

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:20 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Young, Barrasso, Cruz, and Hagerty.

Also Present: Senators Klobuchar, Casey, Toomey, Padilla, Feingold, Heinrich, and Lujan.

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

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We are here today to consider nominations for five very important positions. On the first panel, we will hear from Mr. Thomas Nides to be the ambassador to Israel, Mr. David Cohen to be the ambassador to Canada, and Dr. Cynthia Telles to be ambassador to Costa Rica.

We are also pleased to have a number of our colleagues here to introduce some of these nominees. I will turn to them in order.

Senator Klobuchar, I understand you will be introducing Mr. Nides.

STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Chairman, and to Ranking Member Risch as well. The work this committee does touches the lives of people all over the world and we thank you for that.

Right now in the wake of new leadership in Israel, it is a critically important moment in our alliance with our friend and ally, and we have with us today someone with the experience, credibility, and respect to serve as our ambassador to Israel and he just happens to have been born in Minnesota, as usual.

And I am so proud to introduce my good friend, Tom Nides. With Tom today is his son Max, who will testify to the fact that his dad is wise and patient all the time, right, Max? Okay, good.

And I want to tell you a little bit about Tom. He grew up in Duluth as the youngest of eight siblings. His father, Arnold, served as

the president of Temple Israel and of the Duluth Jewish Federation, and his mother, Shirley, was a teacher. His sister, Jane, told the Duluth News Tribune that their parents would be going crazy with joy if they were alive to see their son nominated to serve as ambassador to Israel.

I was amused the day that Tom was nominated to read the headline in the Duluth News, which said simply this: "Man who grew up in Duluth nominated Ambassador to Israel."

Tom was innovative from a young age. As a senior at Duluth East High School, he was tasked with finding a speaker for his high school graduation. Being the proud Minnesotan he was, he wanted Walter Mondale, who just happened to be Vice President of the United States.

He learned that the best time as a high schooler to catch the Vice President's Chief of Staff was at 5:30 in the morning. He reached out and Walter Mondale agreed to speak at his high school graduation.

A year later, Tom and I met as interns for the Vice President and I remember walking in and seeing him sitting at the desk as a 20-year-old, his legs sprawled up on the desk above him, sitting on the chair with a vice presidential pin on his lapel.

And I watched him answer the phone and say, "Tom Nides with the Vice President's office" in a tone that would convince anyone that he was no 20-year-old intern but he was, in fact, the chief of staff.

While I was assigned to do the furniture inventory and write down the serial number of every lamp and desk, Tom got to save the Lake Superior foghorn for the city of Duluth, and just like everything else, he got it done.

Since then, he continued to serve ably and, most importantly for our work here, optimistically in many leadership positions, including in the halls of Congress and in two presidential administrations.

He was a trusted adviser to Congressman Tony Coelho and to Speaker Tom Foley. He worked for Mickey Kantor in the office of the United States Trade Representative and he later served as Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources with Secretary Clinton under President Obama.

During that time, he distinguished himself as a key voice on Israel and an advocate for humanitarian support for our U.S. allies. For his outstanding service, he was awarded the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Award, our country's highest diplomatic honor.

His private sector and trade background as well as his strong background in Middle Eastern policy makes him the perfect choice to serve as our ambassador to Israel, one of our strongest and most enduring allies.

Members on both sides of the aisle understand that the deep friendship between our two countries is based on shared values and that Israel's interests in the Middle East are strongly aligned with our own. Support for Israel can never ever become a partisan issue.

Now more than ever, we need an ambassador dedicated to fostering lasting peace and stability. I am confident that as ambassador Tom will further the close alliance between our two nations

and our commitment to prosperity in the region for generations to come.

He will do a phenomenal job, Mr. Chair, and I strongly urge the committee to support his nomination. Thank you to the members of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Casey, Senator Toomey, I understand you will be introducing Mr. Cohen. I will ask Senator Casey to go first and then Senator Toomey.

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

Senator CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thanks very much. I am honored to be here with you and appreciate this opportunity as well as thanking the ranking member for this opportunity to say a few words about my friend, David L. Cohen, to serve as ambassador to Canada.

I am especially grateful to be joined by Senator Toomey. We do not always appear together on big issues. But today, we are united in our recommendation and our commendation of the work of David Cohen.

I have known David for more than a quarter of a century and I have seen him in all kinds of circumstances, most of them in connection with public service.

Many of you know that in addition to being a very successful lawyer and doing the work of a lawyer and an advocate, he served as chief of staff to the mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell.

To be chief of staff of a mayor of one of America's largest cities is about as difficult a job as anyone can imagine. But he did it well and he served the people of Philadelphia with distinction.

I think it also bears repeating that sometimes the most difficult jobs in public service also are the jobs that teach you a lot about what public service is. David understands the commitment you have got to make to be a public servant and I think he has demonstrated that over and over again.

In addition to his work for the city and his work as a lawyer, later, of course, he joined Comcast, and I tried to itemize or list all of the roles he played at Comcast and I will just give you just a partial list of the work that he did serving in major leadership positions at Comcast, whether it was legal work or government affairs, communications, administration, real estate, did a lot of work in diversity and inclusion to help lead a major corporation in the city of Philadelphia and, of course, charitable giving.

All of those roles he played. All of that work he did and more helped Comcast to grow and to be such an important corporate partner in Philadelphia for so many institutions in the city.

His community service, I think, is unparalleled, and whether it is at Penn Medicine, the work he did at the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the work he has done with organizations like the Urban League and on and on. We could list many more.

I do not think I have to remind members of this committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, about the importance of our relationship with Canada, our second largest trading partner, ever more so important in the context of the challenges we face today,

whether it is fighting COVID-19 or future viral security challenges, managing climate change, addressing the opioid crisis, trade issues, economic issues, on and on.

A lot of those issues, of course, involve many, many Pennsylvania businesses and businesses across the country that rely upon the stability and the strength of this relationship.

I would say this in conclusion, Mr. Chairman. This is my fifteenth year serving in the Senate and in those years I have seen David commit himself to excellence in every task that he was presented with.

I also got to know over those quarter century or more his wife, Rhonda, who, in her own way, has contributed so much to public service. I asked Rhonda just before this hearing—I said, Rhonda, is David ready? And she said, yes, and that is all I needed to know. He is ready to do this job in a critically important time in our nation's history.

The last thing I will say is this. There is a line in the Scriptures, “To whom much has been given, much is expected.” The good Lord gave David a lot—an intellect, a strength of character, a commitment to helping people, and we have asked him to do a lot, and much is and has been expected of him and he has never failed to deliver. I have no doubt that will be the case when he serves as our ambassador to Canada.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Senator Toomey?

**STATEMENT OF HON. PAT TOOMEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Senator TOOMEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Thank you for allowing me to introduce briefly my friend, David Cohen, and express my enthusiastic support for his nomination to be our next U.S. Ambassador to Canada.

And thank you, David, for your willingness to serve. I was delighted to see your wife, Rhonda, is here with you and I appreciate the sacrifices required of individuals but also their families when they choose to go into public service and I am glad to see that you are up for this challenge.

There is a passage about David in Buzz Bissinger's excellent book, “A Prayer for the City.” It is a book that chronicles the administration of Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell, which, as Senator Casey pointed out, it is an administration in which David Cohen served as chief of staff.

I think the passage is relevant for today's hearing so I am going to read it briefly. It is about David Cohen and it says, and I quote, “It wasn't just his prodigious capacity for work that made him so good at what he did. It was his patience as a negotiator, the way in which he determined the result he wanted, and then, as Macedon put it, exhibited a willingness to stay with something forever until he got there.

In the meantime, he never got frustrated. He never personalized or railed or sought vendettas. Once again, the normal human im-

pulse to get angry and become agitated that never even surfaced,” end quote.

Mr. Chairman, I think there is a word for this kind of quiet, thoughtful, persistent approach to getting things done. It is called diplomacy. David is a longtime resident of Pennsylvania, a very active member in the community, as Senator Casey pointed out.

I think it is important to point out that while serving as chief of staff to Mayor Ed Rendell through the '90s he played a central role in pulling the city out of really dire fiscal circumstances and placing it on a stable footing.

He led a prestigious U.S. law firm prior to joining Comcast Corporation in 2002. Senator Casey mentioned some of the many roles that David has played at Comcast.

I would just point out that in addition to helping to forge Comcast into a telecommunications powerhouse, David also helped to establish Comcast as a really exceptional corporate citizen for Philadelphia and Pennsylvania and our country including, among many other things, donating millions of dollars to myriad charitable causes across the country.

David's many career accomplishments are accompanied by an extensive record of service. As Senator Casey pointed out, he has long served on many, many boards and advisory panels supporting Philadelphia in particular in its academic, athletic, arts communities.

Just to name two, he was for over a decade the chairman of the Board of Trustees for the University of Pennsylvania, and currently he sits alongside Senator Casey and myself on the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission.

All the members of this committee understand full well how important Canada is as one of America's allies and neighbors. We rely on Canada as a major trade, energy, and security partner.

Frankly, Pennsylvania's proximity to Canada gives us a particularly strong tie to that country and our representation of Canada is all the more important for folks in the Commonwealth.

The fact is President Biden made an outstanding choice in choosing David for this post. David Cohen's very strong business background, his deep understanding of government at all levels, and his passion for service prepared him well for this role.

Mr. Chairman, I enthusiastically support his nomination and encourage my colleagues to do likewise. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And last but not least, our distinguished colleague from California, who is going to introduce Dr. Telles.

Senator Padilla?

**STATEMENT OF HON. ALEX PADILLA,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee.

It is my honor to introduce Dr. Cynthia Telles this morning from the great state of California, and President Biden's nominee to serve as ambassador to Costa Rica.

As a clinical professor in the UCLA School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and a widely published researcher, Dr. Telles

is widely recognized for her work in health care and especially in improving the lives of those with mental illness.

For more than three decades, Dr. Telles has directed UCLA's Spanish-speaking psychosocial clinic, where she has helped train a generation of clinicians to provide culturally-competent mental health services for Latino communities.

In addition to her work in health care, Dr. Telles brings life experience from the region and from serving on a number of nonprofit organizations and government commissions.

As a longtime member of the board of directors of the Pacific Council on International Policy, she has worked closely with industry and governmental actors to promote global engagement in Los Angeles, throughout California, and beyond.

She has served as a commissioner in the city of Los Angeles, America's second largest city, for almost 20 years, as well as having served on the board of the California Community Foundation and for nearly a decade serving on the board of the California Endowment, California's largest health foundation.

Dr. Telles also continues a family legacy of public service, including deep ties to Costa Rica. Her father, Raymond Telles, was the first Latino to serve as a U.S. ambassador, appointed by President Kennedy in 1961. Dr. Telles grew up determined to fight for the world's inequities from a young age.

During her father's ambassadorship, she lived in Costa Rica, where she found her calling for both public service and public health. Dr. Telles is a uniquely well-qualified person to represent the United States and Costa Rica, an important regional partner.

She brings a wealth of experience, dedication, and compassion to her role representing the United States and Costa Rica.

I strongly support her nomination, and I urge for her swift confirmation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Padilla.

With that background, maybe we should have Dr. Telles work with us here in Washington to solve a few things.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Thank you to all the senators who made presentations.

Let me turn now, first, to a little bit of committee business before I get to the nominees. I want to appreciate the ranking member's willingness to move forward with nine nominees that the committee was scheduled to consider today.

We postponed the hearing this afternoon out of a deference to one of our members, but that has been rescheduled for next week.

I am also glad that you agreed to a few of the nominees that I proposed for hearings next week and that you indicated, albeit with many caveats, that you may be ready to notice more. I, certainly, hope that materializes.

I remain deeply concerned, however, by the delays and obstacles facing the bulk of nominees when it comes to securing your approval for their hearings.

It is inexplicably taking an average of six weeks, almost 40 days, from the time a nominee's file is complete to the time that the minority is willing to move forward, and that is just for a hearing.

This is almost four weeks slower than it took during a similar period in 2009.

I ask how that is possible. As you know, we have a massive backlog at the State Department, USAID, and other nominations pending before the committee. We have almost reached 80 and the number continues to grow.

The nominations pending include ambassadorships to China, Japan, and countries throughout Latin America, Africa, and Europe, places where competition with China and Russia is real, where we need ambassadors in place to project U.S. power, to assist our citizens, and to promote our companies.

I would just ask Senator Risch, I appreciate the work we have done so far. I need your full cooperation and participation to tackle this backlog.

I would just note that when faced with similar numbers in 2009, the majority and the minority worked together to move 57 nominees in just one month.

There is no reason we cannot do that if we work together. To date, I have noticed only nominees who the ranking member has agreed to. In fact, I have bent over backwards to restore the tradition of comity that was abandoned in the last Congress.

But the slow pace and many obstacles to moving nominees is unacceptable. It is dangerous. We are less safe when our national security agencies are so short staffed.

We have to fix this problem. We owe it to the Senate and we owe it to all Americans, and I look forward to working with you to try to achieve that.

Let me turn to our nominees. Welcome, and thank you and your families for your willingness to serve the country in this capacity. I will briefly address each of the positions that you have been nominated for.

Mr. Nides, welcome back to the committee. I am pleased to see such a qualified and capable nominee for one of our most vital allies. Your extensive experience in management, including as the Deputy Secretary of State, will surely serve you well in navigating the particulars of our embassy in Jerusalem.

As Israel settles into its new government, it is critical that we have an experienced diplomat in place to help pursue many of our shared U.S. and Israeli interests across national security, technology, cultural, and religious exchanges.

And while some may try to exploit any small fissures or differences in policy opinions between our two countries, this committee, the Senate, and the Congress as a whole have repeatedly confirmed our unwavering support for Israel's security, its right to defend itself in the face of neighbors who continue to threaten to wipe it off the map.

Finally, to all our friends who may or may not be watching in Israel and here, let me wish you all a Hag Sukkot Sameah, and I look forward to hearing from Mr. Nides.

I am also pleased that we are reviewing the nomination of our next ambassador to Canada. Our alliance with our northern neighbors, one of the most important partnerships that we have united by shared security interests and strengthened by expansive economic ties, our nations are linked by a common commitment to

democratic principles and to tackling the most pressing challenges on the global stage.

It is with the deepest respect that we also remember that our Canadian brothers and sisters fought alongside our men and women for decades, most recently in Afghanistan.

Yet, during the last administration this most essential alliance was too often marked by tensions and tariffs, marred by insults aimed at Canadian leaders, and neglected by an absentee U.S. ambassador.

It is imperative that we rebuild our relationship with Canada, deepen our collaboration to address the challenges posed by China and Russia, and work together to address the threats posed by climate change.

Mr. Cohen, I have no doubt you are the right person to tackle these challenges and, upon confirmation, will be a strong and effective ambassador.

I am also pleased that we are considering the nomination of our next ambassador to Costa Rica. As it celebrates its bicentennial, Costa Rica stands out for its consistency on the global stage and leadership on environmental stewardship.

Costa Rica is also an example of democratic resiliency in Central America at a time when the region is plagued by weak rule of law and leaders who have embraced authoritarian tactics.

It is also unique that we are considering a candidate whose father served as ambassador to Costa Rica under President Kennedy.

I am pleased that Dr. Telles, if confirmed, will carry forward a family commitment to strengthening our partnership and advancing U.S. interests in Costa Rica. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

Let me now turn to the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch, for his opening remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your comments regarding nominations. They are always difficult, and as I have said publicly and privately to you, having been a governor I know how important nominations are and it is impossible to govern if you do not have your team in place.

I do want to review, however, the record on the numbers. First of all, I am going to compare the 116th Congress to the 117th Congress.

In the 116th Congress, the average Senate Foreign Relations Committee nominations processing time with you as the ranking member was 94 days.

On the average, Senate Foreign Relations Committee nomination processing time in the 117th Congress so far with me as the ranking member it has been 44 days, 50 days less. The average processing time, obviously and clearly, is 50 days less, and the numbers do not lie.

On some specifics, take for instance, the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, Labor. Under the Trump nominee, Robert Destro, was 276 days. The Biden nominee, Sarah Margon, was 76 days.

The U.S. U.N. representative, Andrew Bremberg was 245 days as the Trump nominee, and under this administration, the Biden nominee, Bathsheba Crocker, was 56 days.

The Assistant Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights at Justice—excuse me, Assistant Secretary—Civilian Secretary of Security, Democracy and Human Rights, Marshall Billingslea, was 378 days. Uzra Zeya was 34 days.

U.S. for Arms Control under President Trump, Marshall Billingslea, was 244 days. Bonnie Jenkins under this administration was 34 days.

Ambassador to Mexico, Chris Landau, was 57 days under Trump. Ken Salazar under this administration for ambassador to Mexico was 17 days.

The number of days from file complete to business meeting for U.S. management—the department Secretary of Management, Brian Bulatao, was 319 days. The Biden nominee, Brian McKeon, was 18 days.

The Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs, Clarke Cooper, under Trump, nominee was 260 days, whereas Jessica Lewis was 49 days as the Biden nominee.

The Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, David Schenker, the Trump nominee, was almost one year, 358 days. Barbara Leaf was 68 days.

Other key positions held by Democrats during the Trump administration, the legal advisor to the Department of State, CJ Mahoney, was 187 days from file complete to hearing. Sarah Cleveland, the file has not been complete.

The ambassador for Pakistan, Bill Todd, the Trump nominee, was 180 days from file complete to hearing. Of course, there has been no nominee.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent that this matrix be entered into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

Nomination Processing Time (116th Congress vs. 117th Congress)

(As of September 22, 2021)

- Average SFRC nomination processing time in the 116th Congress (with Sen. Menendez as Ranking Member): **94 days**¹
- Average SFRC nomination processing time in the 117th Congress so far (with Sen. Risch as Ranking Member): **44 days**
- Average processing in 117th Congress = 50 days faster than 116th Congress

¹(conservative estimate based on staff research)

Number of Days from File Complete to Hearing Date

	Trump Nominee	Biden Nominee
A/S Democracy, Human Rights, Labor (DRL)	Robert Destro 276 days	Sarah Margon 76 days
U.S. U.N. Representative	Andrew Bremberg 245 days	Bathsheba Crocker 56 days
U/S for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J)	Marshall Billingslea 378 days (NOT CONFIRMED)	Uzra Zeya 34 days
U/S for Arms Control (T)	Marshall Billingslea 244 days (NOT CONFIRMED)	Bonnie Jenkins 34 days
Ambassador to Mexico	Chris Landau 57 days	Ken Salazar 17 days

Number of Days from File Complete to Hearing Date

	Trump Nominee	Biden Nominee
U/S Management/Deputy Secretary for Management	Brian Bulatao 319 days	Brian McKeon 18 days
A/S for Political Military Affairs (PM)	Clarke Cooper 260 days	Jessica Lewis 49 days
A/S for Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)	David Schenker 358 days	Barbara Leaf 68 days from hearing date (Business Meeting expected in September)

Number of Days from File Complete to Hearing Date

	Trump Nominee	Biden Nominee
Legal Adviser to the Department of State (L)	CJ Mahoney 187 days from file complete to hearing (NOT CONFIRMED)	Sarah Cleveland (FILE INCOMPLETE)
Ambassador to Pakistan	Bill Todd 180 days file complete to hearing (NOT CONFIRMED)	NONE

Senator RISCH. I commit to you to continue to work as best I can, again, realizing that there is always stress on these. We take our vetting responsibilities seriously just as you did when the President was another party.

I respect that. I appreciate it, and we are going to continue to do the best we can to vet these people and as quickly as we possibly can.

Moving to the panel that we have before us today, I want to thank the nominees and, of course, their families for the sacrifice that they will share.

On the nomination for ambassador to Israel, Israel is America's most vital ally in a very turbulent region. It faces serious threats and it is in the national security interest of the United States to ensure Israel is adequately equipped to meet these challenges.

I am deeply disappointed that the House of Representatives have attempted to pull the Iron Dome funding from the Continuing Resolution. I expect the Senate will remedy that issue very quickly.

Since the Biden administration took office, we have seen no movement to expand or strengthen the Abraham Accords. I think most everyone that moves in the area of foreign relations agrees that the Abraham Accords were tremendous steps forward in the relationship we have and others have in the Middle East.

Many of us have concerns that the administration has instead doubled down on the failed Palestinian policies of the past. I am also disappointed the administration continues to provide assistance to the Palestinians without securing any concessions on the egregious "pay to slay" program.

Instead of normalizing this appalling practice through deeper relationships with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the administration should pursue changes in Palestinian policies that glorify and promote violence and terrorism.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these important issues.

On the nomination for the ambassador to Canada, first of all, I appreciated the opportunity to meet personally with the nominee and we discussed the importance of a couple of issues that are important to me and important to America.

One is the Columbia River Treaty. The other is the opening of the Canadian border, and I was pleased to hear his thoughts on that and appeared to be on board as far as both issues are concerned.

The Columbia River Treaty remains an important issue to the entire Northwest delegation. I expect that you will prioritize these negotiations, should you be confirmed, as we discussed.

As for the U.S.-Canadian border, I am disappointed in the administration's decision on Monday to extend restrictions on non-essential travel from Canada to the United States at land ports of entry.

These restrictions are causing significant economic and emotional distress to communities such as those in north Idaho that depend on well-regulated cross-border traffic. The administration should reconsider this decision and reopen our land border with Canada as soon as possible.

Finally, the nomination of ambassador to Costa Rica. Costa Rica is an outpost of democratic governance in Central America and a valuable trade, security, and diplomatic partner.

As many as 50,000 Americans call Costa Rica home, in large part due to its political and economic stability. Nevertheless, Costa Rica's democratic model has come under acute pressure due to instability generated by the Ortega regime in Nicaragua and the COVID-19 epidemic.

Costa Rica has also sought deeper relations with China, which comes with its own set of challenges. I hope to hear how you plan to manage those U.S. relations with this strategic partner in Central America.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Just very briefly, I must say that, of course, one has to compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges in terms of dates.

The reality is, is that for the first nine months of the Trump administration it took an average of just 22 days—22 days—to get a nominee scheduled for a hearing, despite many serious and well-documented vetting issues.

It is currently taking an average of 36 days, over three weeks longer than that period of time, for the minority to clear nominees with completed files for hearings. That is a challenge, and bottom line is we have nearly 80 people.

The final thing I will say is that, unfortunately, the previous administration did not vet nominees so looking at numbers was extremely meaningless.

We had nominees that had unprecedented vetting issues, lying to this committee, lying to the IRS, indictments, racism, #MeToo issues that all came out as a result of the vetting. That is why it took time.

I do not want to belabor it. But I do want to work with the ranking member because, as I have heard him say and he said again today, that as a governor he understands the importance of having people in place in the executive branch to execute. I agree with him in this context as well, and hopefully, we can get to a point where we are promoting the number of nominees for the process.

We still have the floor issues that have been vexing us, which is maybe beyond this committee's pay grade but, nonetheless, is a critical issue where Republican members exclusively are holding up nominees on the floor to the detriment of the national security and interests of the United States.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I hope we do not mix the issue of what is happening on the floor versus what is happening in the committee. Like you, I am likewise frustrated with what is happening on the floor and, certainly, this is an issue that should be tackled by the senior members of leadership of both of our teams and get this removed so we can move forward on that.

I am not going to debate the quality of the appointments. Obviously, that would take many, many more days than what we have here. I will just say that I do commit that I am going to continue to work with you to move as rapidly as we can.

I have no doubt that we will wind up with similar frustrations but we will work through them as best we can.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We ask each of you to summarize your testimony in about five minutes or so. Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection.

And we will start with Mr. Nides to make his presentation.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. THOMAS R. NIDES OF MINNESOTA,
TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE STATE
OF ISRAEL**

Mr. NIDES. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. It is a privilege to appear today. It is an honor to be asked to serve as the ambassador to the State of Israel.

I want to thank President Biden, Secretary Blinken for the confidence in me, and I am grateful to share this day with my family.

I would like to thank Senator Klobuchar for her kind words of introductions. As the Senator mentioned, she and I have been friends for over 40 years having served as interns together for Vice President Walter Mondale. I am so, so grateful for her friendship.

As Senator Klobuchar mentioned, I grew up in Duluth, Minnesota, the youngest of seven children. My parents were leaders in a vibrant but small Jewish community. My dad was the president of our temple, our chairman of our local UJA. My mom was a leader of both Hadassah and Sisterhood, who grew up believing being Jewish was more than a religion but a way of life.

Most importantly, my parents have pressed upon my siblings and me the importance, as they say in Hebrew, tzedakah, or charity, giving to your community and caring about others.

During my first trip to Israel, I worked on a kibbutz where I discovered the importance of this very young and vulnerable nation. As Jews everywhere are celebrating the holiday of Sukkot, there is no greater honor than to be asked to strengthen the ties between the United States and the State of Israel.

My many trips to Israel, both in the government and the private sector, have strengthened my commitment to sustain Israel as a democratic and Jewish state.

The U.S.-Israel relationship has long been based on both common values and strategic interests to remain united in our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security.

Should I have the honor of being confirmed, let me just spend a moment on a few of the priorities that will guide me.

First, the United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security supported by a 10-year/\$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding. Israel is one of our closest security partners in countering the broad spectrum of threats.

Chief among them is the critical threat that Iran poses. President Biden has made clear his commitment to ensure that Iran will never develop a nuclear weapon. Upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests, ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner.

Second, United States remains committed to advancing the depth and breadth of our bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship.

Israel's startup nation economy is welcoming for U.S. businesses, with U.S. companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign investment research and development centers in Israel. And, as importantly, President Biden has announced he will work with Israel in hopes of them joining the Visa Waiver Program.

Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century, and the United States views close cooperation with Israel on foreign investment as critical to our security and intelligence partnership.

Third, the United States values working with fellow democracies to oppose international institutional biases towards Israel, and I look forward to working with Israel to protect the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, creating an atmosphere all voices can be heard.

Equally, we must continue to oppose all efforts to isolate and delegitimize Israel. If confirmed, while respecting the rights of all Americans for free speech, I will continue the tireless work of this administration to firmly reject the BDS movement and boycott laws which unfairly single out Israel.

Fourth, the Abraham Accords. Yes, the Abraham Accords are critical to the region's stability and prosperity. I will personally support every effort to expand cooperation among Israel and the countries of the Arab and Muslim world, and I hope to strengthen the Abraham Accords and identify opportunities to expand Israel's relationship in additional countries in the Arab and Muslim world.

While we support the normalization between Israel and other countries, it is not a substitute for Israel-Palestinian peace, and we seek to harness existing and future agreements and make tangible improvement for the Palestinian people with a view of preserving the vision of a negotiated two-state solution.

I am committed to doing so my part to rebuild the partnership between the Americans and the Palestinian people.

The priorities listed above are only some of the key issues that face any diplomat serving in Israel. Frank and fruitful dialogues only strengthen our partnership and deepen the bonds between Americans and Israelis.

Before I close, I would like to say something, that if I am fortunate to get confirmed, this will be my second time working at the State Department with some of the most talented and dedicated individuals I have ever had the honor to be with.

I would be remiss in not thanking every one of them for their service. I am humbled and grateful to serve this country and to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israeli partnership.

And thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Senator.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Nides follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS R. NIDES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today.

It is an honor to be asked to serve as Ambassador to the State of Israel. I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. I am grateful to share this day with my family.

I would like to thank Senator Klobuchar for her kind words of introduction. As the Senator mentioned, she and I have been friends for over 40 years, having served as interns together for Vice President Walter Mondale. I am grateful for her friendship.

As Senator Klobuchar mentioned, I grew up in Duluth, Minnesota the youngest of seven children. My parents were leaders in a vibrant but small Jewish community. We grew up believing being Jewish was more than a religion, but a way of life. Most importantly, my parents impressed upon my siblings and me the importance of giving back to our community and caring about others.

There is no greater honor than to be asked to strengthen the ties between the United States and the State of Israel. My many trips to Israel, both in government and the private sector, have strengthened my commitment to sustain Israel as a democratic and Jewish state at peace with its neighbors.

The U.S.-Israeli relationship has long been based on both common values and strategic interests. We remain united in our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security. Should I have the honor of being confirmed, some of the priorities that will guide my efforts include:

First, the United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security, supported by our 10-year, \$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding. Israel is one of our closest security partners in countering a broad spectrum of threats ranging from climate change to cyber-attacks to nuclear proliferation. Chief among these is the critical threat that Iran poses.

President Biden has made clear his commitment to ensure that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon. Upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests and ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner.

Second, the United States remains committed to advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship. Israel's start-up economy is safe and welcoming for U.S. businesses, with U.S. companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centers in Israel and President Biden announced we will work with Israel in hopes of them joining the Visa Waiver Program. Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century, and the United States views close cooperation with Israel on foreign investment risk management as a down payment on our security and intelligence partnership.

Third, the United States values working with a fellow democracy to oppose international institutional bias and promote human rights at home and abroad. I look forward to working with Israel to protect the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, creating an atmosphere where all voices can be heard and highlighting efforts to advance the rights of members of vulnerable communities. Equally, we must continue to oppose all efforts to isolate and delegitimize Israel internationally. If confirmed, while respecting the rights of all Americans to free speech, I will continue the tireless work of this Administration to firmly reject the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and boycott laws which unfairly single out Israel.

Fourth, the Abraham Accords are critical to regional stability and prosperity. I will personally support every effort to expand cooperation among Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world, and I hope to strengthen the Abraham Accords and identify opportunities to expand Israel's relations with additional countries in the Arab and Muslim world.

While we work to support normalization between Israel and other countries, it is not a substitute for Israeli-Palestinian peace, and we seek to harness existing and future agreements to make tangible improvements for the Palestinian people with a view to preserving the vision of a negotiated two-state solution. I am committed to doing my part to rebuild the partnership between the American and Palestinian peoples.

The priorities listed above are only some of the key issues that face any diplomat serving in Israel. Frank and fruitful dialogues only strengthen our partnership and deepen the bonds between Americans and Israelis.

Before closing, I would like to thank the very talented, dedicated cadre of public servants who represent the United States faithfully both here in Washington and abroad. It goes without saying that, if I am confirmed, the safety and security of

all Americans, and not just those in the Embassy, but all those in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza, is my top priority.

I am humbled and grateful to serve this country and to work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israeli partnership. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Cohen?

**STATEMENT OF DAVID L. COHEN OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA**

Mr. COHEN. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch—

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Cohen, if you could put your microphone on.

Mr. COHEN [continuing]. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am proud and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Canada.

I want to thank the President for his nomination, Senators Casey and Toomey for their kind introductions, and this committee for its courtesy.

I also would like to acknowledge my wife, Rhonda, who has joined us here today. She has supported me—maybe it would be more accurate to say that she has put up with me—through 44 years of marriage. I deeply appreciate her remarkable partnership and commitment to my career.

Canada is one of our most important allies and a partner for our economic prosperity and our national security.

If confirmed, I pledge to devote my full efforts to strengthening our unique bilateral partnership. As President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau stated this year in their roadmap for a renewed U.S.-Canada partnership, and I quote, "It is in the shared interest of the United States and Canada to revitalize and expand our historic alliance and steadfast friendship to overcome the daunting challenges of today and realize the full potential of the relationship into the future," unquote.

In navigating the confirmation process, including meetings with members of this committee, I have heard many recommendations for expanding and improving the already strong relationship between Canada and the United States.

Based on these discussions, if confirmed, some of my key priorities would be, first, preserving and growing the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, including as detailed in the USMCA.

At nearly \$1.7 billion a day, Canada is our largest trading partner and the top export market for more than 30 of our states.

Second, easing border restrictions while protecting public health in both countries. As Canada and the United States share the world's longest land border with 120 ports of entry and a prepandemic daily rate of 400,000 people, crossing over a safe and vibrant border is important for bilateral relations, trade, tourism, and the personal and family relationships that form the bedrock of our cultures.

I understand that the impact of today's restrictions on the many communities along the border, but I also appreciate the health sensitivities and concerns that have led to the current regulations.

Third, Canada and the United States cooperatively manage multiple watersheds through complex arrangements, several of which would benefit from modernization.

A modernized Columbia River Treaty regime, for example, could enhance hydropower and flood risk management in both countries. I know that many members share this high priority.

Fourth, continue to respect and fortify the trusted and valuable alliance with Canada on multiple defense relationships, including NATO and NORAD.

We also must honor our commitments to make the necessary investments to meet those needs and, of course, our policy toward China is a key priority today.

Finally, continue to advance common priorities of our countries on the global stage on issues such as combating climate change, anti-corruption, and building more diverse and inclusive societies, including for women and girls.

My varied professional career has been rewarding and, ultimately, enhanced by leadership roles in multiple nonprofit organizations. One important theme running through my career has been the opportunities I have had to serve.

I am also proud of my success in tackling big complicated issues and in bringing people together to solve problems. I am excited by the possibility of extending my passion for service and applying my collaborative and solutions-based approach in the role of ambassador to Canada.

If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the members of this committee as I represent the President, the Secretary of State, and this country in Canada.

It would be the ultimate honor to work alongside the 1,200 members of the United States mission in Canada and with the Canadian government to advance our shared priorities.

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

[Prepared statement of Mr. Cohen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID L. COHEN

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am proud and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Canada. I want to thank the President for his nomination and Senators Casey and Toomey—two extraordinary public servants who I have had the privilege of working closely with over many years—for their kind introductions of me, and I thank this committee for its courtesy.

I also would like to acknowledge my wife, Rhonda Cohen, who has joined us here today. She has supported me—maybe it would be more accurate to say that she has put up with me—through 44 years of marriage. I can say with absolute certainty that I simply would not be here today were it not for her remarkable partnership and commitment to my career.

Canada is one of our most important and committed allies and a partner for our economic prosperity and our national security. But I understand the significant challenges that lie ahead for both of our countries. If confirmed, I pledge to devote my full efforts to strengthening our unique bilateral partnership, to enable both countries to take advantage of our shared economic and political interests.

As President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau stated in their Roadmap for a Renewed U.S. Canada Partnership in February of this year, "It is in the shared interest of the United States and Canada to revitalize and expand our historic alliance and steadfast friendship to overcome the daunting challenges of today and realize the full potential of the relationship into the future."

In navigating the nomination and confirmation process, including meetings with members of this committee, I have heard many recommendations for expanding and improving the already strong relationship between Canada and the United States. Based on these discussions, if confirmed, some key priorities for me are:

- Preserving and growing the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, including as detailed in the USMCA. At nearly \$1.7 billion a day, Canada is our largest trading partner and the top export market for more than 30 of our states.
- Easing border restrictions while protecting public health in both countries. As Canada and the United States share the world's longest land border, extending 5,525 miles, with 120 ports of entry, and a pre-pandemic daily rate of 400,000 people crossing over, a safe and vibrant border is important for bilateral relations, trade, tourism, and the personal and family relationships that form the bedrock of our cultures. I understand the impact of today's restrictions on the many communities along the border, but also appreciate the health sensitivities and concerns that have led to the current regulations.
- Canada and the United States cooperatively manage multiple watersheds through complex arrangements, several of which would benefit from modernization. A modernized Columbia River Treaty regime, for example, could enhance hydropower, flood risk management, and ecosystems in the United States and Canada. I know that many Members share this high priority.
- Continue to respect and fortify the trusted and valuable alliance with Canada on multiple defense and foreign affairs relationships, including NATO and NORAD. We also must honor our commitments to make the necessary investments to meet current and future challenges to our collective security and preserve our ability to successfully promote peace and human rights globally.
- Continue to advance common priorities of Canada and the United States on the global stage on issues such as combating climate change, anti-corruption, energy independence, and building more diverse and inclusive societies, including for women and girls around the world.

My varied professional career has included the practice of law, government service, and a senior executive business role. That career has been rewarding, enriching, and ultimately enhanced by leadership roles in multiple nonprofit organizations. For me, one important theme running through my career has been the opportunities I have had to serve. I am proud of my success in tackling big, complicated issues, and in bringing people together to solve problems.

I am excited by the possibility of extending my passion for service and applying my collaborative and solutions-based approach in the role of United States Ambassador to Canada. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the members of this committee as I represent the President, the Secretary of State, and this country in Canada. It would be the ultimate honor to work alongside the 1,200 members of the U.S. Mission in Canada for our Government and with the Canadian Government to advance our shared priorities.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Dr. Telles?

**STATEMENT OF DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES OF CALIFORNIA,
TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC
OF COSTA RICA**

Ms. TELLES. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica.

I am grateful and humbled by the trust placed in me and, if confirmed, I really look forward to working with all of you to advance our nation's interests in the region.

With your indulgence, I would like to introduce my husband, Joe Waz, and my son, Raymond Jimenez, who are here with me today. Their unequivocal love and support mean the world to me.

Also, I would like to thank my beloved parents, Raymond and Delfina Telles, who are with us in spirit. My father taught me by example that public service is a noble cause to which he dedicated his entire career, having served as the first Hispanic elected mayor of a major U.S. city in 1957 and also having served as the very first Hispanic U.S. ambassador when President Kennedy appointed him to serve in Costa Rica in 1961.

If confirmed, it would be my life's greatest honor to follow in his footsteps.

I spent several years of my youth in Costa Rica, which came to have a special place in my heart. I became very familiar with its people, its culture, and its challenges. I also was able to witness firsthand the formation of the Alliance for Progress with its great dreams of shared prosperity and democracy.

My father was able to organize a summit for President Kennedy and all the Central American presidents at the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica. I am committed to using that experience to deepen the enduring bonds between Costa Rica and the United States and, thereby, to further our mutual interests.

The United States and Costa Rica have shared an exceptional partnership across decades, one that is based not only on mutual interests but on shared values of democracy, of good governance, of human rights. This strong partnership is critical now more than ever.

We face an unprecedented convergence of challenges in Central America: increased drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations, economic downturn exacerbated by the pandemic, disruption to the region due to climate change, uptick in irregular migration, and also foreign influences that threaten to undermine democracy and our priorities in the region.

If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rica to promote our shared interests throughout the region. Costa Rica has been a strong ally in migration management and a regional leader in welcoming vulnerable migrants and providing international protection for refugees and asylum seekers.

If confirmed, I will, certainly, work to strengthen its asylum protection and temporary worker programs, and to expand its capacity in general to deal with migration, including border protection.

Very importantly, I will work with Costa Rica to address root causes of migration in the region.

The U.S. and Costa Rica collaborate closely to combat transnational crime organizations. Costa Rica is actually crucial to this shared mission, given its strategic location which positions it at the largest transshipment hub from South America to the U.S. for narcotics bound to our country.

The good news is that in 2020 Costa Rica interdicted a record 71 metric tons of narcotics, mostly cocaine, demonstrating not only its commitment and capacity but also, very importantly, the huge challenges it faces in the region.

If confirmed, I commit to strongly support Costa Rica's counter narcotics efforts in every way possible.

For decades, Costa Rica has been a champion of democracy and recently demonstrating this by calling out that Ortega-Murillo regime in Nicaragua and the Venezuelan government to return to

peaceful democracy, to hold free and fair elections, to release political prisoners, to hold people accountable for corruption.

Certainly, I will gladly support Costa Rica's efforts to promulgate our shared values in the region.

Although Costa Rica has enjoyed a relatively stable economy across time, there are recent troubling signs evidenced by high unemployment, by a large public debt, and by stress in the public health system due to COVID-19 and increased migration from Nicaragua.

In addition to the human toll that these pose, these vulnerabilities can be exploited by our adversaries and competitors. If confirmed, I commit to strengthening economic partnership with Costa Rica and to promote mutual prosperity. Importantly, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the embassy team in San Jose where my highest priorities will be the protection of U.S. citizens and our interests. I will look forward also to seeking consultation from this committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer your questions.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Telles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica. I am grateful and humbled by the trust placed in me.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to advance our nation's interests.

I would like to introduce my husband, Joe Waz, and my son, Raymond Jimenez. Their invaluable support and love mean the world to me.

I would like to thank to my beloved parents, Raymond and Delfina Telles, who are with us in spirit. My father taught me by example that public service is a noble cause to which he dedicated his entire career. He served as the first Hispanic elected mayor of a major American city in 1957 and, subsequently, as the first Hispanic United States Ambassador when President Kennedy appointed him to serve in Costa Rica in 1961. If confirmed, I will be deeply honored to follow in his footsteps.

I spent several years of my youth in Costa Rica, which came to have a special place in my heart. I became very familiar with its people, its culture, and its challenges. I am committed to using that experience to enhance America's enduring bonds with Costa Rica and, thereby, to further our mutual interests.

The United States and Costa Rica have enjoyed an exceptional partnership across decades—one based, not only on mutual interests, but on shared values of democracy, good governance and human rights. This strong partnership is critical—now more than ever. We face an unprecedented convergence of challenges in Central America: increasing drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations; disruption from climate change; economic downturn exacerbated by the pandemic; a related uptick in irregular migration; and foreign influence that threatens to undermine democracy and our priorities in the region.

In addressing these challenges, Costa Rica has been, not only a reliable partner, but an effective role model. If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rican people to promote our shared interests throughout the region.

Costa Rica has been a strong ally in migration management through participation in our Comprehensive Regional Solutions Framework. It has been a regional leader in welcoming vulnerable migrants and guest workers and providing international protection for refugees and asylum seekers, including more than 80,000 Nicaraguans and 30,000 Venezuelans in recent years. Through the U.S. funded Protection Transfer Agreement, Costa Rica hosts individuals with urgent protection needs from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, while they undergo refugee processing for resettlement. If confirmed, I will work with the Government to help strengthen its asylum system, support temporary worker programs, expand its efforts to deal

with migration and protection issues and, very importantly, to address the root causes of migration.

The United States and Costa Rica collaborate closely to combat transnational criminal organizations that move illicit drugs to the U.S. and engage in human trafficking. Costa Rica is critical to this shared mission, given its strategic location, which positions it as the largest transshipment hub for South American cocaine bound for the U.S. In 2020, Costa Rica interdicted a record 71 metric tons of narcotics, demonstrating, not only its capabilities, but also the enormous challenges it faces. If confirmed, I commit to strongly support Costa Rica's counter-narcotics efforts.

For decades, Costa Rica has been a strong champion of democracy. Recently, its Government demonstrated a commitment to pressure Nicaragua's Ortega-Murillo regime to hold fair and free elections and to release political prisoners. Costa Rica has repeatedly called for a peaceful return to democracy in Venezuela and accountability for corruption.

In addressing the climate crisis, the United States has no stronger ally in this hemisphere than the Costa Ricans with their longstanding commitment to protecting the environment, conserving biodiversity, and reducing carbon emissions, in fact, outlining a pathway toward net zero emissions by 2050. If confirmed, I look forward to partnering with them to advance these shared goals.

Although Costa Rica has enjoyed a relatively stable economy, there are recent signs of strain evidenced by high unemployment, untenable public debt, and stress on the public health system due to COVID-19 and increased migration from Nicaragua. In addition to the human toll, these vulnerabilities can be exploited by our competitors and adversaries. If confirmed, I commit to strengthening our economic relationship with Costa Rica to promote mutual prosperity. In the near term, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, which has greatly impacted the country, now in its fourth major surge. U.S. support to date has included a donation of half a million Pfizer vaccines.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading our Embassy team in San Jose and to working closely with you.

My highest priority will be to protect U.S. citizens and to champion our interests in cooperation with our strong partners in Costa Rica.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'm happy to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Before we start a round of five-minute questions with members, there are a series of questions we ask each nominee on behalf of the full committee and they, really, require a simple yes or no answer.

I would like to ask each question and get a verbal response from each of the nominees. These are questions that speak to the importance that this committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from you. I would ask each of you to provide just a yes or no answer.

Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you. All of the nominees have responded yes verbally.

I will recognize myself for a series of questions.

Mr. Nides, this is one of the most important relationships we have. It is long-standing, enduring, and incredibly bound by common values that we share with the people of Israel.

I think these are self-evident but I just want to make sure. You are committed to Israel's right to self-defense, are you not?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, I am.

The CHAIRMAN. Under U.S. law, there is a question of Israel's qualitative military edge. You are committed to continuing to pursue that under the law, right?

Mr. NIDES. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And do you support replenishment of the Iron Dome missile defense system—

Mr. NIDES. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Which has saved countless Israeli and Palestinian lives as well?

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And you spoke to the Abraham Accords, which we all cherish that other countries have finally come together in recognizing Israel and we hope that that can be pursued even more significantly.

