels for humanitarian admissions, 3) facilitating refugee inclusion and self-reliance

through opportunities for education and lawful employment. We believe this summit will mobilize significant new resources to address the challenges of migration.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PAYATT'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Ambassador Pyatt, thank you for your service as Ambassador to Ukraine during a difficult time in Ukraine's history. Can you tell us whether the Ukrainian Government's perceptions of our commitment to Ukraine's security have suffered at all due to our refusal to provide the Ukrainian Government with the lethal assistance it has repeatedly requested, yes or no?

Answer. Ukraine is appreciative of our assistance and has made significant progress toward increasing its defense capacity and reforming its defense sector, thanks in part to our security assistance. In response to the crisis, we have committed over \$600 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine's forces enhance their capabilities to monitor and secure their borders, operate more safely and effectively, and defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our security assistance has saved lives while helping to build Ukraine's long-term defense capacity.

Through the Joint Multi-National Training Group Ukraine, we are building Ukraine's institutional training capacity, reforming its doctrine, improving command and control, and hardening its defenses. The United States and Allies have trained over 1,700 Ukrainian Conventional force and National Guard personnel. We have trained 120 Special Operations Forces (SOF), who are now re-deployed in operations. We are currently training an additional conventional battalion of 630 personnel.

We have provided counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars, over 3,000 secure radios, 130 Humvees, and over 100 armored civilian SUVs, a mobile field clinic, and tens of thousands of medical kits and other life-saving equipment. Our radars have helped Ukrainian forces confirm that the Russia-led separatists are firing from urban areas in blatant disregard for civilians. The Ukrainians, showing restraint aided by our radars, have exercised extreme care with their retaliatory fire in an effort to limit civilian casualties.

Ukraine has been grateful for the assistance we have provided and taken many steps to implement changes to its defense structure at the recommendation of the United States and international advisers. Most recently, President Poroshenko signed the Strategic Defense Bulletin, a landmark document which will guide an overhaul of Ukraine's defense institutions, marking a transition to a western interoperable, civilian-controlled, and accountable defense establishment.

We appreciate Congressional support for Ukraine, and we will continue to work closely with Ukraine to identify requirements for security assistance.

Ukrainians often tell me they feel they have no stronger partner than the United States; among the many memories I will carry from my service here, one of the most cherished is of the hundreds of random Ukrainians who have come up to me on the street to say thank you for what the American people have done to help Ukraine defend its sovereign choice for the future.

Question. Greece is a route for individuals trying to reach Iraq and Syria as well as a transit point for individuals returning home from the battlefield. The leader of the November 13 Paris attacks used Greece several times to enter Europe and two of the suicide bombers at the Stade de France passed through Greece as Syrian refugees. Are we confident that Greek authorities can accurately screen for dangerous actors with a potentially overwhelming number of refugees?

Answer. Greece became the main entry point on an illegal migration route into the EU last year due to its long coast line and proximity to the Middle East. Greek authorities share our concern that terrorists—including potentially foreign terrorist fighters—could use this migration route to transit Europe. With that said, we have a long history of law enforcement and anti-terrorism cooperation with Greece and are working closely with the Greek government to combat terrorism in all its forms.

While there are several areas where Greece could further improve border security efforts, Greek authorities have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving screening of refugees and migrants and have already taken significant strides to do so. For example, as of September 2015, the Greek government registered and screened against EU and international databases only eight percent of migrants and refugees entering Greece. By February, however, that number had increased to 80

percent and is now nearly 100 percent. Greece has also demonstrated success in investigating and prosecuting human smugglers.

Our counterterrorism partnership is strong, and we have ongoing bilateral efforts with Greece to improve border security. In the wake of the November terrorist attacks in Paris, the White House announced on November 30, 2015, that the United States was prepared to deploy teams of technical experts to help some European countries, if desired, enhance border security, information sharing, and other counterterrorism capabilities to counter the threat from foreign terrorist fighters. In February, an interagency team of U.S. subject matter experts visited Athens to consult on shared counterterrorism priorities and work with Greek officials to find ways to improve border security, building on existing partnerships between our two countries. Follow-up dialogue and specialized training efforts continue as a result of this engagement, including terrorism finance training and training on methods to improve border and aviation security and identify potential threats. Together, we are now working cooperatively to protect against vulnerabilities from foreign fighters and other security threats.

We are also currently working with DHS to conduct regional training in Greece later this year. The program will include other countries such as Turkey, Serbia, Macedonia, and Croatia, and will provide training on migrant screening and migrant smuggling investigation. In addition, we are hoping to support regional training to combat migrant-smuggling by sea, to assist in the development of national training curricula and train-the-trainer workshops, and to support other regional capacity-building that may be implemented by international organizations such as INTERPOL.

The Department of Defense is also working to help Greece build its capabilities to conduct counterterrorism operations by providing approximately \$4.5 million in 2282 funding to support a specialized unit of the Hellenic Coast Guard. This agency is also the lead Greek entity focused on counter-smuggling operations.

Finally, our coordination efforts with Greece to upgrade its border security capabilities under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) will also bolster Greece's ability to detect terrorists and share terrorist and law enforcement information with the United States and European partners. U.S. law requires DHS to conduct periodic re-evaluation of VWP countries. Greece underwent a thorough re-evaluation in 2015. This review evaluated the effect that the country's continued designation has on the law enforcement, immigration enforcement, and security interests of the United States, which includes a thorough assessment of counterterrorism and terrorism threats within the country. DHS, in consultation with State, determined that Greece's participation in VWP would not compromise the law enforcement, immigration, and security interests of the United States. Currently, DHS and the Hellenic National Police are actively working to develop a partnership to bolster Greece's vetting of refugees to further enhance the screening process. DHS continues to monitor Greece, as well as other program countries.

The Greek government has made tremendous efforts to improve border security, and we are confident of Greece's commitment to protecting against terrorists transiting its borders. If confirmed, assuring the safety and security of American citizens will be my top priority and I will make every effort to ensure our bilateral cooperation with Greece on border security and counterterrorism is as productive as possible.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PAYATT'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Mr. Pyatt, Greece has had seven different governments since 2009, with three having collapsed. Although Prime Minister Tsipras was reelected decisively in September of 2015, the Greek Parliament remains fragile and fragmented. As the U.S. Ambassador, how do you plan to work with different factions in Parliament?

Answer. Greece's political environment has evolved significantly since 2009 in large part due to the economic crisis and resulting political challenges faced by the Greek government. After several decades of one-party governments, Greece has seen a shift to two or three-party coalition governments and increased volatility in political leadership.

If confirmed, I will seek to work with all parties toward the common goal of achieving long-term economic and political stability for Greece. I will work with political leaders across the spectrum to get a full understanding of the issues and use this broad base to shape our bilateral policies with Greece. Most importantly, I will

work with whichever political party or coalition government is in office to ensure our strong bilateral relationship continues regardless of political persuasion.

Question. In your testimony, you say that the success of U.S. policy in Greece hinges on its partnership with the EU. However, many speculate that if Greece is not able to live up to its promises and obligations under the third financial assistance package agreed to in August 2015, that the EU may consider kicking Greece out of the Eurozone. What impact would that have on U.S. interests in Greece? In the region? As Ambassador, how would you assist Greece in staying on track with these reforms?

Answer. The United States has a strong partnership with Greece, and the administration has said consistently that Greece belongs within Europe's monetary union as Athens implements reforms to restore financial stability and economic competitiveness. European leaders have repeatedly said they will take whatever steps are necessary to maintain the integrity of monetary union and safeguard financial stability in the euro area. European leaders have also made clear that they want Greece to remain in the euro area, while respecting its commitments to reform. We remain confident in euro area member states' efforts to implement economic and financial sector reforms and move towards greater integration, and we will continue to engage closely with European partners on integration efforts.

We have followed developments closely throughout the duration of Greece's bailout program and will continue to do so. We remain in close contact with European leaders and the IMF on the measures necessary to secure Greece's economic recovery. We have a great stake in the outcome, not just for the sake of our friends and partners in Greece, but for the sake of the entire eurozone, the U.S. economy, and the world economy. Greece's economic success affects Europe's economy, and what happens to Europe's economy is very important to the United States. Europe is our largest economic partner and we share close financial, trade, and other linkages. A protracted stagnation in Europe with weak business and consumer demand adversely affects the U.S. economy.

Greek authorities are making progress on far-reaching reforms, including pension reforms, privatization efforts, tax reforms, and others. Greece successfully recapitalized its banks at the end of last year and has gradually loosened capital controls imposed last summer, though some restrictions remain in place. European leaders recognize the efforts that Greece has made to date and understand the need to continue to provide partnership and support to Greece as its reforms continue. Looking forward, Greece must now focus on reform implementation. If confirmed, I will urge the Greek government to continue taking steps to do so. In return for implementing those reforms, it will be important for Greece and its creditors to reach agreement on how to ensure debt sustainability over the long term, allowing Greece to return to healthy economic growth. If confirmed, working toward these goals will be my top economic priority.

Question. A large part of stabilizing Greece's economy hinges on its ability to keep the flow of migrants to a minimum, making the deal struck with Turkey in March of this year immensely important. In your opinion, do you think the deal will hold? What events could endanger the deal? How do you see this deal fitting into U.S.-Greek relations in the coming years?

Answer. More than one million migrants and refugees entered Greece between January 2015 and March 2016, and more than 57,000 migrants and refugees currently remain in Greece. Several factors have contributed to a decrease in the number of new arrivals of migrants and refugees in Greece, including a combination of unilateral border closures throughout Europe, NATO presence in the Aegean, and implementation of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan. Arrivals in May averaged fewer than 50 per day, compared to an average of 870 daily in the first half of March.

Specifically on the EU-Turkey agreement, we believe that all parties are committed to seeing its success and are working toward a common goal of stemming the flow of irregular migration while also improving legal mechanisms for those who need international protection to be able to access it. We expect all nations to uphold their international obligations and commitments not to send individuals with legitimate protection needs back to their countries of origin, and to conduct any returns of individuals who do not qualify for international protection safely, humanely, and with dignity. We also urge the European Union, its member states, and Turkey to continue to work together to swiftly implement assistance measures to which member states have already agreed. This includes the relocation of asylum-seekers already in frontline European States, resettling more refugees from first countries of

asylum into Europe, providing increased humanitarian assistance to refugees, and deploying asylum experts and interpreters to hotspots in Greece and Italy.

We recognize there are several factors that could ultimately affect implementation of the commitments made under the agreement, including legislative requirements, resource limitations, and potentially shifting political dynamics. However, thus far we have observed the parties demonstrate a willingness and effort to uphold their commitments. For example, Greece passed legislation on April 1 to support implementation of the agreement, EU member states have deployed border guards to Greece to provide surge capacity for processing asylum claims, and Turkey has received hundreds of migrants returned under the deal. These are concrete actions that illustrate the willingness of stakeholders to contribute to a comprehensive and coordinated solution.

We believe the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan is an important step in responding to the unprecedented flow of refugees and migrants in the region. The United States has also done what it can to support regional partners in addressing the challenge. Total U.S. humanitarian assistance contributions worldwide were more than \$6 billion last year, including funding from the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the U. S. Agency for International Development. Of this, nearly \$44 million in humanitarian aid in FY 2016 supported activities throughout Europe.

In Greece, we have worked with our Department of Defense colleagues to provide humanitarian assistance items such as beds, blankets, and sanitary items to help equip accommodation facilities. Additionally, our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working in close concert with the Greek public health authorities as they seek to ensure the public health and that of the migrant population is effectively safeguarded. We have worked closely with the Greek government, European partners, and international organizations such as UNHCR to closely coordinate these efforts so that they may be complementary but not duplicative. If confirmed, I will seek to continue this robust cooperation.

Question. Despite the deal to stem the flow of migrants, Greece's relations with Turkey have been strained for some time. Does this tension affect U.S. interests in the region? If so how? If confirmed, how would you go about providing assistance or advice to the Greek government in this matter?

Answer. We are encouraged by regular, high-level bilateral engagements between Greece and Turkey, and Greece has acknowledged publicly that relations with Turkey have improved in recent years. Greek Prime Minister Tsipras visited Turkey three times in the past year and regularly engages his Turkish counterparts on key issues such as Cyprus, refugees and migration, and increasing economic ties. Greece and Turkey held their most recent meeting of the High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) in Izmir in March. At this summit, Prime Minister Tsipras and then-Prime Minister Davutoglu reaffirmed the need for bilateral cooperation on the refugee and migration crisis and reached a bilateral deal for accelerated readmission of migrants from Greece to Turkey.

We believe these visits and joint efforts to address issues of mutual concern—such as refugees and migration—indicate the potential for bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey to continue to improve. We recognize that a tension-free Aegean can be achieved only through constructive engagement between Greece and Turkey and applaud the efforts of the Greek and Turkish governments to improve their relationship. We have conveyed to both Greece and Turkey our strong support for a stable Aegean, which is in their national interests as well. Greece and Turkey have long-established diplomatic channels for addressing tensions in the region, and all NATO members, including Greece and Turkey, are committed to working out any differences peacefully and through dialogue. That is in both countries' best interests, and in the best interests of the United States, as well. If confirmed, I will encourage this dialogue and positive steps by Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences bilaterally.

Question. Prior to being nominated for this ambassadorial position, you served as the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. What lessons learned from your time in Ukraine do you feel will be applicable to the post in Greece, should you be confirmed?

Answer. My time as U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine taught me the importance of empowering a dedicated interagency team and molding a common vision for the U.S. mission. With perseverance and hard work, the U.S. interagency team in Ukraine was able to work effectively together, allowing us to achieve our mission goals. If confirmed, I will apply these leadership skills to help the U.S. mission in Greece move forward on our policy priorities and pursue a common vision in our relations with Greece.

I also learned in Ukraine how much of an impact on-the-ground, people-to-people diplomacy can make. I made it a priority to engage directly with host-country citizens on a daily basis, which gave our mission a much clearer understanding of what was going on in the country—and which allowed us to show Ukrainians the everyday, “real people” face of the United States. Our holiday YouTube videos were a perfect example of outreach that set our mission apart from those of other countries and left a positive impression among average Ukrainians. If confirmed as Ambassador to Greece, I will continue these efforts to harness the power of people-to-people diplomacy.

Finally, I came to appreciate how European finance, businesses, politics, and society are all interconnected—and how they interact and evolve at a very rapid pace. As U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, I learned how to think about our policy and mission goals in this environment of interconnectedness. From our multilateral coordination efforts to stabilize Ukraine’s macroeconomic environment to our intense support, in coordination with our EU allies, for Ukraine’s politically brave reforms, our success was contingent upon our ability to adapt to this continuously changing European environment. If confirmed, I will bring this lesson to bear as U.S. Ambassador to Greece.

RESPONSES OF DOUGLAS ALLAN SILLIMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE
REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGATE SILLIMAN’S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

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

Answer. I have advocated for human rights and proper labor conditions throughout my career. In my most recent assignment as Ambassador to Kuwait, I have, with cabinet-level officials, pressed the fight against trafficking in persons, advocated for enforcement of fair labor standards, encouraged the proper treatment of stateless people and raised other human rights issues. The Embassy and I have met with critics of the government and worked closely with human rights groups and other NGOs.

One key example of this work is related to trafficking in persons. During my tenure as Ambassador in Kuwait, my Embassy and I have repeatedly pressed the Kuwaiti government to address its poor record on trafficking in persons. In large part, as a result of our intense engagement at all levels of government, the Kuwaiti Parliament passed a contract labor law regulating and centralizing the recruitment of foreign workers (and closing hundreds of small labor recruiting agencies that had been the source of trafficking in the past), enacted Kuwait’s first-ever law regulating household workers, opened a government shelter for trafficked women, stood up a new Anti-Human Trafficking Department in the Ministry of Interior, established a Human Rights Office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and conducted its first prosecutions under the two new laws. I am proud of this record of accomplishment, working in cooperation with Kuwaiti government officials who shared our view on the need to end trafficking in persons in Kuwait.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Iraq? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Iraq? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most pressing human rights issue in Iraq is, without a doubt, Da’esh. This reprehensible organization has committed innumerable violations of human rights against Iraq’s diverse ethnic and religious communities. Foremost among these is the genocide it has perpetrated against Iraq’s religious minorities, but its list of crimes also includes—though is not limited to—executing Muslims of different sects, LGBTI individuals, teachers, and aid workers; enslaving women and girls and forcing them into marriages; and employing child soldiers. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Iraqi government in the fight against Da’esh to ensure that its flagrant and disgusting human rights abuses come to an end. Beyond Da’esh, trafficking in persons remains a problem in Iraq. Iraq has taken considerable steps to combat this—especially in light of the ongoing fight against Da’esh—but much remains to be done. If confirmed, I will bring the same zeal in fighting this heinous crime as I brought to Kuwait, and will engage the Government of Iraq at the highest levels to draw greater attention to this issue.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Iraq in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Ultimately, the end of Da'esh and its human rights abuses cannot be achieved through military means alone. Defeating Da'esh and preventing its return requires the Government of Iraq foster a more inclusive political environment, emphasizing a respect for the rights of all Iraqis and a commitment to their safety and well-being. To this end, we must continue to support security and stabilization programs in areas liberated from Da'esh. Advocating for the speedy reintegration of minorities into liberated communities will also be critical, as the political participation of all of Iraq's communities will be essential to building a functioning, representative government and forging a stable, unified Iraq. Continuing the battle against trafficking in persons is made substantially more difficult by the continuing fight against Da'esh and the concurrent need to enhance the capabilities of the Iraqi justice system. Ensuring that Iraqi police and prosecutors are adequately resourced to recognize, investigate, and prosecute trafficking cases will be integral to further advancements in this arena.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Iraq? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, meeting with civil society organizations will be a priority, both in the United States and in Iraq, especially those promoting human rights. Civil society groups provide valuable insight into a variety of issues in ways that our embassies simply cannot replicate. Working with civil society organizations is essential to effectively achieving our goals.

I will also ensure that the Leahy Law continues to be implemented to its fullest extent. Iraq is one of the largest recipients of American military assistance, and along with such aid comes the responsibility to ensure that U.S. equipment and training are not used to commit or support human rights abuses. During my tenure, Embassy Baghdad will continue to provide human rights training to the Iraqi Armed Forces.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Iraq to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Iraq?

Answer. If confirmed, engaging with Iraq to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted will be a priority for me. Fair and equal treatment under the law is essential in any country, but especially in Iraq given the potential for unfair treatment to enflame sectarian tensions during this critical time. In the short term, I will advocate for respecting the rights of Internally Displaced People fleeing Iraqi cities as they are liberated from Da'esh, including the establishment of transparent and humane processes for security screening of military-aged males. I will couple this with increased emphasis on adherence to Prime Minister Abadi's 2014 executive order on enforcing the rights of detainees, which prohibits arrests made without warrants or outside the confines of the Iraqi criminal code.

Question. Will you engage with Iraq on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, the current situation in Iraq requires that our bilateral dialogue address these subjects. Widespread respect for human rights and the promotion of good governance are essential to fostering a post-Da'esh environment in which Iraq's numerous communities flourish and prosper. If confirmed, my short-term engagements on these issues will include advocating for humane treatment of those fleeing the fighting, seeking accountability for security forces that are alleged to have committed human rights abuses, and encouraging the government to guarantee equal protection and access to services for all of its citizens, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

Question. When Secretary Kerry announced that ISIL had committed genocide against Yazidis and Christians, he committed the U.S. to supporting efforts to collect, document, and analyze evidence as well as efforts to hold perpetrators accountable. What specific actions has the State Department taken since March in that regard and what more will you do as Ambassador to ensure ISIL perpetrators are prosecuted?

Answer. The Department's policy has not changed in light of the Secretary's statement, which reconfirmed the direction of our policy. We are undertaking a number of efforts to promote accountability for Da'esh's depraved acts and to secure the peace, good governance, and respect for human rights that Iraqi citizens deserve. Our Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is funding a \$3 million program that has begun securing mass grave sites around Mount Sinjar, and is providing technical training in northern Iraq to Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) staff on mass grave exhumation. Our partner NGOs will also provide analysis support once evidence is collected.

Another project we are funding collects narratives from Iraqi citizens that may be used in a variety of transitional justice processes. Further, we have responded, and will continue to respond, with emergency and other programmatic assistance, with military force to degrade and ultimately defeat Da'esh, and by taking active measures to address atrocities in Iraq. We have also provided humanitarian aid to support survivors of the conflict, including survivors of atrocities perpetrated by Da'esh.

The U.S. government is also working with the Government of Iraq (GOI) to put in place strong governance, human rights protections, and security structures so that Da'esh and similar groups cannot take hold in the region again. If confirmed, I will communicate to the GOI and KRG that we are closely following the progress of their investigations and prosecutions and encourage them to continue such work in a credible way that meets due process standards. Ending impunity for crimes and providing justice to survivors is an important part of long term stability and reconciliation, and assists in creating the conditions on the ground in which minorities will feel more secure in returning to their homes. I will also support implementation of additional State Department programming focused on criminal accountability and broader transitional justice, and seek to work in tandem with the justice efforts of our Coalition partners.

Question. In your testimony, you discussed justice for Sunnis who are alleged victims of atrocities at the hands of Shia militia, and noted that Prime Minister Abadi has committed to setting up a commission to investigate these allegations. Given these crimes and those of ISIL, does Iraq have the investigative and judicial capacity to take this on? What is your assessment and what specific work will you do with the government to ensure they have the capacity and technical skills to investigate and prosecute these complex crimes?

Answer. The Government of Iraq has shown its willingness to investigate and prosecute captured Da'esh fighters and members of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) accused of crimes. Prime Minister Abadi's recent investigations into PMF abuses have resulted in the arrest of several PMF militiamen who are expected to face trial in the near future. The Kurdistan Regional Government is in the process of amending its criminal code to give it the ability to prosecute perpetrators of genocide within the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and legislation is currently before the Kurdish parliament to create a mixed court system consisting of Kurdish and international lawyers to carry out these prosecutions. While high-level members of Da'esh could under certain circumstances be prosecuted in international jurisdictions for their atrocities, it will likely be the national court systems in Iraq that try the vast majority of Da'esh's perpetrators. We have heard concerns related to detention of suspects, as well as questions about provision of due process at trial. We take these reports seriously, and will look into them and work to support the Government of Iraq (GOI) in carrying out fair and credible justice processes. As areas become liberated, the out-flow of thousands of people will naturally create a strain on the capacity of the Iraqi justice system as it strives to ensure that the rights of innocent civilians, particularly Sunnis, are respected, while at the same time identifying potential perpetrators of atrocities. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Iraq to continue to improve its provincial and national criminal justice institutions and investigative capacity, and make every effort to bring the resources of the United States government to bear in this endeavor.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILLIMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. As you know, Iraq faces significant challenges in recovering its economy as it fights to defeat ISIS and build a cohesive civil society. One bright spot for Iraq, however, is that oil exports, which provide roughly 90% of public sector revenue in Iraq, rose in 2016 to 4.5 million barrels per day. Domestic oil production also rose in 2016 to 3.8 million barrels per day. In your opinion, how can the U.S. assist the

Iraqi government in continuing to foster this growth? What steps would you take as ambassador to assist with growth in the oil sector?

Answer. We are encouraged by Iraq's continued growth in oil production and exports, which is an outcome of the open and competitive bid rounds in 2009. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on confidence-building measures, particularly in resolving oil and gas disputes, pushing the Iraqis to implement their IMF and World Bank programs, and supporting the "debottlenecking" of Iraq's southern oil infrastructure.