Those are all key elements and you have covered many other things in your opening statement.

Let me turn to Mr. Cohen. Since Canadian authorities detained the CFO of Huawei in December of 2019, China's Government has engaged in numerous forms of retaliation, including the imposition of tariffs and cutting imports of Canadian products.

However, the most egregious case is the PRC's arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens, Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, as well as the seemingly political conviction of Mr. Kovrig last month. These tactics by China require the international community to respond with a united purpose. I have spoken about this quite a bit.

What steps will you take to deepen coordination with our Canadian allies and ensure that our two countries formulate a joint response to the challenges posed by China's coercive diplomacy?

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I think the good news is that we start from a proposition, as you observed in your opening comments, where Canada and the United States share a commitment to democratic values and I think they share an abhorrence of much of the behavior of the People's Republic of China.

I think the United States has joined Canada in the condemnation of the treatment of the two Michaels. I think Canada almost seems to prefer working in multilateral ways in its foreign affairs, which sometimes may make it appear that they are less outspoken than you might otherwise think.

In the case of the two Michaels and arbitrary detention, they have been very outspoken and the United States has been very supportive. I think we are all waiting for Canada to release its framework for its overall China policy, and I think as ambassador, if I am confirmed, it is an appropriate role to be engaged in discussions and make sure that Canada's policies reflect its words in

terms of the treatment of China, and that we do improve the collaboration and coordination between our two countries in taking on the existential threat that is China politically, economically, diplomatically, et cetera.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The Congress, as a whole, which is a rarity these days, but in a bipartisan way put out legislation, including legislation from this committee that became part of the overarching legislation on China, recognizing China as our most significant geostrategic challenge in the world. Our allies are going to be incredibly important to this.

You and I had an opportunity to speak yesterday. I appreciate you coming by the office.

I hope also upon your confirmation you can work with our Canadian partners, who we have a great deal of respect for. We honor the service and the sacrifices that they have made alongside of us in Afghanistan and other places as a NATO ally.

But I would hope that they would be more forthcoming on democracy and human rights issues in the hemisphere. They are a key hemispheric partner. They sit in the OAS with us.

And yet, I get disappointed at times when, for example, the Canadians do not join us, for example, on human rights and democracy in Cuba. It is pretty amazing to me.

I understand Canadians have economic interests in Cuba, but those should not overcome the human rights and democracy issue. It is something I hope you will work on upon your confirmation.

Dr. Telles, you mentioned Costa Rica and some of the challenges that it has now in COVID and some of the economic impacts on it. How do you think we can work together? What would be some of your top priorities to work with Costa Rica to help it meet these present challenges so it can continue to be what it has been on both refugees, democracy, a stalwart in the hemisphere?

Ms. TELLES. Chairman, thank you for your question. Very timely and relevant at this point.

And, certainly, as you mentioned, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the economic circumstance in Costa Rica as it has throughout the region and also globally.

One of the things that I would hope to do is to assist the government in addressing the issues right now which are currently plaguing it, including high unemployment, also issues related to increasing public debt and also the strain that COVID-19 has placed on its health system.

And I would also suggest in dealing with these shorter-term issues that may require some financial assistance that we look to supporting Costa Rica and it's kind of a long-term economic resilience. And that would, certainly, mean to kind of strengthening our economic partnership with Costa Rica through trade and investment.

I would, certainly, reach out very proactively to American businesses to consider investing in Costa Rica, which has a very favorable business climate.

Additionally, I think that in terms of the longer-term resilience issues it will be important for Costa Rica to continue down the path it has begun already through its accession to the Organization

of Economic Development and Cooperation, which has, certainly, suggested certain reforms—economic and governmental reforms—which they are embarking on.

I believe that we also need to get the assistance of multinational organizations as well as international financial institutions to assist with long-term recovery.

In terms of your question about refugees, as you know, as I mentioned, Costa Rica has been an incredible partner, a regional leader, in terms of providing protection for refugees and asylum seekers.

And just very recently it, actually, has provided a home as it welcomed refugees from Nicaragua, in the last three years probably about 100,000 and from Venezuela close to 40,000 in the last—it just varies in terms.

I believe—and even though they are very willing and welcoming, it has, certainly, strained to some extent its public health system and its infrastructure.

I think that we need to look at some additional humanitarian assistance to Costa Rica and also to figure out how we can expand its capacity to receive migrants by supporting its temporary worker programs, its asylum protection programs also.

Again, I look forward, if confirmed, to working with the government of Costa Rica to address these issues.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me let start with Mr. Nides. First of all, thank you for your enthusiastic condemnation of the despicable and anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement. I really appreciate your enthusiasm for that position, which I share and many others share.

We have another member on the next panel who, I think, has less enthusiasm for that. But we are going to test that when we get there.

I also want to acknowledge your enthusiastic support for the Abraham Accords. That is the most enthusiasm I have heard from anyone from this administration regarding the Abraham Accords, even though almost everyone agrees that this was one of the most significant steps that has happened in the Middle East in decades.

I appreciate that and I also appreciate your personal commitments to expand the Abraham Accords where possible. That is a game changer in that region. Certainly, the more relations that the countries have with each other in the region is good for them and it is good for the world. Thank you for that.

The Palestinian issue that I am most concerned with is the “pay for slay” program, which I assume you are familiar with, and I would ask your thoughts on that, please.

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you very much, and I share your concern about this abhorrent behavior as it relates to the “pay for slay.” Obviously, legislation was passed the Taylor Force Act, which, we are quite focused on, and if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, I have every intention of working with the Palestinians to try to get progress on this.

But I do not think there is anyone in this administration that would disagree with you about what has happened there, and we need to work to get it resolved.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. I was one of the primary sponsors on Taylor Force. I had hoped that it had been more successful than it has been.

But if it is followed closely, it certainly makes inroads in that and I, along with others, are criticized sometimes because we are tough on the Palestinians and particularly when you are talking about money flowing to them because of the corruption and the way that the terrorists have a way of siphoning money from our money that is going there to help people in the country.

I think this is something that really deserves our continued attention and I am, certainly, going to be tough and I think everybody is going to be tough on this “pay for slay” program, and I hope you will enthusiastically join us as we continue that battle. Thank you.

Turning to Mr. Cohen, thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me on the issues with Canada. I, certainly, wish we had the same relationship with all countries.

Like the Chairman, I am not completely satisfied with their view on everything. But that is not unusual. There is virtually no country that we are in complete concurrence with.

Two of the real important issues for me are the Columbia River Treaty. It is important to all of us on a bipartisan basis who serve from the Pacific Northwest.

Senator Cantwell and I have been the two leading people on the negotiations that are going on. She is a very good partner in that regard. We are in complete agreement on where we need to go with this.

We talked about the heavy lift that it is and I know you are ready for that challenge, and we expect to continue that as it is going and we look forward to your help in that regard.

On the second issue, and that is the opening of the northern border, we share—my state shares a border with Canada and we are very painfully and personally aware of the cost of this closing.

I appreciate your commitment to work on getting that open as quickly as we can.

For Ms. Telles, the Costa Ricans switched their diplomatic relations from Taiwan to the PRC in 2007, and ever since then we have seen the slow creep of Chinese influence in that country.

Could I have your thoughts on that?

Ms. TELLES. Absolutely. Thank you for your question, Ranking Member Risch.

It is something of great concern, quite frankly. China has sought for some years now to expand its sphere of influence, politically and economically, and it would love nothing better than to have a beachhead in Costa Rica.

And in recent years, in the last few years or so, these efforts have become much more aggressive. Whether it is through promises of investment and trade or public diplomacy, they built them some time ago, as you know, a stadium and a police academy, but there are more recent offers of a similar nature.

Additionally, they attempted vaccine diplomacy. It did not work at this point, and they are now very interested, very aggressively, actually, pushing, trying to further infiltrate the Costa Rican telecommunications system through the sale at very good terms of their equipment for cellular phones.

I would say that I think the biggest, I think, or the most important strategy here would be, really, to strengthen our economic relationship with Costa Rica in terms of trade and foreign direct investment, and as I mentioned, I really want to urge the American companies to really invest in Costa Rica.

That, I think, will be probably one of the biggest leverages that we will have over time. Right now, we are their top trading partner and the largest contributor to foreign direct investment. I would want to preserve that and expand that.

But also, very importantly, I think it would be important, certainly, to urge the Costa Ricans to be mindful of our shared values of democracy and human rights, and also to encourage them when entering into contracts and list agreements to prioritize trusted partners and entities that will not compromise their long-term security.

But I am confident that in working with Costa Rica—it has been a great partner over many years—that we can achieve these goals.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I appreciate that clear-eyed view. Your reference to the relatively small amount of money that China spends in these countries gets them tremendous leverage at times, whether it is here, whether it is in the Small Pacific nations. We have seen that over and over again.

I appreciate your attention to that and we will all be watching it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand Senator Cardin is with us virtually.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me start by thanking all of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country. We thank you. We thank your families.

These are critically important positions for the United States and we thank you for being willing to step up in this responsibility.

Mr. Nides, let me start with you. Thank you for the opportunity that we had to chat. I know your record over many, many years and I know your strong support for the importance of the U.S.-Israel relations.

We have already covered the issue about Israel's right to defend itself. We have already covered the partnership with the United States under a Memorandum of Understanding and the replenishment of the Iron Dome funds, and we have covered also the dangerous efforts that are made to isolate Israel through the BDS movement.

I want to talk in a positive note. We recognize that the need for peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis, that is in the interest of both Palestinians, Israelis, and the United States and the region for security.

There have been many opportunities in the past where we came close but we were not able to complete the negotiations. It seems to me that we have two things at this moment that give signs of encouragement. We have already talked about one, the Abraham

Accords, with countries normalizing their relations with Israel, and, as you point out, additional countries that are candidates for the Abraham Accords.

And we also have a broad coalition government in Israel right now that gives us maybe the political opportunity within Israel to be more aggressive on peace. We recognize the challenges among the Palestinians and their leadership.

But could you just share with us your thoughts as to whether this might be the right time to pursue peace between the Palestinians and Israelis?

Mr. NIDES. Senator Cardin, thank you for your question.

I think as President Biden said, I think, yesterday at the U.N. there is a view that a two-state solution, clearly, is a goal to try to attempt to achieve. I do not think any one of us believe that that is achievable in the next couple of weeks.

But I do believe that we need, as a government, to continue to create the pathway to achieve that and I think we are doing that through a variety of ways. One, talking about the importance of a two-state solution. Number two, adding to the assistance to the Palestinian people.

I think there is \$400 million of assistance for the Palestinian people through a variety of programs to send a strong message to the Palestinian people and to encourage both the Palestinians and the Israelis not to take unilateral action that will make the path towards a two-state solution impossible.

I, obviously, believe that Prime Minister Bennett's visit here was a successful one. I think the relationship between the prime minister and the foreign minister with the Biden administration is strong.

I hope that relationship will continue to grow as we and, hopefully, when I have the opportunity potentially to be confirmed I will reach out to the Palestinian people to continue to send the message that we not only care, we believe in the importance of the same freedom and security and prosperity that the Israelis want to achieve.

Senator, I am, generally, an optimist. You would not take these jobs if you were not. I am also a realist. But I hope we are beginning the process to create the environment for that to happen.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for that response.

Mr. Cohen, let me just ask quickly a question in regards to U.S.-Canadian relations. We know it is our closest ally from the point of view of regional. A great relationship between our two countries.

But I think we have to recognize that there is damage that has been done. The Canadian Globe and Mail reported on July 22nd that, and I quote, "The political discord in the United States remains dangerously deep."

And although Canada-U.S. relations are improving now that Donald Trump is no longer President, it will be a long time before things return to normal, if they ever do.

Now, I do not want to rehash what happened over the past four years. But I do want to just emphasize the fact, and we talk to Canadians all the time, there has been damage done in our relationship.

What is your strategy in order to strengthen the ties as far as the feelings among the people in Canada and the United States towards each other?

Mr. COHEN. Senator, I agree with the premise of your question quite strongly, and I think that it plays to one of my strengths over the course of my career.

I am going to start with the simplest thing. I am going to show up. I am going to be there. I am going to reach out.

One of the outcomes of the election on Monday is there are going to be a number of new cabinet ministers and I want to make sure that I try to create a relationship and a communication channel with the government and make it clear that I am there to listen. I am there to, obviously, represent the United States interests, that I am there to be communicative and two ways communicative, to communicate our desires and our positions, for example, on issues like China, as the Chairman raised.

But I am also there to listen to Canadian concerns and to bring them back and to make sure that I create a reality that the United States cares about Canada as a strong ally, cares about what they think, and wants to be a true partner in trade and diplomacy, in defense, in energy and climate change, in all of the issues that we share values on and that we work closely together.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The next available member is Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, and thank you to all three of our nominees today. Thank you for your willingness to continue to support our nation and to serve overseas and for your families, who are with you today.

It is my honor to work with you and to question you today, and I intend to support your confirmation before the Senate of the United States and to welcome and express my appreciation, Max, to you—Rhonda, it is great to see you again—to Joe and to Raymond.

All of us are able to sustain our careers in service because of the support of our families. Thank you for that.

If I might, Mr. Nides, I join many others in saying the Abraham Accords enjoy bipartisan support. I look forward to partnering with you and figuring out how we can more fully implement them.

As the Chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, I am committed to working with you on ensuring Israel's security and the continued strengthening of that long, deep, and important partnership.

I want to ask you about a specific program that was funded, the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act. It has \$250 million over five years to support venture capital investment in the West Bank and people-to-people programs.

Are you familiar with this? How do you think it might contribute to the very difficult work of developing an environment for partnership and for peace?

Mr. NIDES. Thank you very much, Senator, for the question.

Yes, I am quite knowledgeable about this and I congratulate the Congress for doing this program in a bipartisan way with your

leadership and many of the Republicans who signed on for this legislation.

I happen to have gone out to see former Congresswoman Lowey in Westchester a few weeks ago to talk to her specifically about the program. The program, as you know, is a \$250 million program over a five-year period of time that marries both the DFC and USAID to do exactly what needs to be done, which is not only people-to-people growth but, more importantly, trying to use these monies to improve both the Palestinian and Israeli relationships.

Congresswoman Lowey, someone who I have known for a long time, it was an honor for her, clearly, but shows the importance of her commitment to the U.S.-Israel-Palestinian two-state solution idea and for us to focus on that.

I am quite familiar with it. I have already had some preliminary discussions with folks as I got briefed up on it. But I think it has got an enormous amount of potential and I look forward to working with you as we implement programs if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Tom.

Mr. Cohen, it is great to see you before us and to be with you again, and I think you will serve as an excellent ambassador to address some of the issues Senator Cardin just raised.

Senator Udall and I actually were part of a bipartisan delegation that went to Latvia a number of years ago where we visited with a Canadian battalion that was helping lead NATO security presence in that Baltic country. Just one of many reminders of the ways in which Canada is not just a critical trade partner, not just a critical values partner, but is a real security partner.

How will you work with Canada to advance our shared security goals through NATO, through NORAD, through their vital work in peacekeeping and other partnerships that are essential to our security?

Mr. COHEN. Again, I think I will have the advantage of starting with the foundation of a long-term friendship and partnership.

There isn't any resistance to the importance of Canada and the United States working together on defense arrangements, including the ones that you have identified.

But as the Chairman pointed out in one of his questions, there is always room for improvement. Let me put it that way. When I look at the side of our relationships about benefit sharing and about making sure that we are all investing appropriately in these defense partnerships, in NORAD, Canada has not appropriated the sum of money that is necessary to fund the modernization and improvement of NORAD that we have agreed to conceptually.

And although the percentage of the Canadian defense budget is creeping upwards, it is only at about 1½ percent and it is projected to drop to as low as 1 percent over the next decade or so.

I think that is an opportunity for dialogue. It is an opportunity for conversation. It is an opportunity to say if we really believe in the importance of NATO, if we really believe in the importance of NORAD, we have to invest appropriately to make sure that we can deliver on the defense benefits to both of our countries and to the free world.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And if I might, Dr. Telles, just a question to follow up on your previous exchange about foreign direct investment.

I was very encouraged to see Intel's announcement in July that they will invest \$600 million in a long-idled semiconductor microchip plant in Costa Rica.

How can partners like Costa Rica help partner with us to support the near shoring of critical technologies as we look to develop supply chains that are more robust and independent?

Ms. TELLES. That is an excellent question, Senator, and I do think that that Costa Rica could play a very important role in partnering with us in this respect.

As you know, they have a relatively well-educated well-trained workforce. They also offer a very positive business environment, open economy, relatively low levels of corruption and such.

And so given that they have already—as you know, one of their main exports is medical equipment, but aside from that they have a capacity to engage in broader production, and I do believe that we could certainly encourage this particular partnership even further.

Senator COONS. Thank you, and I look forward to working with you to support and strengthen the ability of the Costa Rican people to both welcome refugees and to be a wonderful development and security partner with the United States.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I understand that Senator Young is with us virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, Chairman. Thank you, sir.

Mr. NIDES, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has made it clear that his government opposes the Biden administration's efforts to revive the Iran deal, and they would ensure Israel has the ability to go it alone in securing itself from Iranian terror.

I do not necessarily doubt your commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship, especially having visited with you, sir. But this administration seems intent on pursuing certain policies that, I believe, will only undermine it.

Mr. NIDES, how can an administration that claims to be unequivocal about Israel's security continue to press for revival of a deal with Iran that Israel's own government opposes due to the security risks that it presents?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you for the question, as you and I discussed in your office.

I will make two points. One is, as you know, the President has been quite clear that he is attempting to use diplomacy to resolve the Iran nuclear situation. He has also made it clear, as Secretary Blinken has, that he will not stand by to allow the Iranians to obtain a nuclear weapon.

Obviously, I am not a party, since I have not been confirmed, to the level of negotiations, but those are the binding facts of this relationship and the position of this administration.

Senator YOUNG. If you believe the JCPOA, sir, does enhance Israel's security—let us just take that as a premise because you would almost have to in order to reconcile the commitment to U.S.-Israel relationship and their intent on making sure that Israel can defend itself with this JCPOA negotiation.

Let us just assume the JCPOA enhances Israel's security. How do you square that with Israel's opposition to the agreement and the prime minister's commitment to do whatever is necessary to secure the people of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Again, Senator, I am not, obviously, currently involved in the discussions and negotiations, obviously, with Israel or the conversations going on in Vienna.

I will only say that I think the President has been quite clear both in his statements yesterday at the U.N. and the public statements that he and the Secretary of State have said, is obviously they want to, if possible, use diplomacy to resolve the situation.

And I think, as this process plays out, and if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, obviously, I will be more informed about the details of that. But that is, certainly, the policy of the administration and I do believe that there are ongoing communications between the Israeli government and the American government as it relates to whatever discussions are going on around the diplomatic channel and non-diplomatic channel through the conversations among the parties.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Nides.

Mr. Cohen, the United States and Canada are close trade partners, especially evident in the symbiotic relationship between my state of Indiana and the Canadians.

As a leader in the automotive industry, Indiana exports over \$7 billion in motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts to Canada. Canada is also Indiana's largest export destination, followed by Mexico, according to 2019 statistics.

It is safe to say that we rely on access to partners in Canada in order to export products all across the globe and keep our industries humming, and that access was solidified by the landmark USMCA agreement.

As ambassador, Mr. Cohen, how will you work to mitigate supply chain disruptions that business continuously faces as they emerge from the pandemic, and do you see value in diverting supply chains out of China and closer to U.S. soil?

Mr. COHEN. Good morning, Senator. Good to see you.

I think the problem you have put your finger on is something I alluded to in my opening statement, which is the pandemic has, clearly, been disruptive to supply chains and the limitations on travel have complicated things.

I think, in the automotive world, by the way, we are working through the processes of USMCA to try and deal with some of the automobile industry issues that were—frankly, were one of the reasons for USMCA being passed.

If I am confirmed, though, I think this is another case where my role as ambassador is to help encourage these types of discussions and, obviously, anytime we can divert supply chains to our hemisphere as opposed to China is an economic benefit to the hemisphere and to the United States.

And to the extent that we can accomplish that, I think that is good policy for the United States and for Canada.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you. I am out of time. I appreciate your desire to serve, all of you.

Senator SCHATZ. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Young.

Mr. Nides, in my view, we have a moral obligation to help the Palestinians that are suffering, and I understand that there are those who do not share that view.

But could you talk about why U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians is not just morally right but good for us and for the Israelis and serves the long-term interests of a two-state solution?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you very much, and I wholeheartedly agree with that.

The moneys going to the Palestinians are going to the Palestinian people, and making life better for the Palestinian people has been a bipartisan issue. It has not just been a Democratic issue.

For many years, this committee and the appropriators have appropriated money for the Palestinian people from everything from water to education to health care.

I think it makes our national security interests because that is who we are as a country. I think it helps the Israelis by keeping things calm not only in the West Bank, which I think is important for the security, and I think it is important for us if we believe, ultimately, that the solution is a two-state solution it provides them an opportunity and a guide path for that.

I am in complete concurrence and I think it is important with all the caveats that we all understand and all the rules which are in place, but giving assistance to the Palestinian people—not to the Palestinian Authority, but to the Palestinian people—is in our national security best interests, and I think and I believe that also in Israel's national security interest as well.

Senator SCHATZ. Can you flesh out that last part for us? Can you talk about the work that the U.S. government and the NGO community does to make sure that our assistance goes to support the needs of the Palestinian people and what guard rails we will have in place to ensure that the U.S. funding does not get diverted from a humanitarian mission?

Mr. NIDES. Sir, I think we are using our trusted partners. The auditing that goes on through USAID and our other development partners is focused on that.

We are very aware and very focused on the Taylor Force Act. Those monies will be to the Palestinian people. These are programs that help healthcare, education, water purification, a variety of programs, and I believe, if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed to speak for USAID, but I know they are very much focused on how those monies are being spent and all the guard rails that are put up in conjunction with the laws and regulations that are in place.

Senator SCHATZ. I will submit this question for the record because I want to get to Mr. Cohen.

But I do want to ask you about the potential for clean energy partnerships between the United States and Israel.

Mr. Cohen, the Canadian government passed a law this summer ratifying its commitment to clean energy by the year 2050. It still has a lot of work to do. Everybody has a lot of work to do to flesh out its plan and put funding behind it.

But we do need this kind of ambition and commitment from our allies if we are going to combat the climate crisis. Can you talk

about how we can make climate action more of a main part of our bilateral relationship with Canada?

Mr. COHEN. Good morning, Senator. Good to see you.

And I think the premise of your question provides some of the answer. When we deal with Canada, we are dealing with a friend that shares our values and that includes around climate issues.

You have the legislation. You also have Prime Minister Trudeau's federal carbon pricing, which was layered on top of that legislation and which was just upheld by the Canadian Supreme Court. You have got real action being taken by Canada.

I think the best ways to align is better coordination and continued communication. We have got two current examples of that. One is the roadmap that I referenced in my opening statement, which identifies climate and fighting climate change as one of the priorities of Canada and the United States working together. That is a statement from the highest levels of both governments, the president and the prime minister.

And the second thing I would point to is the recent convening that Climate Secretary Kerry had with Canada and promised a periodic high-level convening around climate change-related issues to keep the two countries aligned and to keep this issue front of mind.

I mean, I think that both are consistent with my sense that we need coordination, communication, at the highest levels of our governments.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much, and thanks to all of you for your willingness to serve.

Senator Barrasso?

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

Mr. Nides, congratulations on your nomination. I just had a chance to talk with Senator Klobuchar, who gave you such a nice introduction, and congratulations.

I want to talk about Iron Dome. The U.S.-Israel relationship has long been the cornerstone of America's strategy in the Middle East. Israel constantly faces terrorist attacks. We have seen it again recently, threats including the rocket attacks by Hamas in Gaza, attacks from Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon and Syria.

Iron Dome is the first line of defense for Israel. In May, Israel faced over 4,000 rockets and attacks by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hamas. The Iron Dome system intercepted more than 90 percent in terms of being effective in intercepting the rockets threatening civilians and critical infrastructure. It saved lives.

Yet, what we just saw is the House Democrats removed funding for the Iron Dome that had been included in their Continuing Resolution funding bill. This just happened within the last day.

Do you support funding to replenish the Iron Dome defense system?

Mr. NIDES. Absolutely.

Senator BARRASSO. And how important is continued U.S.-Israel cooperation on the Iron Dome and other cooperative defense programs?

Mr. NIDES. Very.

Senator BARRASSO. In terms of Jerusalem, is Jerusalem the capital of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Do you believe it should be the permanent place of the U.S. Embassy in Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. In 2019, the United States formally recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Do you view the Golan Heights as part of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. We support the current position vis-a-vis the threats that we have in Syria with Assad and it is a strategically very important strategic position for the Israelis.

Senator BARRASSO. In 2018, Congress passed into law the Taylor Force Act. It prohibits U.S. economic assistance that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority as long as the Palestinian Authority continues to pay financial rewards for terrorism.

I know Senator Risch talked about the importance of this issue a little earlier in this hearing. Does the Palestinian Authority continue to subsidize and pay financial reward to terrorists?

Mr. NIDES. I believe they have not stopped these payments.

Senator BARRASSO. If confirmed, are you fully committed to stopping the terror incentive payments by the Palestinian Authority?

Mr. NIDES. If I am confirmed, absolutely will work to achieve that goal.

Senator BARRASSO. There is a new Palestinian Authority law that, effectively, nationalized all what were once independent civil society groups. These groups need to now submit plans and budgets to the Palestinian Authority to review their conformity with the, quote, "work plan of the relevant ministry."

The law also gives the Palestinian Authority power to dissolve any organization and then seize or transfer its assets to a similar Palestinian association or institution.

You look at that, the way that they are going to do this, looking at this and saying would you support the United States providing taxpayer resources to these organizations if they can be seized by the resources can be seized by the Palestinian Authority, which the United States is legally prohibited from funding directly?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, I am not totally aware of exactly the program you are speaking of but, clearly, the Taylor Force Act is the law of the land and, obviously, we will abide by any laws, obviously, on the books.

On that particular one, I am not particularly aware of that piece of—or that Palestinian legislation or whatever law that may be in place. But I will, certainly, look into it.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate your willingness to look into it.

Israel continues to face direct threats from Iran and its terrorist proxies. The administration's budget request includes \$3.8 billion in U.S. security assistance to Israel.

President Biden has clearly stated, "I am not going to place conditions for the security assistance given the serious threats that Israel is facing, and this would be, I think, irresponsible."

Do you oppose placing conditions on U.S. security assistance to Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. And how would reducing or conditioning security assistance to Israel hurt Israel's ability to defend itself from threats?

Mr. NIDES. The reality is the administration does not support conditionality on the assistance and, as you know, we are at a \$38 billion tenure MOU, and the position of the administration is we do not support conditionality.

Senator BARRASSO. Last week marked the one-year anniversary of the Abraham Accords, the historic diplomatic U.S.-brokered agreements between Israel and several of the Arab neighbors.

The Trump administration helped negotiate several historic developments between Israel, its regional Arab neighbors—the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. They joined Egypt and Jordan in establishing relationships diplomatically with Israel.

These agreements have created a path to peace through recognition and engagement rather than isolation and boycotts of Israel.

Israel's foreign minister recently said the Abraham Accords club is open to new members as well. Secretary Blinken pledged the administration will continue to build on the successful efforts of the last administration to keep normalization marching forward.

As the ambassador, what role would you play in fostering peace with Israel in the Arab world?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, as I said in my opening statement, I am quite focused on the Abraham Accords. I think they are good for Israel. If my North Star is a democratic Jewish state, I think this makes it stronger.

Obviously, my hope is that as we operationalize the current Abraham Accords countries and then expand it, it will also benefit the Palestinians as well. I think, obviously, it is something that is good for Israel. It is, certainly, good for the United States' national security interests, and we would love to, at the time, make sure it is also good for the Palestinians as well.

But I will work closely with the implementation, work to strive to get the new additional countries into the Abraham Accords, and I look forward to working with you on that.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SCHATZ. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations to the witnesses. What a great panel.

I am fortunate to have two friends on this panel, Tom Nides and David Cohen, and Dr. Telles, while we do not know each other enough for me to call you a friend, your husband, Joe, is a friend. I am an admirer of yours, but a friend of your husband. What a good panel. I am really excited to be with you.

I have two questions. Sometimes I ask questions to make a point, but these are questions because they are things I am puzzled about. One is for you, Mr. Nides, and one is for you, Dr. Telles.

Mr. Nides, your opening testimony talks about long-time U.S. policy dating back to President Truman supporting two-state, a peaceful Israel, peaceful Palestine living side by side, and that has always been my thought about the best outcome there.

But I will say, I have been to Israel and Palestine now probably more than any other country in the world—I do not consider myself

an expert but I have been a lot—I look for evidence that Israeli or Palestinian leadership want a two-state solution and I am not sure I see it.

I do not necessarily see it in the current government of Israel that they really want a two-state solution. And when I am talking to Palestinian leadership, they sort of suggest that they want it but I do not see a capacity to carry it out.

And when I talk to just everyday people, I often hear two-state, one-state, that is for politicians. On the Palestinian side, what I often hear is, we just want equal rights to water and to voting—equal rights.

I detect a troubling lack of interest in the two-state solution in Israel and Palestine, and it makes me wonder whether the U.S. can have a policy for a nation that it does not necessarily have for itself.

My question to you is what evidence is there right now that Israeli or Palestinian leadership want a two-state solution?

Mr. NIDES. Sir, it is a great question, obviously. We can only control what we can control and, in our view—this is the United States' position and this administration's position—is to set the table, keeping the parties not doing unilateral action that makes that impossible to achieve and we do that by a variety of things: assistance to the Palestinians, clear support to Israel for their own defense, the MOU, providing opportunities on the Abraham Accords, making sure that we articulate to the Palestinians that we care about their freedom and their prosperity and their security.

We, as the United States, can only set the table, potentially giving us the opportunity to achieve it at some point, as the President has articulated.

I cannot, obviously, speak for the Israelis or, obviously, the Palestinians. But, hopefully, if I am confirmed, I can speak for the United States and we will at least not to exasperate and divide but encourage the parties coming together.

Senator KAINE. I think that is about as good an answer as anyone could give, because I am just not sure there is a lot of evidence out there right now.

We should do what we can to, hopefully, create opportunities for progress. But it really troubles me, and we are in the midst of a painful analysis right now of the last chapter of U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan, and one of the questions we are having to ask ourselves is did we want something, a set of things, for Afghanistan that the Afghan leaders did not want for themselves, and we have to be humble in asking that question and getting to the bottom of it.

Dr. Telles, here is my question for you. I lived in Honduras for a while, and when I lived in Honduras in 1980 and '81, Costa Rica was sort of a real island of stability and a very tough Honduras was a military dictatorship. There was a Contra war going on against the government of Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador in the midst of brutal civil wars.

Why has not Costa Rica's success had a little positive infection throughout the Americas? It has always puzzled me that they have been able, and thank God, they have been able to be—they have got challenges, too—but an island of stability.

But that was 40 years ago that I was in Central America. Honduras is not a military dictatorship now but it is equally troubled, maybe more violent and killing of journalists and activists.

What is it about Costa Rica that enables it to be successful? Why has not that model been attractive to its neighbors?

Ms. TELLES. Thank you for your question, Senator, and also I appreciate your interest in Central America, knowing that you lived there for a bit and were involved in humanitarian efforts.

It is a very good question. It is a fact that Costa Rica has really enjoyed a stable democracy and a relatively prosperous economy over the years, and it could be a part of its roots go back to 1949 when, after almost a year of civil strife a constitution was adopted that really emphasized democracy but also, importantly, I think, took certain actions to invest in the people of Costa Rica.

They eliminated their army and they put most of their resources into public health and into education, and I think that that went a long way, I think, towards helping to create a middle class, helping to stabilize its long-term interests.

Why has that not been exported successfully to other countries? That is a very good question. If you look at some of the history of Central America, some instability has been related to military actions which have engaged in coups and also repression of the people. And so that is just one simple answer.

But I do hope that Costa Rica can increasingly through its leadership in the Central American region and its recent presidency, actually, of the Central American Integration System will continue to promulgate our shared values of democracy and human rights, which are very necessary right now in Central America.

Senator Kaine. I am well over my time, but I really appreciate both of you for offering good insights into two very tough questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Senator Schatz. Senator Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to each of you, I want to congratulate you on your nominations. It is a tremendous honor to be nominated to represent your nation in this way and I wish you the best as you move through the hearings process.

I would like to start with an area that is of particular strategic concern, although all of your countries are terribly important—the countries that you are hoping to represent the United States to—but that is Israel.

And Mr. Nides, I wanted to reach out to you. Earlier this year on a 97 to 3 vote, an amendment that I co-authored with Senator Jim Inhofe was passed to ensure that Jerusalem continues to be recognized by the United States as the capital of Israel.

That is pursuant to the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 codified U.S. policy, first, ensuring that Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel and that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city.

Mr. Nides, as nominee to be our ambassador to Israel, do you support the Jerusalem Act of 1995 and, in particular, do you agree that Jerusalem should continue to be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel by the United States, that Jerusalem should re-

main an undivided city, and that the United States should maintain its embassy to Israel in Jerusalem?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you for your question, and the answer is yes. The capital of Israel is Jerusalem. The embassy is in Jerusalem. If I am confirmed, I will be living in Jerusalem. Obviously, that is something that I will be looking forward to.

Obviously, at a certain point, if there is a negotiation between the Palestinians and the Israelis as it relates to a final status, long from now, that will be up to the parties. But from the United States' perspective, Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.

Senator HAGERTY. With respect to the Palestinian negotiations, I would like to probe further on that.

Mr. NIDES. Please.

Senator HAGERTY. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett recently visited here, met with our president.

President Biden told him, told Prime Minister Bennett that he intends to open a U.S. consulate for Palestine in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Bennett's response was not positive to that. In fact, he indicated publicly his opposition to President Biden's proposal.

Foreign Minister Lapid called Biden's proposal a bad idea. Indeed, the U.S. embassy currently has a Palestinian affairs unit at Agron. I visited that facility in June of this year.

If the U.S. government were to open and maintain an embassy, a consulate, a legation, some type of function like that, some type of diplomatic facility in Jerusalem besides the one that exists inside the U.S. embassy to the State of Israel, do you think that that course of action is consistent with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995?

Do you think that that supports the philosophy of that law that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of the State of Israel?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, yes, I do. I, fundamentally, believe that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. The embassy will be in Jerusalem. As you know, the issue around the consulate, that consulate has existed in one form or another for almost 130 years in one form or another.

Obviously, the opening of the consulate if it occurs—and as you know, the President has indicated, as well as the Secretary, that we would like to open the consulate—it will have no impact upon the capital of Israel being Jerusalem.

This is something, obviously, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed I will be, obviously, addressing but, obviously, taking my direction from the President and the Secretary of State.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate the position you are in. I just hope that we take into account the position of our ally, Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East, and their concerns, I think, are very relevant and pertinent to this discussion.

I would like to turn to another point, very quickly, and that is yesterday the House decided to remove funding to resupply and replenish the Iron Dome rocket defense system.

I was very disappointed to see it. I am also happy that Leader McConnell and Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman Shelby are proposing a Continuing Resolution that will include a billion dollars to replenish the Iron Dome.

In fact, earlier this year, I introduced the Emergency Resupply for the Iron Dome Act of 2021 to immediately resupply the Iron Dome. I did that along with our colleagues, Senator Cruz and Rubio, here.

I also visited Israel with Senator Cruz immediately after the 11-day war. I saw the benefit of having a technology like that that saved both Israeli and Palestinian lives.

And I want to ask you if you agree that that defensive capability that we provided through the Iron Dome is actually a benefit to our relationship with Israel and to their position there?

Mr. NIDES. Absolutely. Senator, I will make just one quick point.

Number one, the President has been very clear that he supports the replenishment of the Iron Dome.

Number two, obviously, it is in our national security interest to support a very, very important ally in the region, and this is a defensive mechanism. It is to stop rockets from raining in on Israel.

We are supportive of the replenishment and it is in our national security interest, and it is our desire and hope that those funds will be provided to replenish the Iron Dome.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. I am very pleased to hear that position. Thanks very much.

Senator SCHATZ. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a few quick comments and then a couple of questions.

Senator Van Hollen and I just returned from a trip to Israel to meet with the new government. Incredibly impressive, this coalition that has come together, an unlikely one.

The United States is at our best when we are a helpful and active broker for peace, when we are a friend of Israel but when we are also acting to try to bring the Palestinians to the negotiating table. We abdicated that responsibility for the last four years.

And as you mentioned, Mr. Nides, there was a consulate in Jerusalem for 150 years. This was an effective nonissue prior to the closure of that consulate during the Trump administration.

It is an easy thing to do to just go back to the status quo of a century-plus. But it is important to the Palestinians because they see it as a way for this administration to signal that we care about the plight of Palestinians just like we care about the security of Israel.

Similarly, I support Iron Dome funding. I think we should telegraph right now that we are going to continue to be a full partner with Israel in making sure that they can defend themselves.

But I also think we need to send a message that we are going to restart our partnership with the Palestinians to try to address their legitimate humanitarian needs. This committee has at times not been helpful in allowing the administration to get money to the Palestinian Authority. There are desperate reconstruction needs in Gaza right now.

And so my suggestion is that we should move ahead with Iron Dome funding, but we should partner it with some significant humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people. I think that is just the right thing to do.

Mr. Nides, I wanted to ask you a specific question about the Palestinian elections that have been postponed now. I think it is really

important for there to be elections in the PA, in particular, because we need a shot at new leadership. We need the ability of some new voices to be able to break through.

They were postponed, and the reason given was that there was not a commitment by the Israeli government to allow for elections to happen inside Jerusalem.

I do not know if that is the real reason or not, but I, certainly, know it would be a lot better if the Israelis made that commitment. And while we were there, the prime minister and the PA made a commitment that if the Israelis allowed for elections to go forward amongst Palestinians in Jerusalem, they would schedule them within six months.

How important do you think it is that these elections take place and what role can you, as an ambassador, play in trying to make sure that they occur?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, first of all, thank you for your question and your statement, and I wholeheartedly agree with you.

As I said to Senator Kaine a few minutes ago, we, as Americans, need to set the table for the potential of a two-state solution through assistance and through strong support for Israel and the MOU so we can actually walk and chew gum at the same time as it relates to doing both at the same time.

As it relates to the elections, I agree with you elections would be good for the Palestinians. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will work with the Israeli government to assure that that issue is not an obstacle to achieve elections.

And as you and I both know, we are not sure how much of that was the reason. But I would, certainly, work to make sure that is taken off the table as an issue or an obstacle for elections in the— with the Palestinians.

Senator MURPHY. Yeah, I think that is the right approach. Let us eliminate all of the excuses to not go forward with this election.

I understand the danger of this election. Hamas is, obviously, now in the wake of the latest conflict more politically potent in the West Bank than ever before. But that in and of itself is not a reason to try to give a new generation of leaders the chance to step up.

Mr. Cohen, just very quickly, sanctions coordination between the United States and Canada. We are best when we do things together. We worked together, for instance, on sanctions on Belarus.

What is your analysis of the willingness of the Canadian government to be able to continue to work with us on sanctions? How important do you think that will be in your new role?

It seems like an area where we can do more, where we can communicate earlier. We are stronger when the United States and Canada speak together on issues of pro-democracy and pro-human rights sanctions policy.

Mr. COHEN. Senator, good to see you. Good afternoon.

I think your question is absolutely correct and whenever Canada and the United States can work together we are more powerful. We speak with a greater voice.

The issue of sanctions coordination and sanctions policy is an issue that this committee has dealt with and there is legislation now for a sanctions coordinator position within the State Depart-

ment, and I think the work was started on creating that. The plug was pulled during the Trump administration.

It is my understanding that work is being done to identify a candidate to be nominated for that position, which would report to the Secretary of State, and I think that is an important tool to improve the coordination of sanctions, which will improve the effectiveness of sanctions and will be another example of Canada and the United States being able to work together to advance our mutual goals.

Senator MURPHY. Great. Thank you very much. I look forward to working with you on that.

The CHAIRMAN. [Presiding.] Thank you.

I understand Senator Van Hollen is with us virtually.

Senator Van Hollen: Yes. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, thank you.

To all of our nominees, congratulations on your nominations.

Mr. Cohen, great to see a fellow Swarthmore alum nominated to be our ambassador to Canada. I do have some serious concerns with the current disconnect in our policy with respect to Canada and travel to the United States.

If you are vaccinated as a Canadian you can fly to the United States but cannot cross the border by car, and this is despite the fact that Canada has a higher vaccination rate than the United States.

If I have time at the end of my question, I may circle back with you on that issue.

Mr. Nides, congratulations on your nomination. Great to see you. I agree with the points that you made in your opening statement.

I recently traveled to Israel and the West Bank with Senator Murphy and two of our colleagues, and you have heard some of the report just now from Senator Murphy. We had positive visits in both stops. We very much and warmly welcomed many of the new steps being taken by the government in Israel.

We discussed the importance of our relationship, including the continuation of the MOU, which you reference in your opening remarks. And I fully support replenishment of the Iron Dome, which helped save lives in the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas.

You say in your statement that we need to work to preserve the vision of a two-state solution. I agree with you. As you know, the President agrees with you.

If you could just say in your own words why you think that that is important for the future, both for Israel and for the Palestinians, and what you will do as ambassador to preserve that option, as you say, in your statement.

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you for the question.

If my North Star is a democratic Jewish state, I believe to preserve that—to preserve that, having a two-state solution preserves that. I think it creates the environment for the Palestinians to live with the same freedom and security and prosperity that the Israelis have.

I believe that us providing the assistance for the Palestinian people is critically important. It is not just the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do for our own security.

I think providing security assistance is the right thing to do for not only Israel and the Palestinians but for the Americans as well.

Israel is our most, if not one of the most, important allies that we have in the region and in the world and keeping that safe is relatively and exceptionally important for their security and for our national security.

I just think if you fundamentally believe, as I do, that a two-state solution provides that security for the long haul, I think it is the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do, and if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, I will work towards that goal.

Senator Van Hollen: And what specific measures would you take as ambassador to preserve that option? Because as you know, the door is rapidly closing through changes on the ground with respect to a two-state solution. What measures do you think need to be taken to keep that option open?

Mr. NIDES. If I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, the most important thing is for neither parties, the Israelis or the Palestinians, to take unilateral action that prevents that from happening.

And so if I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, I will work with the parties to avoid that, and we all know those issues that create the environment that allows for conflicts to occur.

I think the goal of the ambassador is to articulate the vision of the President and the Secretary of State, but to try to keep the parties not creating an atmosphere that we cannot move forward on a vision of a two-state solution.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you.

We also, as Senator Murphy said, met with Prime Minister Shtayyeh in the West Bank, who said and acknowledged the importance of opening up the Palestinian Authority to elections.

As you probably saw, they just announced municipal elections this December. But there is the issue of the Legislative Assembly elections. I am pleased to hear your response to Senator Murphy with respect to working with our Israeli partners to make sure that Palestinians in East Jerusalem can vote and make sure that that is not an excuse for not going forward with the legislative elections.

Finally, as you know, the President has said that he wants to reverse the decision by the Trump administration that shut down our consulate in Jerusalem.

Do you support reopening that consulate as the President has committed to do and what do you think the timetable for that will be?

Mr. NIDES. I, certainly, support that, as the President has indicated and the Secretary of State has announced.

Until I am confirmed I am not privy to the conversations that are happening between the State Department or the administration with the Israelis. But, obviously, that is something that, once I am fortunate enough to get confirmed, will work on and be able to report back to you on a timing.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot see the clock. Has my time run out?

The CHAIRMAN. It ran down a while ago.

[Laughter.]

Senator Van Hollen: All right. Thank you all very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

This particular part of the hearing is now over. This record is going to remain open to the close of business tomorrow for questions to the record.

I would urge the nominees if they get a question to respond to it expeditiously and fully so that we can consider your nominations for a business meeting.

And with the thanks of the committee, we will now move to our second panel.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let me introduce our second panel as they get themselves adjusted to their positions.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. We have two nominations on the second panel: our former colleague Senator Tom Udall to be an ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, and Ms. Sarah Margon to be the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. I would ask our other nominees to please take your conversations outside of the chamber so we can move on.

I know that Senators Heinrich and Lujan have expressed their interest in introducing Senator Udall but they have not yet arrived. We will wait for them in the moment.

I also understand that our former colleague and member of this committee, Senator Feingold, is going to introduce Ms. Margon virtually today.

Is Senator Feingold with us?

Senator Feingold, welcome back to the committee even if it is virtually. We will recognize you to give an introduction of Ms. Margon.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RUSSELL FEINGOLD,
FORMER U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Risch and members of the committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today to introduce Sarah Margon, a nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which is known as DRL.

I worked closely with DRL during my tenure at the State Department when I was the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region of Africa. I would argue the DRL's work has never been more important than it is right now, with democracy going head to head with the growing threats of kleptocracy and authoritarianism around the globe.

Right now, democracy is losing some ground in several countries with devastating consequences for human rights, the rule of law, independent judiciaries, and other democratic principles.

President Biden has stressed repeatedly that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy, and I could not agree more. Democracy and human rights go hand in hand, and DRL is at the forefront of implementing President Biden's commitment to human rights and to crafting and implementing policy aimed at strengthening and preserving the democratic values and principles that we so staunchly believe in and cherish.

Sarah is an exceptional candidate to lead DRL at this time and to help inform and guide human rights and democracy-focused U.S. foreign policy. It is a true honor for me to introduce her.

She came to work for me many years ago when I was a member of this committee. At the time, she was coming not just from Oxfam America but she came into the office almost literally right from a trip she had taken to Eastern Chad.

I mention this because it is indicative of Sarah's lifetime commitment to an approach to addressing conflict and crises across the globe. Her policy perspectives are continuously informed and driven by her experiences traveling to these countries and working directly with affected communities and through that and her experience and commitment would help develop meaningful legislation and policy change as it has throughout her career and will in her new role as Assistant Secretary of State, if she is confirmed.

I will just highlight a couple of things that make her unique. She has a strong commitment to bipartisan foreign policy. I saw this firsthand when she worked in my office and worked closely with senators on both sides of the aisle to advance meaningful foreign policy.

This included working with Senator Isakson on many democracy issues, Senators Inhofe and Brownback to pass legislation to help protect civilians in northern Uganda, and Senators McCain and Graham on issues relating to Egypt's growing repression and election concerns in 2010, of course, just before the Tahrir Square protests in 2011.

She takes the time to listen to all sides and stakeholders, including those whom she disagrees with, so she can ensure that she is fully informed. She regularly made time to speak to my constituents in Wisconsin and hear their concerns about everything from Indonesia and East Timor and Sri Lanka. She believed they had important contributions to make to our policy work.

If she is confirmed, I know that Sarah will be committed to engaging the American public beyond the Beltway on America's role in the world, and she will never lose sight that her principal job is to serve the American public.

Sarah believes fiercely in the important role of Congress when it comes to foreign policy. I will state this is particularly important to me and one of the reasons that I hired Sarah.

She firmly believes that Congress must play an active and assertive role in foreign policy, both in terms of helping to build and support an agenda that represents all of America and in terms of oversight of the executive.

She understands the experience and tools to make good policy. Her rich experience makes her an expert on the full toolkit deployed by our State Department, from punitive measures like economic sanctions to incentivizing and relationship building.

She understands that meaningful and impactful policy cannot be made in a vacuum, and I saw her demonstrate this as we traveled all the way from Eastern Congo to Djibouti and even Peshawar, Pakistan, where we were working on these issues.

Sarah is driven by a deep belief and a commitment to ensuring that the United States is a force for good in the world. This translates to a fierce commitment to diplomacy and the necessary work

to build and maintain positive constructive relationships across borders.

I want to close by underscoring Sarah's values, which drive her work every day. She brings sincere integrity to her work. She is solution oriented, which is exactly what we need at this time when democracy is on the back foot around the world and when basic fundamental liberties are under attack.

I think it would be a little hard to find someone who is more genuinely devoted to advancing human rights and democracy, and doing so in an informed, transparent, and collaborative manner than Sarah.

If confirmed, she will be an open honest broker for improving human rights and democracy around the world. I recommend Sarah Margon as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and I thank you so much for the pleasure of testifying before you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Feingold. It is good to see you, and we appreciate your glowing recommendation of Ms. Margon.

We have now been joined by two of our colleagues, Senator Heinrich and Senator Lujan, who will join in introducing Senator Udall. Senator Heinrich?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARTIN HEINRICH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator HEINRICH. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and all the distinguished members of this committee, it is really my honor today, my distinct honor, to introduce President Biden's nominee to serve as the next U.S. ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, and, obviously, our former colleague, Senator Tom Udall.

As a long-serving member of this committee, I know Tom is no stranger to any of you. But I wanted to make sure to echo what I am sure anyone who has worked with Tom Udall over the years would say about his incredible character and the deep commitment that he has to public service.

Tom has devoted his entire life to my state, to serving the people of New Mexico and to serving this great nation, first, as our state's attorney general, then for 10 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, followed by two terms in this body, in the United States Senate.

And during the time that the both of us served here together in the Senate, Tom Udall proved to be a constant friend and close mentor to me. He also set a true example of what it means to be a public servant.

Over his two terms in the Senate, Tom showed all of us how to act with decency and integrity, how to stay true to your principles but also how to find common ground, and these are all qualities that I am very confident will serve him well in this new diplomatic role representing our nation's interests abroad.

With all of his experience on climate issues and his work with indigenous communities, he is uniquely qualified to build upon our nation's cooperation and shared interests with our allies in New Zealand and Samoa, and I can truly think of no one better suited

to represent our country and face international challenges than Tom Udall.

On behalf of Julie and myself, I want to congratulate both Tom and his wife, Jill, on this new opportunity to continue their lifelong service to our country, and I sincerely hope that each and every one of you on this committee will join me in supporting this incredibly qualified nominee.

Thank you, Chairman.
The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Senator Lujan?

**STATEMENT OF HON. BEN RAY LUJAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator LUJAN. Thank you, Chairman. It is an honor to be here this morning before the committee alongside Senators Udall and Heinrich.

Senator Udall has spent his career, his life, serving fellow New Mexicans and our brothers and sisters across America. Both he and Jill Udall have made a tremendous difference in the lives of so many.

As our state attorney general, U.S. Representative, and United States Senator, Tom was deeply and continues to be committed to fighting for everyone to get a fair shake.

You know Tom and Tom knows you. Yesterday at the United Nations, President Biden pledged a new era of relentless American diplomacy, and today's consideration of Senator Udall to serve as U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa is proof of the President's commitment to restore American leadership around the globe.

New Mexicans know Tom as a true statesman and as a leader, as a friend, and as a mentor who takes the climate crisis seriously. He cares about others, he leads by example, and treats people with respect and dignity.

This ambassadorship matters. New Zealand and Samoa are leading on many important issues and are important partners in the fight against the climate crisis.

As ambassador, I am confident that Senator Udall will make New Mexico and our country proud. He will bring the same energy and commitment and, hopefully, a few bolo ties to the world stage.

[Laughter.]

Senator LUJAN. This is an exciting day for Tom and Jill, and for countless New Mexicans back home. Tom is a highly-qualified nominee and it is my honor to stand with him and Jill today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Lujan, for the glowing recommendation of our colleague. We appreciate it. We know you have other issues to attend to. Do not hesitate to leave when you think it is appropriate.

And I will just note as well that Congressman Malinowski from my home state of New Jersey is here with us. He had the former position that Ms. Margon is being nominated for as the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. We welcome him to the committee.

And since you are here, Congressman, we need to talk about the CASE Act and updating it so that we can actually get some information in real time these days. I look forward to working with you on that.

Let me briefly speak to these two nominees.

Senator Udall, welcome back to the committee. You now know what it feels to be on the other side of this questioning. But we know you are going to do great. Congratulations on your nomination, to Jill as well.

I am glad that President Biden selected you for this important post. I am confident that, upon confirmation, you will represent the United States well in New Zealand and in the Independent State of Samoa.

As you know, New Zealand is one of our closest partners, a partnership that is critical in this new era of strategic competition. Now more than ever, the United States has to pursue intense diplomatic outreach in order to support our common goals for addressing climate change, expanding economic and trade opportunities, and building security partnerships.

Climate change is one of the most pressing national security challenges of our time and it poses a significant threat to Pacific Island nations. Overall, I believe we need to reinvigorate our diplomatic presence and outreach to New Zealand and Samoa, and I am confident that you will be very well up to that task.

We look forward to hearing your goals for how we can deepen one of the closest diplomatic relationships we have even further.

Ms. Margon, congratulations on your nomination to DRL. You have extensive experience working to advance human rights and democratic values as well as support a bipartisan group of national security leaders, human rights, and civil society organizations, including prominent Jewish organizations who believe in the importance of the U.S.-Israel partnership and the importance of a two-state solution for ensuring Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state.

But I also know there have been questions about some of the nuances here and I will trust you will be able to answer those questions.

The need for strong effective leadership at the helm of DRL has never been more necessary. In every region of the world today authoritarian governments are seizing more and more power, dismantling core democratic institutions, and closing in on journalists and civil society.

Today, Beijing, Moscow, and their kleptocratic partners are driving global authoritarian expansion. They do this through increasingly sophisticated digital authoritarian surveillance and control tools that we put out a very significant report from this committee, and through old-fashioned arrests of peaceful protests and shutting down independent media.

To that end, we witnessed this summer the Cuban regime unleash a brutal wave of repression in response to unprecedented protests by the Cuban people. While the Trump administration took a wrecking ball to our reputation, the Biden administration is doing vital work to reassert the U.S. role in championing democracy and human rights around the globe.

That effort, however, was badly damaged this summer by the flawed withdrawal from Afghanistan and the unfolding human rights catastrophe.

From Burma to Ethiopia, the amount of human rights concerns around the world is vast. We understand that, at times, the United States faces hard choices where foreign policy and national security interests do not align neatly with the values we strive to reflect as a nation.

Upon occasion that is unavoidable. But we also know that the organizational structure at the State Department has allowed a culture to flourish in which human rights concerns gets less traction because the powerful regional bureaus frequently sideline DRL.

I look forward to hearing from you about how, if confirmed, you will work to recenter our foreign policy around the core American values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law that advance our U.S. national interests and the cause of freedom and human dignity that rightly belong to people everywhere.

And I will just close by saying today we had a breakfast meeting with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, and in that conversation one of the things that he said that I thought was so poignant for our other colleagues to hear was how important it was for the United States to raise the principles of democracy and human rights, and what it means to the rest of the world to do so.

This is an incredibly important position.

I know that the ranking member has as well opening remarks as it relates to these nominees, and when he returns I will recognize him. As such, he is voting right now. But in the interests of expediting this process, let me turn to Senator Udall first for his opening statement.

I ask you both to try to summarize your statements in about five minutes. Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection.

And with that, Senator Udall, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF FORMER SENATOR HON. TOM UDALL OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO NEW ZEALAND AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION TO THE STATE OF SAMOA

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, and I want to thank so much Senator Heinrich and Senator Lujan for coming and introducing me.

Ranking Member Risch and members of the committee, it is an honor and pleasure to meet with all of you again. As a former member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I have great respect for the important work you are doing to consider the diplomatic nominations before you.

Today, I have exchanged my seat on the dais to sit as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the Independent State of Samoa.

After a career of public service in the state of New Mexico, including two terms as New Mexico Attorney General, five terms as United States Representative, and two terms as United States Sen-

ator, I am grateful for the trust of the President and Secretary Blinken that they have placed in me to represent the United States overseas.

The advice and consent role of the United States Senate, Mr. Chairman, as you know well, is one of the most important roles granted to Congress by the Constitution, and I am honored by this committee's consideration of my nomination.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to take a moment to introduce my wife, Jill Cooper. She has been my partner and chief adviser during my 30 years of public service. She is an accomplished lawyer in her own right and a strong advocate for the arts, having served as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

And while they are not here with me today in these chambers, I would like to recognize my daughter, Amanda, and my son-in-law, Judge Jim Noel.

In January, I marked the conclusion of serving New Mexico in the United States Senate. New Mexico is a mountainous and rural state strong in its multiculturalism, including a vibrant indigenous culture.

New Mexico is also rich in natural resources and growing tech and space and cinematic sectors, complete with a vital national security sector. In all these respects, New Mexico is very much like New Zealand.

Both are aiming for the stars. Both continue to invest in new space sectors advancing science, human progress, and cinematic storytelling set in their unique geographies.

While there are numerous positive comparisons, it is no secret that New Zealand and Samoa, like New Mexico, face enormous threats from climate change.

As a senator, I made protection of the environment a priority, from championing the 30 By 30 proposal to conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030, to passing the landmark bipartisan Frank Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act.

The president has made it clear that climate consideration shall be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security.

As ambassador, I look forward to working with New Zealand, a country that shares my passion for the protection of our natural environment.

I also look forward to maintaining the strong political, military, and intelligence relationship we share with New Zealand from World War Two when tens of thousands of Americans were stationed in New Zealand, through the post-war Five Eyes intelligence alliance formed by the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and from support for our forces in Afghanistan in 2001 as well as other peacekeeping missions to formalize our strengthening defense cooperation in the 2012 Washington Declaration.

Just last week, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern affirmed that recent developments in the Indo-Pacific do not change the security intelligence ties of New Zealand to the Five Eyes alliance.

Members of this committee have been clear that the United States cannot challenge all the threats in the region alone. We

need allies like New Zealand and we need to help them thrive despite these regional challenges. We should not allow outside influences to drive a wedge in that relationship.

As ambassador, I will work to protect and grow mutual goodwill between our nations. Countering and competing with the People's Republic of China requires strong partnerships with countries throughout the region. Beijing continues to pressure countries that stand up to its human rights violations, to threaten freedom of navigation, and to violate international rules and norms.

Like you say, I would just ask that the rest of my statement be put in the record and it will be a real honor, if confirmed, to go off as an ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the courtesies. And Ranking Member Risch, I mentioned you. It is wonderful to see you here in person. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Senator Udall follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. It is an honor and a pleasure to meet with all of you again. As a former member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I have great respect for the important work you are doing to consider the diplomatic nominations before you.

Today, I have exchanged my seat on the dais to sit as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the Independent State of Samoa. After a career of public service in the state of New Mexico, including two terms as New Mexico's Attorney General, five terms as United States Representative, and two terms as United States Senator, I am grateful for the trust the President and Secretary Blinken have in me to represent the United States overseas.

The advice and consent role of the United States Senate is one of the most important roles granted to Congress by the Constitution—and I am honored by this committee's consideration of my nomination.

Chairman Menendez, with your permission, I would like to take a moment to introduce my wife Jill Cooper. She has been my partner and chief advisor during my 30 years of public service. She is an accomplished lawyer in her own right, and a strong advocate for the arts, having served as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. While they are not here with me today in these chambers, I'd also like to recognize my daughter Amanda and son-in-law Judge Jim Noel.

In January I marked the conclusion of serving New Mexico in the U.S. Senate. New Mexico is a mountainous and rural state strong in its multiculturalism—including a vibrant indigenous culture. New Mexico is also rich in natural resources, and growing tech, space, and cinematic sectors, complete with a vital national security sector. In all these respects, New Mexico is very much like New Zealand.

Both are aiming for the stars. Both continue to invest in new space sectors advancing science, human progress and cinematic storytelling set in their unique geographies.

While there are numerous positive comparisons, it is no secret that New Zealand and Samoa, like New Mexico, face enormous threats from climate change.

As a Senator I made protection of the environment a priority, from championing the Thirty-by-Thirty proposal to conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030, to passing the landmark bipartisan Frank Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act. The President has made it clear "that climate considerations shall be an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security." As Ambassador, I look forward to working with New Zealand, a country that shares my passion for the protection of our natural environment.

I also look forward to maintaining the strong political, military, and intelligence relationship we share with New Zealand: from World War II when tens of thousands of Americans were stationed in New Zealand, through the post-war Five Eyes intelligence alliance formed by the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; and from support for our forces in Afghanistan in 2001 as well as other peace-keeping missions, to formalizing our strengthened defense cooperation in the 2012 Washington Declaration.

Just last week, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern affirmed that recent developments in the Indo-Pacific do not change the security and intelligence ties of New Zealand to the Five Eyes alliance.

Members of this committee have been clear that the United States cannot challenge all the threats in the region alone. We need allies like New Zealand and we need to help them thrive despite those regional challenges.

We should not allow outside influences to drive a wedge in that relationship. As Ambassador, I will work to protect and grow the mutual goodwill between our nations.

Countering and competing with the People's Republic of China (PRC) requires strong partnerships with countries throughout the region. Beijing continues to pressure countries that stand up to its human rights violations, to threaten freedom of navigation, and to violate international rules and norms.

To ensure stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region as a whole, it is important to note that our relations do not begin and end with security. As an island nation, New Zealand is not unique in its dependence on international trade.

It is also one of many countries that has felt the pressure of Beijing's attempts to coerce through punitive trade decisions.

The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners. And I know from experience that during Senate visits overseas many of us looked for ways to increase trade ties between many nations and our respective states. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our trade relations continue to grow and that you or the companies you represent are welcome in New Zealand.

As Pacific nations with advanced economies, the United States and New Zealand have both an opportunity and responsibility to support the island nations in the Pacific. All of them are increasingly threatened by the immediate threat of COVID-19, but also the growing influence of the PRC, and the threats from climate change. The Independent State of Samoa, a small island country rich in Polynesian culture is not immune to these challenges. We need to continue to reinforce Samoa's independence with our Peace Corps and Fulbright initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it was one of my great honors to serve on this committee and to serve the nation and the people of New Mexico. After a career in public service, I am honored by the President's nomination to represent the United States in New Zealand and Samoa.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am happy to answer any of your questions during this hearing or for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

As I announced, I would recognize the ranking member at this time.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak briefly on both nominees and then, of course, questions.

First of all, it will come probably as no surprise to many that the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the nominee is going to be a very difficult and a heavy lift for me to support.

The nominee has made some deeply troubling public statements related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including on the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement—BDS movement—against Israel, and funding to the biased organizations in Gaza, which I am going to ask some questions on.

The nominee also told my staff, surprisingly, that she feels both the current and prior administrations—both the current Biden administration and the Trump administration's—airstrikes against Iranian proxy targets were illegal.

This view is against those of the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and legal advice spanning both administrations. If this is the kind of advice that she is going to give to the Secretary, it is going to be very difficult to support her.

Further, the nominee publicly congratulated a private company for participating in the BDS movement against Israel and urged other companies to do likewise. She also tweeted in support of a

July 20 New York Times op-ed entitled, "I no longer believe in a Jewish state." We will talk about that when we get to questions.

On the nomination for the ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, it is good to see you, Senator Udall, and your lovely wife. I talked to Senator Brown this morning and he feels that you have won the lottery and have been sentenced to paradise. He is high on this.

If confirmed, you would be charged with stewardship of our relationships with these two nations where we have seen malign influence from the People's Republic of China and where there is room for our partnerships to grow. I look forward to hearing your priorities on these issues.

China recently submitted information to New Zealand to join the comprehensive progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

Yet, we have seen the PRC use its economic might to coerce and bully its neighbors in the region. I am, therefore, skeptical of PRC's ability to be a good trade partner.

This development also reminds us of the importance of a strong U.S. economic and trade agenda in the Indo-Pacific region, a key element of the Strategic Competition Act passed by the Senate earlier this year. I will be interested in hearing your thoughts on that.

Again, good to see you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, I will turn to Ms. Margon now.

STATEMENT OF SARAH MARGON OF NEW YORK, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

Ms. MARGON. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee.

I am honored to be here today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the trust they have placed in me.

It is an honor to have Senator Feingold introduce me. Working for him was a master class in principled integrity. As a result of his leadership, I saw how standing up for what is right can be central to effective policymaking and that reaching across the aisle usually makes for better and stronger policy.

Indeed, America in the world should represent all Americans. I come from a long line of New Yorkers, many of whom rarely left the state but all of whom believed in the promise of a better life through hard work and a little bit of luck.

It is that gritty mindset that enabled my grandfathers, Albert Simon, born Abraham Simonofsky, and Solomon Mogiliwsky, changed to Margon, to flourish. One owned a pharmacy in Queens. The other became a dentist in Brooklyn.

That same grit could be found in their wives as well. Gertrude Simon labored at her family's light and lampshade business in Brooklyn's Pitkin Avenue and raised two girls, while Florence Margon became a secretary, carrying her family through the De-

pression and, in later years, raising my father, all at the same time.

I am deeply grateful for the support of my parents, Arthur and Marilyn Margon, my brother, Andrew Margon, and sister-in-law, Zoe Stopak-Behr, my husband, Sam Chaltain, who is here, whose big dreams and generosity are all the cushion one could need, and my two sons, who are also here, 8-year-old Izzy and 12-year-old Leo, both of whom give me hope for the curiosity, decency, and empathy of future generations.

I am also indebted to the women of national security and their guidance, wisdom, and community.

Today's chaotic and complicated world requires us to be more firmly tethered to core democratic principles. Rising repression and autocracy require us to be bold in adhering to these values, which, as the President has said, are inseparable from our national interests and are the foundation of our diplomatic strength.

The global assault on basic freedoms also requires us to be intentional about who we support and why we fight for rights and dignity. This means considering not just policy choices but also how we engage in countries where those in power are using state institutions, the media, elections, corrupt individuals and entities, and even the pandemic to centralize power undemocratically and to repress their people.

If confirmed, I will apply these insights to focus on three priorities.

First, I will ensure DRL carries forward an agenda that affirms the United States as a leader and a partner in the struggle for democracy, pluralism, and rights.

Our priority must be protecting these foundational values and making sure governments like China, Russia, and Cuba do not succeed in their efforts to undermine international human rights norms and the rules-based order.

I will pay special attention to China, whose pernicious attacks on dissent and the rule of law are both on the rise domestically and fast becoming a common export.

Second, I believe we must focus on countering technological and digital threats as a human rights issue. For example, as we have seen too often, the promotion of disinformation from Russia, to China, to Ethiopia can have life and death implications.

Without U.S. leadership and push back, malign actors will continue abusing technology to enable mass atrocities, undermine democracy and human rights, and harm U.S. interests.

Congress has been on the front lines of this fight and, if confirmed, I look forward to navigating the path together.

Third, I will focus on ensuring human rights as considered as part of U.S. arms sales and security assistance. Advancing democracy and protecting human rights are national security interests, as the President has made clear.

If confirmed, I will make sure DRL provides strong analysis to help ensure our decisions on these issues align with our democratic values and our commitments on human rights.

If confirmed, I look forward to a strong working partnership with Congress so that together we can promote and protect our shared American values and interests around the world.

I will endeavor to make good use of the bipartisan tools you have already developed, from the Global Magnitsky sanctions to the Uighur Human Rights Policy Act to the Corporate Transparency Act, and I will engage allies, the private sector, and civil society to help realize the Biden-Harris administration's goal of centering human rights within U.S. foreign policy.

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

[Prepared statement of Ms. Margon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SARAH MARGON

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this committee. I am honored to be here today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor—and deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the trust they've placed in me.

It's a special honor to have Senator Feingold introduce me. Working for him was a master class in principled integrity. As a result of his leadership, I saw how standing up for what's right can be central to effective policy making—and that reaching across the aisle usually makes for better and stronger policy. Indeed, America in the world should represent all Americans.

I come from a long line of New Yorkers, many of whom rarely left the state, but all of whom believed in the promise of a better life through hard work and a little bit of luck. It is that gritty mindset that enabled my grandfathers, Albert Simon—born Abraham Simonofsky—and Solomon Mogilivsky—changed to Margon—to flourish. One owned a pharmacy in Queens. The other became a dentist in Brooklyn.

That same grit could be found in their wives as well. Gertrude Simon labored at her family's light and lampshade business on Brooklyn's Pitkin Avenue and raised two girls, while Florence Margon became a secretary, carrying her family through the Depression, and, in later years, raising my father—all at the same time. I am deeply grateful for the support of my parents, Arthur and Marilyn Margon; my brother Andrew Margon, and sister-in-law Zoe Stopak-Behr; my husband Sam Chaltain, whose big dreams and generosity are all the cushion one could need; and my sons—8.5-year-old Izzy and 12-year-old Leo, both of whom give me hope for the curiosity, decency, and empathy of future generations. I am indebted to the women of national security and their wisdom, guidance and community. Today's chaotic and complicated world requires us to be more firmly tethered to core democratic principles. Rising repression and autocracy require us to be bold in adhering to these values, which as the President has said are inseparable from our national interests and are the foundation of our diplomatic strength. The global assault on basic freedoms also requires us to be intentional about who we support—and why we fight for rights and dignity. This means considering not just policy choices, but also how we engage in countries where those in power are using state institutions, the media, elections, corrupt individuals and entities, and even the pandemic to centralize power undemocratically and to repress their own people.

If confirmed, I will apply these insights to focus on three priorities.

First, I will ensure DRL carries forward an agenda that affirms the United States as a leader and a partner in the struggle for democracy, pluralism, and human rights. Our priority must be protecting these foundational values—and making sure governments such as China, Russia, and Cuba—do not succeed in their efforts to undermine international human rights norms and the rules-based order. I will pay special attention to China, whose pernicious attacks on dissent and the rule of law are both on the rise domestically and fast becoming a common export.

Second, I believe we must focus on countering technological and digital threats as a human rights issue. For example, as we have seen too often, the promotion of disinformation—from Russia to China to Ethiopia—can have life-and-death implications. Without U.S. leadership and pushback, malign actors will continue abusing technology to enable mass atrocities, undermine democracies and human rights, and harm U.S. interests. Congress has been on the frontlines of this fight, and if confirmed, I look forward to navigating the path together.

Third, I will focus on ensuring human rights is considered as part of U.S. arms sales and security assistance. Advancing democracy and protecting human rights are national security interests, as the President has made clear. If confirmed, I will make sure DRL provides strong analysis to help ensure our decisions on these issues align with our democratic values and our commitments to human rights.

If confirmed, I look forward to a strong working partnership with Congress, so that together we can promote and protect our shared American values and interests around the world. I will endeavor to make good use of the tools you have already developed, from Global Magnitsky sanctions to The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act to The Corporate Transparency Act. And I will engage allies, the private sector, and civil society to help realize the Biden-Harris administration's goal of centering human rights within U.S. foreign policy.

Thank you for the consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Before I turn to Senator Risch, I have some questions that are for the committee as a whole and they require a simple yes or no answer.

These questions speak to the importance that the committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from you. I would ask each of you to provide verbally a yes or no answer.

Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep the committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just simply providing notification after the fact?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to questions for briefings and information requested by this committee and its designated staff?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Both witnesses said yes to all questions. The chair will reserve his time and I will turn to the ranking member for his questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Margon, were you here when Mr. Nides testified?

Ms. MARGON. I was in the anteroom, Senator. Yes.

Senator RISCH. Did you hear his testimony and questions?

Ms. MARGON. I did.

Senator RISCH. I assume you do not share his enthusiasm for the despicable anti-Semitic movement called BDS—Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I firmly oppose the BDS movement.

Senator RISCH. I am looking here at a tweet that you wrote on November 19th, 2018. It says, "Airbnb to remove listings in the Israeli settlements of occupied West Bank. Thanks, Airbnb, for showing some good leadership here. Other companies should follow suit."

Did you write that?

Ms. MARGON. Yes, Senator.

Senator RISCH. And you do not consider that part of the BDS movement?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I firmly oppose the BDS movement. I do believe that the private sector has an important role to play in not pursuing discriminatory practices.

Senator RISCH. I do not understand that.

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I am not and have never been a supporter of the BDS movement. I oppose it.

Senator RISCH. How do you square that statement with the text that you put out November 19th, 2018?

Ms. MARGON. That tweet was in response to a Human Rights Watch report. And again, just to be very clear, I believe the private sector across the board has an important role to play in not promoting or pursuing discriminatory policies.

Senator RISCH. You support any company that would participate in the BDS movement?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I firmly oppose the BDS movement, and if I am confirmed to be Assistant Secretary of DRL, I will continue to do so just as the Biden administration does.

Senator RISCH. That does not square with what you said here on November. You can say it over and over and over again. It just does not make it true and it does not square with what you said in 2018. Have you changed your mind since 2018?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, that tweet was related to a very specific report.

Senator RISCH. It was in respect to a very specific action by Airbnb supporting the BDS movement.

Ms. MARGON. That was actually a report relating to their renting apartments, and as I have said and will continue—just like the Biden administration does, I am firmly opposed to the BDS movement.

Senator RISCH. With all due respect, ma'am, I do not believe it, not with what you put out here. Saying it over and over again just does not square with your actions.

Ms. MARGON. I am sorry, Senator, that you do not believe it. That is my firm belief, and if I am confirmed, going forward, I think you will see, as a member of the Biden administration, that that is the policy that I will implement.

Senator RISCH. When you met with my staff, you made the statement that you believed that the air strike against Soleimani was illegal. Do you still stand by that statement?

Ms. MARGON. That was from a tweet you are referring to?

Senator RISCH. No. That was in a meeting with my staff when you were preparing for this.

Ms. MARGON. That conversation, Senator, was in relation to a tweet that I had put out. I think that is probably a conversation best had with the Legal Adviser's Office at the State Department, for which I am not nominated.

Senator RISCH. Maybe, but you stated that you thought that that air strike was illegal. Is that true or not true?

Ms. MARGON. I did write that tweet at the time. But, again, I am looking at a position that is not for the Legal Adviser's Office.

Senator RISCH. I get that. What I am looking for is your view of these things. Obviously, the position you are in is not a legal position. But it, certainly, is very important in developing policy.

They also tell me that you said that the strikes that the past administration and even the current administration were illegal. Is that your position?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, I think, to be fair, there are wide discussions over the legality of some of these strikes. I am not a lawyer right now. I have never been a lawyer. I did work for an organization that engaged on these questions.

But if I am confirmed, I would consult with the legal advisers at the State Department to come to a determination.

Senator RISCH. I get that, and everybody here has to consult with the lawyers. Nonetheless, our policy decisions are based by our personal beliefs in that regard, and I am really, really troubled by these.

Have they straightened you out? My staff tells me that your Sherpa almost fainted when you said that the strikes by the current administration were illegal. Have they straightened you out on that? Are you willing to go along with the administration's view?

Ms. MARGON. Of course, I am willing to go along. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have nominated me to do a job and I will uphold administration policy.

Senator RISCH. In July of 2020, you retweeted an article from the New York Times op-ed entitled, "I no longer believe in a Jewish state." You retweeted that with approval. Do you still subscribe to that?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, sometimes when we tweet or say things in the heat of the moment we do not necessarily think of the broader impact of them. When I retweeted that article, what I was really focused on was the importance of ensuring Israelis and Palestinians could have equal protection under the law, access to democratic processes, security, and prosperity. That was the thrust of my tweet and what I intended with that.

I firmly believe in a two-state solution so that Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace and security.

Senator RISCH. Thank you for your answers. I am not going to support your nomination, obviously. You have not persuaded me at all. In fact, I might have been persuaded if you would have owned up to these things and confessed there.

I am sorry I do not have any time for you, Senator Udall. But it is nice to see you. I know you will do a good job there and I will help you every way I can to get there.

Thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member Risch, and thanks to our nominees. Congratulations to both of you, particularly to Senator Udall and Jill.

I am such huge fans of both of you as wonderful public servants, and it is exciting that you have had a lot of wonderful chapters in the past, both in New Mexico government and in the United States Senate, and in the House. And this next chapter is one I know you will do every bit as well. I am so proud to support you.

Ms. Margon, I want to ask you a question about the part of the world that I care most about outside the United States and that is the Americas.

I have been really troubled. I lived in Honduras when it was a military dictatorship. It is no longer a military dictatorship but, arguably, it is worse, and that is painful. A country that has gone from a military dictatorship in 1981 to a, quote, “democracy” is rife with corruption, the murder of journalists, the murder of environmental activists.

The current president was reelected in a widely disputed election. The OAS said it was so marked by fraud that the election should be rerun. For some reason, the United States discarded the OAS opinion and supported the current government, and then what has happened this president has been implicated in a variety of drug trafficking cases currently being brought in courts in the United States.

The good news is there is elections this weekend in Honduras. He is term limited and cannot run again. But I could give you the same story in El Salvador where there is currently massive backsliding of a government the people had a lot of hope in but it is behaving more and more authoritarian every day.

In Guatemala, serious issues with corruption. In Nicaragua, brutal repression of political dissidents. Costa Rica is a bit of a bright spot. We heard from Dr. Telles earlier.

I think the United States does not pay enough attention in the Americas. Just because we are not paying attention does not mean China is not paying attention. They are. Russia is paying attention. Cuba is paying attention. Iran is paying attention.

And so I would hope this administration could really embrace a more robust and continuous engagement with the Americas and show other nations because we are all Americans—North, Central, or South Americans—show other nations that our concern is continuous and not just episodic, quickly to be forgotten as we turn our attention elsewhere.

But if we are going to have an Americas policy we are going to have to really grapple with issues of human rights and democracy.

Should you be confirmed, what might your thoughts be about, as you say, centering human rights and pro-democracy within some of the nations that are the nearest to us?

Ms. MARGON. Thank you, Senator, for that question, and thanks for your long-standing work and interest in this region. It has been really notable, and you have been a real leader along with other members on this committee.

I think the Biden administration has taken the right approach in looking at a root driver strategy and allocating \$4 billion dollars to the region. I think those two tranches are really important to start getting at what is at the foundation.

It is not going to be something that can change overnight. But you mentioned many of the issues that we need to be looking at—not just assistance and development, but also anti-corruption, looking to build an independent judiciary, helping to work so that the Security Forces are actually viable entities that can protect the people, looking at criminal networks.

There is very much a punitive approach and a carrot and stick incentivizing approach and I think they go hand in hand. I think even before my confirmation, if that happens, there is good ground-work for which DRL will be able to work on.

I see DRL's role—and if I am confirmed, I will hope to amplify this—is to bring the analysis of the human rights organizations and civil society into the policymaking, to work with the regional bureau closely, but also to work with other agencies and, of course, with this body to make sure that there is a consistent steadfast approach, that the finances are sufficient and, frankly, that we bring in some of the other regional actors.

I spoke yesterday with the Chairman a little bit about Latin America and the importance of engaging broadly on democratic decline and governance deficits, and I think this is the perfect opportunity for DRL to really center its work not just on election by election, as you say, but actually building and supporting with other partners the context in which those elections occur.

I have never been to Central America myself and I would really like to travel there as one of my first trips. I think that would send a very important message, not just about our commitment as a bureau but our commitment as the United States.

Senator KAINE. I thank you for that answer. There are two opportunities coming up that are really important, the Summit for Democracy that President Biden has indicated he wants to hold likely next year, and also the U.S. chairmanship of the Summit for the Americas, which we have not chaired in 25 years, and these are opportunities where these issues of democracy and human rights should be front and center. I appreciate your answers.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso?

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

Congratulations to both of you. Senator Udall, great to see you again. Jill, nice to see you. As you know, when you gave your final speech on the floor, I made a number of comments about our service together and working in a bipartisan way, and congratulations on this nomination. I think you will be magnificent ambassador. Thank you, Senator.

Ms. Margon, on April 27th of this year, the Human Rights Watch published a report accusing Israel of being an apartheid state. Do you believe Israel is an apartheid state?

Ms. MARGON. No, Senator, I do not.

Senator BARRASSO. Do you believe Israel commits war crimes when it acts to defend itself from rocket and other terror attacks from Gaza?

Ms. MARGON. No, Senator. I strongly support Israel's right to defend itself and to protect its people.

Senator BARRASSO. The Biden administration has announced its intention to rejoin the United Nations Human Rights Council. Do you believe the Human Rights Council has a bias against Israel?

Ms. MARGON. That pesky Item 7, Senator, on the agenda at the Human Rights Council needs to be addressed. If I am confirmed, one of the things I would like to do if the U.S. rejoins the Human Rights Council is work with the International Organizations Bu-

reau, the ambassador to Geneva, and this committee to help reform the Human Rights Council so it is more effective, so it does not have a disproportionate bias against Israel, including that agenda item.

I have seen in the past that when the U.S. is a member of that Council that there are less anti-Israel resolutions and there is a decrease in anti-Israel attacks. That would be one of my priorities.

Senator BARRASSO. When I think about the Human Rights Council and the membership, do you know how many members of them are serious human rights abusers?

Ms. MARGON. There are a number of them that are very problematic, Senator. I do not know the exact number.

Senator BARRASSO. Russia?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. China?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Pakistan?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Cuba? I could go on.

It is to point out to me as I look at this, it says—do you know of any of these that have actually had a resolution passed condemning their own actions while on the Council?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, your concern is well placed and I think this would be part of the reform agenda. I will also say that the Human Rights Council has put out some extraordinary reports in the past that this body, I think, has found very useful.

I would draw your attention specifically to the Commission of Inquiry on North Korea. I think it was published in 2014. That was an extraordinary documentation of the horrific abuses in DPRK.

And my goal would be not only to help reform the membership, which I understand is a priority also of the Biden administration, but also to work with the Council so that it has stronger, better membership, and they can produce more reports like that DPRK report.

Senator BARRASSO. Because it does seem to me that a number of these keep themselves on the Council specifically so they can avoid accountability.

In terms of the blacklist the Human Rights Council has come up with, the Human Rights Council has published a blacklist of companies doing business in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Many of them are American companies. It is viewed by many as laying the groundwork for sanctions against these companies.

If confirmed, will you work to encourage the Council to retract this database and discourage our allies from associating with this in any way?

Ms. MARGON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. Okay. And what can the U.S. do to limit the continuation of this dangerous exercise by this group?

Ms. MARGON. This is part of why I think U.S. membership on the Human Rights Council is so important. It gives us a seat at the table. It allows us to help influence decisions, it allows us to engage, and it allows us to ensure there is not a strong anti-Israel bias, but that the Human Rights Council is looking broadly and globally at human rights abuses.

Senator BARRASSO. On January 4th of 2020, you tweeted this, “The Iranian government is replete with nasty characters. Soleimani himself was horrifically brutal. But normalizing selective ally engagement to conduct an illegal action that not only normalizes assassinations but also escalates dramatically has taken us to a whole new scary level.”

Do you believe that the U.S. attack on General Soleimani was illegal?

Ms. MARGON. Senator, this is a tweet. I think if I were going forward, looking at this from my position should I be confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would need to review all of the evidence and the intelligence to make that assessment and consult with the Legal Adviser’s Office.

Senator BARRASSO. What is your view of the Biden administration’s botched drone attack that killed 10 civilians outside of Afghanistan in the last couple of weeks?

Ms. MARGON. Thank you for that question. I was really pleased to see the Pentagon and its press—excuse me, at its press conference admit to the attack, to talk about what had been happening, to talk about the investigation that was going to be underway.

I think this is a very important step that the Pentagon has taken, and I understand that there is going to be an investigation, and from there we will see where it goes.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Ms. Margon, let me just get some things clear for the record. Did you ever advocate on behalf of the BDS movement?

Ms. MARGON. No, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. And regarding the allegation that has been flown around there characterizing Israel’s actions as apartheid and attributed to you, to clarify, that refers to a report released by Human Rights Watch long after you departed the organization. Is that the case?

Ms. MARGON. That is correct. It was nearly two years later.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. When we look at the question of human rights, especially when one is not in an administration, one has the ability to look at it from the vantage—from the perspective uniquely about what is it that we seek to uphold in terms of the fundamental Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Is that not fair to say?

Ms. MARGON. That would be fair to say, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And the organization that you once worked with, Human Rights Watch, which has been quoted by many members of Congress when they find it appropriate and of value to do so, looked at the world in terms of human rights violations in that context. Would that be fair to say?

Ms. MARGON. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. The question is about participating at the United Nations Human Rights Council. The reality is when we are not there, then we cede to the world’s worst actors the ability to take on allies like the State of Israel.

Is that a fair statement?

Ms. MARGON. I would say yes, that is.

The CHAIRMAN. While we do not like, and I, certainly, do not like—I find it appalling that Cuba can be on the Human Rights Council, but in the absence of the United States being there, I cannot push back on them and others, at the end of the day.

And so I think that one has to think about the perspective. Joining the Human Rights Council is not an acceptance of its actions. It is in defiance of its actions. Is that the way you would take the view if you were the assistant secretary?

Ms. MARGON. Yes, I think I would.

I would also say, Senator that it provides an exceptional opportunity for the United States to lead and to partner in pushing back against a number of those very abusive countries.

I would also say that the Biden administration has said it not only wants to rejoin but reform the Council, and there are plenty of opportunities to further that effort.

The CHAIRMAN. Israel remains our only democratic ally in the Middle East, and our bilateral relationship is rooted on shared democratic values. As in the United States or any country with a democratic process, we may not always agree with every policy that every government pursues.

International organizations, however, routinely unfairly target Israel for alleged human rights abuses while in the same breath actively ignoring the gravely serious human rights abuses of the leaders of some of its neighbors.

Would you commit to pushing back on unfair bias against Israel from international human rights organizations?

Ms. MARGON. Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And then, finally, because the world is—as much as Israel is incredibly important, the world that you will be encountering—there are so many different parts of the world so I could spend a lot of time talking to you about arms sales, which I will in the near future, about China and Belarus and Russia and many other places, about Turkey under Erdogan.

Even though they are a NATO ally, there are more journalists and lawyers in Turkish jails than in any other part of the world. That is saying something, considering some of the nasty parts of the world. Ethiopia and what is happening there in terms of human rights violations.

I look forward to having a more in-depth discussion with you. But I do want to just talk about one—something I broached with you when you came to visit me and I appreciated our visit, and it is about Cuba.

You noted that, quote, “Cuba offers more opportunities than dead ends when it comes to human rights, including by easing relations with other countries and encouraging them to pressure Cuba to, quote, “tolerate more dissent.”

I am of the view that dissent should not be tolerated but embraced as a fundamental human right. Would you agree with that?

Ms. MARGON. I think that is a much better word, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. And these statements were made before the July 11th protests in Cuba this year, which—where the regime unleashed a brutal wave of repression in response to average people, mostly led by Afro-Cubans in terms of protests.

If you are confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for DRL, what are some of the specific steps you would take to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba?

Ms. MARGON. The protests in July, I think, reminded us very clearly, not just us here in the U.S. but globally, that what the Cubans need and are looking for—the Cuban people—are basic services and basic rights, and they go hand in hand.

And so there really is an opportunity for the United States, working closely with partners in the region and more globally, to support civil society more extensively, to ensure they have access and are able to be amplified on larger platforms to share their experiences with such a brutal and horrific government.

Because it is those experiences, it is those stories, and it is their fight for those basic rights that we need to be supporting. There are questions about what we can support internet wise. There are questions about what we can support media wise.

And I think the review that is underway, Senator, if I am confirmed, is something that I will want to be actively participating in. But even if that review is done before I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you to figure out the best ways in which we can support civil society, amplify those voices, and make sure that there is an increase in support globally for the movement.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you.

Senator Udall, you and I had a very good and in-depth conversation yesterday about economic opportunities, about how AUKUS is going to affect us with New Zealand on security, bilateral relationship, about New Zealand vis-a-vis China.

And so we had such a good in-depth conversation I do not feel compelled to explore it again here with you today. But I do not want you to think you are not the object of my affection.

[Laughter.]

Senator UDALL. Thank you. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. With knowing everything that you and I spoke about, and I am very pleased with the answers you gave me, I will reserve at this time.

Seeing no other member before the committee, the record for this hearing will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, Thursday, September 23rd. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than then.

I urge the nominees to answer those questions fully and expeditiously so that you can be considered for a business meeting.

And with the thanks of the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:18 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes. There is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me. The administration is actively examining a range of hypotheses but has made no determination about the cause of the AHIs or whether they can be attributed to a foreign actor. I understand that AHIs have been a top priority for Secretary Blinken, who set clear goals for the Health Incident Response Task Force to strengthen the Department's communication with our workforce, provide care for affected employees and family members, and better protect against these events in the future as we continue to work closely with the inter-agency to find the cause of these AHIs.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I will do everything possible to ensure that employees who report a possible AHI receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and the incident is reported through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed there is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

State Oversight

Question. Currently, there are three public diplomacy outposts serving primarily a Palestinian audience, America Houses in East Jerusalem and Ramallah as well as an American Corner in Hebron.