Predictions of low oil prices over the medium term mean that each barrel of oil exported is likely to continue earning lower prices than in recent years, making it crucial that Iraq maintain and, ideally, increase production. The State Department has co-led energy discussions with the Iraqi government to "debottleneck" oil infrastructure since 2012. Based on these discussions, the Iraqi government has contracted with the Department of Energy to focus its national labs' expert staff on identifying vulnerabilities in Iraq's oil infrastructure, resulting in detailed recommendations on how to make the infrastructure more resilient to threats. In addition, a USAID program seeks to increase exports by removing bottlenecks that limit the amount of oil that can be exported and enhancing the resilience of Iraq's oil infrastructure to maximize the number of days Iraq's export facilities are up and running.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on confidence-building measures to maximize cooperation between the two entities. Only through cooperation will the KRG and the government in Baghdad receive the full benefit of the oil they produce, as well as attract foreign infrastructure investment.

I will also work with the Iraqis to implement their IMF and World Bank programs, which recognize the centrality of oil revenues to the Iraqi government's operations. The IMF required the Iraqi government to settle its arrears with the international oil companies operating in Iraq as a prior action to enter into a Stand-By Arrangement. By successfully completing this prior action, the Government of Iraq ensured the resumption of infrastructure investments to expand production and exports and enhance the resilience of its infrastructure. The 2015 World Bank Development Policy Loan provided funding to assist the Government of Iraq capture natural gas associated with oil production for power generation. The World Bank estimated that utilizing gas for power generation instead of petroleum would result in an additional \$520 billion in revenue by 2035, in addition to reducing Iraq's greenhouse gas production.

Question. In your testimony, you highlight the importance of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to the Mosul campaign. However, the KRG may be mounting a political movement for independence from Iraq. How would the KRG's break from Iraq affect the campaign against ISIS? How would it affect U.S. interests in Iraq? As ambassador, how would you go about advising the Iraqi government on this matter?

Answer. The U.S. has long supported a unified Iraq as being in the best interest of all of Iraq's communities, including the Kurds. If confirmed, I will advise the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) that the United States supports a unified, federal, democratic, and secure Iraq. Any change to the structure of the Iraqi state is, however, an internal matter that must be handled in accordance with the Iraqi constitution.

Coordination between Baghdad and Erbil has proven critical in the counter-Da'esh campaign. Baghdad provided the first flights of ammunition to the KRG after the fall of Mosul in 2014. Since then, the Ministry of Defense has included support for the Kurdish Peshmerga in its security assistance plans and budget. Baghdad and Erbil are stronger and more effective when they are united and working together. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that this cooperation continues.

Finally, internal Iraqi politics should not significantly change the U.S. key interests in Iraq. The U.S. will remain steadfast in its support for the people of Iraq in their efforts to defeat Da'esh and achieve political and economic reform.

Question. There have been several votes in Congress on providing direct arms to the KRG instead of through the Government of Iraq. Would you support direct arming of the Kurds? Do you see problems with the current process for providing arms?

Answer. Coordinating U.S. military assistance through the central government is required by both Iraqi and international law and tangibly demonstrates our commitment to a unified, sovereign, and independent Iraq. It is also essential to a durable victory over Da'esh. Any call for preferred treatment for one region of Iraq strength-

ens voices that have been working against the pragmatic reconciliation policies advocated by Prime Minister Abadi, and weakens his ability to hold off Shia political forces that want him to take a more divisive line.

Since Prime Minister Abadi took office, Baghdad has neither prevented nor delayed the delivery of equipment to the Ministry of Peshmerga in Erbil. On the contrary, it has supported a Coalition effort that has provided the Peshmerga with thousands of tons of ammunition and equipment cost-free. The Government of Iraq has also committed to providing the Peshmerga with at least \$200 million of support via the FY 2016 Foreign Military Financing loan. We are expediting deliveries to Erbil as quickly as our system allows, as we are doing with our support to all of Iraq's forces. While aircraft carrying weapons and equipment destined for Erbil do stop in Baghdad for inspection, this usually adds only a few hours to the transit time.

Without any special provision of law, we are already able to train and equip Iraqi Kurdish forces and have been doing this successfully for some time. To date, through U.S. and Coalition donations, we have provided the Peshmerga with more than 67 million rounds of rifle ammunition; 41,000 grenades; 115,000 mortar rounds; 63,000 anti-tank rounds; over 38,000 weapons including rifles, anti-tank systems, and heavy caliber machine guns; counter-IED equipment; and more than 150 vehicles, including ambulances and mine resistant vehicles. Additional equipment and ammunition is on the way, including additional protective gear for nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. In addition, thousands of Peshmerga have already received training at the Build Partner Capacity (BPC) sites.

The FY 2015 Iraq Train and Equip Fund (ITEF) budget included funding to train and equip two Peshmerga brigades. This includes dozens of mounted machine guns, 1,200 M-16 rifles and their associated equipment, as well as protective gear for Peshmerga soldiers. An additional \$65 million has been provided from ITEF in food, fuel, ammunition, and medical supplies with the first food and fuel shipments arriving in late April and early May.

Defense Secretary Carter announced \$415 million in additional funding for support to the Ministry of Peshmerga in support of the fight against Da'esh. This support is for food, fuel, ammunition, and stipends for those Peshmerga directly involved in the fight against Da'esh.

Question. The State Department has noted that only one-third of the \$861 million Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan has been funded. Further, State has recently announced plans to hold a "pledging conference" along with Canada, Germany, and Japan, in order to raise funds for another "substantial contribution" to the humanitarian effort. The U.S. has already provided about \$800 million to Iraqi rebuilding efforts since. If confirmed, do you see yourself participating in this conference? If so, how would you assist in the negotiations with other states, given that the U.S. contribution has already been incredibly substantial compared to other coalition states?

Answer. The dire humanitarian situation in Iraq illustrates the critical need for the international community to continue to support humanitarian and stabilization efforts. The United States will co-host, with Canada, Germany and Japan, a Pledging Conference in July to raise additional funds to meet those needs. The United States recognizes the overwhelming needs of those displaced from their homes in Iraq and the important role our international donor partners play. Informed resource planning for humanitarian and stabilization efforts is vital. The United States has led and will continue to lead the effort to intensify international support and donor contributions on humanitarian assistance, demining, and the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Funding Facilities for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS) and Expanded Stabilization (FFES). These areas reflect critical assistance gaps that must be addressed to bolster effective governance and provision of basic services in areas liberated from Da'esh control, as well as to provide urgently-needed assistance to conflict-affected Iraqis. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with our partners in the Government of Iraq and the international community to further Iraq's stability and defeat Da'esh.

Question. International humanitarian organizations report that of the 3.4 million people displaced in Iraq since 2014, more than half are children. As ambassador, how would you work with the Iraqi government to provide assistance to ensure these children have some sort of basic access to education in order to prevent a generational education gap?

Answer. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Iraq, providing more than \$778 million since FY 2014 for assistance to Iraqis in need throughout the region. In addition, we announced \$20 million in new humani-

tarian assistance for the Iraq response on June 21, 2016. Many of our current humanitarian programs with UNICEF and non-governmental organizations include educational assistance to those displaced, as well as vulnerable host-community members. This includes working with local, provincial, and central government authorities to ensure that children have access to education, either by providing transportation assistance to children living too far away from schools to walk, or by working with authorities to ensure that displaced children are able to take their annual exams so they do not fall behind in school.

If confirmed, I will work within the State Department and USAID to ensure that education remains a priority intervention for the U.S. government to help Iraqi children gain proper access to education. Questions for the Record Submitted to

RESPONSES OF P. MICHAEL MCKINLEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE
FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Given widespread public sentiment in Brazil about the importance of transparency and accountability, what steps would you take to show support for these issues?

Answer. In recent years, we have witnessed Brazil's institutions make great strides increasing openness and creating a higher standard of accountability. Brazilian police, prosecutors, and courts are increasingly investigating corruption and bringing those who violate the law to justice. The Brazilian public supports these changes. Surveys show nearly 80 percent of Brazilians believe the groundbreaking "Operation Car Wash" anti-corruption investigation should be allowed to run its course even if it causes temporary economic pain. Both President Rousseff and Acting President Temer have called for anti-corruption investigations to continue unimpeded.

If confirmed, I would urge the Brazilian government to continue taking steps to strengthen Brazil's independent institutions, preserve crucial reforms such as plea bargaining and access to public information, and provide the Brazilian people with the transparent, accountable governance they deserve. I will consult with civil society and business leaders to identify opportunities for the United States and Brazil to share best practices in prosecuting official corruption and promoting government transparency at the subnational and national levels. I will also build upon the Embassy's ongoing efforts to help Brazil build its law enforcement capacity through training for police, prosecutors, and judges. By doing so, I would show the United States supports Brazil's continued progress toward greater transparency and accountability.

Question. Given our size and synergies, it would seem that the U.S.-Brazil economic relationship has not achieved at full potential. What obstacles exist to resolving our trade disputes and increasing our trade flows? Do Mercosur rules and regulations have an impact on the U.S.-Brazil economic relationship? What steps would you take to address any distortions or negative impact that Mercosur may have in U.S. competitiveness?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, deepening our commercial ties with Brazil would be a key focus of mine. Annual two-way trade in goods and services between our countries is already substantial, having reached \$100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to continue to advance our leaders' vision of doubling trade within ten years, using such fora as the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum and Commercial Dialogue, and will ensure continuing Embassy support of these strong bilateral cooperative mechanisms that work to lower trade barriers and spur additional growth in our trade and investment relationship.

Global supply chains are changing, and new partnerships are being formed every day based on the latest trade and investment agreements. It is important that Mercosur, and the private sectors within Mercosur countries, are not left behind in the new global marketplace. Foreign Minister Serra emphasized the importance of Brazil's relationship with Argentina in his inaugural speech and his first foreign trip was to Argentina. He also discussed the importance of reinvigorating Mercosur, including through increased openness, and we welcome similar sentiments expressed by the authorities in other members of the trade bloc. We are encouraged by the closer ties Mercosur members are building with members of the Pacific Alliance. We welcome increased trade and investment with Mercosur countries and

would like to increase market access for U.S. goods and services. We have ongoing substantive dialogues on trade and investment issues with each of the original Mercosur members. If I am confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to seek ways to deepen our engagement with the Mercosur countries.

Question. Last year, the Brazilian Congress finally ratified the U.S.-Brazil Defense Cooperation Agreement as well as more recently the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which allows for greater defense cooperation and sharing of information, technology and hardware. How would you build on the progress deepen the Defense cooperation between our two countries?

Answer. U.S.-Brazil defense cooperation is on an upward trajectory, and, if I am confirmed, I will seize every opportunity to make it even stronger. The Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) provide an excellent framework for doing so. These agreements are advancing our relationship by strengthening our cooperation on research and development, technology security, and acquisition. They also promote joint exercises and facilitate the sharing of sophisticated capabilities and technologies. If confirmed, I will work closely with relevant Washington agencies, our Embassy team, and the Brazilian government to continue exploring all these issues via bilateral mechanisms such as our Political-Military Dialogue, our Bilateral Working Group, and our Joint Staff Talks. In terms of security assistance, I would support International Military Education and Training Funding (IMET) to be used to expose Brazilian military officers to U.S. training, doctrine, and values. I would also maintain regular conversations with Brazil about how our two countries can help build global peace-keeping capacity, particularly in Lusophone Africa.

If confirmed, I will also focus on promoting robust defense trade between the United States and Brazil. From 2013 to 2015, the Government of Brazil was our second largest defense trade partner in Latin America (after Mexico). During that three-year period, Direct Commercial Sales of defense articles and services to Brazil exceeded \$1.3 billion. The U.S. defense industry continues to have great interest in trade to help Brazil modernize its military, enhance its maritime and land border control, and improve its emergency response capabilities. If confirmed, I will therefore look to support industry efforts to launch a bilateral U.S.-Brazil Defense Industry Dialogue to institutionalize engagement between the U.S. and Brazilian private sectors.