- Do you support keeping these facilities outside of the U.S. embassy compound?

Answer. While I am not in a position to speak to the specific facilities of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, if confirmed I am committed to ensuring that the U.S. Embassy in Israel's capital, Jerusalem, enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including public diplomacy engagement with local communities.

Question. What value do public diplomacy sites focused on the Palestinian audience provide to U.S. foreign policy?

Answer. I believe public diplomacy programs are valuable to U.S. national interests, as they allow the U.S. Government to communicate with local communities on our Government's strategic objectives. I understand that these are critical tools in our engagements with Palestinian communities as they encourage common values, such as the promotion of human rights, economic growth, freedom of speech, and upholding the rule of law.

Question. Do you support completing the renovation of the America House in Ramallah?

Answer. While I am not in a position to speak to the specific facilities of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, if confirmed I am committed to ensuring that our diplomatic presence enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with local communities.

Question. Mission Israel has been under enormous stress over the past five years with the move of the embassy to Jerusalem, changes to the Palestinian Affairs Unit, and COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Israel?

Answer. Mission Israel is full of dedicated personnel committed to their jobs and carrying out U.S. foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I look forward to building a collaborative and inclusive work environment, and placing a priority on morale.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across all of Mission Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to build a collaborative and inclusive work environment. I am committed to placing a priority on embassy morale.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to underscore my commitment to an inclusive and representative working environment in support of U.S. national interests and strengthening the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Management Is A Key Responsibility for Chiefs of Mission

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. My management style is one that focuses on promoting a collaborative, inclusive, and representative environment that is focused on promoting U.S. national interests.

Question. How do you believe this management style will translate to an embassy setting, where processes and resources aren't as readily available as they may be at Main State?

Answer. This style of management has served me well throughout my career and will translate well to an embassy setting. If confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with the Embassy Jerusalem team to support an inclusive and collaborative environment that promotes U.S. national interests.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on the new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. I believe that it is important for us all, as representatives of the United States of America, to work towards serving our country to the best of our ability. If confirmed, I intend to fully integrate myself with the embassy team and look forward to supporting an inclusive and collaborative environment. We can't succeed any other way.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No, this type of behavior is never acceptable.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with the deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The deputy chief of mission is a key part of the embassy community and if confirmed, I look forward to building a collaborative, inclusive, and constructive partnership with him or her.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to the deputy chief of mission being involved in all facets of embassy leadership and working in partnership with him or her to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- Given your previous tenure as the Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, how do you assess the Department's current risk balance?

Answer. Advancement of U.S. foreign policy objectives inherently involves diverse types of risk, and it is the Department's policy that employees and leaders engage in risk management for the decisions and activities within the scope of their duties. All Department employees are expected to identify, evaluate, and mitigate any substantial risks to their objectives or to the enterprise in which they are engaged. Department leaders, including Chiefs of Mission, require the best possible assessment of risk, identification of mitigation measures, and evaluations of any remaining residual risk before making decisions. Department leaders ensure risk management is a continuous process that is adjusted as conditions change, and incorporated into planning and decision-making in a systematic, appropriate, timely and transparent manner by taking into account uncertainty and the impact on our capabilities to protect people, property, information and other assets.

Question. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. The mission of a U.S. diplomat is to promote peace, support prosperity, and protect American citizens while advancing the interests of the United States abroad. U.S. diplomats are dedicated to public service and, even in dire situations, are committed to accomplishing their mission and advancing U.S. objectives.

Question. How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. I believe that it is important for U.S. diplomats to have access to, and engage with, a wide range of local populations if the security environment permits. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that Embassy Jerusalem's diplomatic presence enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaders.

Question. Do you agree that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, should remain undivided, and should be the permanent place of the U.S. embassy to Israel?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve. The administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work diligently to see a new U.S. embassy constructed in Jerusalem?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working diligently to see a new U.S. embassy constructed in Jerusalem.

Question. The administration has made clear its desire to open a consulate in Jerusalem for the Palestinians. It is my understanding that Israel would have to agree with the opening of a U.S. diplomatic facility in Jerusalem or anywhere else in Israel. Is that the case?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I understand that this is part of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. While I cannot attest to all requirements necessary for opening a diplomatic facility, if confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with local communities and government leaders.

Question. The Israeli Government has come out against a Palestinian consulate in Jerusalem. FM Yair Lapid said that the proposed reopening by the U.S. Government of its Jerusalem consulate would be a "bad idea" and would send the "wrong message" not only to the region and to the Palestinians, but to other countries as well, who might view this as a green light to establish their own embassies in what they perceive to be a Palestinian part of Jerusalem. In addition, such a move might destabilize the "interesting, yet delicate" coalition government. Will you pressure Israelis to reverse their opinion? Will you establish a consulate over Israeli objections?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I understand that this is part of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. The United States has not recognized a "State of Palestine." Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem would not affect that policy or walk back or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

While I am not privy to internal U.S. Government conversations with the Government of Israel, if confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Another legal obstacle to a Palestinian consulate is the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, passed overwhelmingly by the U.S. House and Senate, which recognized united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and states that "Jerusalem should remain an undivided city." Does the Jerusalem Embassy Act prevent the United States from reopening a consulate for the Palestinians? What location for a Palestinian consulate would the 1995 law allow?

Answer. I understand that Secretary Pompeo determined and reported to Congress in 2019 that the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem had officially opened, consistent with the requirements of the Jerusalem Embassy Act. I also understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not affect that policy or walk back or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

If confirmed, I will always work to ensure that all our policies are consistent with U.S. interests and applicable U.S. law.

Question. If President Biden decided against (or Congress prohibited in law) the opening of a separate Consulate General to serve the Palestinian Authority, would you be prepared to carry out your duties as Ambassador to Israel with oversight of consular affairs in Palestinian-controlled territories?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy to Israel, which the U.S. Government has been clear will remain in Jerusalem, provides consular services to U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, as well as communities residing in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. The President and Secretary Blinken have reaffirmed the administration's intent as well to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem, to support renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including providing necessary consular services, and engaging with local communities.

Question. The Biden administration is reportedly conducting a review with the goal to open a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office in the United States, despite the legal prohibitions under the 1987 Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and the 2019 Promoting Security and Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act (PSJVTA). Is the opening of a PLO office in the United States permissible under U.S. law? Can you commit to using your position as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, if confirmed, to advocating against any move to re-open the PLO office in the U.S., in contravention of U.S. law?

Answer. I understand that the issue of the Palestinian presence in Washington is a complicated one, with a number of legal implications. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that any possible reopening of a PLO office in Washington is consistent with U.S. interests in advancing peace and applicable U.S. law.

Question. In 2019, the Trump administration officially recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. In your view, what is the strategic benefit of Israel's sovereignty of the Golan Heights? Under what conditions would Israeli sovereignty not apply?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, I understand the administration gives great weight to Israel's security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door. My understanding is that this administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Foreign Assistance

Question. There are promising reports about the effectiveness of the BriLife vaccine for COVID-19, which the American-Israeli company NRx Pharmaceuticals has brought to trial. If approved, this new vaccine could prove to be a game-changer in expanding access to safe and reliable COVID-19 vaccines across the developing world, while also providing a suitable alternative to less reliable vaccines from China.

- If confirmed, will you commit to working with Israel to make its World Health Organization (WHO) and Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved COVID-19 vaccines available to low- and lower-middle income countries, including as in-kind contributions to COVAX, as appropriate?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I commit to working with Israel to make doses of its COVID-19 vaccines, authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Federal Drug Administration (FDA), available to low- and lower-middle income countries, including as in-kind contributions distributed through COVAX.

Question. Institutions in Israel annually request, and routinely secure, funding through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA program). Notably, ASHA is not a development program. Instead, it provides funds for infrastructure and equipment for overseas schools, libraries, and hospitals "to highlight American ideas and practices, to provide concrete illustrations of the generosity of the American people, to further U.S. Government public diplomacy, and to catalyze collaborations between U.S. citizens and citizens of other countries".

- Do you agree that the purpose of U.S. foreign assistance is to end the need for its existence?

Answer. U.S. foreign assistance serves important U.S. national security interests, including supporting our enduring partnership with Israel and priorities such as helping our allies and partners maintain stability and prosperity.

Question. Noting that Israel is a High Income Country that already shares U.S. values, should institutions in Israel continue to be eligible for assistance through the ASHA program?

Answer. While Israel is indeed a high-income country, I continue to value the importance of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad, and if confirmed, I commit to working to deepen the already existing partnerships in Israel.

Question. If so, why? If not, how do you intend to graduate Israeli institutions from dependence upon ASHA funding for basic infrastructure and equipment?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which administers the ASHA program, on this matter. ASHA programs serve as an important link between American institutions and our partners overseas.

Question. Under what conditions, if any, would you support conditioning United States assistance to the West Bank and Gaza?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring U.S. assistance is well-calibrated to advance U.S. foreign policy interests. I understand that U.S. assistance provides critical relief to those in great need, fosters economic development, and supports Israeli-Palestinian understanding, security coordination, and stability. It also aligns with the values and interests of the United States and our allies and partners.

Question. Would you support conditioning assistance upon measurable progress in rolling-back the Palestinian Authority's support for the heinous "pay for slay" program? If confirmed, would you make this a priority?

Answer. The Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. This administration and I are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and "martyr" payments in a manner that addresses long-standing U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work done thus far through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform of this heinous practice.

Question. What forms of U.S. foreign assistance, if any, should be continued in the West Bank and Gaza, notwithstanding the PA's continued support for the "pay for slay" program?

Answer. I understand the administration is committed to providing assistance in a manner that is consistent with U.S. law. U.S. foreign assistance for the West Bank and Gaza serves important U.S. interests, including providing critical relief to those in great need, fostering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination. Economic and humanitarian assistance programs improve the lives of millions of Palestinians by providing immediate relief and advancing development across sectors such as health, infrastructure, economic growth, and civil society, while security sector programs support Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation to enhance the stability of the West Bank.

Question. How would you define "humanitarian assistance" in the West Bank and Gaza? Please be specific.

Answer. U.S. humanitarian assistance for the West Bank and Gaza includes support to U.N. agencies, including UNRWA, other international organizations like the World Food Programme, and non-governmental organizations with the aim of providing immediate relief to the most vulnerable populations, including through support to needy households with food, clean water, and healthcare. Addressing immediate humanitarian needs, in combination with efforts to strengthen the Palestinian economy, civil society, and targeted infrastructure, helps eliminate a core source of social tension in the West Bank and Gaza and advances freedom, security, and prosperity for the Palestinian and Israeli people alike.

Question. How would you define "non-humanitarian assistance" in the West Bank and Gaza? Please be specific.

Answer. U.S. foreign assistance for the West Bank and Gaza serves important U.S. interests, including providing critical support to those in great need, fostering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination through economic, development, and security sector assistance. Economic and development programs for the West Bank and Gaza support critical issues that further progress toward peace such as our support for the development of the Palestinian economy, civil society, and other institutions to improve the lives of Palestinians and ensure the viability of a future Palestinian state. Assistance also supports youth en-

agement and employment activities, so that at-risk youth have access to positive forms of empowerment and are not lured by extremist groups. Further, U.S. assistance programs help small- and medium-sized enterprises to access financial and technical assistance to resume operations, build connections with traditional and new markets, and increase profitability. U.S.-funded security sector programs support Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation to enhance the stability of the West Bank, and advance efforts to uphold the rule of law and the protection of human rights and are a priority for both the United States and the Government of Israel.

Question. The Taylor Force Act prohibits assistance that “directly benefits” the Palestinian Authority. What is your interpretation of “directly benefit”?

Answer. I understand that, consistent with a report transmitted to Congress by the Department of State on May 3, 2018, the U.S. Government takes a number of criteria into account in assessing whether assistance “directly benefits” the PA in this context, such as the intended primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance; whether the Palestinian Authority is the direct recipient of the assistance; whether the assistance involves the payment of Palestinian Authority creditors; the extent of ownership or control the Palestinian Authority exerts over an entity or individual that is the primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance; and whether the assistance or services provided directly replace assistance or services provided by the Palestinian Authority.

Question. Despite compliance with the Taylor Force Act, opponents of continued assistance to the Palestinians argue that all money is fungible and that ESF to the Palestinian people relieves the Palestinian Authority of a burden and thus frees up additional funding for the pay to slay and martyr’s program. Do you believe this to be true? Please provide a detailed response to this argument.

Answer. The administration provides assistance in a manner consistent with U.S. law and through experienced, vetted, and trusted independent partners, who distribute directly to people in need. Further, I understand the administration goes to great lengths to provide assistance based on need and to advance important U.S. interests.

Question. The Nita Lowey Partnerships for Peace Act (PPA) authorized \$250 million annually for five years to support peacebuilding initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians, including through a “People-to-People Partnership for Peace Fund” at the U.S. Agency for International Development and a “Joint Investment for Peace Initiative” at the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

- If confirmed, how would you measure progress of these initiatives?

Answer. I fully support the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA). This legislation and the programs it would support are critical to strengthening civil society peacebuilding projects that build economic cooperation and people-to-people engagement between the Israeli and Palestinian people. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring MEPPA is a vital tool of advancing U.S. foreign policy and supporting Israeli and Palestinian communities and cooperation. If confirmed, I plan to work with my colleagues at the DFC, USAID, and the Department of State to develop tools to measure the progress of this initiative.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that all partners and activities undertaken pursuant to the PPA—including at the sub-award level—are fully vetted and transparently reported to Congress?

Answer. I understand the administration will provide assistance in the West Bank and Gaza through experienced and trusted independent partners, who distribute directly to people in need. The Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have a robust vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. In addition, development and humanitarian partners in the West Bank and Gaza have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching those for whom we intend it to benefit. U.S. assistance is also closely coordinated with Israeli authorities.

Question. If confirmed, how will you leverage co-investment in PPA activities by Israelis and Palestinians, in addition to generating support by other donors?

Answer. I believe the PPA and the programs it would support are critical to strengthening civil society peacebuilding projects that build economic cooperation and people-to-people engagement between the Israeli and Palestinian people. I appreciate your and Congress’ broad support for MEPPA and, if confirmed, I am committed to ensuring MEPPA is a vital tool of advancing U.S. foreign policy and sup-

porting Israeli and Palestinian communities and generating support with other donors.

Question. Do you agree that all investments through a Joint Investment for Peace Initiative at the DFC must have a nexus to development, as envisioned by the BUILD Act which created the DFC?

Answer. Yes, I agree that all investments through a Joint Investment for Peace Initiative at the DFC must have a nexus to development.

Question. The Palestinian Authority recently passed a decree to “nationalize” NGOs working in the West Bank and Gaza, ostensibly giving the PA access to their funding. What concerns does this raise for continued assistance to the West Bank and Gaza? What safeguards are in place to prevent the PA from syphoning funding from “nationalized” NGOs?

Answer. I understand the administration is encouraging the Palestinian Authority to ensure that civil society organizations are free and empowered to engage fully in their activities, which support democratic, social, and economic development and are vital to a free and democratic Palestinian society and a viable future Palestinian state. I also understand the Department is closely following the conversation Palestinian civil society is having with the Palestinian Authority regarding this law and have engaged the Palestinian Authority on this issue. If confirmed, I plan to continue to monitor these efforts to ensure that U.S. assistance and civil society activities are not adversely affected and remain consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Despite the cancellation of elections for Palestinian leadership, there are concerns that Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization, will play a greater role in the Palestinian political environment. Should Hamas play a broader role in Palestinian politics and hand Fatah a defeat at the polls, how do you do reconcile Palestinian policy and counterterrorism policy? What are the implications for continued assistance to the Palestinian people and expenditures on Palestinian Security Forces?

Answer. U.S. assistance for the Palestinians is provided consistent with U.S. law. I understand the Department routinely assesses its foreign assistance programming and would do so as necessary following Palestinian elections or any other significant change related to the Palestinian Authority.

Security Cooperation

Question. The U.S. Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act, which was enacted into law in 2020, mandates not less than \$ 1.3 billion in security assistance to Israel. What is your position with respect to conditioning security assistance to Israel?

Answer. I do not believe that conditioning security assistance to Israel furthers U.S. interests. The President has been clear that the administration does not support placing conditions on military aid to Israel.

Question. Do you support fulfilling U.S. funding commitments outlined in the current 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

Answer. I fully support the 10-year, \$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to opposing any efforts to impose new restrictions on security assistance to Israel, which is an important show of the United States’ commitment to the security of our allies?

Answer. The President has been clear that he does not support placing conditions on military aid to Israel. If confirmed, I commit to opposing any efforts to impose new restrictions on security assistance to Israel, consistent with the President’s policy.

Question. In light of recent violence between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip, do you support emergency funding for the Iron Dome?

Answer. Yes, I support emergency funding for the Iron Dome.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to working to expand U.S.-Israel cooperation on the Iron Dome and other similar defense programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working to expand U.S.-Israel cooperation on the Iron Dome and other similar defense programs, consistent with the President’s policy.

Question. The 11 day war demonstrated that Israel’s Iron Dome struggled to meet the demands of a one-front war with Hamas. A two-front war with both Hamas and Hezbollah would present a much more significant threat. Is Israel’s current number

of Iron Dome batteries, radars and munitions sufficient to meet the threat of a two-front war? What are the associated capability gaps you will address as the Ambassador to Israel?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. On May 20, President Biden assured Prime Minister Netanyahu of his "full support to replenish Israel's Iron Dome system to ensure [Israel's] defense and security in the future."

I understand the administration is prepared to support President Biden's commitment to ensure Israel's right to defend itself from indiscriminate rocket attacks by assisting Israel in replenishing its Iron Dome Air Defense Missile System. If confirmed, I will work with Departments of State and Defense colleagues to see what can be done to assist Israel in replenishing its Iron Dome systems.

Question. Israeli vessels have been subject to an increasing number of Iranian attacks, which threaten freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and beyond. As a result, Israel has increased its deployments in the Red Sea region. How can the U.S. better support Israeli efforts to protect freedom of navigation?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy, which is the best way the United States can support Israeli efforts to protect freedom of navigation.

Question. One of Israel's top cyber security firms, NSO Group, is responsible for developing advanced cyber hacking technology, including Pegasus. NSO insists the software is used exclusively for the purposes of combatting terrorism and monitoring serious crime, underscoring the fact that the Israeli Government is responsible for vetting the company's sales. However, in recent years, numerous countries have been accused of using the software to spy civil society activists, journalists, and political dissidents among others.

- Do you feel the appropriate oversight checks are in place to prevent Pegasus, and other cyber surveillance software like it, from being used to commit human rights abuses?

Answer. The U.S. Government has undertaken a number of steps over the last year to avoid tools or products from U.S.-based cyber-surveillance companies being used abroad to undermine human rights. I understand that in October 2020, the Department of State released the first-of-its-kind "human rights due diligence" guidance to help businesses conduct a human rights impact assessment on relevant products or services and the Department of Commerce issued a Final Rule that revised the licensing policy for crime-control items in connection with human rights concerns, as well as expanded its consideration of human rights beyond crime controlled items. If confirmed, I will work with our bilateral partners to promote respect for and protect human rights.

Question. To what extent do you feel NSO's licensing of the Pegasus spyware is done in a manner that complies with U.S. values and upholds U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The United States condemns the harassment or extrajudicial surveillance of journalists, human rights activists, or other perceived regime critics. Just as states have the duty to protect human rights, businesses have a responsibility, too. Thus, they should work to avoid their products or services being used to abuse human rights. President Biden has affirmed that "American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism." This commitment includes working to help U.S. companies avoid fueling authoritarian practices, stemming the use of new technological tools for repression, and giving citizens tools to improve their digital security. If confirmed, I will uphold this commitment and work with our bilateral partners to promote respect for and protect human rights.

Question. The U.S.-Israel Security Assistance Cooperation Act passed in the FY21 NDAA allows the United States to waive statutory caps on the annual transfer of precision-guided munitions to Israel under section 514(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2321h(b)) under emergency circumstances. Would you consider a one front war with Hamas an emergency circumstance? A two front war with Hamas and Hezbollah? How do we balance U.S. PGM requirements and Israel's requirements?

Answer. The President has made clear that the United States supports Israel's legitimate right to defend itself and I understand the administration is prepared to support President Biden's commitment to ensure this. While any escalation that risks war is not in our interests, I cannot speak to hypothetical questions.

United Nations

Question. In 2012, you sent a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee arguing against efforts to distinguish between Palestinian displaced by the conflict that led to the creation of Israel in 1948 and their descendants, who the U.N. currently classifies as refugees. This distinction would reduce the number of UNRWA registered refugees from 5 million to 30,000.

- Do you still maintain that efforts to limit those who can claim UNRWA refugee status would undermine U.S. interests in advancing discussions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority?

Answer. Yes. My understanding is that the status of Palestinian refugees remains a highly sensitive issue among Palestinians and their supporters, including U.S. regional allies such as Jordan.

Question. Who, in your view, should classify as an UNRWA refugee?

Answer. My understanding is that the United States recognizes UNRWA's definition of Palestinian refugees for the purposes of UNRWA's operations. UNRWA's definition of "Palestine refugees" is: "[P]ersons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of June 1, 1946 to May 15, 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." Descendants of eligible male "Palestine refugees" are eligible for registration with UNRWA for the purpose of accessing services. I understand this approach to including descendants is similar to that used by UNHCR in other protracted refugee situations, such as Afghanistan and Somalia.

Question. Why does UNRWA require 10,000 more staff to advocate its regional mission than UNHCR to advance its global mission?

Answer. UNRWA's mandate is set by the U.N. General Assembly and is to provide essential services directly to Palestinian refugees in the five regions it covers. Unlike UNHCR, which delivers most services to refugees through sub-partners, UNRWA employees include schoolteachers and health care workers who provide the services directly to beneficiaries.

Question. Do you believe UNRWA should be absorbed by UNHCR, given UNHCR's efficiency and infrastructure?

Answer. UNRWA's mandate is set by the U.N. General Assembly and is to provide essential services directly to Palestinian refugees in the five regions it covers. Unlike UNHCR, which works to deliver most services to refugees through sub-partners, UNRWA employees include schoolteachers and health care workers who provide services directly to beneficiaries. UNHCR's mandate focuses on seeking durable solutions (such as resettlement, repatriation, and local integration) for refugees, which cannot be adequately applied in the Palestinian context as these matters are final status issues to be negotiated directly between Israel and the Palestinians.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the appropriate Congressional committees prior to any consultations related to new U.S. contributions to UNRWA?

Answer. The President and the Secretary have been clear that the administration is committed to working with Congress. I understand the Department has regularly engaged with Congressional committees since resuming humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting the continuation of this approach.

Question. How do you plan to work with UNRWA to advance reform, particularly as relates to anti-Semitic educational content of text books?

Answer. I condemn incitement of violence and anti-Semitism in any form. U.N. agencies, including UNRWA, do not develop their own curriculum, but use the curriculum of host governments. When concepts contrary to U.N. principles are identified in host governments' education materials, UNRWA provides instructions and supplementary materials for its staff to address the issue. If confirmed, I will emphasize the importance of following humanitarian principles, including neutrality, in discussions with UNRWA.

Question. In 1997, the Palestinian Authority signed an agreement to allow the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to es-

establish a Liaison officer in Ramallah, and subsequently upgraded relations admitting the PA as a full member state in 2011. In response, both the U.S. and Israel withdrew their member status.

- The Biden administration is requesting a waiver to allow the U.S. to re-join the body. In your view, should the United States be a member of UNESCO?

Answer. The President has stated he believes firmly that more can be accomplished by working within U.N. organizations than outside. However, I cannot speak to the administration's review of U.S. policy on UNESCO.

Question. Section 410, Title IV of the FY94–95 Foreign Relations Authorization Act (P.L. 103-236) prohibits the U.S. from making any voluntary or assessed contribution to the U.N. or any affiliated organization which grants full membership to an entity which lacks “the internationally attributes of statehood” like the Palestinian Authority. If confirmed, can you commit to ensuring no U.S. funds are used to make a contribution to UNESCO or any other U.N. body that grants the PA full membership status?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all our policies, including with respect to U.N. contributions, are consistent with U.S. interests and applicable U.S. law.

Question. How, in your view, should the United States address concerns around the body's politicization and alleged anti-democratic leanings? What specific reforms should UNESCO pursue before the United States rejoins the body?

Answer. I understand the administration has been reviewing various aspects of its multilateral engagement. UNESCO leadership has made progress in helping member states avoid politicized debate on Middle East questions and should continue its efforts to counter any anti-Israel bias in UNESCO decisions and resolutions. UNESCO should continue to build on its efforts to promote transparency and accountability in its personnel and financial management practices.

Question. Recently, the Palestinian Authority threatened action to circumvent ascension protocols and seek a change in their status at the U.N.

- Do you believe this action promotes the Middle East peace process and serves the needs of the Palestinian people?

Answer. As a matter of principle, there are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside of direct negotiations between the parties. This includes counterproductive unilateral steps to gain membership as a state in U.N. specialized agencies and other international organizations.

Question. In your view, what consequences should the Palestinians face if they continue to attempt to gain membership in U.N. agencies?

Answer. While I cannot speak to hypotheticals, if confirmed, I will underscore to the Palestinians that unproductive, unilateral steps are not a shortcut to Palestinian statehood.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to working to prevent the Palestinian Authorities' pursuit of full membership in U.N. entities?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will underscore to the Palestinian leadership that unproductive, unilateral steps are not a shortcut to Palestinian statehood.

Question. In 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) citing “chronic anti-Israel bias.” Since, the Biden administration has re-engaged with the body, claiming U.S. absence did nothing to address its disproportionate focus on Israel. Do you share the Trump administration's assessment regarding the UNHRC's reported anti-Israel bias? What steps should the U.S. take to improve the UNHRC's impartiality?

Answer. If confirmed, consistent with administration policy, I will oppose efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. When we have had a seat at the table, we have been able to advocate on Israel's behalf, and we have seen changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel.

Question. What are your views on the U.N. Human Rights Council's decision to open a commission of inquiry the wake of the 11 day Israel-Gaza conflict in May?

Answer. I understand that the United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council following the escalation in Gaza in May. It exemplifies the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel. I believe the establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary

to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians, and ensure that terrorist organizations, including Hamas, do not exploit the situation, including by indiscriminate firing of rockets, to further their own destructive aims. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and likeminded partners to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states.

Question. Do you support U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334?

Answer. If confirmed, I will oppose, as I understand the administration does already, efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. Equally, I will firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek. I will also continue and sustain diplomatic engagement on the issue of settlements.

Question. In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor opened an investigation into possible war crimes allegedly committed in the West Bank and Gaza. Do you believe that the ICC should be investigating a case involving alleged Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories? If yes, please explain.

Answer. The United States shares the goals of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in promoting accountability for the worst crimes known to humanity. Further, the United States has always taken the position that the ICC's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the U.N. Security Council. I understand the administration continues to disagree strongly with the ICC's actions relating to the Palestinian situation.

Question. Do you believe that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate or bring to trial Israeli service members, officials, or other Israeli citizens? If yes, please explain.

Answer. The United States has always taken the position that the ICC's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the U.N. Security Council.

Question. Do you believe the ICC's reputation has been diminished by recent attempts to prosecute United States and Israeli nationals? If no, please explain.

Answer. The United States has always taken the position that the ICC's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the U.N. Security Council.

Abraham Accords

Question. What is your opinion on the Abraham Accords? What, if anything, has hampered additional normalization agreements?

Answer. I welcome and strongly support the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. While identifying new opportunities and negotiating agreements takes time, if confirmed I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to learning from Israel's new partners in the region to better understand how we can work together to advance new normalization agreements and strengthen existing ones.

Question. How do you plan to operationalizing and expanding the existing Abraham Accords to ensure all parties reap tangible economic and security benefits?

Answer. The Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world have already made an important contribution to regional security and economic development, yet even more is possible. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and neighboring Arab countries that have normalized relations with Israel to identify and capitalize on the many new opportunities that these agreements have unlocked.

Question. Please provide you assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and Sudan.

Answer. While the Israel-Sudan normalization agreement is yet to be finalized, I understand the two governments have made significant progress towards improving their relations since announcing their intention to normalize their relations on October 23, 2020. On January 6, 2020, Sudan signed the Abraham Accords declaration of principles in a ceremony in Khartoum. On April 19, 2021, Sudan officially repealed its 1958 law boycotting Israel. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Israel to support the full implementation of the normalization agreement.

Question. Please provide you assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and Morocco.

Answer. Since announcing their intention to normalize their relations on December 10, 2020, I understand Israel and Morocco have made significant progress in deepening their relations. On January 16, Israel reopened its Liaison Office in Morocco and Israel's Chargé d'Affaires to Morocco, Dr. David Govrin, arrived in Rabat four days later. On February 9, Moroccan envoy Abderrahim Beyyoudh arrived in Tel Aviv to reopen Morocco's liaison office. In August 2021, the countries agreed to open embassies in the future. This diplomatic progress has been matched by similar progress in improving economic and social ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Israel to ensure the strength of the Israeli-Moroccan partnership continues to grow.

Question. Please provide you assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Which sectors do you feel should be targeted moving forward as we continue to build upon the historic normalization agreement between Israel and UAE?

Answer. Since normalizing relations, I understand Israel and the UAE have enjoyed robust cooperation across a range of areas. Israel opened its embassy in the UAE on January 25, 2021 and officially inaugurated it on June 29 during Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid's visit to Abu Dhabi, the first official visit by an Israeli foreign minister since the announcement of the Abraham Accords. On February 26, the UAE's first ambassador to the State of Israel, Mohammad Mahmoud Al Khajah, was sworn in and he arrived in Israel on March 1. On March 12, the UAE announced it was setting up a \$10 billion investment fund aimed at "strategic sectors" in Israel. On May 31, Israel and the UAE announced an agreement on a tax treaty. If confirmed I look forward to identifying new ways to deepen Israel-Emirati cooperation, including increasing trade and investment, building new vehicles to support academic and people-to-people exchanges, and expanding security cooperation.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the progress that's been made with respect to the normalization agreement between Israel and Bahrain?

Answer. Since normalizing relations, I understand Israel and Bahrain have signed over a dozen Memoranda of Understanding covering cooperative initiatives in sectors ranging from healthcare to education. On March 30, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain issued a Royal Decree appointing Ambassador Khalid Yusuf Al-Jalahma as head of Bahrain's diplomatic mission to Israel, the first Bahraini envoy to the country. On September 3, Eitan Na'eh was nominated as Israel's first ambassador to Bahrain, the same day that Bahrain's Khalid Yusuf Al-Jalahma presented his credentials to Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Israel to nurture and grow this important new partnership.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to leverage the existing normalization agreements between Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbors, as well as Morocco and Sudan, to advocate for other countries to reach similar agreements with Israel?

Answer. I welcome and strongly support the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. If confirmed, I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to learning from Israel's new partners in the region to better understand how we can work together to advance new normalization agreements and strengthen existing ones.

Question. In your view, what tangible benefits does normalizing relations with Israel offer to Muslim Majority countries in the Middle East and beyond?

Answer. The Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world have made an important contribution to regional security and economic development and support U.S. national security in-

terests. The Abraham Accords have empowered our partners in the region to work together on their shared security interests, created new channels for peaceful dialogue and exchange, and fostered a broader culture of tolerance across the region. They are also an engine of economic growth, having spurred new trade and investment deals that previously would have been impossible. Over time, these new economic initiatives will create opportunities for the young and marginalized communities across the region. As more countries in the Middle East and beyond normalize their relations with Israel, more opportunities for cooperation and economic development will emerge.

Question. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, you will have the opportunity to interact with both the UAE and Bahraini Ambassadors to Israel—in addition to potentially hosting delegations or meeting with diplomats from other countries normalizing or considering normalization with Israel. Will you commit to meeting regularly with your Abraham Accords counterparts?

Answer. I believe it is important to foster and promote the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements by identifying ways to strengthen and expand them. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, I look forward to meeting regularly with my counterparts from Abraham Accords countries to capitalize on these opportunities.

Question. Some argue that the Trump administration's exit from the nuclear deal and maximum pressure against Iran coupled with its clear pro-Israel policies set the conditions for normalization under the Abraham Accords. Please provide your perspectives on this argument.

Answer. The Abraham Accords have empowered our partners in the region to work together on their shared security interests, created new channels for peaceful dialogue and exchange, and fostered a broader culture of tolerance across the region. They are also an engine of economic growth, having spurred new trade and investment deals that previously would have been impossible. I believe these shared interests, including an interest in working together preserve stability in the region in the face of malign actors, were the core drivers behind the Abraham Accords and will continue to drive new normalization agreements in the future.

Question. Some have argued that the Abraham Accords may set the conditions for a new multilateral security construct in the Middle East focused on the shared threat from Iran, countering violent extremist organizations, and transnational organized crime. What are your thoughts on the potential for new security constructs stemming from the Accords and what shape might these take? What do you see as your role as the Ambassador to Israel in driving these new constructs?

Answer. I am committed to helping Israel build partnerships that further integrate Israel into the region. Any sustainable regional economic and security dialogue will need to include Israel, and normalization efforts have opened that door. If confirmed, I will work with Israel to identify ways to advance a structured regional dialogue that explores ways to reduce tensions, create pathways to de-escalation, and manage mistrust.

Egypt/Jordan

Question. Please provide your assessment of the Egyptian-Israeli relations? What are some of the key frictions points in your view? What steps should the United States take to resolve these issues?

Answer. Peace between Egypt and Israel has lasted for more than 40 years and both countries have extensive areas of cooperation, including security, intelligence sharing, economic and energy. I understand the Biden-Harris administration is eager to explore ways to support development of a warmer peace between Egypt and Israel, including through greater people-to-people and civil society ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my Egyptian counterpart and Israeli officials to strengthen all parts of this partnership.

Question. In your view, what role does the Multilateral Forces Observer Mission (MFO) play in maintaining regional stability? Should the U.S. maintain existing levels of support?

Answer. The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) remains essential to both the treaty relationship between Israel and Egypt and the enduring peace and security within the region. The MFO continues to work as an intermediary between the treaty parties, enabling open and frequent communication between them to maintain strong mutual trust and cooperation. The MFO promotes confidence in the treaty, maintains dialogue between the parties, and assists them during a period when

both face security challenges. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. support for the MFO and its critical mission.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the Jordanian-Israeli relations? What are some of the key friction points in your view? What steps should the United States take to resolve these issues?

Answer. Israel's relationship with Jordan is both vital and complex. Over the 30 years since they signed a peace agreement, they have forged strategic ties and developed cross-border business ties that employ thousands of Jordanians, signed valuable contracts exporting Israeli natural gas to Jordan, and have collaborated on the allocation of scarce water resources. While domestic considerations tied to Jordan's large Palestinian population have made it difficult for Jordan to fully embrace and grow its relationship with Israel, both appreciate the need for deeper ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my Jordanian and Israeli counterparts as I work towards strengthening all parts of this partnership. I will also work to improve coordination between the two countries at the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount.

Question. Since 1967, Jordan's custodial role over Temple Mount has helped maintain peace at one of the region's most contentious and divisive religious sites. For decades, religious worship at Temple Mount has been restricted to Muslims but in recent weeks the Israeli Government has authorized a growing number of Jewish worshippers to practice there.

- To what extent do you feel this shift in policy threatens to trigger further instability in East Jerusalem?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the U.S. recognition of the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and to handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. What specific steps would you propose the U.S. takes to address concerns over worship at Temple Mount? What role should Jordan play in these discussions?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration made clear that it recognizes the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, and it continues to respect the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty, which recognizes the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem.

While I am not privy to diplomatic discussions between the U.S. Government and its foreign counterparts, I understand that the U.S. Government hopes to partner with its counterparts to express the importance of maintaining calm and keeping flashpoints like the situation in Jerusalem—be it in the Old City, on the Temple Mount, or elsewhere—from igniting the situation.

If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the U.S. recognition of the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and to handling all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Lebanon

Question. To what extent do you feel UNIFIL's current mandate is sufficient to oversee safety and security along the so-called Blue Line? Are there specific reforms to the mandate you feel the U.S. should pursue to help address Israel's ongoing security concerns?

Answer. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) plays a critical role in ensuring security and stability along the Blue Line, limiting Hizballah's operations in southern Lebanon, and preventing escalation between Lebanon and Israel. I was glad to see that the United States worked with France and other partners to amend the mandate to allow UNIFIL to provide food, fuel, and medicine to the Lebanese Armed Forces, a key partner that provides an important counterweight to Hizballah's argument that it is the legitimate defender of Lebanon. Despite the success that UNIFIL has had in implementing its mandate to date, Hizballah continues to impede UNIFIL's access to key points along the Blue Line and openly flouts the arms embargo established under UNSCR 1701. If confirmed, I will work with UNIFIL and international partners to strengthen the mandate and enable UNIFIL to fully implement all aspects of that mandate.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to advance efforts to resume U.S.-mediated maritime talks between Israel and Lebanon? How do you feel the change in administration in both Israel and Lebanon impacts the likelihood of negotiations making tangible progress towards a viable resolution?

Answer. The maritime boundary is a decision for both Israel and Lebanon to make. The administration remains committed to working with the parties toward an agreement benefiting both countries.

Question. Hezbollah threatens Israel with precision-guided munitions often stored in densely packed urban areas. Should the United States sanction Hezbollah under the Sanctioning the Use of Defenseless Shields Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-348)? Why or why not? How do you address the PGM threat to Israel?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel is ironclad and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States uses all the tools at our disposal to confront security threats to Israel, including from Hizballah. The U.S. Government remains committed to imposing sanctions on Hizballah and its financial supporters and enablers, and the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control's designations on September 17, 2021 of members of a major financing network of Hizballah demonstrate this administration's commitment to continuing to target Hizballah's financial networks around the world. If confirmed, I also commit to consult with Congress about the range of U.S. efforts to counter Hizballah and support Israel's right to self-defense.

The West Bank and the Palestinian Authority

Question. In 2016, John Kerry argued there would be no "separate peace" between Israel and Arabs without first solving the issue of Palestinian statehood.

- What are your views on Palestinian statehood and its ties to additional normalization agreements?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state solution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. Doesn't re-inserting Palestinian statehood back into the peace process hinder prospects of further normalizations with Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to engaging with Israel's new partners in the region to find ways to improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike to help create the conditions for a durable two-state solution.

Question. What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and support for terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to restore calm in the West Bank and Gaza and keep flash point issues from flaring into violence. There are issues of good governance and accountability that affect the standing of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of the Palestinian public, and that lie within the PA's hands to advance; there are at the same time steps that the Israeli Government can consider for enhancing the role of the PA in delivering services and economic opportunities. It is incumbent upon both sides to adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, positive steps for providing the Palestinian people—whether in Gaza or the West Bank—greater economic opportunities while restoring the conditions that will make possible eventual direct negotiations toward a two-state solution.

Question. In your view, how do Israeli-Arab normalization agreements affect the prospects for Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state solution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to cap-

italize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. In 2012, you claimed “final status issues can and must only be resolved between Israelis and Palestinians in direct negotiations.” Do you still feel this is the case? If so, how would you support efforts to facilitate direct talks between the Israeli and Palestinians?

Answer. I believe that final status issues can and must only be resolved between Israelis and Palestinians in direct negotiations. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. What do you view as the proper role for the U.S. to play in assisting the parties’ efforts to reach an agreement?

Answer. I believe the United States is in a position to help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians, which is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for both people.

Question. Do you agree that the only way to reach a lasting two-state resolution to this conflict is through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians rather than one imposed by outside actors?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution achieved through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for both people.

Question. What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to restore calm in the West Bank and Gaza, and keep flash point issues from flaring into violence. There are issues of good governance and accountability that affect the standing of the Palestinian Authority in the eyes of the Palestinian public, and that lie within the PA’s hands to advance; there are at the same time steps that the Israeli Government can consider for enhancing the role of the PA in delivering services and economic opportunities. It is incumbent upon both sides to adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, positive steps for providing the Palestinian people—whether in Gaza or the West Bank—greater economic opportunities while restoring the conditions that will make possible eventual direct negotiations toward a two-state solution.

Question. In August 2021, Israel rolled out several measures designed to strengthen the Palestinian Authority, including the extension of a \$150 million dollar loan to the occupied West Bank. How can the U.S. work with the Israeli Government to ensure none of these funds are used to support the abhorrent pay for slay program?

Answer. Both the United States and Israel are likeminded in their opposition towards this abhorrent practice. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Israeli Government to ensure funds are not misused to support this heinous practice.

Question. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) continue to incentivize and celebrate the use of violence against Israel through the egregious “pay to slay” program. In 2019 alone, the Palestinians spent \$151 million dollars to support imprisoned terrorists and their families. In addition, to these prisoner payments, the PA and PLO maintain a “martyrs’ fund” to help support the families of terrorist killed while carrying out violent acts against the Israeli state. There is concern the Biden administration’s decision to re-establish relations with the Palestinians in a manner that failed to extract concessions with respect to their pay to slay program was a missed opportunity. How has the Biden administration’s outreach set conditions for any reforms on pay to slay?

Answer. While I am not in a position to comment on private diplomatic discussions, this administration and I, are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments in a manner that addresses longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring

that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform of this heinous practice.

Question. Despite opening the aperture of ESF and INCLE to the Palestinians, the State Department has achieved no progress on the pay-to-slay policy. Please provide your roadmap for addressing this egregious practice.

Answer. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. This administration and I are absolutely committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments in a manner that addresses longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing reform of this heinous practice.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to making efforts to address the Palestinian Authority’s pay for slay program a priority?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, pursuing reform of this heinous practice is a priority for me.

Question. What is your position on the viability of a two-State solution? Is it your sense that the tenure between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian authority has changed under the new administration led by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. The administration has been clear that Israelis and Palestinians alike equally deserve to live in freedom, security, and prosperity. As such, the United States is strongly encouraging both the Palestinians and the Israelis to avoid unilateral actions including settlement activity, annexation, and demolitions, as well as incitement to violence and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. If confirmed, I am committed to taking an affirmative and practical approach that encourages constructive, positive steps to keep the possibility of a negotiated two-state solution alive.

Question. Please provide your views on the relative benefits and risks of ESF and INCLE expenditures targeted towards the Palestinian people and security forces.

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances our national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and hold those who violate human rights accountable. I believe that we must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent cooperation. Institutional reforms supported by U.S. security sector assistance are critical in building the capabilities necessary to maintain stability in the West Bank and improve the Palestinian Authority security forces. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that our security sector assistance further supports efforts to uphold the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Gaza Strip and Hamas

Question. In your view, does Hamas’ targeting of civilian infrastructure in Israel constitute war crimes?

Answer. Hamas’s heinous rocket attacks on Israel in May only reinforced the Biden administration’s ironclad resolve on Israel’s security. I unequivocally condemn all rocket fire into Israel by terrorist groups Hamas and PIJ, and human rights abuses being committed in Gaza where Hamas, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, exercises de facto authority. The U.S. Government supports Israel’s inherent right of self-defense, including against rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups. If confirmed, I will be committed to stabilizing Gaza to prevent further conflict and loss of civilian life.

Question. Hamas fighters reportedly position military tunnels and deploy rocket launches in close proximity to civilian infrastructure, like hospitals, schools, and mosques to limit the likelihood of an Israeli counterstrike. Is Hamas responsible for using Palestinian civilians as human shields to protect its military assets from Israeli counter strikes?

Answer. I unequivocally condemn all rocket fire into Israel by terrorist groups Hamas and PIJ, and human rights abuses being committed in Gaza where Hamas, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, exercises de facto authority. The President has made clear that the U.S. Government supports Israel’s inherent right of self-defense, including against rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza-based

terrorist groups. If confirmed, I will be committed to stabilizing Gaza to prevent further conflict and loss of civilian life.

Question. The Sanctioning the Use of Defenseless Shields Act of 2018 (P.L. 115–348) mandates sanctions on any member of Hezbollah or Hamas who “knowingly orders, controls, or otherwise directs the use of civilians protected as such by the law of war to shield military objectives from attack.” Under the law, the President is required to submit to Congress a list of, and impose financial sanctions on, each foreign person involved in the use of human shields by Hamas or Hezbollah “on or after the date of enactment.” Despite widespread reporting on Hamas’s use of human shields, as of September 21, 2021, no action has been pursued under this act. If confirmed, can you commit to advocating for the imposition of sanctions under The Sanctioning the Use of Defenseless Shields Act of 2018 (P.L. 115–348)? Please provide your assessment of Qatar’s role with respect to Gaza. To what extent do you see it as a stabilizing influence?