Question. What obstacles exist to the U.S. and Brazil pursuing negotiations of a bilateral tax treaty? What steps can the U.S. take to encourage Brazil to simplify and address a range of tax issues impacting bilateral trade and investment?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I would advocate for a more ambitious trade and investment relationship with Brazil, including on tax issues. In June 2015, the United States welcomed the entry into force of the agreement between the United States and Brazil to implement the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). The FATCA agreement will improve international tax compliance and combat offshore tax evasion by facilitating an annual automatic exchange, on a reciprocal basis, of specific account holder information that financial institutions in each country will report to their own governments as required under local law.

The United States as well as the both the U.S. and Brazilian business communities have long advocated for the conclusion of a bilateral tax treaty that would provide meaningful tax benefits to cross-border investors, including in the form of significant reductions in withholding taxes, the adoption of transfer pricing rules consistent with the international standard, and robust rules to facilitate the resolution of disputes between the tax authorities. We understand progress on many of these issues would first require legislative changes in Brazil. If confirmed, I would advocate for concrete progress on these tax issues.

Question. Brazil has played a limited role in trying to diffuse the situation in Venezuela. As Ambassador, how would you work with the Brazilian government business leaders, and civil society to engage on the current democratic, economic, social and humanitarian crisis Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I would work closely with the Brazilian government to promote a more active role in calling on the Venezuelan government to engage in meaningful and inclusive dialogue with the political opposition and work towards a Venezuela that is prosperous, governable, and respects human rights and democratic principles.

If I am confirmed, I will engage with the Brazilian government and with Brazilian civil society to convey our concern that the current institutional stalemate in Venezuela is preventing the political dialogue needed to find solutions that address the

challenges Venezuela's citizens face, including shortages of food, water, and medicine. I will emphasize that Brazil, as the largest democracy in Latin America, can play an important role in promoting a democratic and inclusive political process in Venezuela. Indeed, Brazil has already taken action to promote dialogue among Venezuelan government officials and opposition lawmakers. Brazil's decision to co-sponsor Argentina's June 1 OAS resolution and the June 15 joint statement on Venezuela by Ministers and Heads of Delegation at the OAS General Assembly were welcome steps, as was Brazil's offer to donate medicines produced in Brazilian public laboratories to international humanitarian organizations for distribution to the Venezuelan people.

Question. Brazil has established a series of non-trade barriers and other temporary subsidies that protect certain domestic industries from competition and there are a number of WTO cases filed against Brazil over discriminatory taxation and charges affecting sectors such as automobiles and information and communication technology. How would you propose to work with Brazil to level the playing field for U.S. companies seeking to export their goods and services to Brazil?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I would push to promote a level playing field for U.S. businesses and an expanded commercial relationship, consistent with our leaders' vision of doubling trade within the next decade.

In his inaugural speech in May, Brazilian Foreign Minister Serra said, in the short-term, Brazil should focus on removing non-tariff barriers to trade and regulations that obstruct trade. We are working with Brazil in those areas, including standards, trade facilitation, and innovation, through the Commercial Dialogue process.

We are also advancing the trade relationship through a number of other important dialogues, including the U.S.-Brazil Commission on Economic and Trade Relations under the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ATEC), the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum, and the U.S.-Brazil Consultative Committee on Agriculture. In March of this year, for the first-time ever, a meeting of the ATEC was held at the ministerial level. Recognizing the importance of the manufacturing sector as a key driver of economic growth in both countries, the United States and Brazil agreed in principle to establish an ongoing dialogue on policies that promote investment in manufacturing during the ATEC meeting.

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

Answer. Throughout my career, I have taken concrete steps to promote democracy and human rights in each of the countries in which I have served. As U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan and as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, I implemented our long-term strategy to help Afghans construct a democratic government that respects human rights. In those two positions, I oversaw a broad array of U.S. assistance programs designed to build the capacity of Afghan security forces and civilian institutions, improve the performance of the Afghan justice system, and promote economic growth, all in the context of increased respect for human rights. More directly, I have personally advocated for the extension of services to abused women and children. I have also strongly pushed for measures to address corruption. On rule of law, I have secured support for the new Attorney General to allow his office to pursue higher profile legal cases. Although much remains to be done, as a result of this U.S. government assistance, Afghans have made progress toward building a democratic system of governance that is credible, transparent and inclusive.

Earlier, as U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, I led U.S. efforts to support Colombia as it transitioned from conflict towards peace. We worked closely with the Colombian government to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and protect vulnerable citizens. I also focused directly on programs to provide services to victims of gender-based violence in areas affected by conflict; on the security of journalists facing death threats; on the right of trade union workers; on the promotion of LGBT rights; and on the importance of a more inclusive approach to the Afro-Colombian community. Colombia is now working toward a historic final peace accord, and I am confident this agreement will lead to continued progress on human rights issues.

Similarly, as U.S. Ambassador to Peru, I implemented bilateral programs to support the Peruvian government's anti-narcotics and alternative development efforts, improve governance, and advance social and economic inclusion for all Peruvians. As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, I played a key role in formulating U.S. policies to promote orderly and humane international migration and to provide protection and assist-

ance to refugees, stateless persons, conflict victims and vulnerable migrants. I also personally successfully advocated for the resumption of the U.S. government resettlement program that had been suspended after the September 11, 2001, attacks and worked to include the security enhancements needed to protect the program and allow us to resume resettling genuine refugees in our country.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Brazil? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Brazil? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The Brazilian government takes seriously its obligation to protect human rights and, although Brazil's constitution and legal framework provide a robust structure for doing so, some areas of concern persist. As the Department of State has reported, Brazilian state police have committed unlawful killings, and conditions in some Brazilian prisons are poor and at times life-threatening. Other problems include corruption, sex trafficking, forced labor, as well as violence and discrimination against women, children, people of African descent, and other vulnerable populations.

Brazil has made great strides on many of these fronts in recent years, but more needs to be done. If confirmed, I will continue to express our concerns regarding human rights abuses and urge the Brazilian government to continue making progress on these important issues. For example, some Brazilian authorities have expressed interest in learning from the U.S. experience with managing a large prison population in a way that respects the human rights of prisoners. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage dialogue between U.S. and Brazilian counterparts to exchange best practices with respect to prison management. In this way, I would hope to advance Brazilian authorities' efforts to ensure prisons and detention centers are safe and humane for all inmates.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Brazil in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Brazilian law includes ample protections of human rights, but implementation continues to be inconsistent. Authorities' efforts to enforce the law have at times been insufficient, and there have been frequent delays in bringing violators to justice due to inefficiencies in Brazil's judicial process. Another problem is that statistics on the nature and extent of certain human rights violations are lacking. For instance, while there are serious concerns regarding the use of lethal force by some Brazilian police, there are no official statistics regarding the exact number of people killed nationwide each year in police operations. Reporting suggests, however, that a disproportionate number of these victims are Afro-Brazilian males under 25 years of age. This trend has led to public outcry and intense debate among civil society and within Brazil's Congress.

I believe Brazil shares our perspective on the importance of advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general. At the same time, I recognize that with Brazil's economy experiencing its worst recession in decades, Brazil is currently facing a difficult fiscal situation, and government resources are limited. If I am confirmed, one of my challenges as Ambassador will therefore be to encourage Brazil to continue to invest the resources needed to strengthen its democratic institutions, expand the role of civil society, and enforce the human rights protections contained in Brazilian law.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Brazil? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to meeting with civil society and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United States, as well as with local human rights NGOs in Brazil. Our U.S. Mission to Brazil regularly meets with civil society actors and NGOs to discuss bilateral and multilateral human rights issues, and if I am confirmed, I will pledge to do the same.

I would also ensure that U.S. security assistance to Brazil and security cooperation activities with the Brazilian government continue to reinforce human rights, including by actively supporting the Leahy Law. We already enjoy an excellent security relationship with the Brazilian government thanks to our joint efforts to ensure the 2016 Olympics are safe and successful. At the Brazilian government's request, we have been working together in a variety of areas, ranging from airport screening

procedures to managing entry/exit at stadiums to looking at how to prevent serious security incidents in and around major sporting events. This is in addition to ongoing programs and activities by various law enforcement and other agencies in Brazil that have helped bolster Brazilian security capacity. Overall, our training programs and exchanges have benefited over 3,800 Brazilian security officials.

For each of these programs and exchanges, our U.S. Mission to Brazil has taken all necessary steps to ensure compliance with Leahy vetting requirements. When arranging for security assistance and organizing security cooperation activities, the Mission has worked hand in hand with the Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which has in turn consulted closely with human rights NGOs like Amnesty International. When necessary, the Mission has evaluated Brazilian security forces down to the sub-unit level while clearing candidates for training. If confirmed, I will instruct my Embassy team to maintain the same level of rigor in Leahy vetting so as to ensure the continued momentum in our close security cooperation produces an even greater shared respect for human rights.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Brazil to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Brazil?

Answer. As the State Department's Human Rights Report has noted, there have been no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Brazil. Brazil's constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press, and the Brazilian government has mostly respected these rights. The government places no restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events. Brazilian law provides for the freedoms of assembly and association, and the government generally respects these rights. If confirmed, I will remain in close contact with the Brazilian government about these important issues, and I will emphasize our shared belief that these fundamental freedoms must always be respected.

Question. Will you engage with Brazil on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to continuing to advance the broad and deep bilateral agenda that President Obama and President Rousseff outlined when she visited Washington in June 2015. Human rights, civil rights, and good governance form an integral part of that agenda. As the two largest democracies in the hemisphere, Brazil and the United States are natural partners on issues of human rights. We share democratic values and a determination to defend the rights of our peoples. The United States and Brazil have a longstanding commitment to promoting human rights, diversity, and racial, ethnic and gender equality. In 2010, we signed a MOU for the Advancement of Women, and in 2008, we created a Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality (JAPER). We are co-founding members of the Open Government Partnership, and in 2015, we created a U.S.-Brazil Global Human Rights Working Group to improve our coordination on human rights issues in multilateral fora.

If confirmed, I will work to maintain the positive momentum our two countries have created in terms of addressing issues of human rights and social inclusion. For instance, our U.S. Mission to Brazil has been very engaged in organizing events addressing issues that impact women, refugees, indigenous groups, people of African descent, religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI persons. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I will ensure that these important policy and program engagements continue, and I will work to encourage collaborative action with government and civil society partners to promote human rights, civil rights, and good governance.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Rio De Janeiro will host the 2016 Olympics August 5-21, 2016 and Paralympics September 7-18, 2016. The acting Governor of Rio de Janeiro has declared a state of financial disaster just before the host city celebrates the Olympic Games.

- ◆ Does the country have enough resources to follow through on its commitments to protect people attending the Olympics?
- ◆ Does the Brazilian government still believe it is safe for people to travel to Rio even though a group of 100 scientists formally wrote to disagree, stating that the Zika situation is too dire?

Answer. The Government of Brazil is fully committed to hosting a safe and successful Games, and is maintaining federal support for the Games. I understand the declaration of fiscal emergency will allow the State of Rio de Janeiro to access funds in advance of the Olympics to pay salaries, pay police overtime, and complete transportation projects.

The Brazilian government has stated that there is a low public health risk related to Zika and the Olympics. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have stated that available evidence does not indicate there would be any meaningful public health impact from altering the schedule for the Games. All travelers to the Olympics should follow the recommendations outlined in the CDC's travel notice.