Answer. The President has made clear that the United States supports Israel’s inherent right of self-defense, including against rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups, and unequivocally condemns Hamas’s human rights abuses in Gaza. If confirmed, I will support efforts by across the Government to use the tools at our disposal, including sanctions authorities, in countering terrorist actors like Hamas. We must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. We can do this by working with partners, such as Qatar, through meeting humanitarian needs, including increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, and increasing levels of electricity and freedom of movement, while facilitating political and physical reintegration in the West Bank. Qatar has played a stabilizing role in Gaza, and I believe their strong partnership with the Government of Israel will continue to help stabilize the situation.

Question. What is your position on Qatari assistance to the Gaza Strip? Can you commit to working with the U.N. and the Government of Israel to ensure it IS delivered in a manner that’s consistent with Israeli and U.S. national security interests?

Answer. I understand the United States is committed to working with the international donor community to support the Palestinian people. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the United Nations and Government of Israel to ensure assistance to Gaza is delivered a manner that is consistent with U.S. and Israeli national security interests.

Question. To what extent is assistance to Gaza subject to diversion by Hamas?

Answer. I understand the U.S. Government provides assistance in a manner consistent with U.S. law and does not direct assistance to Hamas. The Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have a robust vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. In addition, our development and humanitarian partners in the West Bank and Gaza have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance reaches its intended recipients.

Question. Please provide your assessment of Egypt’s role in Gaza and its relationship with Hamas.

Answer. I believe that Egypt plays an important stabilizing role in Gaza, exhibited by Egypt’s critical efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities during the conflict in May.

Question. In August 2021, Egypt reportedly closed its main border point with the Gaza Strip, Rafah crossing, over “differences” between Cairo and Hamas with respect to the latest Egypt brokered ceasefire. Specifically, officials have cited concerns over the lack of progress in indirect talks with Israel following the 11 day war in May and efforts to reconcile the militant Palestinian factions that dominate Gaza Strip. Do you share these concerns?

Answer. We must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. We can do this through meeting humanitarian needs, including increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services and increasing levels of electricity and freedom of movement, while facilitating political and physical reintegration in the West Bank. An effective humanitarian response requires adequate access to Gaza to allow reputable, vetted organizations to meet emergency needs; continued and regular opening of border crossings; fast-track processing of humanitarian convoys; and the unimpeded movement of relief and recovery supplies, including critical goods required to meet the needs of Palestinian families.

Question. What is your position on the blockade over Gaza that Egypt and Israel imposed following Hamas's ascension to power in 2007? In your view, should this blockade be lifted? If so, on what basis?

Answer. I believe we must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. We can do this through meeting humanitarian needs, including increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services and increasing levels of electricity and freedom of movement, while facilitating political and physical reintegration with the West Bank. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the international community and Government of Israel to support these humanitarian efforts.

Question. Given Hamas' continued control over Gaza, what are some of the obstacles to post-conflict recovery?

Answer. Hamas is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224. I understand U.S. engagement in the West Bank and Gaza and with the Palestinians is consistent with U.S. law. Given Hamas's role, many partners have similar restrictions on operating in Gaza.

Question. Do you agree that there are significant challenges to assisting with long-term reconstruction in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip? In your view, what impact would reconstruction efforts have on Hamas' credibility and legitimacy?

Answer. Yes, I agree there are significant challenges to assisting with long-term reconstruction in Gaza and I understand U.S. engagement in the West Bank and Gaza and with the Palestinians is consistent with U.S. law. I also understand relief and recovery efforts are done in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel, and international donors in a manner that does not permit Hamas to restock its arsenal or achieve any legitimacy.

Question. Please address concerns that long-term reconstruction projects in Gaza would merely serve to bolster Hamas' rule much to the detriment of the Palestinian people?

Answer. We must work to stabilize Gaza to prevent future conflict. I believe relief and recovery efforts should be done in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel, and international donors in a manner that does not permit Hamas to restock its arsenal.

Iran and Its Proxies

Question. Please provide an assessment of the threat Iran poses to the security of Israel, including a detailed assessment of the extent of support it provides to its proxies, like Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) which pose similar dangers to Israeli sovereignty and the safety of its citizens.

Answer. Israel believes Iran is the greatest threat to its security. As Secretary Blinken and other senior U.S. officials have said, the United States is committed to ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon, and believes diplomacy, in coordination with our allies and regional partners, is the best path to achieve that goal. An Iran with a nuclear weapon is likely to act even more provocatively when it comes to these issues. The administration has fundamental problems with Iran's actions across a series of issues, including its support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, its support to armed militant groups, and its destabilizing actions in the region. Our partners in the region share a similar concern.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the threat Hezbollah poses to Israeli security.

Answer. Israel's top national security priorities are forestalling Iran's nuclear ambitions, preventing the proliferation of advanced weaponry across the region, and ending support to terrorist organizations, particularly Hizballah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. The President and the Secretary have been clear that this administration has fundamental problems with Iran's behavior throughout the region, including acts committed by Iranian-backed militia groups. If confirmed, I commit to working with my Israeli counterparts to strengthen all facets of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Iran

Question. In your view, should the United States make addressing Iran's support to its proxies like Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) a priority? If so, how should efforts to limit Iran's regional aggression fit into the Biden administration's efforts to pur-

sue a mutual U.S.-Iranian return to the 2015 Iran Nuclear Agreement, otherwise known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA.)

Answer. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other Iranian-backed terrorist and militant groups pose a serious threat to the security of Israel and to that of the Middle East. The United States is fully committed to working with Israel and our other partners in the region to deter and defend against these threats, using the full spectrum of tools available. Regarding Iran's nuclear program, the administration's goal is first to return to mutual compliance with the JCPOA, and then to build on that to address other areas of concern, including Iran's ballistic missile development and proliferation, and support for terrorism. I support using a variety of policy tools to strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address other issues of concern.

Question. Israel faces constant threats from terrorist organizations including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and various Iran backed militia groups in Syria. If confirmed, how do you plan to work with the Government of Israel to address the threat Iran and its proxies pose to Israel's security?

Answer. The President has made clear that the United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. The President and the Secretary have also been clear that this administration has fundamental problems with Iran's behavior throughout the region, including acts committed by Iran backed militia groups. If confirmed, I commit to working with my Israeli counterparts to strengthen all parts of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Question. Do you support Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks?

Answer. Yes. The United States has a long-standing, unshakable commitment to Israel's security.

Question. What role should the U.S. play in safeguarding Israeli sovereignty and security?

Answer. The United States should maintain its unwavering commitment to Israel's security and work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Question. Since taking office, President Biden has made facilitating a U.S. return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) a priority for his administration, and, in February, appointed Rob Malley as Special Envoy for Iran to oversee such efforts. Since, Special Envoy Malley has engaged in several rounds of indirect talks in Vienna, Austria aimed at facilitating a mutual U.S.-Iran return to JCPOA.

- After the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal was signed, the Israeli Government, as with our Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partners, made clear, both publicly and privately, their discontent over the lack of consultations prior to the U.S. entry into the agreement. If confirmed, can you commit to ensuring the U.S. consults Israel prior to any U.S. re-entry into the JCPOA?

Answer. Yes. I understand that the Department, and in particular Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley, has been in close contact with our Israeli partners and will continue consulting closely with them throughout this process. I also understand that former U.S. ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro has also recently joined the State Department and remains in close consultation with Israel over Iran.

Question. In your view, how extensive should these consultations be? To what extent should the U.S. be responsive to Israeli concerns over Iranian proxy activity in the context of talks with Iran?

Answer. I understand that the Department, and in particular Special Envoy Malley and senior advisor Ambassador Dan Shapiro, have been in close contact with, and updated, our Israeli counterparts extensively throughout the negotiations. If confirmed, I will continue to consult deeply and continuously with our Israeli partners on all dimensions of Iran policy.

Question. Further, many have characterized Special Envoy Malley's consultations as "one-way" and not responsive to their concerns. Do you commit to extensive consultations with Israel prior to making concessions to Iran?

Answer. I understand that the Department, and in particular Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley, and senior advisor Ambassador Dan Shapiro have been in close contact with partners in Israel and among the Gulf Arab states, and will continue consulting closely with these key partners as this process proceeds. Every one of us shares a common interest: seeing to it that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. Can you commit to seeking Israel's concurrence before the U.S. and Iran finalize any arrangement or agreement related to Iran's nuclear program?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to consult deeply and continuously with our Israeli partners on the nuclear negotiations and on preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Question. If confirmed, how will you manage disagreements with Israel over Iran policy?

Answer. I believe the Biden-Harris administration has conducted itself with a great deal of transparency, knowing that the United States and Israel share a common interest: seeing to it that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. I believe diplomacy, in coordination with our allies and regional partners, is the best path to achieve that goal.

Question. How do you address criticisms that the Biden administration's decision to re-engage with Iran merely served to isolate Israel and our Gulf partners?

Answer. The Biden—Harris administration has made clear that the United States has an ironclad commitment to Israel's security. Alongside that commitment, the administration is focused on de-escalating tensions, putting out the fires of conflict in Yemen, Libya, and Syria, and enhancing stability throughout the Middle East. The Department has updated Israeli and Gulf counterparts regularly before and after negotiation rounds, and is regularly engaged in discussions on its work to constrain and contain Iran's destabilizing regional activities. In fact, the administration's sustained diplomatic engagement with allies and partners has ensured a more united, better coordinated, and more consistent approach in countering the Iranian threat and advancing our shared goals in the region.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to working with the Special Envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, to ensure Israeli concerns are addressed in the context of talks aimed at facilitating a U.S.-Iran re-entry into JCPOA? How would you do so?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Special Envoy Malley and other colleagues in the administration to continue to consult deeply and continuously with our Israeli allies on the nuclear negotiations and on preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Question. The Biden administration has indicated that it will address Iran's ballistic missile program and regional terrorism in follow-on agreements. Should the United States and Iran rejoin the JCPOA, what leverage does the United States possess to encourage follow on agreements? Iran's leadership has refused to address regional terrorism. How likely is Iran to engage in discussions on its ballistic missile program and support for regional terrorism?

Answer. As the President has said, the goal is first to return to mutual compliance with the JCPOA, and then to build on that to address other areas of concern, including Iran's ballistic missile development, proliferation, and support for terrorism using a variety of policy tools to strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address other issues of concern. The administration will consult closely with our allies and partners in the region on ways to address this moving forward.

Question. Should the Iranian regime refuse to rejoin the JCPOA, what is "Plan B" to address Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missile program, and support to terror proxies?

Answer. The administration has made clear that it believes that diplomacy is the best path forward on the nuclear challenge at this time. In the event Iran refuses to return to mutual compliance with the JCPOA, the administration is prepared to leverage all applicable authorities, including sanctions against Iran, as well as the support of allies and partners around the world, to prevent Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon and to defend U.S. vital interests.

Question. Do you support Israel's freedom to take unilateral military action against Iran's nuclear program, its terror proxies, and ballistic missile program? Under what conditions would you constrain Israel's freedom of action?

Answer. The President has made clear that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. I support Israel's freedom of action to counter Iran's destabilizing activities and the United States will not take any action that jeopardizes Israel's security.

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement

Question. Please provide your assessment of the boycott, divest, sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

Answer. This administration and I firmly reject the BDS movement, which unfairly singles out Israel. While the administration will fully and always respect the right to freedom of expression, the United States will be a strong partner in fighting efforts to delegitimize Israel. We will continue to support Israel's further integration into the international community.???

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to prioritizing efforts to fight boycott, divest, and sanctions (BDS) Israel globally? If so, how would you use your position to do so?

Answer. If confirmed, while respecting the rights of all Americans to free speech, I will continue the tireless work of this administration to firmly reject the BDS movement and boycott laws that unfairly single out Israel and I will continue to support Israel's further integration into the international community.???

Question. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has publicly stated that he will not annex West Bank territory, nor permit it to be incorporated into a Palestinian state, though he does intend to pursue additional construction in the settlements. Do you believe Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal? If so, on what grounds?

Answer. The two-state solution is the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state, and to give the Palestinians the state they seek. I firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I will continue to oppose any unilateral action that undermines the prospects for genuine progress and peace, whether that is settlement activity, home demolitions, annexation of territory, incitement to violence, or compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. I am not in a position to speak to the administration's legal views. If confirmed, I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution, as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek.

China

Question. In recent years, commercial ties between Israel and China have grown significantly, as reflected in the Israeli decision to award numerous infrastructure projects to Chinese building conglomerates.

- Please provide your assessment of bilateral relations between Israel and China.

Answer. Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century. As Israel is a world leader in developing innovative technology with military, civilian, and dual-use applications, I understand the administration remains deeply concerned by PRC attempts to extend influence and acquire dual-use technology through acquisition and investment in Israel.

Question. Specifically, what, if any, concerns do you have about Israeli cooperation with China and the impact on core U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The administration remains deeply concerned by attempts by the People's Republic of China to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use technology through acquisitions and investment in Israel. The administration welcomes efforts by all countries to enhance investment in quality infrastructure development. I believe that such an investment must be within the confines of strong regulatory structures that ensure all companies investing in Israel do so in a responsible manner, consistent with international practices, that benefits the people of Israel, and does not undermine Israeli national security.

Question. In your view, to what extent should Israeli-Chinese relations shape and inform Israel's relationship with the U.S.?

Answer. Strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is a defining feature of the 21st century. While the administration remains deeply concerned with attempts by the People's Republic of China to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use technology through acquisitions and investment in Israel, the United States views close cooperation with Israel as important to our security and intelligence partnership.

Question. In 2019, in response to U.S. concerns over growing Chinese investment, Israel announced the establishment of an advisory committee, led by the Finance Ministry, to oversee and evaluate foreign investments in Israel. Right now, that committee is an inadequate mechanism and lacks a broad enough scope to protect high technology firms. Only foreign investments in the Israeli financial, communications, infrastructure, transportation, and energy sectors are subject to regulatory ap-

proval. Israel is a world-leader in high technology industries. Without a mechanism empowered to review in high technology firms, Israel will lack the ability to ensure controlling and non-controlling investments in these companies do not disadvantage Israel's national security. If confirmed, can you pledge to work with the Government of Israel to improve oversight of foreign commercial investment in Israel, particularly as relates to dual use technology and infrastructure?

Answer. While Israel's establishment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, especially its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. From your perspective, what specific reforms should the U.S. seek from Israel to help improve its existing foreign investments oversight regime?

Answer. While Israel's establishment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, especially its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. Can you commit to working with the Government of Israel to ensure its investment oversight regime covers high tech industries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. The United States has growing concerns with China's economic relationship with Israel. Given the relative weakness on Israel's committee on foreign investment and issues highlighted by the China's involvement in Haifa port, how do you effectively decouple China from Israel?

Answer. The United States views close cooperation with Israel on a variety of national security topics including foreign investment risk management as important to our security and intelligence partnership. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Russia

Question. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is scheduled to travel to Moscow for a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the coming weeks. This will form the basis for joint Israeli-Russian cooperation on a number of issues, including Iran's role in Syria which remains a top priority concern. Please provide your perspective on the Israeli Russian relationship.

Answer. Russia views its military intervention in Syria as helping to solidify a dominant influence in the Middle East and is responsible for enabling numerous atrocities on the ground. While we routinely condemn Russia's brutal military intervention in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime, we recognize Russia has influence on the ground and that Israel wishes to test that influence with regards to curbing Iran's presence in Syria. The U.S. Government has found narrow areas in which to engage with Russia in Syria, for example to extend cross-border humanitarian access into Syria through Security Council Resolution 2585, and we will continue to explore additional avenues for discussion if they are to the benefit the Syrian people and stability in the region.

Question. How does the U.S.'s failure to mitigate the threat Iran and its proxies pose to Israeli security impact Israel's relationship with Russia? In your view, does it make Israel more reliant on Russia given the former's active ties with destabilizing actors like Iran and its proxy, Hezbollah?

Answer. Israel's security posture is independent of Russia's presence due to Iran's destabilizing tactics through Hezbollah and other proxies allowing it to focus on subversive activities by those responsible.

VISA Waiver Program

Question. President Biden in his recent meeting with Prime Minister Bennett committed to advance a process to see Israel join the visa waiver program. If confirmed, can you commit to making it a priority to advance the President's commitment?

Answer. The administration is fully supportive of Israel joining the Visa Waiver Program once it meets all the requirements for participation in the program. If confirmed, it is a priority for me to advance the President's commitment.

Question. If confirmed, will you work to ensure an efficient visa process that allows eligible Israelis to travel to the United States?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work to ensure an efficient visa process that allows eligible Israelis to travel to the United States.

Question. Will you work with the Israelis to help bring down the refusal rate for Israelis applying for visas?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel toward meeting all requirements for participation in the Visa Waiver Program.

Non-Defense Cooperation

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to expand trade and deepen the economic cooperation with Israel?

Answer. Advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship, remains a top priority for me. Israel is a world leader in innovation, research and development, and its start-up economy is safe and welcoming for U.S. businesses, with American companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centers in Israel. If confirmed, I will build on these robust relationships to expand trade and deepen economic cooperation with Israel.

Question. If confirmed, what areas of the U.S.-Israel relationship will be priorities for you?

Answer. The U.S.-Israeli relationship has long been based on both common values and strategic interests. We remain united in our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security. Should I have the honor of being confirmed, maintaining the U.S. Government's ironclad commitment to Israel's security, advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship, working with a fellow democracy to oppose international institutional bias and promote human rights at home and abroad, and supporting the Abraham Accords and exploring new opportunities to advance normalization efforts are some of my top priorities.

Question. What areas of the relationship do you think can be strengthened?

Answer. Upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests and ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israeli partners to address critical threats from Iran and Iranian-backed militias and will work to strengthen Israel's foreign investment advisory committee to identify and mitigate risks associated with foreign direct investment, including investments involving critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In July, the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) announced a permanent, three person commission to investigate alleged Israeli war crimes during the conflict in Gaza earlier this year. Recent reporting indicates that all three members—Navi Pillay, Miloon Kothai, and Chris Sidoti—hold anti-Israel views. I'm concerned that the composition of this commission makes it all too likely that this is just another anti-Israel attack by a commission that should be focusing on the ongo-

ing genocide of Uyghurs and Muslims in China, or on Cuba's human rights violations of peaceful protesters, or at least a dozen other countries.

- If confirmed, what steps would you take to cooperate with the Israeli Government to counter this blatant anti-Israel sentiment at the U.N.?

Answer. The United States strongly opposed the special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council following the escalation in Gaza in May. It exemplifies the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel. The establishment of an open-ended Commission of Inquiry distracts from the diplomatic work necessary to provide greater dignity, freedom, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians, and ensure that terrorist organizations, including Hamas, do not exploit the situation, including by indiscriminate firing of rockets, to advance their own destructive aims. If confirmed, I will work closely with Israel and likeminded partners to influence the scope and timeline of this Commission as part of broader efforts to ensure Israel is treated fairly by the Human Rights Council, in line with other U.N. member states.

Question. In May of this year, Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists launched more than 4,000 rockets that targeted Israeli civilians. As you know, shortly after this, the Biden administration announced that it would re-open the consulate general in Jerusalem. U.S. law is clear that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. Re-opening this consulate sends the wrong message.

- Do you support re-opening the consulate in Eastern Jerusalem?

Answer. In May, Secretary Blinken publicly announced the administration's intent to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I understand that this is a component of the administration's renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaders.

Question. In your opinion, how does re-opening the Consulate comply with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995?

Answer. I understand that the Jerusalem Embassy Act restricted certain funding for the Department of State until the Secretary determined and reported to Congress that the U.S. Embassy to Israel had officially opened in Jerusalem. During the Trump administration, Secretary Pompeo determined and reported to Congress in 2019 that the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem had officially opened, consistent with the requirements of the Jerusalem Embassy Act. I understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem as called for by the Act. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem would not affect that policy or walk back or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

If confirmed, I will always work to ensure that all our policies are consistent with U.S. interests and applicable U.S. law.

Answer. Are you aware of other cases where the U.S. operates both a consulate and an embassy in the same city?

Answer. I cannot speak to the global U.S. diplomatic presence, however I understand that the Department uses a variety of diplomatic and consular platforms to best serve U.S. interests around the world and maintained a Consulate General and Embassy in Jerusalem simultaneously from May 2018 to March 2019. The Biden-Harris administration has made clear that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and the U.S. Embassy will remain in Jerusalem. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Do you believe, as is the policy of the United States, that we must assist the Government of Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side-by-side in peace and security and to encourage Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Similarly, making progress towards a two-state so-

lution may hasten new normalization agreements. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. As the President's nominee, do you agree that our diplomatic presence in Jerusalem through our Embassy is sufficient to meet the consular needs of Palestinians?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy to Israel, which the United States Government has been clear will remain in Jerusalem, provides consular services to U.S. citizens and permanent residents, as well as local communities residing in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. The President and Secretary Blinken have reaffirmed the administration's intent as well to reopen the Consulate General in Jerusalem, to support renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Jerusalem enables our government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaderships.

Question. While the opportunities for partnership are significant, there are also those who worry about China's growing relationship with Israel and needed proper guardrails in place when seeking to work on technology together. If confirmed, how would you seek to deepen the U.S.-Israel partnerships in emerging tech while seeking to deter the Israelis from taking steps closer to China?

Answer. The administration remains deeply concerned by attempts by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to extend influence and acquire critical and dual-use technology through acquisitions and investment in Israel. The administration welcomes efforts by all countries to enhance investment in quality infrastructure development. I believe that such an investment must be within the confines of strong regulatory structures that ensure all companies investing in Israel do so in a responsible manner, consistent with international practices, that benefits the people of Israel, and does not undermine Israeli national security. While Israel's establishment of a new investment advisory committee is a step in the right direction, I understand there are concerns as to its effectiveness, given the voluntary nature of its coverage and its lack of coverage for the high-tech sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to strengthen its foreign investment advisory committee to minimize exposure to national security risks, including the acquisitions of critical technologies, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure.

Question. What untapped opportunities exist for mutual exchanges to deepen our bilateral research and innovation relationship?

Answer. Advancing the depth and breadth of the bonds between our people, including our ever-expanding economic relationship remains a top priority for me. Israel is a world leader in innovation, research and development and Israel's start up economy is safe and welcoming for U.S. businesses, with U.S. companies establishing two-thirds of the more than 300 foreign-invested research and development centers in Israel. Three U.S.-Israel bi-national foundations have provided over \$1.2 billion for joint science and technology projects and both sides signed a new Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement that entered into force in December 2020. If confirmed, I plan to build on these already robust relationships to promote further cooperation in bilateral research and innovation, including working with Israel to strengthen foreign investment risk management which is a key investment in the innovation relationship between the United States and Israel.

In addition, collaboration made possible because of the Abraham Accords and in the Eastern Mediterranean, including with the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) and 3+1 mechanism, presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. These efforts can help promote Israel's regional integration and greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity throughout the region. If confirmed, I look forward to expanding these efforts.

Question. A developing story from September 21 is that progressive Democrats in the House of Representatives have stripped funding for Iron Dome—Israel's primary tool for defending civilians from Hamas' terrorist rocket attacks—out from the upcoming funding bill. If confirmed, would you commit to advocating for the Congress to provide Israel with all the tools necessary to defend itself?

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including Israel's ability to maintain its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. The President was clear when President Bennett visited Washington

at the end of August that the administration fully supports replenishing Israel's Iron Dome System.

This administration is committed to ensuring Israel's right to defend itself from indiscriminate rocket attacks by assisting Israel in replenishing its Iron Dome Air Defense Missile System. If confirmed, I will work with relevant State and DoD colleagues to see what can be done in this regard.

Question. In carrying out the Memorandum of Understanding on U.S. Foreign Defense Aid to Israel, the funding for which Congress authorized last year, what are the most pressing threats that Congress must consider when we set aside annual funding for security assistance to Israel?

Answer. The commitment to Israel's security is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, supported by the 10-year, \$38 billion Memorandum of Understanding with Israel. This commitment includes \$3.3 billion in annual Foreign Military Financing. As I shared in my opening statement, Israel is one of our closest security partners in countering a broad spectrum of threats ranging from climate change to cyber-attacks to nuclear proliferation. Chief among these is the critical threat that Iran and Iranian-backed militias pose. While President Biden has made clear his commitment to ensure that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon, upholding Israel's security serves America's national security interests and ensures that we will always have a strong, reliable, and secure partner.

The best way we can do this is by continuing robust levels of bilateral U.S. security assistance including through the Foreign Military Financing program, which will help to maintain Israel's Qualitative Military Edge; and acknowledge strong bilateral ties; and enable cutting-edge cooperation on missile defense. U.S. funding also supports Israel's continued defense modernization and provides for the acquisition of U.S.-origin defense equipment ranging from ammunition to advanced weapons systems and training.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Congressional Determinations and Policies

Question. In 1987, Congress passed The Anti-Terrorism Act, in which Congress determined that "the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization and a threat to the interests of the United States, its allies, and to international law" (22 USC § 5201). In 2012, Congress passed The United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, which established that it is "the policy of the United States. To assist the Government of Israel with its ongoing efforts to forge a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states living side-by-side in peace and security, and to encourage Israel's neighbors to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state" (22 USC § 8602). In 2014, Congress passed The United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, which reaffirmed that it is "the policy of the United States. to support the Government of Israel in its ongoing efforts to reach a negotiated political settlement with the Palestinian people that results in two states living side-by-side in peace and security" (22 USC § 8602 Statutory Notes).

- Do you agree with Congress's determination that "the PLO and its affiliates are a terrorist organization and a threat to the interests of the United States, its allies, and to international law?"

Answer. My understanding is that subsequent to the 1987 passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act, in 1993, in connection with the Oslo Accords, the PLO renounced terrorism and recognized Israel's right to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people for purposes of negotiations for permanent status and peace. Subsequently, across administrations, Congress and the executive branch have worked together to press the PLO to continue to comply with those commitments, and to support its engagement with Israel, and with the United States in support of negotiations and its commitments including those disavowing terrorism.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our engagement with the Palestinians advances Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, understanding, peace, security coordination, and stability. To that end, I will work with the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel, and international community to consider ways in which we can strengthen the position of the Palestinian Authority and to recommend that all sides adopt an affirmative and practical approach to the conflict that encourages constructive, posi-

tive steps-like condemning incitement to violence and terrorism- to keep the possibility of a negotiated two-state solution alive.

Question. Do you commit to “assist” and “support” the Government of Israel in its negotiations with the Palestinians?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as to help create the conditions for direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Question. Do you believe that the United States should be neutral between the Governments of Israel and the Palestinians?

Answer. I believe that a two-state solution is the best way to ensure equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians. By making Israel more secure and opening new channels for constructive dialogue and diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world, normalization agreements also bring with them the potential to create new opportunities to advance a negotiated peace between Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will work to capitalize on all opportunities to advance existing coordination between Israelis and Palestinians to help create the conditions for direct negotiations between the two parties.

Sovereignty

Question. The Obama-Biden administration’s approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict was justified on the basis of a theory of regional relations in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevented broader Israeli-Arab rapprochement. Among other decisions, that administration implemented discriminatory policies that distinguished between Jewish communities in places Israel controlled before and after 1967. That approach culminated in December 2016, when the Obama administration maneuvered the United Nations Security Council into passing UNSCR 2334, which among other things denied Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights and part of its capital Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter. The Trump administration systematically worked to hollow out and render UNSCR 2334 null and void. They did so, including by recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, by moving our embassy to Jerusalem, by seeking to end discriminatory approaches that distinguished legally and for the purposes of aid and trade between different Israeli communities, and by taking several other steps.

- Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, I understand the administration gives great weight to Israel’s security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door. I understand the administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the administration has not altered U.S. policy on this important issue. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of the Golan Heights?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, I understand the administration gives great weight to Israel’s security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria and Iran is present in Syria, it would be greatly irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door. The administration has not changed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If con-

firmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Abraham Accords

Question. In your testimony you indicated that you are supportive of the Abraham Accords. In early 2021 the State Department distributed internal guidance through emails about how to refer to the normalization between Israel and other countries. In the emails, staffers were instructed that the State Dept. would no longer refer to the normalization as the “Abraham Accords,” and the use of “normalization agreements” instead was indicated, according to a June 4 report by the *Washington Free Beacon*.

- Please transmit copies of those emails. *The Washington Free Beacon* reviewed at least two of them.

Answer. While I understand your interest, as a nominee I am not in a position to act on behalf of the State Department with regard to its records. I take my responsibilities with respect to Congressional oversight seriously and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to respond to your concerns.

Question. Please transmit any other internal guidance issued by State Department staffers—including emails, memos, cables, notes, decision memos, briefing papers, instructions, etc.—regarding the use of the phrase “Abraham Accords,” from December 2020 through September 2021.

Answer. While I understand your interest, as a nominee I am not in a position to act on behalf of the State Department with regard to its records. I take my responsibilities with respect to Congressional oversight seriously and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to respond to your concerns.

Question. Can you commit to ensuring that any guidelines or policies prohibiting using the phrase “Abraham Accords” are revised and reversed?

Answer. My understanding is that the Biden-Harris administration refers to the agreements known as the Abraham Accords as such. I certainly do. If confirmed, I will continue to use that moniker.

Palestinian Consulate

Question. The Biden administration has indicated and recently reiterated its intention to open a Palestinian-facing consulate in Israel’s capital Jerusalem.

- Please describe your assessment of whether the Israeli Government supports such a plan?

Answer. Secretary Blinken publicly announced the administration’s intent to reopen the Consulate General. I understand that this is part of the administration’s renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership. I am not in a position to comment further on diplomatic discussions related to this process. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out the full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leaders. My understanding is that reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and the U.S. Embassy to Israel will remain in Jerusalem.

Question. Do you believe that opening a Palestinian-facing consulate in Jerusalem in the absence of affirmative permission from the Israeli Government would constitute an erosion of their sovereignty over Jerusalem? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out the full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leadership. The U.S. Government has been clear that our Embassy will remain in Jerusalem. The administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. My understanding is that reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

Question. Do you believe that the opening of a Palestinian-facing consulate in Jerusalem would prejudice final status negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians? If not, why not?

Answer. This administration recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will

not change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Energy

Question. In January 2019, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, and the Palestinian Authority established the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) headquartered in Cairo. The EMGF, an intergovernmental energy forum, knits together Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf countries, including through an Israeli-Cypriot-Greek pipeline. The forum members agree to work to formulate a common policy for the regional energy market.

- Do you support the efforts and objectives of the EMGF?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. The Forum can help promote greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity throughout the region. If confirmed, I would build on the work between colleagues in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs, Energy Resources, and European Affairs to coordinate our engagement and am eager to learn more about the EMGF's announcement earlier this year that it plans to work with specialists to discuss and promote gas decarbonization. I would also take steps to align our other regional embassies to support this effort in the field so that we can advance cooperation, energy security and U.S. national interests.

Question. Do you support the United States continued involvement within the EMFG?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. If confirmed, I hope to continue U.S. involvement with the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum.

Question. Do you support efforts by Israel and other regional partners to develop a sustainable natural gas infrastructure including through bilateral negotiations?

Answer. I support the development of sustainable, secure, energy sources by Israel and other regional partners, including through bilateral negotiations. Natural gas discoveries have helped redefine relationships and increase energy security in the Eastern Mediterranean, and our partners building up capacity in renewable energy sources will further transform the energy landscape in this region.

Question. Can you evaluate the impacts of the EMFG on advancing peace and cooperation between Israel and regional partners?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners. The Forum promotes greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity and supports Israel's greater integration in the region.

Question. Can you evaluate the impact that completing the EastMed pipeline would have on providing Europe with an alternative to Russian supplied gas?

Answer. If completed, the EastMed Pipeline project could increase regional energy security in the Eastern Mediterranean, diversify Europe's energy supply, and aid in ensuring a more stable energy transition.

Question. Do you support the continued development of the EastMed Pipeline?

Answer. As I understand it, there are a number of regional energy projects in the Eastern Mediterranean under consideration, including the EastMed Pipeline. If confirmed, I would advocate for regional energy and electrical interconnections that have the potential to increase our partners' and allies' energy security, diversify energy supplies, and aid in ensuring more stable and sustainable energy transitions.

Question. What impact do you think this energy forum has on regional dynamics, including those related to diplomatic, economic, and security?

Answer. The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum presents new opportunities for collaboration with allies and key partners and promotes greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity in the region, which would help advance stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
 SUBMITTED TO HON. THOMAS R. NIDES BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. After the United States implemented the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45)—including by formally recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel on December 6, 2017, and by relocating and opening the U.S. Embassy to Israel in Israel’s capital city of Jerusalem on May 14, 2018—it also closed the U.S. Consulate General for the Palestinians and merged this Consulate General’s functions into Embassy Jerusalem under the U.S. Ambassador to Israel’s Chief of Mission authority. Do you agree that opening/reopening a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem—in particular, after the fact of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital on December 6, 2017—would constitute a diminution of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital?

Answer. During the Trump administration, Secretary Pompeo determined and reported to Congress in 2019 that the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem had officially opened, consistent with the requirements of the Jerusalem Embassy Act. I understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem as called for by the Act. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not affect that policy or walk back or change U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

Question. Do you also agree that opening/reopening a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem—in particular, after the fact of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital on December 6, 2017—would constitute a diminution of Israeli sovereignty? Please begin your answer with a yes or no.

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. I understand the administration is committed, as am I, to keeping the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Reopening the Consulate General in Jerusalem will not change U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. The Government of Israel—under then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and now under Prime Minister Naftali Bennett—has consistently opposed the opening/reopening of a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem after the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital on December 6, 2017, and relocated the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem on May 14, 2018. Do you agree that the United States should not open/reopen a U.S. consulate for the Palestinians in Jerusalem if the Government of Israel continues to oppose it? Please begin your response with a yes or no.

Answer. The administration has also been clear, as am I, that our Embassy to Israel will remain in Jerusalem. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem enables our Government to carry out a full range of diplomatic activities, including engagement with the local communities and government leadership. In May, Secretary Blinken stated “the United States will be moving forward with the process to reopen our consulate in Jerusalem. That’s an important way for our country to engage with and provide support for the Palestinian people.” I understand that this is part of the administration’s renewed engagement with the Palestinian people and leadership.

Question. Since the change in presidential administrations, some U.S. Government officials at times have publicly resisted using the term “Abraham Accords” and instead insisted on only using the term “normalization agreements.” If confirmed, do you commit that you will refer to the historic agreements that normalized Israel’s relations with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco by their name—the “Abraham Accords?”

Answer. My understanding is that the Biden-Harris administration refers to the agreements known as the Abraham Accords as such. I certainly do. If confirmed, I will continue to use that moniker.

Question. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, you will have the opportunity to interact with both the UAE and Bahraini Ambassadors to Israel—in addition to potentially hosting delegations or meeting with diplomats from other countries normalizing or considering normalization with Israel. Will you commit to meet regularly with your Abraham Accords counterparts? What other steps will you take to continue Arab-Israeli normalization from your position?

Answer. As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have said, the administration welcomes and strongly supports the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. I understand

the Department is leading the U.S. Government's efforts, working with interagency partners, to deepen existing agreements and urge other countries to normalize relations with Israel.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with diplomatic colleagues in Israel, including those from countries that have recently established ties with Israel. I am committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones, including by highlighting the tangible benefits of relations with Israel and leveraging the wide range of diplomatic tools at our disposal. I also look forward to engaging with Israel's new partners in the region to find ways to improve the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike to help create the conditions for a durable two-state solution.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Canada & China:

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to deepen coordination with our Canadian allies and ensure that our two countries formulate a joint response to the challenges posed by China's coercive diplomacy? What would success look like to you two years from now?

Answer. Consistent with the longstanding, strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, I have observed that the United States and Canada have undertaken significant efforts in recent years to coordinate our engagement with the People's Republic of China ("PRC"). If confirmed, I would maintain regular contact with Canadian leadership to build on this progress and explore new avenues in our response to this significant challenge. Success in two years would see us having engaged in continued dialogue with Canada to identify and act on opportunities to develop a joint approach to the PRC that reflects our shared values and effectively pushes back on the PRC's problematic activities.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes, I agree that these incidents are serious and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit that any such reported incident would be treated seriously and reported quickly through appropriate channels, and that affected individuals would receive prompt access to medical care.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit that I would meet with medical staff and RSO at post to discuss any past incidents to ensure protocols are being followed.

Canada and Refugees⁴

Question. Canadians are among our most reliable partners on refugee resettlement, implementing innovative government and privately sponsored resettlement programs that enable the world's most vulnerable to find safety quickly. The Canadian Government has committed to accept 20,000 refugees from Afghanistan, adding to the tens of thousands they accepted from Syria, and the upwards of one million they've accepted since 1980. As conflicts become increasingly protracted and global challenges abound, the numbers of people in need of international protection will grow exponentially. Our partnership with Canada in anticipating and responding to new displacement-related needs will be critical.

- If confirmed, how would you seek to leverage Canada's experiences and deepen our collaboration with our Canadian partners on migration and protection issues?

Answer. As one of our closest allies, we have worked with Canada hand-in-hand on many issues, including migration and refugees. If confirmed, I would maintain the robust work our countries have done in conjunction with President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau's Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership on addressing the global migration crisis. Our countries share a commitment to providing safe haven to refugees, including through refugee resettlement. These commitments have been spotlighted recently with Afghan refugees. I applaud Canada's commitment to receive 20,000 Afghan refugees, 5,000 of whom are to be referred by the United States.

Additionally, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with our Canadian partners as they chair the MIRPS (Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework) Support Platform under the theme of "protection and empowerment of women and girls on the move" to draw attention and support solutions to forced displacement in Mexico and Central America.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Canada-China Relations

Question. What is your assessment of the current state of Canada-China relations?

Answer. Canada-China relations reached their lowest point in 50 years following both the PRC's arbitrary detention of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in December 2018 and PRC bans on some Canadian agricultural exports in response to Canada's arrest of Meng Wanzhou on a U.S. extradition request in December 2018. Canada's relations with the PRC remain strained.

Question. Please explain how you would recommend the United States work to address the worst aspects of China's economic, political, and security influence in the Western Hemisphere and the world at large.

Answer. If confirmed, taking advantage of the historically strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, I would continue to explore ways to work with Canada to more closely align our approaches to Beijing, including to address the challenges the PRC presents to our collective interest and to the international rules-based order in our hemisphere and around the world. I would work to coordinate our policies pursuant to the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, including when dealing with the PRC's coercive and unfair economic practices, national security challenges, and human rights abuses, while cooperating on areas where it is in our interest, such as on the climate crisis.

Question. Please explain how you plan to communicate with the Canadian people about the challenges posed by the People's Republic of China to international norms.

Answer. The Canadian people appear to have a clear understanding of the challenges posed by the PRC, from its arbitrary detention of Canadian citizens to its use of economic coercion in trade to its intimidation of ethnic Chinese, Uyghur, and Tibetan communities in Canada. If confirmed, I plan to have significant interactions with Canadians and I would have frank conversations with Canadians about how the United States and Canada could work even more closely, bilaterally and multilaterally, to face the challenges the PRC poses to international norms.

Question. Please explain how the United States and Canada could enhance cooperation to counter Chinese disinformation, influence operations, academic espionage, and propaganda efforts.

Answer. These PRC efforts impact the United States, Canada, and many of our like-minded allies and partners. If confirmed, building on the historically strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, I would work to increase cooperation with Canada and other likeminded countries to counter these PRC campaigns through joint actions, exchange of best practices, and multilateral initiatives.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritize collaborative initiatives to implement the January 9, 2020 U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals Development Collaboration?

Answer. As part of the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau agreed to strengthen the U.S.-Canada Critical Minerals Action Plan to target a net-zero industrial transformation, batteries for zero-emissions vehicles, and renewable energy storage. If confirmed, I would look to the Roadmap to guide my priorities as Ambassador, including efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Canada Critical Minerals Action Plan, as well as related efforts to build the necessary supply chains to make the United States and Canada global leaders in all aspects of battery development and production.

Question. Canada is the only member of the Five Eyes that has not formally barred or restricted use of equipment from Huawei in its telecommunication networks. Please explain what impact the presence of untrustworthy technologies, such as those from Huawei would have to our bilateral cooperation with Canada.

Answer. The United States understands the promise of 5G wireless networks, and governments and telecom operators need to prioritize security when building their 5G infrastructure. United States technical experts assess that the risk of allowing untrustworthy suppliers' equipment anywhere in 5G networks cannot be sufficiently mitigated; the United States is, therefore, removing untrustworthy equipment from its own government and private sector communications networks. Other governments, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand have come to the same conclusion. If confirmed, I would help carry out the U.S. Government commitment to ensure that U.S. telecommunications networks do not use equipment from untrusted vendors.

Question. If confirmed, how would you communicate concerns about the use of untrustworthy technologies, such as Huawei's in Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I would convey the need for governments and telecom operators to prioritize security when building 5G infrastructure. Through conversations with the Canadian Government, public, and business community, I would stress that allowing untrusted telecommunications suppliers to participate in or control any part of a 5G network creates unacceptable risks to national security, the integrity of critical infrastructure, privacy, and human rights.

Question. Please describe the impact on privacy, censorship, and human rights from the inclusion of communication networks and supply chains with equipment and services from companies with close ties to or susceptible to pressure from governments or security services without reliable legal checks on governmental powers.

Answer. Countries and citizens need to be able to trust that 5G equipment and software will not introduce risks that threaten national security, privacy, or human rights. Trust cannot exist where information and communications technology and services vendors are subject to control by authoritarian governments, like the PRC, which lacks an independent judiciary or democratic checks and balances to protect companies and consumers and has a long track record of using access to data to surveil, harass, and otherwise crack down on its dissidents and to enabling other authoritarian governments to do the same. Like-minded countries, companies, and civil society groups can and must work together to address these threats.

U.S.-Canada Border Closures

Question. In August, Canada lifted its travel restrictions on Americans that are vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test result. On September 20, the Biden administration extended restrictions on land travel from Canada for at least another month, while lifting air travel restrictions for travelers from around the world who have been vaccinated or tested negative for COVID-19.

Answer. Acknowledged, and noted as context for the question that follows.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the reasons behind the different approaches to U.S. restrictions on land travel versus air travel from Canada.

Answer. I understand the difficult impacts on United States border communities and their residents of COVID-based travel restrictions. I also understand the health-based justifications for those restrictions. I also understand that decisions regarding travel restrictions are made with advice from public health and medical experts, who consult regularly with their Canadian counterparts. These decisions are made to decrease the spread of COVID-19, especially emergent variants. If confirmed, I would coordinate closely with the White House, relevant U.S. agencies, and

Congress on our policies to protect our borders and citizens, and to facilitate cross-border traffic and commercial activities to the extent possible.

Question. In your opinion, does the divergent approach to air and land travel with Canada constitutes sound policy?

Answer. I believe that decisions regarding the health, safety, and welfare of the United States and its citizens are best left to our public health and medical experts.

Question. What is your understanding of the economic and emotional hardship northern border closures are placing on American border communities?

Answer. I empathize with those who face challenges as a result of the ongoing border restrictions. I understand that some U.S. citizens, their families, and businesses do not fall under the essential travel exemptions and may have experienced social and economic challenges. I want to emphasize that I share the desire of many fellow Americans to resume normal cross-border travel as soon as possible, once public health and medical professionals deem it safe to do so.

Question. Do you agree that the Biden administration should pursue a more consistent approach to air and land travel from Canada?

Answer. I believe we should resume normal cross-border travel as soon as U.S. public health professionals conclude it is safe to do so. I trust their recommendations and know that decisions regarding travel are made with our safety in mind. If confirmed, I would prioritize the safety and security of U.S. citizens in all aspects of my duties.

Arctic

Question. Please explain how the United States and Canada can revitalize cooperation on continental defense and in the Arctic, including the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) to effectively defend the Northern Hemisphere against the range of threats by peer competitors.