Question. In November 2015, Brazil's Ministry of Health declared a "public health emergency of national importance" in response to a sharp increase in the number of infants born with microcephaly, a devastating birth defect caused by the Zika virus. Brazil's Ministry of Health has confirmed more than 1,550 cases since October 2015 linked to the rise of Zika infection in the country. What actions has the Brazilian government taken to stop the spread of Zika, to educate and screen pregnant women, and to care for children born with microcephaly?

Answer. Brazil has responded quickly and transparently in its efforts to combat the Zika virus and better understand its relationship to microcephaly, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, and other neurological disorders. Brazil has launched a massive public awareness and vector control campaign, involving over 220,000 Brazilian armed forces and over 300,000 public health workers to conduct education campaigns and vector control measures in high-risk neighborhoods. In March, Brazil announced over \$300 million in funding over the next three years to combat the Zika virus. We understand that Brazil is also working at the state and federal levels with the World Bank to reallocate existing program funds towards strengthening surveillance, maternal and child health and rehabilitation, and training for health workers.

Question. The U.S. Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention has been working with Brazil's Ministry of Health since early November 2015 to understand the sudden increase in microcephaly and the impacts of Zika infection during pregnancy. What lessons have been learned from the widespread Zika infections in Brazil?

Answer. There is extensive and high-level engagement between the U.S. government and the Government of Brazil on Zika virus and associated complications. The Brazilian Ministry of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are working in close collaboration on studies exploring the link between Zika virus and microcephaly and Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

The CDC, along with the Brazilian Ministry of Health, launched in February the largest case control study analyzing the link between Zika and microcephaly. CDC scientists have announced there is enough evidence to conclude that Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects and has been linked to problems in infants, including eye defects, hearing loss, and impaired growth. These studies have increased our understanding of who is at risk from Zika infection, in what stages of pregnancy is Zika able to cause neurologic problems, and helped target guidance and prevention to those populations.

Brazilian scientists and the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) are also collaborating on a study on Zika in pregnancy which will provide essential information on microcephaly and the full range of other health problems that Zika virus infection during pregnancy may cause. Other NIH collaborations with Brazilian institutions are developing various Zika vaccines and a potential vaccine for both Zika and dengue fever. The CDC is working with the Brazilian Ministry of Health on better Zika surveillance and innovative ways to control the mosquito vector that spreads the disease. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is also working with Brazil to develop faster, more definitive testing methods for Zika. These efforts have helped Brazil combat Zika, and help U.S. citizens that are exposed to Zika to be rapidly diagnosed and managed appropriately. If confirmed, I will ensure we maintain the highest-level engagement, as our current Ambassador has done, to ensure U.S.-Brazil cooperation on Zika remains robust.

Question. According to the State Department, Brazil is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children exploited in forced labor and sex trafficking. The State Department rates Brazil a "Tier 2" in its 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, asserting that the Brazilian government "does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking" but "is making significant efforts to do so." Although, the Brazilian government has improved data collection on victim identification, strengthened penalties for child sex traffickers, and contin-

ued awareness-raising efforts, Brazilian statutes prohibits trafficking do not align with international law and Brazil convicts relatively few traffickers given the scale of the problem. If confirmed, what is your plan to work with the Brazilian government to comply with the standards set in the State Department Trafficking in Persons Report?

Answer. If I am confirmed, I will redouble the State Department's calls for Brazil to increase its efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses and impose sentences commensurate with the severity of the offense. I will encourage Brazil's Congress to advance legislation to harmonize the definition of trafficking with the 2000 U.N. Trafficking in Persons Protocol and increase the minimum sentences for anti-trafficking crimes. My understanding is that a draft of this legislation has already been introduced, in 2014.

I will also call on Brazil to continue improving coordination and collaboration between judges and prosecutors in trafficking cases so as to arrive at final convictions more quickly. To ensure victims are identified and cared for, I will urge the Brazilian government to partner with civil society to offer specialized, comprehensive services to victims of sex trafficking and forced labor and to provide officials working at social service centers with sufficient funding and training. I will also voice support for the Brazilian government's ongoing efforts to implement awareness-raising campaigns and other preventive initiatives. In these ways, I will, if confirmed, support Brazil's continued progress toward meeting the standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons, as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. If confirmed, you may need to interact with Interim President Temer and/or his interim government. How do you see yourself dealing with the challenges of an interim government setting? If political turmoil continues in Brazil, how will that affect U.S. interests in Brazil? In the region? How would an elongated interim government affect your agenda for the coming year?

Answer. I recognize Brazil is facing a challenging political moment, but I am confident Brazil will work through its political challenges democratically and in accordance with constitutional principles. Furthermore, I believe our relationship with Brazil will remain strong and the United States will have ample opportunities to engage with the Brazilian government on our bilateral, regional, and global priorities even as Brazil's domestic political situation plays out.

If I am confirmed, I will seek to work with the Brazilian government to continue implementing the broad, forward-looking agenda President Obama and President Rousseff laid out when she visited Washington in June 2015. Acting President Temer and several of his ministers have expressed interest in building upon the momentum we have established in our bilateral cooperation since that visit. I anticipate our two countries will continue to engage via our some 20 major bilateral dialogues, which address trade and investment, human rights, climate change, internet and information and communications technology, defense, and a host of other topics. For example, we are holding our U.S.-Brazil Commercial Dialogue June 28-29 in Washington, and we are pressing forward with our bilateral cooperation on the 2016 Summer Olympics and fighting the spread of the Zika virus.

Question. While most U.S.-Brazil trade declined last year, the U.S. was able to maintain a merchandise trade surplus with Brazil valued at \$4.2 billion. Indeed, the United States remains Brazil's second-largest trade partner, behind China. As ambassador, how would you promote the U.S. merchandise exports to Brazil to ensure that we remain competitive with China in Brazil's market? What other economic sectors do you think have the potential to increase U.S.-Brazil trade?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, continuing to develop our commercial ties with Brazil would be a key focus of mine. Annual two-way trade in goods and services between our countries is already considerable, having reached \$100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to advancing our leaders' vision of doubling trade within ten years, and I will work with Brazil to lower trade barriers and spur additional growth in our trade and investment relationship.

We are advancing the trade relationship through a number of important dialogues, including the U.S.-Brazil Commission on Economic and Trade Relations under the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Commercial Dialogue, and the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum. In March of this year, for the first-time ever,

a meeting of the U.S.-Brazil Commission on Economic and Trade Relations was held at the ministerial level. Recognizing the importance of the manufacturing sector as a key driver of economic growth in both countries, the United States and Brazil agreed in principle at the ATEC to establish an ongoing dialogue on policies that promote investment in manufacturing.

From manufacturing to energy, retail to high-tech, our firms trade with and invest in Brazil. The United States is Brazil's largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI), with a stock value of \$70 billion. The Government of Brazil actively encourages FDI, particularly in the automobile, renewable energy, life sciences, oil and gas, and transportation infrastructure sectors. In his inaugural speech in May, Brazilian Foreign Minister Serra said, in the short-term, Brazil should focus on removing non-tariff barriers to trade and regulations that obstruct trade. We are working with Brazil in those concrete areas, including standards, trade facilitation, and innovation, through the June 28-29 Commercial Dialogue.

Question. With the Olympic Games taking place in Rio this summer, Brazil must gird itself for the possibility of terrorist threats. What steps would you recommend Brazil take to increase security for the Games? Would you recommend increased security for areas that will likely attract Western tourists? What steps would you take to ramp up security at the U.S. Embassy should a terrorist attack occur?

Answer. The Government of Brazil (GOB) is committed to hosting a safe and successful Olympic and Paralympic Games, and we are confident in Brazil's ability to deliver on that commitment. The 2014 Brazil World Cup tournament was a success, and we expect the same outcome for the Olympics and Paralympics. The GOB is deploying a security force of 85,000 for the Rio Olympics, which is more than twice as many as were deployed for the London Olympics. There is an increasing awareness in Brazil of the threat of terrorism, and we are pleased that Brazil passed a new counterterrorism law in March of this year, which defines and criminalizes terrorism and terrorist financing. This legislation has opened up new channels of security cooperation between our two governments.

At the Brazilian government's request, we have been working together in a variety of areas, ranging from airport screening procedures to managing entry/exit at stadiums to looking at how to prevent serious security incidents in and around major sporting events. We have facilitated visits to the United States for Brazilian security personnel to observe our mega event security management and command and control centers during events like the Boston Marathon, a PGA golf tournament, the U.N. General Assembly, and the Super Bowl. We have been able to support a variety of Brazilian requests for subject matter exchanges in areas such as protection of soft targets, drones, suicide bombers, behavioral observation and suspicious activity recognition, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear explosion response (CBRNE)—over one hundred such trainings in all. Overall, our training programs and exchanges have benefited over 3,800 Brazilian security officials.

The U.S. government is also engaged in extensive contingency planning for various security and/or medical incidents. We have emergency action plans in place that we will follow in these types of situations. We will also have an inter-agency Joint Operations Center in place at U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro that will be able to monitor all security situations and liaise with host government officials.

Question. The Brazilian government has taken a number of positive steps toward investigating the cause of the Zika virus and educating its citizens about the risks of being infected. However, with the Olympic Games coming to Rio, some worry that the steep uptick in visitors could cause infection rates around the world to skyrocket. What steps, if any, is Brazil taking to increase health security and awareness among Brazilian citizens as well as foreign visitors for the Games? Will U.S. health organizations be involved in any kind of awareness campaign? If confirmed, how would you advise the U.S. government propose to help, if at all?

Answer. Brazil is working very hard to protect the health and safety of all of the athletes and spectators attending the Games in Brazil, including through public awareness campaigns and vector control efforts at Olympic sites, and we continue to be supportive of those efforts to protect those who are participating in the Games. The Brazilian Government has also emphasized that the Olympic Games will take place during Rio de Janeiro's winter, when the population of mosquitos is low.

The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have stated available evidence does not indicate there would be any meaningful public health impact from altering the schedule for the Games. All travelers to the Olympics should follow the recommendations outlined in the CDC's travel notice.

The U.S. government, including the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services—and its CDC—is coordinating an extensive public relations campaign for travelers to the Olympics. The U.S. government has launched the #USinRio campaign for travelers to the Olympics. As part of this campaign, our Ambassador to Brazil filmed a welcome video and launched a blog (www.usmissionbrazil.org/usinrio). The #USinRio campaign advises U.S. citizens traveling to Brazil to visit travel.state.gov, a one-stop shop containing travel information on security, authorized ticket sellers, and emergency contact information for the embassy, consulates, and consular agencies. State's Olympic and Paralympic Fact Sheet on travel.state.gov contains links to essential resources such as the U.S. Mission to Brazil's Olympics Brochure, the #USinRio smartphone app (which includes information on hospitals, emergency services, links to the CDC for information on Zika and other health issues, and consular information), and the CDC Travel Notice on the Zika virus.

U.S. authorities intend to disseminate our information regarding travel to the Olympics broadly, including by highlighting it on travel.state.gov, through our passport agencies and acceptance facilities, in travel and sports publications, and via official social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Department has also developed a tri-fold flier for printing and distribution. Uber, Starbucks, McDonald's, and Airbnb representatives have agreed to assist with disseminating the tri-fold flier and contact cards in Brazil.

Question. With increased violence from drug trafficking in the Northern Triangle, what effect has this unrest had on Brazil? What efforts is Brazil taking to increase its borders against violence and drug trafficking? In your opinion, is there anything more the U.S. could do to help?

Answer. Violence related to drug trafficking and gangs in the Northern Triangle has had little direct impact on Brazil, but drug trafficking in general continues to be an issue for Brazil. Brazil is a major transit and destination country for cocaine, and the Brazilian drug trade is controlled by large, violent, and well-organized drug trafficking organizations operating throughout the country.