Answer. As a close and strategically located ally, Canada plays an indispensable role in promoting our common defense, especially in the Arctic. If confirmed, I would underscore in interactions with Canadian officials the strategic importance of NORAD to our mutual continental defense and emphasize the urgent need to bolster our aerospace defense through modernization efforts - efforts which Canada has embraced. Regarding Canada's Future Fighter Capabilities Project, I would continue U.S. efforts to advocate for a U.S. solution that would provide Canada with world-class defense technology at the best value while also supporting continued interoperability in our collective defense of Northern America.

Question. Please explain your views on the growing Chinese and Russian presence in the Arctic region.

Answer. Both Russia and the PRC have increased their activities in the Arctic in recent years, the latter going so far as to declare itself a "near Arctic state" and publicizing its objective of extending its Belt and Road Initiative into the Arctic. While investment in the Arctic is expected as climate change makes the region more accessible, such investment must be transparent, adhere to existing international law and practice, and support the needs of the peoples of the region. Neither Russia nor the PRC has been transparent about its operations in the Arctic, and both are eager to advance their interests. At the same time, Russia has indicated willingness to engage in discussions on our concerns, agreeing at the June Presidential Summit in Geneva to further discuss the Northern Sea Route and improved coordination between our respective Coast Guards. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen our ability to deter attempts by Russia and the PRC to constrain the United States and our allies, including in the Arctic.

Question. If confirmed, how would you communicate the need to heighten deterrence capabilities in the Arctic?

Answer. The Arctic is a strategic space in which U.S. and Canadian capabilities may be put to the test and in which our need to communicate credible deterrence is critical. This is another space where joint communication and action by the United States and Canada will send a more powerful signal. If confirmed, I would consult closely with the Department of Defense and others among the interagency to ensure we are conveying the full spectrum of our concerns, with supporting information, to our Canadian allies.

U.S.-Canada Border Security

Question. Last year, the CBP seizures of illicit narcotics along the Canadian border were up 1,000 percent. CBP seized nearly 40,000 pounds of marijuana across

16 ports of entry worth between \$100 million and \$120 million. There are concerns about increases in illicit trafficking of drugs through the border between the U.S. and Canada. How should the U.S. and Canada work together to better address these threats to prevent transnational criminal activity?

Answer. The U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Opioids was launched in Washington on January 31, 2020. On February 23, 2021, President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau recommitted to the U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Opioids as part of the larger Roadmap for a U.S.-Canada Renewed Partnership jointly issued by both leaders.

If confirmed, I would build on close bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States and the good progress our countries have made on the joint action plan to combat opioids, and I would work closely with our Canadian counterparts to address the issue of the flow of illicit drugs over the border.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges, project sub-groups focused on law enforcement, border security, and health meet regularly. The Working Group meets quarterly, and the Steering Committee meets bi-annually. I applaud the great work our respective countries have made to address this important issue, and I would support this action plan at every appropriate opportunity.

NATO

Question. Canada plans to increase its defense spending by 73 percent over ten years to reach C\$32.7 billion (\$25.2b) in 2026-2027. If implemented, Canada's total defense spending as a percentage of GDP would reach 1.4 percent in 2024-2025, which would fall well short of NATO's recommended 2 percent of GDP level. How do you see your role as Ambassador, if confirmed, to encourage Canada to adhere to its 2 percent commitment at NATO?

Answer. If confirmed, I would engage Canada's leadership to clarify the intent behind our security priorities, the underlying concerns that drive those priorities, and our position regarding equitable and sufficient contributions to NATO.

Question. Do you agree with Canada's counterargument that the countries' contributions to the alliance should be measured more by capabilities and the troops they provide over their defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP? How would you react to this if confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. If confirmed, I would express appreciation for Canada's notable contributions to security in the hemisphere and globally (including through NATO), I would note how both our countries' interests have been undermined by the actions of third parties, and I would underscore that a robust and concerted response to these threats and challenges is required. Such a response must necessarily include funding as well as capabilities and troops.

Question. In what ways can the U.S. and Canada work better together in NATO engagements?

Answer. Our defense cooperation with Canada is one of the most comprehensive security relationships globally and comprises both bilateral and multilateral arrangements. If confirmed, I would ensure U.S. security interests concerning NATO are conveyed and advanced as part of the U.S. Mission's bilateral engagement plan. Additionally, I would engage Canada's leadership to clarify the intent behind U.S. security decisions, and I would regularly solicit Canada's input for how best to further strengthen the NATO alliance.

USMCA (*United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*)

Question. What's your assessment of Canada's implementation of USMCA? What challenges do you foresee in USMCA implementation and how would you use your role as Ambassador to encourage Canada to rectify these issues?

Answer. Canada continues to work toward meeting its obligations under the USMCA, though challenges remain. If confirmed, I will work to further Canada's compliance with USMCA issues impacting dairy quotas, automotive trade, and digital services, among other topics. We will put the interests of American workers and businesses at the forefront of our foreign policy.

Trade Disputes

Question. The United States has longstanding disputes with Canada over softwood lumber imports. U.S. industry contends that Canada unfairly subsidizes its lumber by providing cheap access to public land. Softwood lumber is now in its fifth iteration of litigation. If confirmed as Ambassador, how would you work to ensure U.S. industry interests are represented?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the United States interagency and industry to ensure fair treatment for U.S. softwood lumber producers. Because this remains an active litigation matter, I am unable to comment further.

Energy

Question. The Biden administration cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline's border crossing presidential permit in January 2021, which would have moved up to 830,000 barrels of crude daily. Canadian Government officials have expressed disappointment with President Biden's decision. Do you agree with President Biden's decision to revoke the permit?

Answer. Canada remains the top energy partner of the United States. I understand we have a robust trading relationship and shared energy infrastructure. Tackling the existential threat of the climate crisis requires, as the President's Executive Order of January 20 stated, action on a scale and at a speed commensurate with the need to avoid setting the world on a dangerous and potentially catastrophic climate trajectory. The world must be put on a sustainable climate pathway to protect Americans and the domestic economy from harmful climate impacts, and to create well-paying jobs as part of the climate solution. If confirmed, I would support President Biden's efforts to restore American leadership in the fight against climate change and to help position our nation to be the global leader in clean energy and jobs, while continuing to respect the strong energy partnership between Canada and the United States.

Question. What negative implications does the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline have on the bilateral U.S.-Canada energy relationship? What about the broader bilateral relationship?

Answer. President Biden spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his first call to a foreign leader as President of the United States only two days after the cancellation of the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline. While President Biden acknowledged Prime Minister Trudeau's disappointment regarding the decision to rescind the permit, he reaffirmed his commitment to maintain an active bilateral dialogue and to further deepen cooperation with Canada. During the call, both leaders highlighted the strategic importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship and the desire to reinvigorate bilateral cooperation on an ambitious and wide-ranging agenda, including combating the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening economic ties, defense, and global leadership to address the pressing challenge of climate change. The continuing strength of our relationship was further demonstrated with the issuance of the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership in February.

Question. Do you think this decision has casted doubt among Canadians of the U.S. as a long-term reliable energy partner?

Answer. No. Following President Biden's decision to rescind the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed the President's decisions to rejoin the Paris Agreement and to place a temporary moratorium on all oil and natural gas leasing activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, noting, "I look forward to working with President Biden to reduce pollution, combat climate change, fight COVID-19, create middle class jobs, and build back better by supporting a sustainable economic recovery for everyone." The United States and Canada are working together to increase the scale and speed of action to address the climate crisis and support the transition to a net-zero clean energy future. If confirmed, I would support these goals in the course of my duties.

Question. If confirmed, where does North American energy security would fall on your list of priorities as U.S. Ambassador to Canada?

Answer. Energy security is an important priority. President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau recognized the important energy security benefits of our bilateral energy relationship and its highly integrated infrastructure as part of the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership. President Biden's Build Back Better agenda also highlights the importance of creating clean energy jobs as part of our economic recovery. If confirmed, I would focus on President Biden's priorities for the bilateral relationship as highlighted in the Roadmap, including the importance of energy security in the bilateral energy relationship.

Question. If confirmed, how would you work to promote American and North American energy security?

Answer. President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau have pledged to work together to build on the countries' strong energy security partnership, including in the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S. Canada Partnership and to strengthen action towards a net-zero clean energy future. If confirmed, I would work to support this vision by

communicating often and openly with Canadian counterparts on their energy plans, by identifying areas for deeper collaboration between our respective governments, and by looking for investment opportunities for U.S. companies.

Foreign Assistance

Question. In what areas do you see the greatest opportunity for U.S.-Canadian cooperation in foreign assistance?

Answer. A top priority of the United States and Canada is to end the COVID-19 pandemic and support global health security by working together to support global affordable access to and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, including through the COVAX Facility. The United States and Canada cooperate closely in multilateral groups to raise global climate ambition, including through increased pledges of climate-related assistance to developing countries. Consistent with our shared values, the United States and Canada promote diversity and inclusion in our foreign assistance, particularly in support of gender equality through equal rights for women and girls.

Question. Canada is considered to be a “strong supporter” of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and even hosted the Fund’s fifth replenishment conference in 2016. Still, Canada has provided roughly \$2.5 billion in contributions to the Fund since 2002, while the United States has provided over \$17.6 billion. Similarly, Canada is considered to be an “anchor” donor to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, as well as to the Gavi-led COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative (COVAX). Canada has provided \$842 million in contributions for Gavi since 2002 and \$545 million for COVAX, while the United States has provided over \$4.4 billion and \$3.5 billion, respectively. If confirmed, how will you encourage Canada to take on a larger proportion of contributions for the Global Fund, Gavi, and COVAX? Do you consider this a priority?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to prioritize the issues highlighted in the bilateral Roadmap, of which fighting COVID-19 is first and foremost. Efforts to support global health security remain a top priority for both the United States and Canada, as demonstrated by Prime Minister Trudeau’s participation at the Global COVID-19 Summit, hosted by President Biden on September 22, 2021. Both the United States and Canada have agreed to strengthen existing pandemic preparedness platforms and arrangements and to work to improve international institutions, including the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization.

Question. How will you encourage the Canadian Government to help finance international pandemic preparedness and response more broadly? What levers does the United States have? Are you willing to use them?

Answer. Through the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership, Canada has committed to strengthening international pandemic preparedness as a top priority. If confirmed, I would work closely with Canadian counterparts to drive progress on our shared priorities, including efforts to support increased global health security.

Venezuela

Question. Canada has taken a series of multilateral and bilateral actions in support of the Venezuelan people and to weaken the illegitimate Maduro regime.

- If confirmed, in what ways would you encourage Canada to take heightened action against the corrupt and illegitimate Maduro regime?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage Canada to continue to coordinate with the United States and other international partners to maintain and increase pressure on the Maduro regime, as appropriate. I would do this by seeking avenues to further isolate Maduro internationally, call attention to the regime’s human rights abuses, and through the application of additional targeted sanctions, if warranted.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to encourage the Canadian Government to maintain support for the Guaido-led democratic forces as legitimate representative of Venezuela at the Organization of American States?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage the Canadian Government to maintain support for the Guaido-led democratic forces as the legitimate representatives of Venezuela at the Organization of American States.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to encourage the Canadian Government to maintain sanctions on the Maduro regime until there is a credible transition to democratic order in Venezuela?

Answer. Canada has implemented significant sanctions against the regime to date. If confirmed, I would seek continued support from Canada to maintain coordinated pressure against Maduro -including through sanctions- until there is a credible process underway to restore democracy, rule of law, and human rights in Venezuela.

Nicaragua

Question. Canada has issued sanctions related to Nicaragua in response to the gross and systematic human rights violations that have been committed by the Ortega regime against Nicaraguan people. In what ways would you encourage Canada to put further pressure on the Ortega regime?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage Canada to remain linked up with international efforts to further pressure the Ortega regime. I would also encourage Canada to continue to take a leadership role in the Organization of American States, where it has been instrumental in crafting previous joint statements denouncing the Ortega-Murillo regime.

STATE DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Mission Canada

Question. Mission Canada has been under enormous stress over the past few years with management issues and COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Canada?

Answer. Based on the experience of this nomination process, I understand our mission in Canada to be staffed by hard-working civil servants, foreign service officers and specialists, uniformed military personnel, and locally employed staff. Respecting the limitations of my role as a nominee, I have not had any personal contact with Mission Canada. If confirmed, one of my first priorities would be to assess the morale of these dedicated staff members at the embassy and at our constituent posts.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across all of Mission Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consult at the start of my tenure with key managers at U.S. Embassy Ottawa and at all our constituent posts to determine where the strengths and weaknesses of the mission are in terms of morale. I would make the maintenance of strong morale a priority in my role as Ambassador.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consult closely with the Canada country desk, with others at State and across the interagency, and with Congress on priorities for our relationship with Canada. In Canada, I would consult with embassy and constituent post staff to solicit a full range of inputs and opinions, and I would encourage all to speak frankly. I would refer to the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership to inform my vision for Mission Canada, and I would build on priorities and lines of effort in Mission Canada's current Integrated Country Strategy.

Management

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I would describe my management style as collaborative and respectful. I consider myself to be an accessible and communicative leader. I believe in communicating expectations clearly and in providing constructive feedback as required.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

Answer. As noted above, I understand our mission in Canada to be staffed by dedicated civil servants, foreign service officers and specialists, uniformed military personnel, and locally employed staff. I have the utmost respect for their work and for what they do every day on behalf of the American people. If confirmed, this respect would be the foundation for my management of the complex operations of Mission Canada. I have had the experience of working with similarly well motivated career (civil service) employees when I served as Chief of Staff in the Philadelphia City government. In order to accomplish the Mission's goals, I would prioritize securing appropriate resources for the Mission, commensurate with the importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. I agree with this approach. No leader can be successful if he or she lacks understanding of the organization's operations or workplace culture. If confirmed, I would commit to understand the Mission's operations and culture across the full spectrum of employees in Ottawa and at the constituent posts. As a manager and leader, I believe strongly in meeting and interacting with a wide swath of the employees in the Embassy and in being accessible and communicative.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No. Respect for subordinates is an essential leadership trait.

Question. How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) plays a key role in ensuring that the Mission's priorities are pursued properly and that the Mission's functions are carried out smoothly. The DCM is also a wealth of institutional knowledge about the bilateral relationship and the workings of the State Department and the inter-agency. If confirmed, I would seek to complement the DCM's experience with my leadership of the Mission.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek the advice of the DCM on how best to engage with Canada to pursue U.S. interests, how to solicit required resources so that the Mission may fully pursue these interests, and how best to support Mission staff in the completion of their duties.

Local Interaction

Question. It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. Diplomats are most successful when they are able to allot ample time and are sufficiently resourced to engage directly and regularly with host country and host government contacts. If confirmed, I would support and prioritize my own engagement and staff engagement with their contacts to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Canada's current public health advice.

Question. How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I would assess if the Mission had adequate resources to pursue U.S. interests and accomplish its goals, including the ability of our diplomats to access a sufficiently representative cross section of the local population. If these resources were lacking, I would work with my DCM and others to determine how best to fulfill our needs.

Public Diplomacy

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Canada? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face?

Answer. The bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States is strong and productive, with deep, historic ties. Although Canadians see the bilateral relationship as vitally important, public opinion polling in 2021 showed Canadians perceived the state of relations between Canada and the United States with mixed feelings. To address this challenge, Mission Canada works to reinforce our shared values and goals, including our commitment to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, building back our economies in environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive ways, accelerating climate ambitions, advancing diversity and inclusion, bolstering security and defense, and building global alliances. Continuing to pursue these objectives, and to communicate our commitment and work on these issues would be a top priority if I am confirmed.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. The U.S. Mission in Canada conducts public diplomacy activities through its eight posts across Canada. Main State, through bureaus like Global Public Affairs, Western Hemisphere Affairs, and the Global Engagement Center, provides overall policy guidance and general messaging. Each post tailors messaging to its audience based on daily interactions with the Canadian public.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Canada's Participation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Question. As Ambassador to Canada, how would you lead the U.S. Embassy to work with the newly-elected Canadian members of the Parliamentary Assembly to become active in the OSCE PA?

Answer. Our shared democratic heritage, including the regular election of legislative bodies to represent our populations, is a foundational aspect of the bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States. If confirmed, one of my top priorities would be to build strong connections with members of Canada's Parliament, in particular those newly elected on September 20. Canada participated in its 29th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) on June 30 to July 6. If confirmed, I would encourage further inter-parliamentary dialogue through vigorous engagement with parliamentarians. I would also encourage active Canadian participation in OSCE PA meetings, committees, and election observation activities to advance our shared goals of promoting security, prosperity, and democracy in the OSCE region.

Question. I also authored a law directing the State Department to seek to build out a parliamentary assembly in the OAS. How would you propose that Canada help to support this initiative?

Answer. The United States and Canada both have a long history of supporting parliamentary exchanges. The Canadian Section of ParlAmericas is one of the 35 members of ParlAmericas, an institution that promotes Parliamentary Diplomacy in the Inter-American System. The international Secretariat of ParlAmericas is incorporated in Canada and remains the only interparliamentary forum to have its headquarters located in Ottawa.

If confirmed, I would cite past successes and promote the value of parliamentary exchanges, and I would encourage counterparts and legislators in Canada to continue to support a parliamentary assembly in the OAS comprising elected legislators.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID L. COHEN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The Trudeau Government has stated it supports upgrading its equipment to strengthen NORAD, including purchasing more than 80 fighter aircraft. Yet the procurement process has been delayed for more than a decade, raising questions about Canada's political commitment to NORAD. What message would you communicate to the government of Canada regarding NORAD and our shared aerospace defense?

Answer. If confirmed, I would build on our robust relationship and our frank engagement with Canada to underscore the strategic importance of the role NORAD plays in our continental defense, and the urgency with which Canada should bolster its contribution to our shared aerospace defense. In my engagement with Canada, I would further highlight the indispensable role we need Canada to play in promoting our common defense due to its position as a close ally and a strategically located neighbor. Regarding Canada's Future Fighter Capabilities Project, I would continue U.S. efforts to advocate for a U.S. solution to offer world-class defense technology at the best value in support of continued interoperability in defense of North America.

Question. How do you view our defense cooperation with Canada? Given our recent diplomatic tension with France and other allies over questions of defense cooperation, what steps will you take if confirmed to reassure Canada about our enduring commitment?

Answer. Our defense cooperation with Canada is one of the most comprehensive security relationships in the world and comprises both bilateral and multilateral arrangements. If confirmed, I would ensure U.S. security interests are fully represented in the U.S. Mission's engagement. Additionally, I would engage Canada's leadership to clarify the intent behind our security decisions, and I would regularly solicit Canada's input for how best to strengthen our alliance even further.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Economic Stability

Question. Costa Rica's remarkable economic growth over the past quarter of a century has been made possible through the strength of its democratic institutions, its openness to foreign investment, and steadfast adherence to environmental and humanitarian principles. Although Costa Rica still has one of the lowest poverty rates in the region, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the country's tourism-dependent economy.

- Given these setbacks, if confirmed as our ambassador in Costa Rica what would be your top priorities over the next year to help the country recover from the pandemic and build resiliency against future potential economic shocks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our economic partnership, which supports prosperity in both Costa Rica and the United States. In the short term, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created a significant retraction of the economy, as it has in the region. Additionally, with respect to economic resiliency, I will strongly support efforts to expand bilateral trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). I will encourage Costa Rica to follow through on commitments for governmental and economic reforms, which will lead to a more sustainable path toward prosperity. I will also urge Costa Rica to leverage its recent accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to align itself even more closely with standards that will help it attract investment from U.S. firms and create quality employment. Lastly, I will support Costa Rica's efforts to ensure that post-pandemic growth is inclusive, creating opportunities in tourism and other key sectors for all its citizens.

Anomalous Health Incidents

Question. I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Absolutely. There is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me. The interagency community is actively examining a range of hypotheses but has not yet made a determination about the cause of the AHIs or whether they can be attributed to a foreign actor. AHIs have been a top priority for Secretary Blinken, who set clear goals for the Health Incident Response Task Force to strengthen the Department's communication with its workforce, provide care for affected employees and family members, and better protect against these events in the future.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes. I will do everything possible to ensure that employees, who report a possible AHI, receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and that the incident is reported through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes. Again, if confirmed, there is nothing I will take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working at U.S. Embassy San Jose.

Migration

Question. Costa Rica has a long tradition of welcoming asylum seekers. As of the end of 2020, Costa Rica hosted nearly 122,000 people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Already in 2021, nearly 23,000 people have applied for asylum in the country, mainly citizens fleeing oppression in Nicaragua.

- Dr. Telles, in your view, how important is it for the United States to support Costa Rica's humanitarian efforts and what will you do as our ambassador to further these efforts?

Answer. Costa Rica is a regional leader in providing access to international protection for refugees and asylum seekers and welcoming vulnerable migrants and guest workers from Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, and elsewhere. We anticipate Costa Rica will continue to support Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers, which are likely to increase as a function of upcoming elections. If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rica to further our cooperation on migration and to assess the need to increase capacity to welcome refugees and asylum seekers.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Please describe the evolving Chinese presence in Costa Rica since President Solis switched diplomatic relations from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China in 2007.

Answer. Costa Rica was the first Central American country to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2007. The countries signed a free trade agreement in 2011 and a bilateral investment treaty in 2016, but the economic relationship remains very limited. Foreign direct investment (FDI) from the PRC in Costa Rica is small, topping \$10 million only once in the last decade and never exceeding one percent of total FDI inflows. Large PRC-backed infrastructure projects have been marred by delays or outright cancellations. Nonetheless, there are efforts to increase public diplomacy and to expand the PRC's economic presence in specific areas, including telecommunications.

Question. Please describe any efforts by the PRC to build relations with legislators and local government officials in Costa Rica.

Answer. My understanding is that the PRC has actively built relations with legislators and local government officials in Costa Rica to build support for PRC-backed infrastructure projects, which have been marred by delays or outright cancellations. The PRC has also attempted to make inroads with local officials through offers of monitoring and communications technology for municipalities.

Question. Please describe what would be your approach to countering Chinese influence in Costa Rica, if confirmed.

Answer. If confirmed, I will vigorously promote the United States as Costa Rica's steadfast partner, emphasizing our common democratic values and strong track record of success. I will communicate to the Costa Rican Government the security risks to Costa Rica's telecommunications infrastructure of allowing PRC-backed vendors to participate in or control its networks. I will also call attention to the poor-quality and costly infrastructure projects financed by the PRC and promote high-standard and transparent investment by the United States and our partners. I would also continue to support ongoing Embassy efforts to build strong relations and security programs with local governments, which have already served as effective counterpoints to the PRC's efforts to increase its influence in Costa Rican municipalities.

Question. Do you agree that the presence of Huawei in Costa Rica is concerning, especially as Costa Rica transitions to 5G?

Answer. The presence of equipment from untrustworthy vendors, such as Huawei, in any country's telecommunications networks is concerning. Allowing high-risk suppliers like Huawei to participate in or control any part of a 5G network, or nationwide broadband networks, creates risks to national security, critical infrastructure, and privacy. If confirmed, I will lead Embassy San Jose's ongoing efforts to engage with Costa Rica on the risks posed by PRC-backed 5G network providers and to encourage the use of only trustworthy vendors in the information and communications technology ecosystem.

Question. Costa Rica participates in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) undertaking upgrades and widening works for its primary national route (Route 32), costing US\$465 million. Please describe U.S. concerns with the Belt and Road Initiative, including in Costa Rica.

Answer. The United States remains concerned about infrastructure projects built under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including its efforts in Costa Rica. In many countries, the PRC uses investment under the BRI and diplomatic engagement to create dependency on PRC resources. In Costa Rica, efforts include the PRC's donation of a \$100 million national soccer stadium (2011) and subsequent donation of \$11 million to modernize the stadium (2018), as well as a multimillion-dollar contribution towards the construction of a police academy. Other large public investments in Costa Rica have not been successful. The financing and construction of the Route 32 highway expansion has been marred by delays, poor planning, and poor budgeting. If confirmed, I will work to maintain the United States' position as Costa Rica's economic partner of choice and trusted ally by emphasizing our geographic proximity, common democratic values, and strong track record of success.

According to the U.N. Refugee Agency, more than 108,000 Nicaraguans have fled the repression of the Ortega-Murillo regime in Nicaragua since 2018, mainly to the United States and Costa Rica. Nearly 23,000 Nicaraguans have sought asylum in Costa Rica in 2021 alone.

Question. Do you agree that the Ortega/Murillo regime in Nicaragua has become a source of significant instability in Central America, and for Costa Rica specifically?

Answer. Yes. The Ortega-Murillo Government's repression has contributed to instability in Central America and a dramatic increase in Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers. The Ortega-Murillo regime has taken actions that undermine respect for human rights and exacerbate fear and insecurity, thus, fueling surges in migration. Costa Rica is a regional leader in providing protection to asylum seekers, refugees, and vulnerable migrants, including a great number of Nicaraguans. If confirmed, I will work with Costa Rica and our international organization partners to increase their capacity to process asylum seekers and refugees and to provide protection to vulnerable Nicaraguans.

Question. The Ortega-Murillo regime of Nicaragua continues to receive international financing by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), despite the instability it generates in Central America.

Answer. I understand that the amount of CABEI financing that benefits the Ortega-Murillo Government is disproportionate, particularly given the many challenges we are addressing in Central America. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to encourage Costa Rica to oppose any funding from CABEI that would go toward sustaining the Nicaraguan Government while it represses its people and undermines democracy and human rights.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work with Costa Rica to ensure that any loan or assistance provided by CABEI to Nicaragua is administered through entities with full technical, administrative, and financial independence from the Ortega-Murillo regime?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to encourage CABEI members to halt financing that directly benefits the Ortega-Murillo Government. If confirmed, I will encourage CABEI members, particularly Costa Rica, to explore ways to structure projects and work through non-governmental organizations and implementers, in order to ensure that financing more directly benefits the Nicaraguan people rather than the repressive Ortega-Murillo Government.

In March 2020, the U.S. indicted Nicolas Maduro and 14 current and former Venezuelan officials for allegedly partnering with the FARC to use cocaine as a weapon to "flood" the United States.

Question. Do the actions by the Maduro regime related to transnational criminal activities undermine U.S. counternarcotic and law enforcement cooperation with Costa Rica?

Answer. We are concerned about the Maduro regime's transnational criminal activities and their impacts across the region. Costa Rica has become a major transshipment hub for South American cocaine headed to the United States, and it is used by transnational criminal organizations for trafficking both narcotics and people through Central America and Mexico. Therefore, sustaining support of Costa Rica's security forces with training, equipment, and infrastructure will be key to ensuring their continued success in combating transnational crime. If confirmed, I will

continue the strong U.S. support to bolster Costa Rica's capacity to be our partner in these efforts.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the nexus between transnational criminal organizations and human smuggling/trafficking across Central America and Mexico.

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations fund their activities by engaging in drug trafficking, human smuggling, and human trafficking through Central America and Mexico. Irregular migrants pay smugglers to guide them through Central America to the United States and then later fall prey to human traffickers, who force them into committing crimes, such as transporting drugs to the United States. Irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuses by transnational criminal organizations that engage in human trafficking crimes, such as commercial sex, forced labor, forced criminality, and forced recruitment. Irregular migrants who embark on a journey to the United States unwittingly put themselves at greater risk of financial hardship and human trafficking abuses.

Question. What financial benefits would you estimate drug trafficking groups are reaping from the increased flows of illegal migrants transiting through Costa Rica towards our Southwest border?

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are reaping significant profit from smuggling migrants northward through Central America. Costa Rican and Panamanian authorities, assisted by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security investigative unit, are pursuing a cross-border human smuggling ring. Costa Rican media outlets widely reported smugglers are charging migrants from \$11,000 to \$22,000 per person.

In 2020, Guatemala and Honduras declared Hizballah a foreign terrorist organization.

Question. In your opinion, would it be in the interest of the United States for Costa Rica to make a similar determination?

Answer. Yes, it would be in the U.S. interest for Costa Rica to make a similar determination.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to seek Costa Rica's designation of Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to seeking Costa Rica's designation of Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization.

Question. Costa Rica is a reliable partner in the fight against illicit narcotics. Please explain how an increase in coca cultivation in South America impacts the ability of the Costa Rican Government to effectively reduce the flow of illicit narcotics through its territory and into the United States.

Answer. Certainly, increased coca cultivation in South America impacts Costa Rica's efforts to reduce the flow of narcotics bound for the United States. Costa Rica is the number one transshipment point for Colombian cocaine moving towards the United States. Nonetheless, it is a strong partner in the fight against drug trafficking as exemplified by its interdiction of a record 71 tons of narcotics in 2020. Increased coca cultivation leads to a higher volume of cocaine flowing through Costa Rica. The Embassy works closely with multiple partners in Costa Rica, including their Coast Guard, Border Police, Air Surveillance Service, and national police to increase interdictions and to build law enforcement capacity. In order to ensure that Costa Rica continues to be successful in combating transnational crime, it is critical for the United States to maintain its support of Costa Rica's security forces with training, equipment, and infrastructure. If confirmed, I will continue the strong U.S. support to bolster Costa Rica's capacity to be our partner in these efforts.

There is currently a case of a minor American Citizen who was abducted by her mother to Costa Rica. Costa Rica, a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, is in direct violation of their agreements under the Convention and has not returned the child to her parent here in the U.S.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to engage on this matter with Costa Rican authorities?

Answer. I understand the Embassy maintains regular contact with PANI (Costa Rican child protective services, the central authority for Hague Abduction Convention cases) and often communicates with the parents, in addition to conducting welfare checks on the child when possible. If confirmed, I will ensure that compliance with the Hague Convention agreements continues to be a top priority for the U.S. Embassy.

Question. How will you work to ensure Costa Rica becomes compliant with the obligations under the Convention?

Answer. Costa Rica was cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the Department's 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports on International Child Abduction due to judicial delays and decisions that were noncompliant with the Hague Abduction Convention. To address these concerns, the Department of State's Consular Affairs Bureau engages with Costa Rican authorities and international partners. As part of these efforts, the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs helped organize a series of judicial seminars focused on the Convention hosted by the Costa Ricans in November 2020 and February 2021. If confirmed, I will be committed to supporting these and other efforts of the U.S. Embassy to help ensure that Costa Rica complies with its obligations under the Convention.

Question. According to the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons report, Costa Rica was again placed on Tier 2, indicating they do not meet the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking but are making significant efforts to do so.

If confirmed, how will you engage with the host government on this issue to provide additional support to victims, increase prosecutions, and continue prevention efforts?

Answer. The Costa Rican Government demonstrated increasing efforts overall to combat human trafficking compared to the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity. The Costa Rican Government's anti-trafficking efforts included employing new investigative techniques in trafficking cases, identifying more victims, and converting planned training and interagency coordination to virtual delivery amidst the pandemic. However, authorities decreased funding for anti-trafficking efforts and closed a trafficking-specific emergency shelter. If confirmed, I will encourage the Costa Rican Government to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts and to continue providing support for ongoing projects that improve prosecution efforts, protective services, and prevention campaigns.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. CYNTHIA ANN TELLES BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, how would you engage with Nicaraguan activists and refugees in Costa Rica fleeing the persecution of Daniel Ortega's regime?

Answer. I am deeply concerned about the Nicaraguan refugees fleeing the Ortega-Murillo Government's repression. If confirmed, I will support Costa Rica as it continues to serve as a safe haven for those Nicaraguans. I also commit to engage with those courageous individuals who are advocating for democracy and human rights in their home country.

Question. What steps is the administration taking to support Costa Rica in its efforts to welcome and care for the Nicaraguan refugees streaming into the country?

Answer. Costa Rica is a regional leader in providing protection to asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants and has a tradition of welcoming vulnerable migrants from Nicaragua. This summer, Costa Rica has seen a rise of Nicaraguan asylum seekers and migrants in the wake of political violence in Nicaragua. If confirmed, I will work with Costa Rica to continue to increase their capacity to process asylum seekers and provide protection. Costa Rica is concerned that it does not have the resources to continue to care for Nicaraguan asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with our international organization partners on the ground and the Costa Rican government to build capacity and provide protection.

Question. The Trump administration's donation of three former Coast Guard cutters to Costa Rica in 2018 gave the country its first blue water interdiction capability. Since then, seizures of illegal drugs has dramatically increased in the country. I applaud this creative use of former Coast Guard cutters to support our allies in defense of U.S. national security interests. Looking forward, what are the current gaps in Costa Rica's capability to disrupt the flow of illegal drugs from South America through the country? What is the Biden administration doing to address these gaps in cooperation with the Government of Costa Rica?

Answer. Costa Rica remains a strong partner in the fight against drug trafficking, interdicting a record 71 tons of narcotics in 2020. The Embassy works closely with multiple partners in Costa Rica, including their Coast Guard, Border Police, Air

Surveillance Service, and national police, on increasing interdictions and building law enforcement capacity. Costa Rica has become a major transit point for South American cocaine heading to the United States. Continuing to support Costa Rica's security forces with training, equipment, and infrastructure will help ensure it can effectively combat transnational crime. If confirmed, I will assess the U.S. support needed to bolster Costa Rica's capacity to be our strong partner in these efforts.

Question. How has U.S. security assistance and cooperation been utilized by Costa Rica? If confirmed, what steps would you take to oversee and strengthen our cooperation?

Answer. The U.S. Government works with Costa Rica closely on a number of shared security concerns, including narcotics trafficking. U.S. security assistance to Costa Rica focuses on four areas: counternarcotics; curbing transnational threats and crime; improving citizen security and law enforcement capacity; and strengthening rule of law. If confirmed, I will continue the strong U.S. support for bilateral security cooperation with Costa Rica and assess the need for enhancing this partnership.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TOM UDALL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question. What steps should the United States take to work more closely with New Zealand on economic and trade matters?

Answer. Robust economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific is a key part of the Biden-Harris administration's effort to Build Back Better. The United States will continue working with New Zealand and other partners in the Indo-Pacific region to address specific economic issues such as infrastructure, the digital economy, and energy.

Question. How do you anticipate this agreement will affect the U.S.-New Zealand bilateral relationship?

Answer. AUKUS will increase peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, which will have a positive impact on the bilateral relationship with New Zealand. PM Ardern has said that she welcomes "the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region and reiterate our collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability and the preservation of the international rules based system."

Question. In what ways can we bolster our security partnership with New Zealand and work towards stability in the South Pacific?

Answer. Our military-to-military relationship has reached new heights since the signing of the Wellington and Washington declarations in 2010 and 2012, respectively. Combined naval patrols and exercises have become routine, the New Zealand Army holds one of the Deputy Commander positions with the 25th Infantry Division, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force has been instrumental in providing critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support in the Pacific.

The United States and New Zealand defense forces continue to explore additional ways to cooperate beyond our current work in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and peacekeeping support operations.

Question. What is your assessment of how New Zealand's thinking on China has evolved in recent years? And what should the United States be doing to influence New Zealand's approach towards confronting and competing with China?

Answer. New Zealand is increasingly concerned about growing PRC influence in the Pacific, an indelible part of its own identity and backyard. Mission New Zealand in turn has deepened government, parliamentary, and academic engagement with the United States. Mission New Zealand's Public Affairs section has collaborated with speakers and exchanges to promote our shared understanding on issues related to the PRC.

Question. Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed. There is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me. There is an extensive, ongoing interagency investigation into the cause of these incidents and how we can best protect our people.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will do everything possible to ensure that employees who report a possible AHI receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and the incident is reported through appropriate channels

Question. Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed. Again, there is nothing I take more seriously than the health and security of the people who will be working with me.

Question. If confirmed, what opportunities and priorities will you pursue to grow U.S.-New Zealand climate cooperation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to continue strong U.S.-New Zealand climate cooperation, for instance on the Global Methane Pledge and USDA's AIM4C. The United States is committed to working with New Zealand to raise global ambition on climate change.

Question. What are the U.S.-New Zealand shared security interests in building resilience and climate change adaptation capacities in Oceania—especially the countries facing existential crises due to climate change?

Answer. Climate change is considered an existential crisis by many Pacific Island countries. The United States and New Zealand share similar concerns about the security of Pacific Islands that may be forced to take on financial debt from other countries, such as the PRC, to fund adaptation programs like climate-resilient infrastructure.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TOM UDALL BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What are the key interests underpinning U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region, and what should our objectives and goals be in the region?

Answer. Strong diplomatic, military, and economic relationships with like-minded allies and partners can help ensure a safe, prosperous United States. To that end, I support a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region where democracies can thrive, with strong institutions, responsible actors, and close security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

Question. The 2018 National Defense Strategy states that “great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security.” Do you agree with the Defense Department’s assessment?

Answer. Counterterrorism remains a deep concern to the United States and our partners, as recent acts of terrorism in New Zealand have demonstrated. As Secretary Blinken has said, China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system. I support that statement and, if confirmed, will work closely with our New Zealand partners to advance U.S. interests and support a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Question. Do you agree that the objectives and policies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the greatest foreign policy challenge facing the United States today? If not, why not? What do you think instead is our greatest foreign policy challenge?

Answer. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system. However, the United States can still cooperate with China on issues of mutual interest. If confirmed, I will work with New Zealand under the premise that the U.S. relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be.

Question. If confirmed, what will your top 3-5 policy priorities be as U.S. Ambassador?

Answer. I look forward to working with our partners to advance U.S. and common interests in a variety of issues. My top three priorities would be strengthening our Pacific and Antarctic cooperation, advancing security ties, and expanding economic

cooperation and commercial opportunities. The United States would like to be the Pacific's "partner of choice."

Question. How would you characterize the current U.S.-New Zealand relationship? What are our main challenges? Where do we have opportunities for growth?

Answer. The United States and New Zealand have a very close relationship, with strong political, economic, intelligence sharing, security, and people-to-people ties. We cooperate on a range of international issues from upholding the rules-based international order and defending against threats to shared democratic values. We also work together to counter foreign influence and debt diplomacy in the region. Our space and cyber cooperation are vibrant and growing. Challenge areas include COVID-19 recovery, climate change, and ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our Pacific and Antarctic cooperation, advance U.S.-New Zealand security ties, and expand economic and commercial opportunities.

Question. What role do you see New Zealand playing in the Indo-Pacific region in light of the growing challenges from China?

Answer. China is New Zealand's most important goods trading partner and second most important overall trading partner after Australia. Recent New Zealand Governments have made tough public statements about the PRC's influence in the Pacific and its human rights record and sharpened the country's stance on the South China Sea. If confirmed, I would continue to work with New Zealand as a likeminded democratic partner. In addition to diplomatic responses in the South China Sea, New Zealand has funded repairs to identified substandard projects completed by Chinese construction companies in the Cook Islands.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our security relationship with New Zealand in the short-term?

Answer. New Zealand officials have previously stressed the importance of their Government's commitment to increased intelligence and defense interoperability, prevention of the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, and stoppage of terrorist financing. If confirmed, I would continue to expand these efforts and work with the New Zealand defense forces to explore additional ways to cooperate beyond our current work in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and peace-keeping support operations.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our security relationship with New Zealand in the medium- to long-term?

Answer. U.S. defense engagement with New Zealand is strong but limited by the small size of the New Zealand Defense Force. However, New Zealand has recently taken steps to increase interoperability with the United States by purchasing P-8s and C-130Js and conducting combined patrols in the South China Sea with the United States and other Five Eye partner nations. If confirmed, I would continue to encourage New Zealand to work with the United States as the security partner of choice, including by enhancing our cooperation in the fields of space and cybersecurity.

Question. What specifically can we do to strengthen our economic relationship with New Zealand in the short-term? What about the longer-term?

Answer. Partnerships in innovation, like the technology sector, film industry, and the space sector, are helping to drive trade and investment in both New Zealand and the United States. New Zealand has a small but developed economy that is highly trade dependent, so New Zealand's trade dependency on the PRC has a distorting effect on its foreign policy. If confirmed, I will explore whether regulatory reforms or a digital services/trade agreement could provide interim steps that signal U.S. support to New Zealand on trade.

Question. How would you characterize the current U.S.-Samoa relationship?

Answer. The United States and Samoa enjoy strong bilateral relations based on shared values and mutual trust. Cultural and historical linkages, including shared connections to the U.S. territory of American Samoa, translate into strong people to people ties. The United States and Samoa also share close economic ties on multiple levels and cooperate on security and policing matters.

Question. What are our main challenges?

Answer. China is seeking to grow its influence among the Pacific Islands, including Samoa. Samoa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Additionally, unreported, unregulated and illegal fishing threatens the livelihoods of Samoan fisherman. If confirmed, I look forward to discussing how to best address these challenges with the Government of Samoa.

Question. Where do we have opportunities for growth?

Answer. Our engagement with Samoa is vital for a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region where democracies can thrive, with strong institutions, responsible actors, and close security, economic, and people-to-people ties that benefit the U.S. economy and our people. The PRC is engaged in Samoa, as it is throughout the Pacific, and the United States needs to be present to maintain and expand its influence. If confirmed, I look forward to establishing strong ties with the new Government of Samoa and identifying what more we can do together as Pacific nations.

Question. What role does Samoa and the Pacific Islands play in broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Samoa is an active member of regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Polynesian Leaders Group. Samoa regularly sides with the United States on key votes in international fora. Samoa is particularly vulnerable to climate change, and I understand the Government will be a willing partner on U.S. or global initiatives to mitigate the ongoing effects of climate change or expand the use of new climate-friendly technologies. If confirmed, I will reassure Samoa that the Pacific region remains an enduring foreign policy priority for the United States.

Question. In your assessment, what are the implications for U.S. interests of more pronounced presence and influence by China in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. The PRC's goals for the Indo-Pacific include reducing U.S. influence and that of like-minded partners, growing its own influence, and reducing Taiwan's international space.

Question. What forms of influence are we seeing from China that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests in the Pacific Islands region?

Answer. The Pacific Island Countries are susceptible to questionable loans and infrastructure projects that can threaten their sovereignty and the stability and security of the region. China has made significant inroads in Samoa over the last decade by providing extensive development assistance, primarily in the form of large infrastructure projects, including the airport, the national hospital, and government buildings. In September 2019, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati established diplomatic ties with Beijing, leaving Taiwan with just four diplomatic partners in the region (Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu). Some Pacific Islands Countries no longer accept PRC loans, but grants remain on the table, and there is high demand from the region for development and infrastructure assistance.

Question. How can the U.S. better collaborate with Indo-Pacific countries, including New Zealand and Samoa, to deal with the negative effects of China's economic coercion and malign political influence?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with New Zealand and Samoa where our mutual interests are being undermined by PRC actions. Like the United States, New Zealand has areas of cooperation and areas of disagreement with China. I welcome New Zealand's public comments on regional security and the South China Sea, including that all countries, big and small, need to follow the rules of international conduct. I also welcome New Zealand's public comments regarding human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

Question. Do you support pursuing a robust trade agenda in the Indo-Pacific region?

Answer. Robust economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific is a key part of the Biden-Harris administration's effort to Build Back Better. If confirmed, I would support an Indo-Pacific trade agenda focused on supporting American working families, defending our values, and protecting the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. As President Biden has said, the United States is focused on making investments in U.S. workers and U.S. competitiveness before he signs new trade agreements, including in the Indo-Pacific.

Question. What are your views on the United States joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership agreed to by 11 other nations in 2019?

Answer. As White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, "The President has been clear that he would not rejoin the TPP as it was initially put forward." Much has changed in the world since the original TPP was signed in 2016. The administration is reviewing the CPTPP to evaluate its consistency with the Build Back Better agenda. If confirmed, I would work with the White House, other agencies, and Congress to negotiate and develop trade policies that advance the interests of all Americans, support American innovation, and enhance our competitiveness.

Question. What areas can the U.S. expand its trade and investment footprint in the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I would look for ways to work with New Zealand to build the capacity of countries in the Pacific to participate in comprehensive, high standard bilateral or multilateral trade agreements that remove barriers and unfair practices. I would also explore securing, diversifying, and strengthening resilient U.S. supply chains to ensure we are prepared not only to defeat COVID-19, but to reduce the likelihood that future crises or global challenges can impede our supply chains and economic growth.

Question. Do you support exploring opportunities for expanding digital trade in the region specifically? Why or why not?

Answer. Barriers to digital trade threaten the ability of all firms—including small businesses—to benefit from the advantages of the digital economy. Our test for trade policies—including in the area of digital trade—is whether they deliver for the American worker and the middle class. If confirmed, I would apply that metric to any new trade deal. For further questions, I refer you to USTR.

Question. On September 17th, Chinese Commerce Minister submitted China's application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) to New Zealand's trade minister. What should the future of the trade structure in the Indo-Pacific look like?

Answer. I understand that China has submitted a formal request to join CPTPP. The United States is not a party to the CPTPP; therefore, it defers to CPTPP parties regarding views on China's potential accession. That said, if confirmed, I would engage with New Zealand and other partners who are members of the CPTPP to remind them that China's non-market trade practices and use of economic coercion against other countries should factor into CPTPP parties' evaluation of China as a potential candidate for accession. For further questions, I refer you to USTR.

Question. The U.S. has been engaged with the Pacific Islands on multiple energy projects. What would your priorities be with respect to cooperation on energy, should you be confirmed?

Answer. New Zealand is an important partner for assisting the Indo-Pacific region with its clean energy transition. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our energy cooperation with New Zealand to increase energy security, expand access to energy, and accelerate the region's decarbonization. One project I would like to continue pursuing with New Zealand and other like-minded partners is the Papua New Guinea Electrification Partnership (PEP), which will help 70 percent of Papua New Guinea's population have reliable access to energy by 2030.

Question. Should the Development Finance Corporation be restricted from financing energy projects in Samoa and other qualifying Pacific Island nations if those projects are related to oil, natural gas, or other fossil fuels?

Answer. The Development Finance Corporation and other U.S. development financing tools will be important to accelerating the Pacific's transition to clean energy economies. Assisting the Pacific in its deployment of renewable energy can best advance the region's energy security, energy access, and decarbonization goals in most instances.

Question. Does New Zealand's nuclear free policy present challenges to the U.S.-New Zealand security relationship?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work with New Zealand to advance our security relationship. Despite its history, New Zealand invited the U.S. Navy to send a ship to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Royal New Zealand Navy in 2016. New Zealand has again invited the Navy to make a port visit in New Zealand as soon as is practical with COVID-19.

Question. How can we mitigate the negative effects of these challenges?

Answer. U.S.-New Zealand relations have warmed significantly over the past decade, which has resulted in several Royal New Zealand Navy ship visits to U.S. military ports. The bilateral relationship has grown significantly over the past few years and is stronger than it has been in decades. If confirmed, I will work to further strengthen our partnership.

Question. Do you commit to messaging these negative effects to New Zealand?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the frequent, candid, and constructive conversations on issues across the board and at the highest levels of government.

Question. Do you agree that extended deterrence is fundamental to our alliance network in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. I believe the United States should remain committed to maintaining a strong, credible deterrent to defend the United States and our allies, while also taking steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. If confirmed, I will uphold the policy that extended deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region plays a critical role in advancing U.S. national security interests, including providing assurance to allies and promoting nonproliferation.

Question. China has a history of breaking its promises, and its words on climate change often do not match its actions. Will you commit to the following: not to advise or support entrance into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change;

Answer. I believe the United States must judge Beijing by its actions, not its words. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to impose costs on China when it violates international norms and agreements. If confirmed, I will also work with New Zealand and other partners to press Beijing to raise its climate ambition significantly during this critical decade.

Question. not to recommend any the following policies to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC:

- Decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China;
- Making changes in our defense relationships with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region;
- Delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation;
- Deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices;
- Terminating sanctions against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List;
- Dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang?

Answer. Prime Minister Ardern's Government has spoken out about human rights abuses by China, condemned malicious cyber activity by Chinese state-sponsored actors, and reaffirmed its support for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the face of expansive Chinese claims in the South China Sea. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government, businesses, and people of New Zealand to promote our shared interests on issues related to China. If confirmed, I will engage with New Zealand and other partners on climate change, while continuing to protect our national security interests and working to maintain a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific.

Question. What is your view on the challenges presented by greater presence of Huawei Marine in constructing undersea cables?

Answer. If confirmed, I would urge our partners to consider the potential risks to national and economic security, critical infrastructure, and privacy of selecting untrusted vendors to build and maintain undersea cable systems. Undersea cables are vital lines of communication, but there are national security risks associated with network equipment that can be manipulated, disrupted, or controlled by authoritarian regimes, like the People's Republic of China, which have no regard for human rights or privacy, or where the equipment is susceptible to potential unethical, unlawful, and otherwise inappropriate behavior, including intellectual property theft.

Question. Do you commit to prioritizing this issue should it come up for either of the two countries where you are credentialed, should you be confirmed? How would you use diplomacy and other tools to address this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I would urge our partners to consider the potential risks to national and economic security, critical infrastructure, and privacy of selecting untrusted vendors to build and maintain undersea cables or choosing to land and interconnect with such cable systems.

Question. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission New Zealand?

Answer. I understand Mission New Zealand is, unsurprisingly, a very sought after posting with high morale. As an outsider, I do not yet know specifics, but I know

that Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa, like much of the world, have faced quarantine requirements, occasional lock-downs, and travel disruptions due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across Mission New Zealand?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the teams at Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa to understand and address any issues affecting morale.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission New Zealand?

Answer. If confirmed, I will start by listening to those already in Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa. I will also clearly communicate my priorities and those of the Biden-Harris administration.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I believe in being an inclusive manager and encouraging everyone to perform to the best of their abilities.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

Answer. As a collaborative and inclusive manager, if confirmed, I hope to listen closely and to seek ideas and opinions widely throughout Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa. Many of the best ideas come from those closest to the issues.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. New Chiefs of Mission must integrate themselves into the mission community and culture. A lot can be learned from career State Department Personnel.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. I don't believe in berating mission employees in public or private. If confirmed, I would work to supply constructive criticism without belittling, if and when required. When State Department performance reviews are required, I would conduct these with the goal of recognizing strong performance and improving weaker performance.

Question. How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. As an inclusive manager, if confirmed, I will work to empower my deputy chief of mission (DCM) to do his or her best work by being trusted and having my full confidence.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will rely on my DCM's career-knowledge of Department policies and procedures to ensure the smooth functioning of Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa.

Question. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. My experience overseas has taught me that State Department employees are out in the community and trying hard to learn about the country they are serving in.

Question. How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the public affairs teams in Mission New Zealand and Mission Samoa to ensure we are reaching all of the local populations to the best of our ability.

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in New Zealand? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face?

Answer. I understand there is a vibrant and active public diplomacy environment in New Zealand. If confirmed, I would work to expand and strengthen the relationship between the people and Government of the United States and the citizens of New Zealand and Samoa. Some of the successful programs Mission New Zealand

has done include cultural and sports programming, academic grants, educational exchanges, and international visitor programs. I hope to continue science and technology-related public diplomacy programs which focus on encouraging youth, particularly women, to explore STEM fields, including space industries. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for public diplomacy programming, although many initiatives have continued by shifting online or by changing logistics.

Question. How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the team at Mission New Zealand to understand and protect the Mission's crucial role in formulating public diplomacy programs and responses. The staff of Americans, New Zealanders, and Samoans based at the Embassy in Wellington, the Consulate General in Auckland, and the Embassy in Apia, Samoa, all provide expertise and local insight. If confirmed, I will draw on that local expertise to ensure our public diplomacy messages are appropriate for the local audience.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TOM UDALL BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. How do you assess New Zealand's relationship with China?

Answer. New Zealand is increasingly concerned about growing PRC influence in the Pacific and has made clear that it will follow an independent foreign policy that supports the rules-based international order in the face of challenges to democracy, human rights, governance, free markets, and the global common good. New Zealand's trade relationship with China has not stopped its Government from speaking out on matters of security and human rights.

Question. What are the implications for U.S. security and defense cooperation from a growing relationship between New Zealand and China?

Answer. The United States and New Zealand are both committed to the security, stability and prosperity of our shared neighborhood, as well as strengthening democracy and democratic resilience across the Pacific region. We continue to draw on New Zealand's depth of knowledge and unique perspective on the South Pacific and look forward to greater partnership in the North Pacific.

Both the United States and New Zealand have a clear national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. New Zealand's relationship with China, like ours, can be expected to have aspects of competition and cooperation.

Question. If confirmed, what would be your message to the Government of New Zealand regarding strategic competition with China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with New Zealand where our mutual interests are being undermined by PRC actions, while recognizing areas where cooperation with China is still possible. I welcome New Zealand's public comments on regional security and the South China Sea, including that all countries, big and small, need to follow the rules of international conduct. I also welcome New Zealand's public comments regarding human rights in the PRC including in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Cuba

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, what are some of the specific steps you would take to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government continues its steadfast support and engagement with Cuban human rights defenders, activists, and other civil society members to bolster their important work; promote human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy; and facilitate the free flow of information to the Cuban people, including access to the internet. I will also support continued use of targeted sanctions and other punitive measures that respond to human rights viola-

tions. In addition, I will work closely with partners and allies—in the region and beyond—to develop a coordinated, comprehensive, and expanded approach to this support.

Question. What are the redlines, in your view, for the steps that the Díaz Canel regime must take before there should be any sort of normalization with Cuba?

Answer. Before any sort of normalization with Cuba takes place, there must be signs that the Díaz-Canel regime is adhering to long-established benchmarks for democratic governance, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms. This includes the release of political prisoners, the freedom of movement, speech, and expression, and an end to arbitrary detention.

Question. Will you commit to pushing back on unfair bias against Israel from international human rights organizations?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to pushing back against unfair and disproportionate bias against Israel across the international system.

Question. There have been extensive efforts by many countries including China, Saudi Arabia, Belarus and Russia, to engage in assassinations, abductions, and other forms of violence against nationals abroad, including human rights activists, dissidents, and members of diaspora communities. Freedom House recently documented 608 cases of direct, physical transnational repression since 2014, including assassinations, abductions, assaults, detentions, and unlawful deportations. How should the United States respond to and deter these activities?

Answer. Human rights abuses through transnational repression activities are disturbing and must be taken seriously, and I understand that the Biden administration is focusing additional attention and resources to combatting the growing scourge of transnational repression. If confirmed, this will be a top priority for me, especially given the potential implications transnational repression has here at home. I will endeavor to ensure that human rights activists, journalists, political dissidents, former insiders, and members of minority groups are able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms without fear of retribution, retaliation, punishment, or harm from the governments of their home state and that if they flee their home state they are adequately protected. To promote accountability for government officials who engage in transnational repression, I will ensure that combatting transnational repression remains a high priority for DRL, and will work closely with interagency partners, as well as congressional allies, to consider all available tools to deter perpetrators, including financial sanctions and visa restriction authorities such as the Khashoggi Ban, which the Department announced in February to promote accountability for governments that threaten and attack journalists and perceived dissidents overseas.

Question. In what ways should we work together with our partners and allies to combat this sort of authoritarian reach and protect threatened communities?

Answer. I take very seriously the growing threat of transnational repression, as I understand the Biden administration does. If confirmed, I will support and lead diplomatic engagement with like-minded partners to deter, counter, and hold accountable perpetrators of transnational repression. I support information-sharing between like-minded partners to identify and build evidence against those responsible for these attacks, to prevent transnational repression from occurring, and to protect the individuals who are targeted. I will coordinate diplomacy, messaging, and action such as sanctions, with our partners and allies, to strengthen their impact and deterrent effect. Publicly denouncing individuals involved in transnational repression, as with other human rights abuses, can help deter them and others from committing subsequent attacks.

Question. Please describe the Department's efforts to address abuses and violations of the rights of people with disabilities.

Answer. I understand that the Department's disability rights programs promote the rule of law and good governance by strengthening the capacity of Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) to effectively promote implementation and enforcement of national and local disability rights laws. Currently, the Department's disability rights programming is in 46 countries including: 7 countries in Africa, 11 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, 4 countries in Europe and Eurasia, 8 countries in Near East Asia, 4 countries in South Central Asia, and 12 countries in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will be happy to consult on these programs.

Question. How much funding does the Department provide to foreign governments, foreign NGOs, and U.S. NGOs to promote and advance the rights of people with disabilities?

Answer. I understand that DRL has approximately \$15,500,000 in active programming dollars focused on disability rights programming in 46 countries.

Question. How does the DRL bureau engage with other parts of the Department and the broader interagency to prioritize support for people with disabilities in U.S. foreign policy, including in bilateral engagements?

Answer. I understand that DRL promotes the full inclusion of persons with disabilities by providing capacity building training, resources, and technical assistance to Department personnel and collaborating with regional and functional bureaus and the interagency to achieve policy objectives that promote inclusion and expand disability rights. Further, I understand that DRL works with federal agencies to support bilateral policy engagements on employment, inclusive education, accessibility, and independent living.

Question. Describe the Department's efforts to support human rights defenders, both in terms of support to their work and support to provide them with safety and protection when threatened. Please be specific. How does the Department currently define a human rights defender?

Answer. I understand the Department defines a human rights defender (HRD) as an individual, working alone or in groups, who non-violently advocates for the promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. I understand the Department supports HRDs through a variety of diplomatic tools, including by engaging with the U.N. and its special rapporteurs to address specific threats against human rights defenders; developing policies to reduce violence against human rights defenders; working across the interagency to strengthen policies and practices related to protecting human rights defenders; and conducting foreign assistance programs. More specifically, I understand DRL has developed programming to provide HRDs with flexible, short-term, emergency financial support that gives them the real-time assistance they need to increase their safety and continue their critical work. I understand short-term emergency grants include support for: medical expenses, legal representation, prison visits, trial monitoring, temporary relocation, security, equipment replacement, daily living necessities, and dependent support. Since the inception of impact reporting, I understand 97 percent of respondents stated that the assistance received has had a positive impact on their safety or reduced the threat they faced and 80 percent of respondents have been able to continue their human rights work in some way.

Question. Please describe the role played by the DRL bureau in the planning for the December Summit for Democracy.

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor serves as the subject matter experts within the Department. Given the scope of the Summit shared to date, I am confident that DRL has been involved in providing technical expertise in anti-corruption, human rights, countering authoritarianism, supporting marginalized populations, and engaging international organizations and civil society. DRL is also skilled in planning and hosting large events including the Community of Democracies Governing Council Ministerial in 2017. If confirmed, I will also engage in Summit planning and implementation.

Question. What influence does the DRL bureau have on the invitees to and the agenda of the Summit?

Answer. I understand that both established and emerging democracies will be invited to participate in the Summit. I have not seen the invitation list nor the agenda and am not involved in internal administration deliberations. Therefore, I cannot provide specifics about them, but believe DRL has played an important role in providing input and more generally that this is an important opportunity for the Biden administration to shore up not only its support for global democracy but its own commitments to democracy as well. If confirmed, I will engage on both the agenda and the proposed invitees.

Question. What criteria or process is being used to determine which countries which will receive invites, and which countries will not?

Answer. It is my understanding that since this is a Presidential Summit, the White House will make the final determination on which countries will receive an invitation. I understand the Summit will include both established and emerging democracies and presume geographic diversity and country context may have also been factors in the invitation list. In my view, the Summit would benefit from the diversity of perspectives and voices discussing both democratic achievements and challenges and hearing directly from organizations and individuals who work on de-

mocracy and understand how best to secure some of the core institutional components of a democracy in today's world.

Question. How do you think the U.S. arms transfer process should change to better incorporate human rights and civilian harm concerns, and what changes would you advocate for as Assistant Secretary?

Answer. I understand the administration is already working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the administration's foreign policy priorities, including its emphasis on putting human rights at the center of foreign policy. While I understand human rights and civilian harm concerns are one of several factors taken into account in the arms transfer process, together with the implications of such sales for U.S. and regional security, bilateral relations, and U.S. commercial interests, if confirmed I will make sure DRL is at the right decision-making tables to ensure human rights concerns are incorporated into the process early on and given adequate weight. In addition, I will coordinate closely with the Political-Military (P/M) and regional bureaus to ensure they are seeing the same information and analysis that we see. If confirmed, I will ensure that the arms sales process gives appropriate weight to any human rights and civilian harm concerns.

Question. Do you agree that the U.S. Government should refrain from exporting arms to fragile states or countries at risk of atrocities?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances our national security interests. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, frequent and ongoing cooperation, and carefully considered arms exports. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our arms export policies uphold and support U.S. laws on global fragility and atrocity prevention.

Question. Under Erdogan, Turkey is neither a reliable NATO ally nor a democracy. Turkey is among the top jailers of journalists and lawyers in the world, which is unacceptable for a NATO member. The Government of Turkey has slapped arbitrary restrictions on the Orthodox Church and Orthodox community, Turkey's Kurds, and other minority groups. We must be clear-eyed about Erdogan and the autocratic path he is taking, and we must stand with the Turkish people as they work to change that. What is the best way to support civil society and counter Erdogan's aggressive push for power?

Answer. I share your concerns about measures employed by the Government that negatively impact civil society and other voices critical of the Government in Turkey. I am deeply troubled by the pattern of punitive actions by Turkish officials targeting those whose views differ from those of the Government. Turkey has been an important NATO Ally for nearly 70 years and addressing democratic backsliding is critical to our alliance. If confirmed, I would call for the immediate release of Osman Kavala, who remains incarcerated on specious charges despite a European Court of Human Rights ruling calling for his immediate release, and will work to coordinate with U.S. allies, particularly in the EU, on this issue. I would also urge Department action to underscore for the Turkish Government the fundamental importance of the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association in democracies. I would urge the Turkish Government to revise laws that restrict freedom of expression and other essential freedoms guaranteed by Turkey's constitution. I would also urge the Department and the embassy to regularly engage with Turkish civil society, hear their concerns, and amplify their voices.

Question. The situation in Tigray and across Ethiopia is bleak. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, released a statement, in which she deplored "multiple and severe reports of alleged gross violations of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law" committed by all parties to the conflict in Tigray. Violations included extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, rape, and racially-targeted killings. President Biden recently signed an executive order threatening sweeping new sanctions against all parties if serious negotiations do not start, attacks on civilians continue, and if humanitarian access remains blocked.

While this is a welcome step, what more can the United States do to ensure that gross human rights violations cease in Ethiopia and that all parties are held accountable for mass atrocities committed over these past eleven months?

Answer. It is imperative that the United States continue to use every available tool to urge all parties to end the conflict in northern Ethiopia and cease all gross

violations of human rights. These tools include the newly-signed Executive Order; a visa restriction policy targeting those responsible for, or complicit in, undermining resolution of the crisis; foreign assistance restrictions; defense trade controls; multi-lateral development bank lending; and certain trade benefits.

The United States must continue to marshal its diplomatic resources to press for a negotiated ceasefire; full and unhindered humanitarian access; protection of civilians; the withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Ethiopia; a withdrawal of the Tigray People's Liberation Front and Amhara regional forces to their home regions prior to the military conflict; and a political settlement of the crisis. The United States also must continue to press our concerns with like-minded partners, regional governments, the African Union, eminent African voices, and the U.N. Security Council and engage independent actors—including Ethiopian civil society—in the process. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would work steadfastly to resolve the human rights crisis in Ethiopia through these and other means.

I also believe that U.S. efforts must remain focused on ensuring that all those who are responsible for atrocities, violations of international humanitarian law, and human rights abuses in Ethiopia are held accountable in transparent processes. To that end, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would make sure that DRL continues to support independent, international investigations of human rights violations and abuses and atrocities as part of a broader strategy to advance transitional justice efforts in Ethiopia.

Question. During the 2020 Armenia-Azerbaijan war, according to human rights organizations, the Azeri military deliberately targeted civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh with cluster munitions and committed extrajudicial executions, including decapitations, as well as beatings of prisoners of war. The State Department's 2020 Country Report on Human Rights for Azerbaijan documented these and other gross human rights violations by the Azeri military. How will you lead State Department efforts to hold Azerbaijan accountable? Why does the administration continue to provide an exemption waiver for Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, further incentivizing this conduct?

Answer. The 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights for Azerbaijan and Armenia both detail credible reports of unlawful killings involving summary executions of detained combatants and civilians, and civilian casualties during the 44 days of intensive fighting last fall. The Biden-Harris administration is deeply committed to fostering respect for human rights. I understand that the administration has been urging both sides to investigate any and all allegations of human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law and bring to justice those responsible, and, if confirmed, I would press for accountability for such abuses. I also understand that administration officials have been urging both sides to return all remaining detainees—an area of work I would also take up, if confirmed, should it remain unresolved.

U.S. assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan is provided consistent with Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and related provisions of U.S. law. Assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan that does not fall under a statutory exemption is contingent upon a presidential waiver certifying that such assistance is a) necessary to support U.S. efforts to counter international terrorism, or b) is necessary to support the operational readiness of U.S. Armed Forces or coalition partners to counter international terrorism, or c) is important to Azerbaijan's border security, and d) will not undermine or hamper ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia. The aforementioned waiver authority comes with reporting and consultation requirements to help ensure that Congress is fully informed with respect to assistance for the Government of Azerbaijan. Additionally, all units receiving U.S. security assistance continue to go through the Leahy vetting process. If confirmed, I would strongly support the Leahy vetting process, which DRL is responsible for managing.

Question. In the past year, the Lukashenka regime has detained thousands of protesters, torturing hundreds, jailed political opponents, banned and shut down media organizations, and persecuted its people both at home and abroad. The regime is weaponizing migrants by forcing them at gunpoint to cross illegally into Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania. How can the United States partner with countries like Lithuania and others on the front lines of democracy to support the democratic opposition in Belarus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen U.S. support for the pro-democracy movement in Belarus and promote accountability for the regime's abuses. As such, I will press for additional sanctions to promote accountability for those respon-

sible for human rights abuses, undermining democracy in Belarus, and for supporting the Lukashenka regime. Similarly, I hope to continue U.S. support for international mechanisms designed to document the regime's abuses, including the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) and U.N. fact-finding mission. If confirmed, I seek to increase U.S. support for Belarusian civil society, independent media, and exiles fleeing repression. Lastly, I hope to increase cooperation with likeminded countries in the context of the Summit for Democracy, including Lithuania, which has done remarkable work to provide a safe haven for the Belarusian opposition, civil society, journalists, and ordinary citizens fleeing the Lukashenka regime's repression. Lithuania continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to democratic values, and we look forward to collaborating with them and others to safeguard and advance democracy globally.

Question. Earlier this month, Russian occupation authorities in Crimea detained more than 50 Crimean Tatars, reportedly beating them and questioning them without lawyers present. Arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, and torture of Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians have been a recurring feature of Russian occupation, with many residents being persecuted on religious grounds. An estimated 30,000 Tatars have fled from the region. How can the State Department work with the international community to hold Russian authorities accountable for their crimes in occupied Crimea?

Answer. I am appalled by the egregious abuses Russia carries out in occupied Crimea and its targeting of Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians, and other religious and ethnic minorities for intimidation, harassment, and repression. Such abuses must cease immediately and perpetrators must be held to account. If confirmed, I will lead the U.S. Government in playing an active role in the newly launched Crimea Platform to increase the spotlight on Russia's occupation of Crimea, hold Russian occupation authorities to account for their human rights abuses on the peninsula, and implement policy that increases the costs to Russia for their continued occupation. Crimea is Ukraine. I would also focus on securing releases for political prisoners and documenting human rights abuses so that perpetrators can be held to account.

Question. Hungary, Poland, and other nominal democracies in Europe continue to backslide on democracy and human rights. These countries have undermined the independence of their judiciaries. In addition, Hungary has outlawed gender transition and gay adoption, and banned LGBTQ content from television and in schools. Poland has created 'LGBT-free' zones in almost 100 Polish regions, town and cities. How can the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor work with NATO partners like Hungary and Poland to meet not only their defense commitments to the alliance, but their commitments on values like individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law?

Answer. I share the concerns expressed by the Biden-Harris administration and members of Congress regarding the undermining of democratic institutions in Poland and Hungary. Being a member of NATO includes commitments to Transatlantic values, not only security. If confirmed, I would engage with governments, civil society, the private sector, and core European allies to support strengthening Poland and Hungary's democratic institutions and urge transparency and respect for the rule of law. I would work with partners in the European Union to encourage the EU and member states to amplify U.S. messages through complementary statements and action. Additionally, I would look for opportunities to use available tools, including the Global Magnitsky sanctions passed by the Congress, when there is sufficient credible information that a particular politician has engaged in corruption or serious human rights abuses. I am troubled by the rise in anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and legislation in recent years in both countries. If confirmed, I would work with the Special Envoy to Advance the Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons to raise awareness of this challenge and determine the best way to respond to discriminatory laws and policies and intolerant rhetoric while engaging local communities and/or organizations and maintaining the safety and security of LGBTQI+ persons.

Question. The UK's Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis introduced a proposal in July that would create a statute of limitations on all crimes committed during the Troubles prior to April 1998. The proposal is not supported by a single political party in Northern Ireland, signaling cross-community opposition, and its incompatibility with the intent undergirding the Good Friday Agreement. 1,000 civil cases seeking justice and resolution for crimes during the Troubles are currently pending in the High Court in Belfast, indicating a continued desire to address legacy issues in the courts. What leverage can the United States exert on the United Kingdom

to ensure that it protects the Good Friday Agreement, and respects the intertwined questions of legacy and reconciliation?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to protecting the gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement as the bedrock of peace, stability, and prosperity in Northern Ireland. Constructive engagement with all affected parties is critical, and I will continue to urge the parties to negotiate within existing mechanisms when differences arise. I will encourage a focus on solutions that promote peace and stability in Northern Ireland and help victims move forward.

Question. As of August, The Memorial Human Rights Center in Moscow recognized 329 Russian political prisoners that were imprisoned in connection with their right to freedom of religion. This list includes 87 Jehovah's Witnesses. Memorial identifies another 81 political prisoners for non-religious reasons, including those on the front lines of democracy in Russia like opposition leader Alexey Navalny and his supporters. How will you use your role as Assistant Secretary to pressure the Russian Government to release those unjustly imprisoned by the Putin regime?

Answer. I share your concern about the growing number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Russia, one of the many manifestations of the Kremlin's deepening repression. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to call for the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in public statements and in multilateral fora. I will work with likeminded governments and civil society organizations to raise awareness of their cases and demonstrate solidarity with their families, friends, and colleagues. I will also use all available tools to promote accountability for those officials responsible for their wrongful imprisonment and work with other allies to ensure they're doing the same.

Question. In September, on the eve of the Russian elections, the Russian Government accused Google and Apple of supporting extremism under the Russian extremism law for hosting apps critical to informing Russians of candidates associated with Alexei Navalny's democracy movement. How will you work to address the increasing media repression in Russia, where the internet seems to be the last outpost for freedom of expression? How will you engage U.S. tech companies on their policies and practices with regard to authoritarian regimes like Putin's?

Answer. I share your concern about the stark erosion of media freedom in Russia, including increasing restrictions on Internet Freedom. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to promote the courageous work of Russia's independent media, civil society organizations, and democratic elements of society, and call out and hold accountable the Russian Government for its repressive actions.

More broadly, concerns around the use of technology to undergird authoritarian tendencies are only accelerating. While the United States needs to continue promote connectivity to an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet where the rights that all persons have offline are also protected online, including freedom of expression, there is also much work to be done engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including other governments and tech companies, to advocate for implementation of human rights principles in the tech space. But additionally, if confirmed, I will work across the Department to help build a collective and strategic approach to combatting digital authoritarianism that ensures public-private partnerships and any potential regulation are rooted in the promotion and protection of basic rights and the core principles of democratic governance.

Question. Locally-employed U.S. Embassy and Consulate staff remain in prison following the Government's purges in 2016. In June 2020, one translator employed by the U.S. Consulate was sentenced to more than 8 years in prison. Will you prioritize getting these staff out once confirmed?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing prosecutions of U.S. locally employed staff in Turkey based on unsubstantiated charges related to their official duties. If confirmed, I would strongly support continued Department efforts to secure the immediate release of Metin Topuz from prison and press Turkey to terminate any judicial controls or prosecutions targeting Mete Canturk and Hamza Ulucay, including movement restrictions.

Question. In June 2021, the Turkish Constitutional Court agreed to hear a case seeking to ban the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the country's third largest political party and a strong proponent for ethnic Kurdish rights. The campaign follows years of replacing democratically-elected HDP mayors with so-called "trustees" appointed by the Government. The State Department reported in its 2020 Country Report on Human Rights for Turkey that "the Government suspended 81 percent of HDP mayors elected in the March 2019 municipal elections, suspending 16 mayors in 2020 alone." What do you intend to do about this democratic backslide in Turkey,

especially ahead of potential snap elections? How will your bureau ensure ethnic minority rights and political representation are protected in Turkey?

Answer. I share your concerns about democratic backsliding, erosion of rule of law, and the repressive tactics employed by the Turkish Government. If confirmed, I would urge Department action to make clear to the Turkish Government the importance of political pluralism. Banning the country's second largest opposition party would unduly subvert the will of Turkish voters, further undermine democracy in Turkey, and deny potentially millions of Turkish citizens their elected representation. If confirmed, I would urge the Government to abandon efforts to dissolve the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and impose political bans on hundreds of HDP members. I would also call upon the Turkish authorities to investigate and hold accountable perpetrators of violence against HDP members. I would also support efforts to ensure all parties in Turkey are able to campaign freely and on a level playing field. I would also seek to work closely with like-minded governments and consider engaging private sector companies that might also have an interest in advancing rule of law issues to the benefit of all Turkish citizens.

Question. How is State measuring Bangladesh's progress on labor rights in the aftermath of the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster? Is the administration considering restoration of Dhaka's access to the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)? Under what circumstances or conditions would it do so?

Answer. I understand that since the horrific building collapse at Rana Plaza in 2013, the United States Government has worked with partners across the international community, major industries, and Bangladeshi authorities to advocate for and enable improvements in factory safety, which included the establishment of new agreements by major international brands to enforce safety standards across factories. While these changes are encouraging, much more needs to be done to institutionalize safety standards across Bangladesh's major industries, as evidenced by the tragic fire at a juice factory in July 2021. The Department of State works closely with the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the Department of Labor to monitor Bangladesh's progress to meet internationally recognized labor rights, especially workplace safety, freedom of association, and collective bargaining. I commit, if confirmed, to upholding the USTR's position that if Congress reauthorizes GSP, restoring Bangladesh's GSP benefits must be contingent upon strengthening labor rights and workplace safety, as well as improving the overall business and civil society operational environment.

Question. Extrajudicial killings by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) have reportedly spiked since the Government of Bangladesh began its 'war on drugs' in the months ahead of the December 2018 elections. Do you support imposing sanctions on senior commanders of Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which has reportedly conducted more than 400 extrajudicial killings since 2015?

Answer. I share the Biden-Harris administration's deep concern regarding reports of extrajudicial killings in Bangladesh and urge the Government to thoroughly and transparently investigate and hold perpetrators accountable. I believe the United States Government must continue to press the Bangladeshi Government to uphold its commitments to human rights and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will seek to utilize available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or with the Department of the Treasury to consider the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals.

Question. There have been nearly 600 forced disappearances of activists, opposition members, and government critics since Prime Minister Hasina took office in 2009, as documented in Human Rights Watch's August 2021 report. How will you address this issue?

Answer. I understand the Department of State has repeatedly emphasized its concern over reports of enforced disappearances and have urged the Government to hold perpetrators accountable. If confirmed, I will maintain this approach in bilateral meetings, multilateral exchanges, and coordinate with like-minded partners to stop these abusive practices and protect human rights in Bangladesh. If confirmed, I will explore the use of available tools to promote accountability and deter further violations and abuses.

Question. Rights groups have detailed increased abuse of Tamil political prisoners—including beatings, burnings, suffocations, sexual assaults—since Gotabaya Rajapaksa became president in 2019. What consequences should there be to hold those responsible accountable?

Answer. Such allegations of abuse and gross violations of human rights are disturbing and must be taken seriously. If confirmed, I will work to promote the protection of human rights for all in Sri Lanka, including, but not limited to, members of ethnic and religious minority groups, women and girls, LGBTQI+ persons, and persons with disabilities. For reconciliation to take place, members of the Tamil and other ethnic communities can no longer suffer from systematic discrimination and targeted treatment such as monitoring, harassment, and abuse by security forces. If confirmed, I will utilize all available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or with the Department of the Treasury to consider the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals. I will also advocate that Sri Lanka amend its Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)—legislation that denies due process and is used disproportionately to crack down on members of Tamil and Muslim minority communities. If confirmed, I will continue the Department’s commitment to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation measures in support of all people in Sri Lanka.

Question. In January 2021, Michelle Bachelet pushed for targeted sanctions on Sri Lankan military commanders implicated in war crimes committed during the civil war, including the current army chief and in March, the Human Rights Council passed resolution 46/1 promoting accountability in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, recently policies and actions indicate that the Government’s commitment rule of law, judicial processes, and democracy are weak. How will you work to hold accountable those who perpetrated atrocities during the war and since, including current Sri Lankan officials and, if possible, forestall further deterioration in Sri Lankan democracy?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the backsliding of democratic governance and human rights in Sri Lanka, especially pertaining to justice for victims, civil society, rule of law, human rights defenders, and religious freedom. The United States’ co-sponsorship of Human Rights Council resolution 46/1 is a testament to our Government’s commitment to promoting democratic values, human rights for all, and accountability measures. If confirmed, I will utilize all available tools to promote accountability, including, as applicable, Section 7031(c) visa restrictions and/or with the Department of the Treasury to consider the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, in a targeted manner, to advance our human rights goals. I will also urge my Sri Lankan counterparts, at the highest levels, to follow through on recommendations of the United Nations and Sri Lanka’s robust civil society to make progress on justice, accountability, and reconciliation objectives. If confirmed, I will continue the Department’s commitment to promote democratic values, respect for human rights, justice, and accountability measures in support of the people of Sri Lanka.

Question. The five countries of Central Asia—despite progress in some—regularly confine human rights defenders, political opposition figures, outspoken minority members, and others to lengthy detention without trial or following conviction for trumped-up charges. What will you do to ensure that our diplomacy with these countries continues to advocate for these unlawfully detained prisoners?

Answer. Countries are stronger when they enshrine and respect the rights to peaceful protest and freedom of expression. Despite advancement in some Central Asian countries, many challenges remain on these issues, including meaningful democratic reform. If confirmed, I will urge these issues be a priority for our diplomacy in Central Asia. I will stress the long-term benefit in strengthening protection of human rights. I am particularly concerned about the criminalization of non-violent political speech and the detention of political prisoners, but also concerned by an uptick in restrictions on freedom of expression and politically motivated detentions in the run up to upcoming elections in the region. If confirmed, I will directly engage on specific cases, broader systematic concerns regarding political prisoners, and the need to protect dissenting voices.

Question. Democratic progress in Central Asia is always uncertain. Some countries may be trending in the right direction now, but we know that this could change. What can the U.S. do to shore up human rights in the region amidst our competing priorities with regard to China, Russia, and Afghanistan?

Answer. Thirty years after their independence, some Central Asian countries have made considerable progress in human rights reforms; however, significant challenges in the region remain. Addressing these shortcomings by promoting democracy and human rights in Central Asia is central to our regional efforts to reassert core values and advance respect for human rights, especially for women, girls, and minority groups, as a cornerstone of our foreign policy. If confirmed, I will support and reinforce ongoing reforms while pressing governments to take necessary steps to cre-

ate genuinely pluralistic political systems that uphold human rights for all, including women, members of religious and ethnic minority groups, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, and opposition members. I will press governments to secure fundamental freedoms and expand space for civil society—including organizations that work on resource transparency and accountability—by amending problematic laws, easing excessive and burdensome administrative requirements, and enhancing trust between the Government and independent civil society. U.S. support is vital for democratic progress to continue in Central Asia.

Question. Minority groups in Pakistan are under duress. Members of the Ahmadi Muslim community are frequently accused of, prosecuted for, and murdered on the basis of their identity or the belief that they have committed blasphemy or apostasy. Furthermore, the Pakistani Government has successfully pressured U.S. based technology companies to remove web-based content and apps provided by the Ahmadi community to its members. How will you lead State Department efforts to the State Department to address the dire human rights situation there for millions of minorities? What tactics will you employ to ensure that the internet in Pakistan remains free of malicious government control for these same persons?

Answer. I am very concerned about Pakistan's continued enforcement of blasphemy laws, which are inconsistent with international human rights law. Several dozen people are currently serving life imprisonment or are on death row for blasphemy.

I am also deeply concerned by the targeted killings of individuals accused of blasphemy and members of Pakistan's Ahmadiyya Muslim community, spurred in part by discriminatory anti-Ahmadi laws. A recent example of such violence was the assassination of Tahir Naseem, an Ahmadi and U.S. citizen who was murdered by a violent extremist in open court while on trial in Peshawar for blasphemy in July 2020.

If confirmed, I will advocate for the human rights of all individuals irrespective of their religion or beliefs. I will advocate for everyone to have the opportunity to live freely from harassment or threat of violence and to practice the religion of their choice. I will work with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and the Office of International Religious Freedom to engage technology companies, to highlight the human rights costs of enabling these abuses by governments, and to help empower civil society groups, including religious actors, advocating against the use and abuse of blasphemy laws. If confirmed, I will join my colleagues across the U.S. Government actively supporting freedom of expression online and offline and working to remove obstacles facing members of minority groups around the world.

Question. I have concerns about the persecution of minorities in India, the re-categorization of Muslim citizens as stateless persons under the Citizenship Amendment Act. What will you do to ensure that Indian democracy and its diverse population remain a centerpiece of our diplomacy with India?

Answer. I share your concerns and believe strongly in the importance of Indian democracy serving as a model for the region. If confirmed, I would advocate the United States Government continue to place human rights and democratic principles at the heart of our diplomacy with India, including an open, inclusive civil society, and respect for human rights, including the freedoms of religion or belief, expression, peaceful assembly, and association. If confirmed, I will urge Indian officials to protect and respect the right to practice one's religion or belief, the right to peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression for all, on and offline, in keeping with India's constitution and democratic values.

Question. After a decade of work to establish a civilian-led democratic government, the Tatmadaw tragically overthrew Burma's Government. The same leaders now running the country are guilty of genocide against the Rohingya and of a sustained campaign of violence against Burma's ethnic minorities. While I welcome Secretary Blinken's decision to review the atrocities and make a determination on genocide, such determination is long overdue.

How can the United States work to promote accountability for the military's gross abuses and atrocities? When will the administration announce whether the Tatmadaw and/or the Burmese regime committed genocide against the Rohingya people?

Answer. I am appalled by the atrocities that the Burmese military continues to commit against the people of Burma, which underscores the urgency of promoting accountability for perpetrators of atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses. I understand that the administration is taking action, alongside our allies and partners, to promote justice for victims and accountability for those responsible,

including by supporting the U.N. Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, providing assistance to Burmese civil society actors seeking justice, and implementing sanctions on those responsible for these horrific abuses. The Secretary has committed to reviewing whether the atrocities committed against Rohingya constitute specific atrocity crimes. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary in reaching a decision and to making sure our commitments on accountability are implemented with both the spirit and the letter of the law.

Question. After a decade of work to establish a civilian-led democratic government, the Tatmadaw tragically overthrew Burma's Government. The same leaders now running the country are guilty of genocide against the Rohingya and of a sustained campaign of violence against Burma's ethnic minorities. While I welcome Secretary Blinken's decision to review the atrocities and make a determination on genocide, such determination is long overdue.

How can the United States continue to support democracy and human rights in Burma and halt the horrific reversal of progress there?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing our longstanding support for democracy and promotion of respect for human rights in Burma, which is vital in the face of the military coup d'état and continued deterioration of civilian security and human rights across the country. I would continue to support Burma's pro-democracy movement and provide humanitarian assistance on the basis of need, including to ethnic and religious minority communities as appropriate, and to regularly meet with members of Burma's civil society. Ensuring their voices are heard as part of the roadmap for Burma's democracy is an essential part of its legitimacy and so if confirmed I would urge that the U.S. remain steadfast in our support for the people of Burma. Additionally, I would encourage strong diplomatic engagement and cooperation with our likeminded and regional partners, including in international organizations, to deny the military regime international credibility and press the regime to reverse course. If confirmed, I will support continued efforts to pursue targeted sanctions and other actions to deny the military financial resources and promote accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What would you do to bolster and reiterate the U.S. Government's commitment to protect and advocate for those on the frontlines, including civil society organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to bolster protections for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people—including women, youth, and members of historically marginalized groups—so that they may shape the laws, policies, and political processes that affect their lives. To do so, I will support the utilization of a wide array of tools to achieve this goal, including bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; accountability tools; and foreign assistance to civil society, including rapid response programs to support journalists, activists, and human rights defenders under threat for their work. I will also make sure to seek out the views of civil society groups and activists, meet them when I travel, help ensure they are able to participate in multilateral fora, and take all steps to ensure their concerns are central to our consideration on larger U.S. policy decisions.

Question. How would you direct the State Department to enhance the protections globally governing freedom of expression and press?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to work with other parts of the Department, executive branch agencies, and Congress to bolster efforts to promote the ability of people everywhere to exercise their right to freedom of expression—online and offline—free from harassment, intimidation, and violence. This includes through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; accountability tools; multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Media Freedom Coalition, the Freedom Online Coalition, and the President's upcoming Summit for Democracy; and foreign assistance to civil society, including rapid response programs to support activists, human rights defenders, and journalists under threat.

Question. How will you prioritize a "whole-of-government" approach to human rights policy and its application in regional and functional diplomatic relationships?

Answer. The diplomatic work of the United States encompasses all the work of all applicable federal agencies and tools. If confirmed I will consult broadly with federal agencies and within the Department to ensure that U.S. policy on human rights and fundamental freedoms is a significant component of decision-making. If confirmed, my job will be to use resources and information to ensure policy making adequately reflects core human rights and democracy standards. It means ensuring DRL is at the table, participating actively in interagency debates and decision making. It also means making sure DRL is viewed across the foreign service as career enhancing and a net positive in career development so there is interest, engagement, and an understanding of why our work matters. This cross-Bureau and inter-agency work is a high priority and essential to effective diplomacy.

Question. There is serious concern about the state of press freedom around the world. If confirmed, what actions will you take to curb suppression of press freedom and support independent journalists around the world?

Answer. I share the concern that press freedom is threatened globally. If confirmed, I will direct the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to work with other parts of the Department, executive branch agencies, and Congress to promote the ability of journalists everywhere to do their work—online and offline—free from harassment, intimidation, and violence. This includes through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; accountability tools; multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Media Freedom Coalition, the Freedom Online Coalition, and the President’s upcoming Summit for Democracy; and foreign assistance to civil society, including rapid response programs to support journalists under threat and training and capacity building programs to bolster the safety of independent journalists globally. If confirmed I’ll also look at new ways to partner in support of press freedom and to do so with allies around the globe—whether other governments, philanthropic groups, or the private sector.

Question. Everyone should be able to practice their faith however they choose, including in places like China, India, and Uzbekistan. How does international religious freedom factor into your priorities?

Answer. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have made clear that the United States prioritizes respect for human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, as a key foreign policy objective. Human rights are universal—no matter where someone is born, what they believe, how they identify, or whom they love, they are entitled to the enjoyment of these rights. Human rights are also co-equal, inter-related, and interdependent. All people should be able to organize their lives in accordance with their conscience, free from violence, abuse, and discrimination. If confirmed, I intend to work alongside the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and with our embassies and consulates around the world, to deploy the full range of diplomatic tools—both positive and punitive—to encourage governments to respect their international obligations and commitments to protect freedom of religion or belief.

Question. What do you believe is the U.S. Government role in advocating on behalf of religious minorities?

Answer. I believe the U.S. Government must be committed to advancing religious freedom internationally, including the protection of members of religious minority groups, across the globe. As a part of those efforts, we must demonstrate solidarity with those struggling to secure their rights and provide foreign assistance to build the capacity of local organizations to effectively advocate for themselves. We must assist victims of abuses through direct advocacy with foreign governments and other forms of emergency assistance, including working to free individuals imprisoned for their beliefs. It is also imperative that we engage in bilateral diplomacy to encourage governments to bring their laws and policies into alignment with their obligations and commitments to promote respect religious freedom, including ensuring protection for members of religious minority groups. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Office of International Religious Freedom and its appointed Ambassador at Large on these issues.

Question. Would you describe the U.N. Human Rights Council as a deeply flawed body? Why or why not?