The Brazilian government recognizes the seriousness of the situation, and it is committed to combating drug trafficking and addressing its growing domestic consumption problem. Brazil continues to implement supply reduction, prevention, and treatment programs under its 2010 National Integrated Plan to Confront Crack and Other Drugs. Brazil is a party to the three U.N. drug conventions, and it also maintains bilateral narcotics control agreements with the United States and every country in South America. Brazil cooperates with programs administered by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, the Organization of American States' Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, and INTERPOL. The Brazilian military is also piloting an integrated frontier monitoring system on a limited basis. Brazil eventually hopes to expand this system to cover its entire border.

The best way for the United States to support Brazil's efforts is to continue deepening our work with Brazilian security counterparts. In recent years, we have provided significant training support to Brazilian law enforcement. In 2015, the United States provided 26 courses for almost 1,000 officers. If I am confirmed, I will seek opportunities to deepen our bilateral cooperation in this important area and further build Brazil's capacity to combat narcotics trafficking.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MARKEY

Question. Ambassador McKinley, many experts are concerned that the prevalence of Zika in Brazil at a time when over half a million people are expected to visit Rio for the Summer Olympics could elevate the risk that Zika will spread. Given the current political crisis and the financial situation in Brazil:

How prepared is Brazil to deal with the Zika epidemic, not only during the Olympics but also in the long term?

Answer. Brazil has responded quickly and transparently in its efforts to combat the Zika virus and better understand its relationship to microcephaly, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, and other neurological disorders. Brazil has launched a massive public awareness campaign and is working together with the U.S. government on research and development on vaccines and treatments; further development of diagnostic tests; studies to provide a better understanding of the virus and its clinical outcomes; and improved control of the mosquito vector.

Brazil is also working very hard to protect the health and safety of all of the world-class athletes and spectators attending the Games in Brazil, including through vector control efforts at Olympic sites, and we continue to be supportive of those efforts to protect those who are participating in the Games. The Brazilian government has also emphasized that the Olympic Games will take place during Rio de Janeiro's winter, when the population of mosquitos is low.

The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have stated that available evidence does not indicate there would be any meaningful public health impact from altering the schedule for the Games. All travelers to the Olympics should follow the recommendations outlined in the CDC's travel notice.

Question. Is Brazil currently investing enough in controlling and preventing Zika? Where will money needed for health sector investments come from as Brazil economy faces the deepest recession in generations?

Answer. Brazil has significantly invested in efforts to control and prevent Zika and associated neurological disorders. In March, Brazil announced over \$300 million in funding over the next three years to combat the Zika virus. The government plans to redirect existing resources to meet this goal.

Brazil has launched a massive public awareness and vector control campaign, involving over 220,000 Brazilian armed forces and over 300,000 public health workers to conduct education campaigns and vector control measures in high-risk neighborhoods.

In Brazil's Northeast region, the region hardest hit by the Zika crisis, there have been increased demands for health services due to the Zika crisis. Hospitals are prioritizing care for pregnant women, children, and elderly patients.

Brazil is also working at the state and federal levels with the World Bank to reallocate existing program funds towards strengthening surveillance, maternal and child health and rehabilitation, and training for health workers.

Question. What can you do as Ambassador to help them focus on this? What kind of help can we give them to prevent the further spread of Zika?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure we maintain the highest-level engagement, as our current Ambassador has done, to ensure U.S.-Brazil cooperation on Zika remains robust. In February, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil launched a Zika Task Force that is facilitating communication, interagency coordination, and follow-on actions, and is attentive to the implications on consular matters, management decisions, public messaging, commercial interests, and political repercussions of the disease.

There is extensive and high-level engagement between the U.S. government and the Government of Brazil on Zika virus and associated complications. The Brazilian Ministry of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Biomedical Advance Development and Research Authority (BARDA), are working in collaboration to analyze, validate, and exchange information about the Zika outbreak, facilitate the development and availability of medical products to respond to Zika, spearhead biomedical research related to Zika, and address medical countermeasure needs for the Zika response.

Brazilian scientists and NIH are also collaborating on a study on Zika in pregnancy which will provide essential information on microcephaly and the full range of other health problems that Zika virus infection during pregnancy may cause. Other NIH and collaborations with Brazilian institutions are developing various Zika vaccines and a potential vaccine for both Zika and dengue fever. BARDA and FDA are providing technical and regulatory assistance to aid Brazil in developing vaccines. The CDC is working with the Brazilian Ministry of Health on better Zika surveillance and innovative ways to control the mosquito vector that spreads the disease. The CDC is also working in close collaboration on studies exploring the link between Zika virus and microcephaly and Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

These efforts have helped Brazil combat Zika, and help U.S. citizens that are exposed to Zika to be rapidly diagnosed and managed appropriately. If confirmed, I would continue and expand our engagement with Brazil to combat the spread of Zika.

RESPONSES OF LAWRENCE SILVERMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR
TO KUWAIT, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILVERMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

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

Answer. I have been directly involved in our efforts to promote respect for human rights in every overseas post in which I have served. In Turkey and as Director of the Turkey desk in Washington, I led the successful diplomatic effort to gain the Turkish government's opening of what we believe was the first women's shelter for victims of trafficking. In Syria, Jordan, Namibia (then under South African rule) and Turkey, I monitored human rights issues and contributed to the human rights reporting, including preparation of the annual Human Rights Report. I have pressed foreign governments on such priorities as freedom of speech and the press, judicial independence, fair and transparent trials, women's and minority communities, proper treatment of detainees and prisoners, and the encouragement of laws against conflict of interest, therefore reducing the potential for corruption. While responsible for our assistance programs in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, I encouraged and oversaw programs to eliminate discrimination against minorities, monitor elections for fairness, improve labor laws, stop trafficking in persons and supported the development of civil society. I also pressed for the release of detainees in Ukraine and democratic reform in such authoritarian states as Belarus.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Kuwait? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Kuwait? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Kuwait has made progress in upholding and expanding protections for human rights over the past decade, but more work remains to be done. Women were granted the right to vote in 2005, the private sector labor law was passed in 2010, an Anti-Human Trafficking law was passed in 2013, under which, for the first time, Kuwait convicted eight traffickers in 2015, and most recently, the first domestic worker law was passed in 2015, although it is yet to be implemented. With the passage of legislative reform comes the requirement to properly implement the law, and I believe this is where our assistance and raising these issues can be used to good effect.

First, I believe the plight of domestic workers (numbering over 300,000) must remain a priority. These individuals are subjected to the worst forms of labor abuse and I am encouraged that the government has passed a law providing domestic workers in Kuwait enforceable rights for the first time. U.S. training and expertise to assist the Kuwaiti authorities in the implementation of these laws could improve the plight of these workers.

Promoting women's rights is also a priority. Kuwait has one of the largest female labor participation rates among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and I believe we could see progress with the empowerment of women in all sectors. However, despite the fact that four women won seats in Parliament following the 2009 elections, there are no women in the current Parliament, and only one woman in the cabinet (holding two ministerial portfolios). Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis are also unable to pass on citizenship to their children. Kuwaitis are having an important conversation within their society on the value and importance of women's rights, and I believe that with continued engagement from the United States, additional progress can be made to increase political participation and representation, and ensure greater equality in both law and practice.

Finally, we need to continue to focus on upholding freedom of expression. Kuwait has one of the most liberal societies in the GCC region. Following protests in 2012 for government reforms, there were increased government restrictions on freedom of expression, and legislation was passed that restricts expression online and in print media, but we are starting to see what we hope will be a reversal of that trend, which provides an opening for us to press local leaders to initiate reforms that safeguard freedom of expression and promotes greater religious tolerance and freedom of conscience.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges

will you face in Kuwait in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. There are factors that have constrained democratic development in Kuwait: geo-political events play a major role in Kuwaiti politics and governance, leading authorities to at times slow democratic development. Kuwait has experienced significant social change over the past few years and Kuwaiti society is still absorbing the passage of a number of important laws, such as suffrage laws and more recently, labor reforms. These laws hold both the Kuwaiti government and Kuwaitis accountable to a greater degree than in the past and may meet resistance by some in implementation. These challenges must not hinder progress. I will continue to press for the advancement of democracy, human rights, and the rights of civil society.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Kuwait? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, I am absolutely committed to meeting with local and international civil society organizations. Civil society activism exists in Kuwait, and I believe the embassy has a critical role to play in fostering an atmosphere in which local NGOs can grow and mature and play an effective role in advocating for positive change. I will ensure continued compliance with the Leahy Law through the application of Leahy vetting for all military and law enforcement personnel who receive training from U.S. military and law enforcement.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Kuwait to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Kuwait?

Answer. Yes. I am prepared to actively engage with the Kuwait government to address such cases. As I stated above, I will continue to push Kuwait to uphold freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

Question. Will you engage with Kuwait on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. I believe that all three of these issues must go together in order to create an effective and engaged civil society. Kuwait is on a pathway to make progress in all three of these areas and particularly as it approaches elections in 2017, we must continue to make human rights, civil rights, and governance a central pillar of our bilateral mission.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILVERMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Last week the New York Times reported that dozens of diplomats and other mid-level officials filed a dissent memo with the State Department's senior leadership calling for military strikes against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. According to the New York Times a draft of the memo stated that "the status quo in Syria will continue to present increasingly dire, if not disastrous, humanitarian, diplomatic, and terrorism-related challenges" and that "it is time for the United States, guided by our strategic interests and moral convictions, lead a global effort to put an end to this conflict once and for all."

◆ Do you know the diplomats and other mid-level officials who signed this dissent memo?

Answer. I know some of them.

Question. Do any of them report to you in your current capacity as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State?

Answer. None of them report directly to me. In my capacity as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, some of them report to people who report to me.

Question. Do you agree with the conclusions of the memo?

Answer. These are extremely tough issues: How to get a successful cessation of hostilities; how to ensure full, unimpeded humanitarian access to all Syrians in need; and how to bring about a genuine political transition in accordance with the Geneva Communiqué. We are also working all-day, every day to defeat Da'esh in

Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. That's what we are trying to do, and there are regular, frank discussions about how best to go about it. We are very focused on getting the cessation of hostilities enforced nationwide in an enduring way and getting humanitarian assistance to the still millions of Syrians in need. We do not believe there is a military solution to this conflict, so we are working to bring about a political solution, which includes a transition away from Asad.

Question. If not, what elements of their argument do you disagree with?

Answer. We do not believe that there is a military solution to this conflict. Rather, we are working to bring about a political solution that includes a transition away from Asad. Questions for the Record Submitted to

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILVERMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Kuwaiti officials have publicly stated that they would conform to a Saudi-Russia agreement to freeze oil production at January 2016 existing levels—a move that some producers have said could stabilize world oil prices. As U.S. ambassador, how, if at all, would you go about advising the Kuwaiti government about this deal? Would you see yourself having a role in regional discussions should the deal go forward?

Answer. The United States believes that market forces should determine the price of oil. If asked by the Kuwaiti government to provide advice about oil production deals, I would advise that the U.S. government does not take a position on oil prices and that market forces, not governments or organizations, should determine the price of oil. As the Ambassador to Kuwait, I would regularly confer with fellow U.S. ambassadors in the region, U.S. government officials in Washington leading our approach on energy issues, high-level Kuwaiti government officials, and international oil companies doing business in Kuwait.

Question. The US coalition has benefitted greatly from Kuwait's willingness to serve as a base of operations for the coalition against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. As you reference in your testimony, Kuwait has also experienced a terrorist attack at the hands of an ISIS fighter. However, Kuwait has not participated in actual military operations against ISIS with the coalition in Iraq or Syria. They did participate in military operations in Yemen on behalf of the Saudi coalition there. Why do you think Kuwait has chosen to join forces in Yemen against the Houthis, but not to join forces in Iraq and Syria against ISIS? As ambassador, would you encourage the Kuwaiti government to reconsider?

Answer. Kuwait's access, basing, and overflight for Operation Inherent Resolve is critical to the Coalition's ability to conduct operations to defeat ISIL, as is Kuwait's longtime hosting of Army Central Command. In addition to this military support, the Kuwaitis have made important contributions along several lines of effort in the battle against ISIL, including support for Iraqi Prime Minister al-Abadi's government; the contribution of billions in humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria, Iraq, and the neighbors hosting refugees; stabilization of liberated areas in Iraq; the deferral of Iraq's reparation payments; and the countering of ISIL's messaging.

We are encouraging the Kuwaitis to increase their contributions to the campaign, an effort I would continue if confirmed.

Question. Kuwaiti relations with Iran are complicated, however, diplomatically, they are relatively normal. Some speculate that Kuwait's engagement with Iran has allowed Kuwait to position itself to mediate talks between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis. Do you see this engagement with Iran as a positive or a negative for U.S. interests in Kuwait? In the region? Do you think this engagement could lead to more sympathy for the Iranian regime?

Answer. At the Camp David U.S.-GCC Summit in May 2015, President Obama, the Amir of Kuwait, and other GCC leaders all stated that they "oppose and will work together to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region" and called on Iran to "take concrete, practical steps to build trust and resolve its differences with neighbors by peaceful means." To this end, we have worked with our GCC partners to accelerate arms transfers and improve their military preparedness, ballistic missile defense, counterterrorism, and cyber capabilities, so that they can face any Iranian aggression from a position of strength.

This April, when they met in Riyadh at the U.S.-GCC summit, the Amir and other GCC leaders discussed with President Obama the challenges posed by Iran's problematic regional activities, and they underscored the importance of an inclusive

approach to de-escalating regional conflicts. Kuwait withdrew its ambassador to Tehran in January, in protest against the attacks on the Saudi Arabian diplomatic mission in Iran; other GCC countries also downgraded or broke diplomatic relations with Iran.

Kuwait has not yet returned its ambassador. Kuwait, like the other GCC countries, has expressed a willingness to engage with Iran in order to resolve regional issues but stresses that Iran must be a good neighbor and cease its interference in domestic internal affairs of other countries. The U.S. has a strong national interest in promoting regional stability, a goal we share with Kuwait. The Kuwaitis remain key partners in our efforts to de-escalate and resolve regional conflicts by peaceful means, including by facilitating the current negotiations on Yemen.

Question. The State Department Trafficking in Persons report for 2015 ranked Kuwait as a "Tier 3" country for the eighth year in a row, meaning that the government is not making sufficient efforts to comply with minimum standards of the elimination of trafficking. Though Kuwait passed a new human trafficking law in 2013, it seems that there is little interest in pursuing prosecutions under the law. Why do you think that is? Do you think the U.S. should respond, given the extent of U.S. involvement in the country? If so, how? What would you do, as ambassador, to push them to take steps to improve their rating?

Answer. Trafficking in persons has indeed been a significant problem in Kuwait and remains a serious concern of the U.S., but we are starting to see progress. In 2015, for the first time, Kuwait prosecuted cases under the 2013 human trafficking law. This is an important step to deter as well as punish traffickers, and one that needs to continue.

The establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Department within the Ministry of Interior in 2015 was another positive step. Kuwait also passed the first-ever domestic workers law, with enforceable rights, in 2015, although we are still awaiting its implementation. This law will need to be implemented properly, and our ongoing assistance and advocacy on these issues can be used to improve the situation of these workers.

The plight of domestic workers will remain a priority for Embassy Kuwait. If confirmed, I will press for further progress to eliminate human trafficking and enhance respect for domestic workers' rights, and will support U.S. training and expertise to facilitate Kuwait's implementation of these laws.

It would also be useful for Kuwait to address the cultural norms that sometimes enable the abuse of domestic workers. Public awareness campaigns, carried out with the support of International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labor Organization (ILO), local non-governmental organizations, and government labor officials, could change societal perceptions towards this vulnerable workforce, bring about a safer work environment, and substantially reduce trafficking.

Question. Kuwait's political system which incorporates secular and Islamist political factions is widely seen as a model for the region. As U.S. ambassador, would you seek to engage in dialogue with other nations in the region who are struggling to unite secular and religious factions under the umbrella of civil society?

Answer. Kuwait is unique in the region for its tradition of constitutional, participatory governance, as exemplified by its independent parliament. The continuation of democratic development in Kuwait is in the U.S. interest. If I am confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, I will focus on encouraging further progress with respect to democracy in Kuwait. I would maintain our priority on supporting human rights, the growth of civil society, and the protection of freedom of expression. Our Missions to the other countries in the region are engaging with those governments on the development of democracy.

RESPONSES OF CAROL Z. PEREZ, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PEREZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

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

Answer. Throughout my career I have supported human rights and promoted democracy. During my tenure in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, I worked to provide rule of law and justice programs that helped

fragile states protect their citizens and ensure accountability for violations of their human rights. In Central America, our programs improved citizen security, reduced drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, and helped reduce the dangerous irregular migration and trafficking of unaccompanied children to the United States. In the Caribbean and Central and Southeast Asia, I engaged with government officials and civil society to improve justice systems, build new, humane prisons and introduce alternatives to incarceration. In Ukraine, I worked to transform the police and justice services, building the capacity of a new generation of rule of law practitioners. In Milan, I facilitated dialogue among Northern Italy's growing immigrant population with the center-right, often xenophobic local and regional governments, promoting inclusion and finding ways to counter violent extremism. If confirmed, I look forward to continue promoting human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Chile.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Chile? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Chile? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The United States and Chile are bound by shared interests and values, including a commitment to democracy and human rights. If confirmed, I would continue our cooperation in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, where Chile is a staunch ally in global human rights. In 2014, Chile's leadership at the U.N. Human Rights Council led to the passage of the second-ever U.N. resolution on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

We applaud the Chilean government's continued efforts to find answers in cases of human rights violations during the Pinochet dictatorship. If confirmed, I will ensure our Embassy continues to support the family members in their search for justice for Boris Weisfeiler, a U.S. citizen who disappeared while hiking in southern Chile in 1985. The victims and families in cases of human rights violations must be able to seek justice, regardless of when those acts were committed.

The Department of State is concerned by the recent wave of attacks on churches of several denominations. If confirmed, I would continue the dialogue about security and religious freedom with the government, civil society, and religious institutions. The attacks on churches and other properties are believed to be committed by a small number of private actors and are taking place within the larger context of an ongoing conflict between the Mapuche indigenous community and the Chilean government. If confirmed, I will also continue our engagement with the Mapuche and other indigenous groups to support their peaceful political participation. Chileans have called on authorities to fully investigate these crimes, and the Chilean government is working to provide security for rural churches in the Araucania region.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Chile in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The United States and Chile maintain an open dialogue on advancing human rights, engaging civil society, and strengthening democracy around the world. If confirmed, I would look forward to continuing that and working with the Chilean government, law enforcement, civil society groups, religious institutions, and the private sector to promote the human rights, particularly of LGBTI persons and other marginalized groups.

The United States and Chile work closely together in multilateral organizations including the Open Government Partnership to promote transparency and access to public services, and the Community of Democracies, where Chile, as a member of the Executive Committee, supports sharing best practices to strengthen the world's democracies. Chile is also a member of the Global Equality Fund, supporting civil society in combatting violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. If confirmed, I would seek to continue the open dialogue with Chile about promoting human rights around the world—leveraging our cooperation in multilateral institutions while also encouraging Chile's leadership on regional issues; for example, ensuring human rights in Venezuela and Cuba. I would also continue to support family members of U.S. citizen victims who continue to seek answers regarding human rights crimes that were committed during the Pinochet era.

Finally, despite Chile's global leadership in advancing LGBTI rights, we remain concerned about reports of three Chileans murdered and dozens injured in homophobic attacks in 2015, and sadly, violent incidents against LGBTI persons continued in 2016. In light of these attacks, many Chileans recognize protections for LGBTI individuals as a clear human rights issue due to the work of Chile's dynamic

civil society. If confirmed, I would work with the Chilean government and civil society to take meaningful steps in advancing the human rights of LGBTI persons at home and around the globe.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Chile? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. The United States and Chile share interests, concerns and, most importantly, values, including the importance of civil society engagement in a democracy. If confirmed, I would strengthen our already close working relationship with human rights, civil society, and non-governmental organizations in the United States and Chile.

As a member of the INL FO team, I ensured my offices and our programs completely met Leahy requirements. This included funding officers dedicated to Leahy vetting for our large Colombia, CARSI and Mexico programs. I also was involved in authoring the standard text for the Department's interagency agreements, and for INL's international organization agreements and contracts and grants, all of which require that our partners adhere to the Leahy rules and requirements. Finally, with responsibility for oversight of the INL Air Wing, I ensured my team vetted all foreign national air crews that we trained and/or used for counter narcotic efforts. If confirmed, I will be equally diligent in ensuring that the embassy continues to adhere to the Leahy rules and requirements.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Chile to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Chile?

Answer. There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees in 2015, although some indigenous Mapuche convicted of criminal offenses claimed to be political prisoners. Chile has an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters that permits individuals to seek civil remedies for human rights violations. However, the civil justice system retains antiquated and inefficient procedures. If confirmed, I would work with the Chilean judicial system to share best practices in modern, efficient judicial practices.

Question. Will you engage with Chile on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to work with Chile on human rights, civil rights, the engagement of civil society, and governance. Chile is a model democracy, well-known for its dedication to the principles of transparency, freedom of expression, and an independent judiciary. Chile routinely scores high marks for good governance, openness, and rule-of-law. Chile ranked 23 out of 168 countries on Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, the second highest in Latin America.

Together, the United States and Chile can continue to take meaningful steps in advancing the human rights of LGBTI persons at home and around the globe. Through the work of Chile's dynamic civil society, many Chileans recognize combating violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity as a clear human rights issue. Chile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs shares this perspective, and said the country's foreign policy is "characterized by support for the promotion and respect of human rights, including LGBTI rights."

Question. What is your assessment of whether the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement is living up to its full potential? Additionally, what efforts will you take to prioritize trade facilitation, including working with key institutions such as OPIC, TDA (Trade and Development Agency) and the Foreign Commercial Service?

Answer. The U.S.-Chile FTA has benefitted both our countries. The United States has long been the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile. According to USTR, Chile is our 28th largest goods trading partner with \$24 billion in total (two way) goods trade during 2015. The United States had a trade surplus of \$6.68 billion in 2015 with Chile. U.S. exports totaled \$15.45 billion while imports totaled \$8.77 billion. U.S.-Chile trade in goods has quadrupled since our bilateral FTA entered into force in 2004. Over the past several decades, Chile has experienced some of the most robust growth rates in the region and is now by many estimates the wealthiest economy in Latin America thanks in large part to its embrace of an economic model characterized by openness to trade and investment. TPP provides an important opportunity to advance our commercial relationship and ensures the United States improves our competitive position in the Chilean market.

Reducing trade transaction costs through trade facilitation reforms will assist U.S. exporters and small and medium sized enterprises reach new customers in the developing world. The successful conclusion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in 2013 was a major milestone that will help streamline customs procedures, increase customs transparency, and speed the flow of goods across borders. The United States is a strong proponent of this agreement, which according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), could reduce trade costs by almost 12 percent for OECD countries like Chile when fully implemented. If confirmed, I will encourage the government of Chile to expeditiously ratify and implement the TFA.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with OPIC, the Foreign Commercial Service, and the Economic Bureau in the State Department to promote trade and support U.S. companies, including, U.S. renewable energy companies, defense-sector suppliers, and small and medium enterprises. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries.

Question. As the U.S. is deepening its engagement in Central America to advance security, governance, and economic growth, we've been working closely with partners like Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, specifically on issues of police and military training. What is your assessment of current cooperation and how might we strengthen it further going forward?

Answer. The State Department has enhanced its efforts to improve donor coordination in Central America. As noted, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico are key partners in our engagements in the region. We continue to strengthen our partnership through exchanges of ideas and best practices at donor coordination events in Washington and through established mechanisms for programing coordination on the ground in the Northern Triangle countries. We are also actively encouraging new partners to support the efforts of the Northern Triangle governments.

Chile takes an active role in Central American security and development with specific programs focused on capacity building of public administration officials. Chile has also provided training to law enforcement and justice sector personnel and supported food safety projects. We routinely discuss opportunities for collaboration in Central America with our Chilean counterparts at our annual High Level Bilateral Political Consultative Mechanism, most recently in December 2015. If confirmed, I will work closely with USAID and Chile's development agency, AGCID, to coordinate activities in Central America.

Colombia has been a strong partner in building security and law enforcement capacity in Central America through training and joint military exercises. Colombia hosted Northern Triangle ministers of defense and security, as well as U.S. government officials, in mid-June to discuss ways to ensure effective cooperation in security and defense matters.

Question. As the U.S. is working closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to set up in-region refugee processing in Central America, to what degree could we cooperate with Chile to help relocate Central American refugees in South America?

Answer. Chile is working with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners to improve the country's refugee resettlement program and ensure refugees successfully integrate into the country. Chile agreed in 2015 to resettle about 150 Syrian refugees. Chile takes an active role in Central American security and development, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the region. The State Department asked the Chilean government to consider accepting Central American refugees, and if confirmed, I will work closely with Chilean authorities to follow up on this request and find practical ways for safe humanitarian resettlement of refugees fleeing violence.

Question. Chile has been on the U.S. Trade Representative's "Priority Watch List" for insufficient intellectual property rights protection and enforcement since 2007; why have these concerns still not been addressed adequately despite years of bilateral engagement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with USTR to do whatever I can to ensure the Chilean government addresses the intellectual property issues identified in the Special 301 Report. Under the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Chile has committed to strengthen its IPR regime, and I will engage at the highest levels to build political will for Chile to make the type of changes required for an improvement in Chile's Special 301 designation.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PEREZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. How important is the Trans-Pacific Partnership to Chile?

Answer. Over the past several decades, Chile has experienced some of the most robust growth rates in the region and is now by many estimates the wealthiest economy in Latin America—thanks in large part to its embrace of an economic model characterized by openness to trade and investment. As such, Chile is a natural fit for TPP and a global leader in free trade. Chile is a member of the precursor to TPP (the 2005 "P4" agreement) and has 17 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Chile already has bilateral FTAs in place with all 11 other TPP countries.

Chile recognizes the importance of being a rule-setter in the global trading system, the need to build upon its existing agreements to reflect modern trade issues, and the importance of TPP, which creates rules that will make it easier to participate in regional supply chains and will foster greater regional integration.

Economically, Chile stands to gain under TPP over its existing free trade agreements—particularly with regard to Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam—through better access for thousands of Chilean products in those markets. Major Chilean business groups praised the agreement, which is expected to help the agricultural sector, small and medium-sized businesses, and the growing services sector. Chile also stands to gain from TPP's accumulation provisions, which will allow the integration of production and supply chains throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Strategically, TPP positions Chile, Peru, and Mexico in leadership roles in a Latin America, which is gradually moving to embrace the benefits of liberalized trade and investment. The agreement will allow the United States and our TPP partners in the Western Hemisphere to build the Americas into a shared, integrated platform for global success.

TPP provides an important opportunity to advance our commercial relationship and ensures the United States improves our competitive position in the Chilean market. The United States has long been the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile, where total FDI inflows in 2015 reached nearly \$23 billion. U.S.-Chile trade in goods has quadrupled since our bilateral FTA entered into force in 2004.

Question. What is your opinion on the economic reforms enacted by the Bachelet administration?

Do you foresee those reforms having an impact in our bilateral relations?

Answer. Chilean President Bachelet campaigned on a platform of reforms designed to tackle the problem of income inequality and uneven access to services, especially education. She has made good on several of her key priorities, including tax reform.

While Bachelet has been able to enact many of her reforms, the legislation passed is often less ambitious than she might have wanted. At the present time, Bachelet is continuing her efforts to reform the country's pension and education systems, and overhaul the Pinochet-era constitution.

U.S.-Chile cooperation is institutionalized and transcends administrations; our cooperation continues to grow under Bachelet's leadership. If confirmed, I would continue to advocate for U.S. interests to ensure the planned reforms do not unfairly impact U.S. businesses and encourage Chile to maintain openness to trade and investment, a significant factor in its economic development.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PEREZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Since she took office, President Bachelet's approval ratings have dropped significantly, most likely due to her reform agenda, recent corruption scandals, and a weakening economy. In April 2016, 65% of Chileans disapproved of President Bachelet's performance in office. In addition, the corruption scandals have reinforced public perception in Chile that the power in the country is concentrated within the hands of a few businessmen and political elites. What changes do you foresee in the months ahead that might be taken by the president to reverse her current decline in popularity? How do you plan to work through the current corruption scandals that have been identified? In your opinion, will President Bachelet's anti-corruption bills and efforts to regulate political parties and campaign financing be enough to reverse people's distrust of the government?

Answer. U.S.-Chile cooperation is institutionalized and transcends administrations; our cooperation continues to grow under President Michelle Bachelet's leadership. President Bachelet campaigned on a platform of reforms designed to tackle the problem of income inequality and uneven access to services, especially education. She made good on several of her key priorities, including tax reform.

While President Bachelet has enacted many of her proposed reforms, legislation passed by the parliament to enact the president's goals is often less ambitious than she might have wanted. During her remaining 18 months in office, President Bachelet has said her priorities are to reform the country's pension and education systems and to begin the overhaul of the Pinochet-era constitution. The Bachelet administration hopes its reforms will have a long-lasting impact in reducing inequality, particularly by providing higher quality education at dramatically reduced costs for Chileans.

After more than two decades of solid economic growth culminating in the highest per capita income levels in Latin America, Chile's economy is slowing due primarily to external factors—namely, the fall in global copper prices. Copper accounts for half of Chile's exports and 30 percent of GDP. Fiscal uncertainty and reduced revenue have forced prudence in government spending and limited the scale and pace of some reforms, for example, free higher education.

Chile is a model democracy, well-known for its dedication to the principles of transparency, freedom of expression, and an independent judiciary. It routinely scores high marks for good governance, openness, rule-of-law, and was ranked 23 out of 168 countries on Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, the second highest in Latin America.

Chilean authorities are investigating some politicians for violating Chile's campaign finance laws, dismissing indicted public officials from office, and passing new laws strengthening anti-corruption measures. Chilean institutions are functioning well to enforce the law and address and reduce cases of suspected corruption, and political actors across the spectrum are working hard to restore trust in the governing class.

Chilean voters will choose in October 2017 whether to continue supporting the center-left's reform agenda, or make way for a center-right coalition government. If confirmed, I look forward to working with President Bachelet and her successor in areas of mutual interest, including supporting free trade, human rights, and rule of law.

Question. In 2015, our budget surplus in Chile was valued at \$6.7 billion. We are their second largest trading partner behind China. If the value of the dollar continues to increase, or in the case of another global recession that heavily impacts Chile, how do you see us maintaining or increasing our influence to compete with China in Chilean markets? In your opinion, can Chile sustain such a massive trade imbalance with us?

Answer. We support Chile's efforts to grow its economy, including through trade with other nations. China is an important trading partner for Chile as the leading importer of Chilean copper. But after more than two decades of solid economic growth, culminating in the highest per capita income levels in Latin America, Chile's economy is slowing in large part due to a drop in copper prices. Copper accounts for half of Chile's exports and 30 percent of GDP. While China's trade with Chile is primarily commodities based, the United States and Chile have a diverse trade relationship in which small and medium enterprises participate. Leading U.S. exports and services to Chile consist primarily of high-tech products notably aircraft, machinery, vehicles, and intellectual property.

Chile recognizes the importance of being a rule-setter in the global trading system, the need to build upon its existing agreements to reflect modern trade issues, and the importance of TPP, which creates rules that will make it easier to participate in regional supply chains and will foster greater regional integration.

TPP provides an important opportunity to advance our commercial relationship and ensure the United States improves our competitive position in the Chilean market. The United States has long been the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile, where total FDI inflows in 2015 reached nearly \$23 billion. U.S.-Chile trade in goods has quadrupled since our bilateral FTA entered into force in 2004.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to identify opportunities for U.S. firms to export their goods and services to Chile and to ensure U.S. firms have a level playing field in Chile.

Question. Given the current security issues that afflict the United States today, do you see Chile playing a larger role in international security? Given your previous

experience with law enforcement affairs, how could Chile help in reducing the level of drug trafficking within Central America?

Answer. The United States and Chile have robust, mature military and security cooperation. Chile participates in international security cooperation throughout the region and globally; expanding bilateral security sector cooperation and Chile's role as a partner and role-model is a U.S. priority. Chile has over 400 personnel deployed worldwide, most in the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Chile deploys with other regional partners, such as El Salvador and Honduras, and provides those countries with specialized training prior to their deployments. For example, Chile trained El Salvador peacekeepers on aviation maintenance training for their deployment to Mali. Chile announced in 2015 a plan to deploy staff officers, helicopters, engineers, and a medical unit to an African peacekeeping mission over a three-year period. In January 2016, Chile deployed four advisors to the U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic as the first phase of this plan.

Chile takes counterterrorism seriously and has an inter-ministerial working group on counter terrorism issues. We commend Chile for their support at the UNSC for a counter-Da'esh resolution. In August 2015, the United States and Chile cosponsored a meeting of UNSC members condemning Da'esh attacks on LGBT persons. If confirmed, I would work closely with Chile in areas where our interests align (refugees, humanitarian relief), and promote continued coordination in multilateral organizations such as the U.N.

Further, Chile takes an active role in Central American security and development, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Chile in the region. It continues to teach at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in El Salvador, educating police officers, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice practitioners from Central and South America and the Caribbean. We applaud Chile's International Cooperation Agency for Development, AGCID (Agencia Chilena de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo) for their projects in Central America to strengthen government institutions and improve governance, especially in the Northern Triangle. If confirmed, I would look for ways the United States and Chile could leverage our 2009 and 2014 trilateral cooperation agreements to undertake development projects in Central America and the Caribbean to enhance citizen security. These projects could include an expansion of Chile's role in law enforcement training and rule of law cooperation with Central American partners.

Question. As of 2014, the accumulated stock of U.S. foreign direct investment in Chile was \$27.6 billion. The accumulated stock of Chilean foreign investment in the United States was \$730 million. A bi-lateral income tax treaty (Treaty Doc. 112-8) would provide certainty on the tax treatment of investors and reduce tax barriers to investment. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported the treaty as favorable in February 2016, but it has not yet been considered by the full Senate. In your opinion, does this treaty seem like an effective way to encourage trade between our two countries? Is there anything you would like to add regarding this treaty that may lock in a successful vote from the full Senate body.

Answer. The administration continues to support the double taxation treaty and hopes it moves quickly through the Senate. Without the treaty's passage, U.S. businesses investing in Chile face higher taxes in Chile that will place them at a competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis firms from other countries with bilateral tax treaties in place. The proposed tax treaty with Chile would be the first between the United States and Chile. The Department of Treasury actively pursues opportunities to establish new tax treaty relationships with countries in which U.S. businesses encounter unrelieved double taxation with respect to their investments.

The Departments of State and Treasury are aware of the keen interest of both the business community and the Senate to conclude income tax treaties that provide meaningful benefits to cross-border investors with South American countries. If approved by the Senate, the tax treaty with Chile would be the second U.S. tax treaty in force with a South American country. Thus, the proposed tax treaty with Chile represents a significant inroad into the South American region.

If confirmed, I will support this and other measures to encourage Chilean companies to invest in the United States, reduce the burdens on U.S. businesses investing in Chile, and increase economic cooperation and prosperity for both countries.