Answer. The U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) does have flaws, including in particular the Council’s problematic membership and its disproportionate focus on Israel. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring with colleagues the HRC can be as effective and balanced as possible. When the United States has a seat at the table, it has been able to advocate on Israel’s behalf, resulting in changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel, a clear benchmark for U.S.

leadership, and has stood up to more problematic members with notable records of abuse. When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, it has been able to engage with our allies and partners to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council and encourage countries with better records to run for seats.

Question. Can you please explain in detail how the Biden administration plans to reform the U.N. Human Rights Council?

Answer. The United States is committed to seeking reforms of the U.N. Human Rights Council, particularly with respect to the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel and the Council's problematic membership. When the U.S. has had a seat at the table, it has been able to advocate on Israel's behalf, and has seen changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel, one benchmark I will use for our leadership. I have not been part of these conversations, but I understand it is a priority for the administration—and certainly one for me, if confirmed. As part of that effort, I will prioritize working closely with U.S. friends, allies, and long-time HRC experts in civil society to address the Council's problematic membership record and its anti-Israel bias. I will engage regularly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on a wide range of issues and also make clear U.S. opposition to problematic anti-Israel mandates.

When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, it has been able to engage with our allies and partners to keep off some of the countries with the worst human rights records and to encourage and support countries with better records to run for seats.

Question. Do you believe that human rights should be a permanent agenda item for the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. Human rights are woven into the agenda items for the U.N. Security Council in its work to maintain international peace and security. Peace and security are intrinsically linked to respect for and support of human rights. The U.N. Human Rights Council, to which the United States is running for an elected seat, is the premier U.N. body focused on human rights issues. I look forward to utilizing that platform to advance human rights, if confirmed.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Do you believe that human rights should be a permanent agenda item for the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. Yes. That said, human rights are woven into the agenda items for the U.N. Security Council in its work to maintain international peace and security. Peace and security are completely linked to respect for human rights. The U.N. Human Rights Council, to which the United States secured an elected seat, is the premier U.N. body focused on human rights issues. If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing that as well as other multi-lateral platforms to advance human rights.

Question. Do you support U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334?

Answer. I am committed to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians and to supporting dignity, equal protection under the law, and fundamental freedoms for all. For as long as Israel has been a member of the United Nations, Israel has been treated differently from other nations at the United Nations. Such unequal treatment not only unfairly singles out Israel, it undermines the legitimacy of the United Nations itself.

If confirmed, I will uphold President Biden's strong commitment to Israel and its security. This includes opposing efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. I will also continue to oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states.

I understand the United States will block any resolution that we believe may undermine Israel's security or seek to impose a resolution to the conflict.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Do you support U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334?

Answer. If confirmed, I will oppose, as I understand the administration does already, efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through

one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. Equally, I will firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek. I will also continue and sustain diplomatic engagement on the issue of settlements.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a bipartisan manner, including by providing timely, accurate, and complete information on all relevant strategies, initiatives, programs, and assistance under the purview of DRL?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a bipartisan manner, and in coordination with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Foreign Assistance

Question. If confirmed, under what conditions, if any, would you support conditioning U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. Conditions that prohibit certain assistance to foreign security forces that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights, such as the Leahy Laws, support the U.S. foreign policy objective of promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. U.S. national security is strengthened when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote, and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and do not unduly restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State's continued rigorous implementation of the Leahy Laws and similar conditions. Foreign assistance is an important part of how the U.S. engages globally—a way for us to engage local communities and support their goals for a more pluralistic society. I believe the principle of “do no harm” is an important one for all donors to embrace. If confirmed, I would work closely with colleagues at USAID to consider whether restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance related to DRL equities are prudent.

FOLLOW-UP TO PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. If confirmed, under what conditions, if any, would you support conditioning U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. I believe effective implementation of existing U.S. law provides helpful starting points to identify the conditions under which I would support appropriate conditioning or limitations on applicable U.S. assistance. For example, Section 502(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act precludes assistance to governments that engage in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. Similarly, the Leahy laws prohibit the provision of applicable U.S. assistance to foreign security force units that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights. U.S. national security is strengthened when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote, and protect human rights, and hold those responsible for human rights violations accountable. In addition, if confirmed, I would carefully examine, on a case-by-case basis, other human rights factors that may impact decisions about foreign assistance, such as whether another government is engaged in acts that could constitute atrocities or gender-based violence.

Question. Would you support conditioning assistance to the West Bank and Gaza upon the achievement of measurable progress in ending the Palestinian Authority's support for human rights atrocities through the heinous “pay for slay” program?

Answer. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and “martyr” payments to address longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I will commit to closely tracking requirements under the Taylor Force Act and other similar legislation and ensuring that U.S. assistance is consistent with it. By providing critical humanitarian relief, fostering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, we will help millions of vulnerable Palestinians and promote a stable environ-

ment that benefits both Israelis and Palestinians in a manner that is consistent with our values, with U.S. foreign policy priorities, and with U.S. law.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Would you support conditioning assistance to the West Bank and Gaza upon the achievement of measurable progress in ending the Palestinian Authority's support for human rights atrocities through the heinous "pay for slay" program?

Answer. I believe the Palestinian practice of prisoner and martyr payments is abhorrent. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and "martyr" payments to address longstanding U.S. and international concerns. If confirmed, I would build on the work thus far, through sustained diplomatic engagement and pressure, underscoring that part of resetting the U.S.-Palestinian relationship is seeing an end to this heinous practice.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with regional and functional bureaus, including the Bureau for Political-Military Affairs (PM) to ensure statutory restrictions on the provision of certain forms of U.S. foreign assistance to foreign security forces that commit human rights abuses are upheld on the one hand, while balancing U.S. national security interests and regional security imperatives on the other?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security interests. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. Human rights is one of a number of national security interests that need to be considered as part of U.S. foreign assistance, but ensuring human rights is part of that conversation requires doubling down on both information-sharing and relationship-building. I understand DRL colleagues are engaged in building relationships with the various regional and functional bureaus; if I am confirmed, I will not only support such efforts but undertake them myself. If confirmed, I will work to support to the fullest extent partner governments' accountability mechanisms essential to the resumption of assistance to elements of foreign security forces critical to U.S. national security and regional security.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with regional and functional bureaus to ensure that statutory restrictions on assistance to foreign governments that engage in corruption and/or fail to uphold budget transparency requirements are upheld on the one hand, while balancing U.S. national interests and on the other?

Answer. U.S. national interests are served through a wide array of tools and approaches, including bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy, and foreign assistance. In countries that do not meet statutory restrictions on assistance to foreign governments, including those relating to corruption, I understand the Department elevates other forms of engagement, and can at times provide assistance to civil society organizations capable of advancing U.S. interests. Congress has passed important bipartisan legislation that enables U.S. Government efforts to better fight corruption and President Biden's Memorandum on the Fight Against Corruption as a Core United States National Security Interest will further enable the executive to assess corruption concerns by modernizing and resourcing our ability to elevate and effectively address this problem. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely and collaboratively with regional and functional bureaus and across the interagency to strategically leverage all foreign policy tools possible in each country context.

Question. If confirmed, how will you measure the impact of DRL grants for building the capacity of civil society organizations, particularly in non-permissive environments? What is—or should be—the criteria for "graduating" civil society organizations from reliance upon U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. I understand that DRL is a leader in the Department of State for their monitoring and evaluation of programs and grants. I understand DRL measures outcomes and impact, including on capacity building, through a set of custom indicators and routine evaluation. If confirmed, I will continue to support this practice and closely examine what criteria and metrics are in place for measuring success over all programmatic goals, including capacity building for civil society organizations (CSOs), including in non-permissive environments. My understanding is that DRL does not provide core funding for CSOs, but instead provides technical assistance (which can be geared towards CSO sustainability) or assistance to conduct par-

ticular activities within a time-limited grant (usually 2-3 years in length). Furthermore, my understanding is that it is not a question of “graduating” from U.S. foreign assistance as the grants, by nature, are time-limited and end.

Question. If confirmed, how will you de-conflict DRL’s grant-making with the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development—which has a far more significant budget and deep roots with civil society across all development sectors—to guard against duplication and waste?

Answer. DRL adds unique value to U.S. democracy, governance, and human rights programming. DRL’s close connection with activists and human rights defenders on the ground, especially in repressive environments, and programmatic flexibility allow it to address emerging opportunities and challenges. If confirmed, I pledge to ensure these programs are closely coordinated with the U.S. Agency for International Development. My understanding is that USAID and other relevant interagency representatives regularly participate in DRL’s grant-making process, to include serving on panels and reviewing program proposals. I hope to continue and deepen this collaboration if confirmed.

Question. In your view, should the U.S. Agency for International Development be directly engaging in democracy promotion, or would democracy promotion be best left to the Department of State and its diplomatic corps?

Answer. I believe that the U.S. Agency for International Development should engage in democracy support, especially in the context of development and strengthening government institutions in permissive environments. Supporting and advancing democracy in all environments is vitally important and has important links to development and aid efforts. support , If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues both at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to use all tools at our collective disposal to promote democracy.

Question. In your view, what is the difference between human rights defenders and climate activists?

Answer. I understand the United States defines human rights defenders as individuals, working alone or in groups, who non-violently, and consistent with the law, advocate for the promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights defenders can be of any ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious denomination, disability status, or age. They can come from any part of the world, from any social class or background, and work on a wide range of issues. A climate activist is someone who actively campaigns to have issues of climate change recognized and addressed. In some countries, individuals who exercise their human rights to peacefully express views on land, climate, or environmental issues face abuses from corrupt actors and/or politically motivated repression or reprisal. In such cases, I believe the Department should continue to protect the universal human right of these individuals to express and advocate for their views non-violently.

Question. Do you agree with the Biden administration’s recent efforts to prioritize U.S. foreign assistance specifically set aside for human rights defenders for climate activists, effectively placing them above other categories of activists that may be subject to security action?

Answer. The Department works to ensure foreign assistance funds are programmed consistent with applicable directives, including those related to human rights defenders. Members of civil society should be heard and not silenced when exercising their rights to freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly as they seek to participate in the governance of their country. U.S. diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance programs seek to protect and support civil society members and human rights defenders threatened and attacked for exercising their human rights, including those advocating on environmental issues. I also understand the Department has long included environmental activists as beneficiaries of support through a variety of foreign assistance programs. Activists exercising their human rights when seeking to protect the environment, including addressing climate change, are experiencing increasing repression and violence, including killings. I understand U.S. foreign assistance is provided to help address these threats. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the committee on these and other U.S. foreign assistance matters.

Security Partnerships:

Question. How do you define a values-based security partnership?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, protect the human rights of their citizens and civilians they protect, hold human rights violators accountable, and do not unduly restrict the fundamental freedoms of their people. Partnerships should also allow partners to speak openly and honestly about all issues—ones where there is agreement and ones where there is disagreement. Waiting until a U.S. law is violated doesn't help the U.S. and doesn't help the partner be at its best and more effective. If confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure core DRL equities are part of all security cooperation discussions, with an eye towards enhancing behavior and strengthening the partnership. I believe that we must continue to create and maintain strong values-based security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. How do you define a values-based security partnership?

Answer. I define a values-based security partnership as one that promotes democracy, human rights, and accountability in partner security forces. This means supporting leaders and institutional safeguards in foreign security forces that seek to advance those values but also placing importance on transparency, both between governments and with the American public. It means having regular, respectful, and frank conversations with our foreign security partners through embassy personnel as well as in bilateral security meetings with more senior officials. Rights-respecting, accountable security forces enjoy more support from their public, are better allies, and are more effective in promoting security in their own countries. It also means looking for opportunities to help with remediation so security forces can get back on track—or at least understand that doing so is a viable option. This ultimately improves U.S. security as well. If confirmed, I will work to build and maintain such values-based security partnerships.

Question. Do you believe that the U.S. should only pursue security partnerships with liberal democracies? Why or why not?

Answer. No. I believe that supporting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security and that most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, protect the human rights of their citizens and civilians, hold human rights violators accountable, and do not unduly restrict the fundamental freedoms of their people. While these are not the only security partnerships that exist, it is important to centralize core democratic tenets within these efforts. In some cases, if the partner in question isn't a democracy, security assistance can be a valuable incentive to generate reform. If confirmed, I will work to realize President Biden's vision of a foreign policy, including with regards to security partnerships, that are centered around human rights and democratic values, which can certainly but not exclusively find expression in partnerships with other democracies.

Question. How do you think a country's human rights environment will be affected if China replaces the U.S. as security partner of choice?

Answer. The PRC's active campaign to reshape the rules-based order, and corrupt practices are often conducted under the guise of diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation and can threaten both the human rights situation in countries with which China partners, as well as the partner country's very sovereignty. America's commitment to democracy and human rights in our foreign policy is a competitive advantage, including with our security partners, and one we have seen demanded by local populations from Hong Kong to Belarus. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that American values continue to remain a centerpiece of U.S. security cooperation.

FOLLOW-UP TO PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. How do you think a country's human rights environment will be affected if China replaces the U.S. as security partner of choice?

Answer. I believe the PRC's active campaign to reshape the rules-based order and other problematic practices are often conducted under the guise of diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation and threaten to degrade the human rights situation in countries with which China partners if China replaces the U.S. as a country's security partner of choice. America's commitment to promoting democracy and respect for human rights in our for-

eign policy is a competitive advantage, including with our security partners and has created important opportunities for strengthening bilateral relations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that American values continue to remain a centerpiece of U.S. security cooperation.

Question. Do you support imposing a new requirement for Leahy-like vetting for all U.S. arms sales? Why or why not?

Answer. I understand the Biden-Harris administration is already working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the administration's foreign policy priorities, including its emphasis on putting human rights at the center of foreign policy; if confirmed, I will support and uphold that policy. In the meantime, I understand the Department—consistent with the Arms Export Control Act and other applicable laws—determines on a case-by-case basis whether arms transfers support U.S. interests, including human rights. If there is interest from Congress to move a new Leahy-like vetting for all U.S. arms sales, I would engage meaningfully in the discussion and consult closely with others in the Department—as well as outside experts. When appropriate, that review should include consultations with the U.S. Congress and input from DoD and other interagency partners—a process I intend to take very seriously, if confirmed.

Question. Should the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor have a veto over arms sales?

Answer. No single bureau has or should have a veto over foreign arms sales; I understand human rights concerns are one of several factors taken into account in the arms sales process, together with the implications of such sales for U.S. and regional security, bilateral relations, and U.S. commercial interests. If confirmed, I will ensure that the arms sales process gives appropriate weight to human rights concerns raised by any bureau, and I will fully support the role of human rights considerations in arms transfer decisions, in line with the requirement for such considerations in statute and with President Biden's commitment to putting human rights at the center of foreign policy. I understand the Biden administration is already working to develop a new Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to ensure arms transfer decisions reflect the administration's foreign policy priorities, including its emphasis on putting human rights at the center of foreign policy.

Question. There are efforts in Congress to condition security assistance given to Israel. Yes or no, do you believe in conditioning Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of assistance that the U.S. gives Israel? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed I will fully support the administration's commitment not to condition U.S. assistance to Israel. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. I understand that the Leahy laws prohibit Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of U.S. assistance to foreign security forces that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights, where no accountability is taking place. If confirmed, I will fully support the letter and spirit of the Leahy Laws and their rigorous implementation by DRL, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. There are efforts in Congress to condition security assistance given to Israel. Yes or no, do you believe in conditioning Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of assistance that the U.S. gives Israel? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully support the administration's commitment not to condition U.S. assistance to Israel. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. I understand that the Leahy laws prohibit Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and other forms of U.S. assistance to foreign security forces that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights, where no accountability is taking place. If confirmed, I will fully support the letter and spirit of the Leahy Laws and their rigorous implementation by DRL, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense.

Question. Can the nominee clarify whether she thinks Israel is such a place where no accountability is taking place, as referenced in her answer?

Answer. I do not believe that Israel is a place where no accountability is taking place.

Question. The United States provides significant funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross. However, ICRC is now advocating for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty that threatens the ability of the U.S. to defend itself and its allies, among other issues. Do you believe this advocacy is outside the ICRC's mandate? Should U.S. taxpayers fund it?

Answer. I am aware the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been addressing nuclear weapons since 1945 as part of its mission. I also understand that the PRM bureau at the State Department is authorized to provide funds to the ICRC to respond to emergencies, protect and assist civilians in situations of armed conflict, wounded members of armed forces, prisoners of war, and other vulnerable populations, and promote international humanitarian law. I understand that the United States does not support the TPNW and, if confirmed, I will commit to work with my State Department and interagency colleagues on tangible, verifiable measures to reduce strategic risk and enable progress on nuclear disarmament.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. The United States provides significant funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross. However, ICRC is now advocating for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty that threatens the ability of the U.S. to defend itself and its allies, among other issues. Do you believe this advocacy is outside the ICRC's mandate? Should U.S. taxpayers fund it?

Answer. I am aware that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been addressing nuclear weapons since 1945 as part of its mission. The ICRC has an important role that includes promoting respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), helping to disseminate and teach it, and working with States in fulfilling their obligations under IHL, especially those of states parties to the Geneva Conventions. The United States does not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, nor does the U.S. Government provide funds to support the ICRC's advocacy activities related to it. If confirmed, I commit to defending the ability of the United States to defend itself and our allies and will work with my State Department and interagency colleagues on tangible, verifiable measures to reduce strategic risk and enable progress on nuclear disarmament.

Question. Since 2015, parties to the conflict in Yemen have carried out gross human rights violations with impunity. This includes the Iran-backed Houthis, who, both the U.N. and the Department of State, have implicated in abuses ranging from arbitrary arrest, forced disappearance, to gender-based violence and even torture.

- Please provide your assessment of the Houthi Movement's adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law.

Answer. The Houthis have committed egregious human rights abuses in Yemen; the United Nations Panel of Experts noted they may have also committed war crimes. The 2020 State Department Human Rights Report on Yemen notes many of these allegations, including arbitrary deprivation of life, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, torture, and the recruitment and use in hostilities of children. All parties to Yemen's armed conflict, including the Houthis, are responsible for compliance with international human law. Efforts to hold the Houthis responsible for grave crimes are just as important as those to hold government officials accountable. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push all parties to the conflict to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit to using your position to bringing greater awareness to the human rights violations being actively perpetrated by the Houthis in Yemen, which poses a grave and long-term threat to regional stability?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push all parties to the conflict to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions. The United States continues to work with our international partners to apply pressure on the Houthis, including via domestic and U.N. sanctions, and, if confirmed, I would support that work. I would also work closely with the U.N. Human Rights Council to continue highlighting the importance of accountability for human rights abuses committed in Yemen.

Question. To what extent do you feel the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure by the Houthis both in Yemen and in Saudi Arabia constitutes war crimes?

Answer. The Houthis continue to impact Saudi civilians and infrastructure with missiles and unmanned aircraft systems launched from Yemen. I understand that the Department of State shares concerns over these actions and has continued to urge all parties to this conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to mitigate the risk of harm to civilians.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. To what extent do you feel the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure by the Houthis both in Yemen and in Saudi Arabia constitutes war crimes?

Answer. The Houthis continue to mount egregious attacks against Saudi civilians and infrastructure with missiles and unmanned aircraft systems launched from Yemen. While I am not in a position to make a legal assessment of whether individual attacks constitute war crimes, credible NGOs such as Human Rights Watch have alleged that some of these attacks constituted war crimes. Houthi attacks on Marib have killed civilians, including small children, and have put over one million internally displaced Yemenis at grave risk, and Houthi attacks on Saudi civilian infrastructure have killed and wounded civilians. I understand that the Department of State shares concerns over these actions and has continued to urge all parties to this conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to mitigate the risk of harm to civilians.

Question. How would the role of the Houthis in a future government of Yemen impact this administration's ability to carry out its priorities with respect to human rights, religious freedom, and democracy promotion in Yemen?

Answer. President Biden has committed to elevating the importance of human rights in our foreign policy. The Houthis have a record of egregious human rights abuses. Respect for human rights, accountability for human rights abuses and violations, and progress on the political track are all mutually reinforcing. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking and our international partners to push all parties to the conflict to engage with the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in good faith and without preconditions.

Question. In a 2020 report, the U.N. panel of experts noted that their investigations "confirmed rampant levels of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, many of which may amount to war crimes." What role should DRL play in international efforts to pursue accountability and justice for crimes committed in Yemen?

Answer. The United States continues to work with our international partners to promote accountability in Yemen, including via domestic and U.N. sanctions, public and private diplomatic engagement, and support for documentation of human rights violations and abuses by all parties to the conflict. If confirmed, I would support that work and also engage local civil society organizations on what types of justice would be most meaningful.

Question. How does institutional capacity building at the local level fit into the overall peace process in Yemen?

Answer. Years of war have degraded governmental and non-governmental institutions throughout Yemen, and rebuilding key social, political, and economic institutions will be critical to reaching and maintaining a durable peace agreement. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking, the United Nations, the Government of Yemen, civil society leaders, including women and youth, and key regional and international partners to build on the unprecedented international consensus on the need to end the war.

Question. How can local government structures be better used to advance efforts to find a political settlement to the conflict?

Answer. Only a comprehensive peace agreement between Yemenis can begin to reverse the humanitarian crisis and bring sustainable relief. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking, the United Nations, the Government of Yemen, and key regional and international partners to build on the international consensus on the need to end the war and to engage civil society leaders, including women and youth at the local and national level. An inclusive political dialogue involving civil society is essential to ensuring all Yemenis are heard and represented in efforts to end the war.

Question. Since anti-government protests broke out in October 2019, dozens of protestors have been killed by Iran backed militia groups in Iraq. These groups operate largely with impunity having successfully evaded the Government of Iraq's efforts to hold them to account for their crimes. What role should DRL play in ensuring the protests movement's voices are heard and their concerns addressed?

Answer. The Government of Iraq has an obligation to respect and protect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Peaceful demonstrators seeking democratic reforms should never be met with threats and violence. If confirmed, I will prioritize promoting accountability for the ongoing violence against protesters, journalists, and activists in Iraq. I also will ensure DRL continues to work with other U.S. Government stakeholders and likeminded countries to pursue justice, accountability, and democratic reforms through increased diplomatic pressure on the Government of Iraq to investigate and hold accountable individuals responsible for violence against the media, protesters, voters, civil society activists and minority populations, as well as to continue to communicate the U.S. Government's strong support for the rights and dignity of all persons.

Question. After months of stalled government formation efforts following the August 4, 2020 Beirut Port Blast, Lebanon's political elite finally reached an agreement to form a cabinet on September 20, 2021. If confirmed, please outline your list of priorities with respect to Lebanon.

Answer. If confirmed, I would support efforts to urge the newly formed Lebanese Government to take action to address the dire economic situation facing those living in Lebanon and to address the legitimate demands of the Lebanese people, including concrete political and economic reforms which would combat corruption and protect the rights of Lebanese civil society, as well as accountability for the port blast. I would also support efforts to work to ensure Lebanon's parliamentary elections are held on-time and conducted in a free and fair manner.

Question. How do you plan to work with Lebanon's newly formed cabinet and civil society to support efforts to pursue accountability for the Beirut Port Blast?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support efforts to push for the newly formed Lebanese Government to work closely with Lebanese civil society to ensure accountability for the Beirut Port Blast. I believe the Lebanese justice system must work without any political interference, and civil society plays an important role in promoting transparency.

Question. Please provide your assessment of Russia's role in the Middle East and North Africa region with respect to human rights and democratic ideals.

Answer. Russia's actions in the Middle East and North Africa largely serve to undermine the international order, including human rights and democracy, through its enabling of regimes committing human rights violations. Among the greatest concerns is Russia's military campaign in Syria in support of the Assad regime, which has led to massive destruction, the detainment and abuse of countless individuals, the displacement of millions, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands. If confirmed, I will push back on Russia's efforts to shield the Assad regime from accountability, including in multilateral fora.

Question. Is it your view that closer partnership with Russia positively, or negatively, impacts U.S. interests in the region?

Answer. In general, Russia's interests in the region are mostly geopolitical but there is an element of commercial interest as well—which means there are multiple angles for the U.S. to consider engaging. If confirmed, I would support cooperation with Russia in the Middle East and North Africa region on issues where our interests align, such as on constraining Iran's nuclear ambitions. In Syria, the United States has always been open to dialogue with Russia as long as it contributes to the protection of civilians, enables steps toward a political resolution to the conflict, and promotes Syria's adherence to its international obligations. Where Russia acts to thwart U.S. objectives in the region, however, I believe the United States should respond with firm resolve. Calling out and holding Russia accountable for its malign actions is an important response tool.

Question. According to the U.N., widespread human rights violations have been committed over the course of the conflict in Libya. What role should DRL play in efforts to pursue accountability for the victims?

Answer. The United States shares the aspirations of the Libyan people: a sovereign, stable, unified, and secure Libya, free from foreign interference. Libyans should be able to feel that their rights will be respected. Ensuring accountability for human rights abuses is critical to the national reconciliation process.

If confirmed, I will explore all tools available to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses in Libya, including sanctions and support for multilateral mechanisms like the U.N. International Fact-Finding Mission on Libya. I will continue ongoing diplomatic engagement with the Libyan Government and civil society, and will support civil society in their efforts to document human rights violations and abuses as part of broader accountability mechanisms.

Question. What is the best recourse to pursue action against the alleged perpetrators of such crimes?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with Libyan civil society and build on international best practices and the expertise of my colleagues in the Department to determine the most effective way to promote accountability in support of a sovereign, stable, secure, and unified Libya that protects the human rights of all individuals in the country.

Question. Please provide your assessment of the exceptional measures taken by President Kais Saied in July through which he suspended parliament, lifted MP's immunity, and dismissed the prime minister.

Answer. I share the Tunisian people's goal of a democratic government that is responsive to the country's needs, as it battles economic and health crises. I am concerned that President Saied's transitional measures are continuing without a clear end in sight. If confirmed, I would echo calls from the Tunisian public for the president to articulate a plan with a clear timeline for an inclusive reform process that includes civil society and diverse political voices and ensure that Tunisians' human rights are respected and protected.

Question. To what extent do you feel President Saied's recent actions threaten the state of Tunisian democracy?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration continues to urge President Saied to swiftly end exceptional measures, appoint a prime minister to form a capable government that can respond to Tunisians' legitimate economic and political demands, and launch an inclusive reform process that incorporates civil society and diverse political perspectives. If confirmed, I would support and advance administration policy on these fronts, echo calls from the Tunisian public for the president to articulate a plan with a clear timeline for an inclusive reform process that includes civil society and diverse political voices and ensure that Tunisians' human rights are respected and protected.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to work with Tunisia to preserve hard won democratic gains?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has called on the Tunisian Government to continue its public commitment to respect Tunisians' fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. If confirmed, I would continue to make clear the United States' unwavering support for Tunisian democracy and work closely with a range of Tunisian interlocutors, including Tunisian civil society, to strengthen Tunisia's democracy, and ensure that Tunisians' human rights are respected and protected. I would also work closely with multilateral organizations and the international financial institutions to ensure Tunisia's democracy has wide support and adequate resources to succeed.

Question. In 2016, the Obama administration signed a 10-year security assistance Memorandum of Understanding with Israel in which the U.S. pledged military assistance in the form of Foreign Military Financing and missile defense funding. Do you support providing Israel with defensive capabilities that include Iron Dome munitions?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel's defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. On May 20, President Biden assured Prime Minister Netanyahu of his "full support to replenish Israel's Iron Dome system to ensure [Israel's] defense and security in the future." If confirmed, I will support transfers of defensive capabilities to Israel consistent with U.S. law and the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding.

Question. In May, President Biden confirmed his administration's support for Israel and said, "Until the region says unequivocally they acknowledge the right of Israel to exist as an independent Jewish state, there will be no peace." If confirmed, will you support transfers of offensive capabilities to Israel so they can properly defend themselves?

Answer. The United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. If confirmed, I will support transfers of offensive capabilities to Israel consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Should the International Criminal Court investigate U.S. or Israeli personnel? Why or why not?

Answer. No. I support the administration's efforts to firmly oppose investigations by the International Criminal Court of U.S. or Israeli personnel. The United States and Israel are not parties to the ICC and have not consented to the Court's jurisdiction. I understand the U.S. Government has expressed serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise its jurisdiction over Israeli personnel. The Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state and therefore, are not qualified to obtain membership as a state in, participate as a state in, or delegate jurisdiction to the ICC.

I understand the United States Government remains deeply committed to ensuring justice and accountability for international atrocity crimes. I recognize the role that international tribunals such as the ICC can play—within their respective mandates—in the pursuit of those important objectives and believe a peaceful, secure, and more prosperous future for the people of the Middle East depends on building bridges and creating new avenues for dialogue and exchange, not unilateral judicial actions that can exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution.

Question. What are your views on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which includes companies with whom the Department of State does business?

Answer. I firmly oppose the BDS movement. While the United States will protect the constitutional rights of our citizens to free speech, the Biden-Harris administration has been clear that it resolutely opposes the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement because it unfairly and inappropriately singles out Israel.

Question. Under what conditions would you advocate for the United States—and the Department of State, in particular—to join the boycott movement?

Answer. Like the Biden-Harris administration, I firmly oppose the BDS movement.

Question. Do you believe that Israeli settlements in West Bank and Gaza are illegal?

Answer. I believe it is critical for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, including annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, incitement to violence, and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Do you believe that Israeli settlements in West Bank and Gaza are illegal?

Answer. The two-state solution is the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state, and to give the Palestinians the state they seek. I firmly oppose any unilateral provocative actions that risk sparking more violence and that undermine prospects for a just, durable resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, which ultimately requires two states. I believe it is critical for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, including annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, incitement to violence, and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. I am not in a position to speak to the administration's legal views. If confirmed, I will work to preserve the path to a two-state solution, as the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state they seek.

Question. The Egyptian Government has a less-than-stellar record on human rights, including recent arbitrary detentions of human rights activists, impunity for security services, deplorable detention conditions, suppression of fundamental freedoms, and more. It is important that the United States seek to bolster human rights and civil society in Egypt. What tools will you use to address these human rights abuses and end impunity for those committing them?

Answer. It's clear that the United States has multiple priorities when it comes to policy toward Egypt, but I think it's important to recognize that the Secretary of State's recent decision neither to certify improvements in Egypt's human rights record nor to waive the Foreign Military Financing human rights conditions presents an opportunity for the administration to double down on its efforts to address Egypt's grave human rights crisis. If confirmed, I will consider all tools available to address human rights violations in Egypt and to end impunity for those violations, including through public and private diplomatic engagement, engagement with partners and at multilateral forums, and more punitive measures to address specific abuses, including restrictions on security assistance as appropriate. I also will support engagement with Egyptian civil society groups, including human rights defenders and work closely with the NEA bureau and Embassy Cairo to ensure those civil society voices are heard. Ultimately, the Egyptian people will be the most effective advocates for human rights and government accountability in Egypt, so if confirmed I will prioritize identifying how to best push back on Egyptian restrictions on civic space and how to secure adequate space for independent civil society groups working to address these issues in Egypt.

Question. If confirmed, what would you change about current programming in Syria?

Answer. I understand that since before the 2011 uprisings, DRL programs have been actively supporting Syrian civil society, independent journalists, civic groups, and women and youth activists, to advance the cause of democracy and human rights. I believe DRL's programs protect civic space for Syrian civil society groups to advocate for the needs of their communities; play an active role in the political process; promote reconciliation and stabilization of areas recently liberated; hold local governance institutions accountable; contribute to accountability and transitional justice efforts; and provide support to survivors of torture and sexual and gender-based violence. While other donors have ceased or limited their support for these Syrian civil society actors, DRL has provided continuous assistance to help protect civil society's role as positive change agents within Syria, in neighboring countries, and in the diaspora. If confirmed, I will look closely at DRL's programmatic efforts in Syria to determine if any changes are needed to ensure the continued success and impact of these efforts, to ensure our programs remain aligned with our policy, and to ensure our partners can continue to operate as safely as possible.

Question. Do you agree that the United States should not be funding reconstruction efforts in Syria? Please explain your answer.

Answer. If confirmed, I would not support reconstruction assistance to Syria until there is irreversible progress toward a political resolution to the conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254. I would support the United States continuing to provide humanitarian aid in Syria, including certain early recovery assistance, to build resilience and restore Syrian civilians' access to basic services, so long as these are delivered on the basis of need and conducted by independent and impartial humanitarian agencies.

Question. What steps, if confirmed, will you take to bolster civil society in country?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure the United States continues its strong support for courageous Syrian civil society actors whose efforts are critical to advancing peace and stability in Syria. I understand DRL has provided continuous assistance to maintain civil society's role as positive change agents within Syria, including through efforts to protect and expand civic space and encourage meaningful citizen participation in public policy and governance; promote local reconciliation; support human rights and accountability efforts; and facilitate reintegration of returning IDPs, among other activities, as well as Syrians in neighboring countries and the diaspora. If confirmed, I will ensure DRL continues to work closely with interagency colleagues to ensure the continued success and impact of these efforts, and that our partners can continue to operate as safely as possible.

Question. What steps, if confirmed, will you take to bolster human rights defenders in country?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure DRL continues its strong support for courageous Syrian human rights defenders whose efforts are critical to advancing peace and stability in Syria. I understand DRL has provided continuous assistance to ensure human rights defenders' efforts to contribute to accountability and transitional justice efforts; provide support to survivors of torture and gender-based violence; play an active role in the political process; and promote stabilization in areas liberated from ISIS. If confirmed, I will ensure DRL continues to work closely with inter-

agency colleagues to support and encourage the continued success and impact of these efforts, and that our partners can continue to operate as safely as possible.

Question. Syrian-Russian forces continue to deliberately and openly attack civilian entities, community centers, and populations. How would you engage with the intra-Department and interagency to promote a political solution through United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254?

Answer. If confirmed, I would encourage the United States to remain engaged with the U.N., our allies, and our international partners to encourage all possible efforts to advance a political resolution to the conflict through a U.N.-facilitated, Syrian-led process as laid out in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254, including a nationwide ceasefire and the release of arbitrarily detained Syrians. Peace and stability in Syria, and the greater region, can only be achieved through a political process that addresses the root causes of the conflict, including the Assad regime's ongoing campaign of arbitrary detention and violence against his own people, and promotes accountability for the innumerable atrocities the Assad regime and its allies have perpetrated against the Syrian people.

Question. The use of arbitrary detention and torture by the Assad regime continues to shock the conscious. Please explain what tools are available to you, if confirmed, to hold the regime accountable for its crimes against civilians?

Answer. If confirmed, I would use every tool at my disposal to promote an end to the Assad regime's vicious campaign of arbitrary detention and torture in Syria. I will consult with our DRL team and Department colleagues to assess which tools are most appropriate to achieving this objective, including continued support for human rights and documentation groups laying the groundwork for accountability efforts; support for former detainees, families of the missing, and other survivors of the regime's abuses; the continued use of targeted sanctions that promote accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses and limit their access to resources; and ensuring our efforts to advance a political resolution also address the root causes of the conflict and promote accountability for the innumerable atrocities the Assad regime and its allies have perpetrated against the Syrian people.

Question. The recent botched evacuation in Afghanistan highlights some serious gaps in the policy decisions made by this administration. What conditions would a Biden administration place on future assistance to Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will monitor closely how any future government of Afghanistan respects and protects human rights, especially for women, girls, and minority groups, and fundamental freedoms that have become an integral part of the life of all Afghan citizens, and actively engage our bilateral and multilateral partners to maintain unity in holding the Taliban accountable to their actions. If confirmed, I also commit to ensuring unhindered U.S. humanitarian assistance continues to safely flow to support the needs of Afghan people and that female aid workers are granted the ability to fully participate in the delivery of aid. I will work to increase support to human rights defenders, independent journalists, and civil society activists who remain in Afghanistan. The provision of humanitarian assistance is a demonstration of the U.S. commitment to the Afghan people, and an important part of ensuring they remain protected and supported. If confirmed, I will encourage the United States, to work with other governments, with financial institutions, and with NGOs to support humanitarian and emergency assistance to Afghans whose lives depend on it.

Question. U.S. efforts in Afghanistan dramatically improved conditions for women, minority and youth but now are at great risk of violence and regression from the Taliban. How should the State Department safeguard the gains made for Afghan women, minority, and youth in the current security environment?

Answer. The meaningful participation of women and members of minority groups in governance has a positive effect on the economic, political, and health aspects of a country and its people. If confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to hold the Taliban to its stated commitment to allow U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghans with the proper documentation who wish to leave the country to do so. I will also continue to support efforts to hold the Taliban to international expectations on respecting the fundamental human rights of all Afghans, including those of women, children, and members of minority and vulnerable groups. I will also work with the international community, including the United Nations, to hold the perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations accountable for those actions. Part of my job, if confirmed, will be to make sure the Department—as well as the interagency—is aware of the fragile situation for women, minorities, and youth and has all the updated information available so we can make decisions as U.S. Government that

lessens the burdens—and threats—they face and increase protection and opportunities.

Question. Do you feel that this administration failed women, girls, and youth in Afghanistan given the botched evacuation?

Answer. Over 124,000 American citizens, lawful permanent residents (LPRs), locally employed staff, Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs), and Afghans at-risk, including women, children, journalists, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and members of minority groups were evacuated from Afghanistan prior to September 1. That said, many vulnerable Afghans remain in Afghanistan and will need support and protection. The administration will continue to hold the Taliban to their commitment to allowing the safe passage of American citizens, LPRs, and Afghans with the proper documentation, including women and children, who desire to leave. The meaningful participation of women and members of minority groups in governance has a positive effect on the economic, political, and security health of a country. If confirmed, I will work with the rest of the interagency to press the Taliban on the international community's expectations of their ability to uphold the rights of all Afghans, including women and children. I will engage our multilateral and bilateral partners on the same, to ensure they are pushing the same message of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need to form an inclusive government that includes women and members of minority groups. I will work with the international community, including the United Nations, to hold the perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations accountable for their actions.

Question. How will you continue to support vulnerable populations in Afghanistan and the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially for Afghan human rights defenders, women, children, journalists, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, members of minority groups, and other vulnerable persons. I will support U.S. efforts to hold the Taliban to its stated commitment to allow American citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghans with the proper documentation who wish to leave the country to do so, as well as press them to respect human rights, including those of women and children, in Afghanistan. I will also look for ways for the State Department to support multilateral initiatives that protect and support vulnerable populations, work with regional governments, multilateral organizations, international civil society organizations and USAID colleagues. I will seek to maintain our robust relationships with Afghan human rights defenders both inside and outside Afghanistan. If confirmed, my commitment to these relationships will remain unwavering as we work with academics, human rights defenders, women activists, and disability activists on these issues.

Question. The U.S. recently killed 10 civilians, including seven children, via an over-the-horizon drone strike in Afghanistan. The U.S. has killed civilians in numerous other errant strikes. Would other countries be justified in boycotting, divesting, and sanctioning the United States? Why or why not?

Answer. I share my deepest condolences with the families and friends of those who were killed by the strike. While the United States, like all other countries, has a right to defend itself and, if confirmed, I will defend that right, there has been tremendous work in the area of how best to respond to civilian casualties and a number of lessons learned that if implemented robustly can help generate both effectiveness towards national security goals and good will amongst local communities. General McKenzie stated on September 17, "This strike was taken in the earnest belief that it would prevent an imminent threat to our forces and the evacuees at the airport. But it was a mistake and I offer my sincere apology." Secretary Austin said that "We will endeavor to learn from this horrible mistake. To that end, I have directed a thorough review of the investigation just completed by U.S. Central Command. I have asked for this review to consider the degree to which the investigation considered all available context and information, the degree to which accountability measures need be taken and at what level, and the degree to which strike authorities, procedures and processes need to be altered in the future." I believe such a response is important not just to the immediate friends and family of those killed but also for us as a country and is morally responsible. If confirmed, I will support the approach described in these statements.

Question. Is it your opinion that the policy and objectives being advanced by the Chinese Communist Party pose the greatest foreign policy challenge to the United States today and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future?

Answer. There is no doubt that the PRC poses the most significant challenge of any nation to the United States in terms of our values and the interests of the American people. If confirmed, I will pay special attention to the PRC, whose pernicious attacks on human rights, dissent, and the rule of law are on the rise domestically and fast becoming a common export. Our priority must be making sure the PRC does not succeed in its efforts to undermine international human rights and the rules-based order.

Question. If not, why not?

Answer. There is no doubt that the PRC poses the most significant challenge of any nation to the United States in terms of our values and the interests of the American people.

Question. What do you believe is our greatest foreign policy challenge?

Answer. I believe there is not one issue that is our greatest foreign policy challenge but instead a number of interlocking ones that include digital and technological advancements, the climate crisis, rising authoritarianism, and an increasingly aggressive China. These transnational issues are already testing democracies worldwide and, left unchecked or ill-coordinated, have the potential to lead to frayed alliances, institutional vulnerabilities, massive, large scale and persistent migration, and a serious deterioration of basic, fundamental freedoms. If we don't rise to the occasion to respond to each of these developments in a coordinated way, the consequences to democracy, security, and human rights could be catastrophic.

Question. Will the Biden administration continue public presidential meetings with, and support for, the Dalai Lama as conducted by the Trump administration?

Answer. Yes. I understand administrations from both political parties have long welcomed engagement with, and support for, His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a globally renowned religious leader. If confirmed, I would support a continuation of that practice.

Question. Will you commit that the Department of State will meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives, as the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor did in 2020?

Answer. Yes. I understand administrations from both political parties have long welcomed engagement with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. If confirmed, I would support a continuation of that practice.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to confront the Chinese Government on the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang?

Answer. The United States should continue to speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and deter future abuses. If confirmed, I will continue concrete U.S. Government action—in coordination with our allies and partners whenever possible—to promote accountability for ongoing atrocities and genocide in Xinjiang, including through the imposition of visa restrictions, tightening of export controls, enforcement of import restrictions, imposition of financial sanctions, and multilateral initiatives. We will continue to caution businesses about the economic, legal, and reputational risks of supply chain links to entities that engage in human rights abuses, including forced labor in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China.

Question. Due to the massive amounts of human rights abuses being committed by the Chinese Communist Party, do you believe they should be allowed to host the Olympics in 2022?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the human rights violations and abuses being committed by the PRC. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State continues to play a strong leadership role in global efforts to combat serious human rights abuses committed by the PRC, domestically and abroad, and consults closely with our allies and partners to establish a shared approach regarding the Olympics.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Due to the massive amounts of human rights abuses being committed by the Chinese Communist Party, do you believe they should be allowed to host the Olympics in 2022?

Answer. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) members select the Olympic host. If confirmed, I will engage with the IOC and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee to advocate for human rights to be consid-

ered in the selection of host cities consistent with the Olympic Charter, which highlights respect and human dignity as key values.

I am deeply concerned by the human rights violations and abuses being committed by the PRC Government and the PRC Government's abhorrent genocide and crimes against humanity against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State continues to play a strong leadership role in global efforts to end the genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, combat human rights abuses committed by the PRC, domestically and abroad, and will consult closely with our allies and partners to define our common concerns and establish a shared approach.

Question. Legislation currently under consideration proposes a human rights briefing for the Olympic athletes on Team USA. The briefing would help inform athletes about major human rights abuses committed by the government hosting the Olympics, and alert them to narratives that the government pushes to deflect or deny such abuses. Do you support such a proposal?

Answer. I support raising awareness among athletes of the human rights abuses committed by the government hosting the Olympics. If confirmed, I will consult with key stakeholders, including the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, in developing an approach that does so.

Question. Would you devote Department of State resources and personnel toward working with the International Olympic Committee and other relevant stakeholders to ensure such briefings are provided to as many American athletes as possible prior to the 2022 Olympics?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with key stakeholders, primarily the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, in developing our approach to continue to conduct outreach on human rights issues to American athletes chosen or competing for a place on Team USA prior to the 2022 Olympics.

FOLLOW-UP TO THEIR PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Would you devote Department of State resources and personnel toward working with the International Olympic Committee and other relevant stakeholders to ensure such briefings are provided to as many American athletes as possible prior to the 2022 Olympics?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and relevant others in the Department to ensure that briefings, including about PRC human rights and atrocities, are provided to as many American athletes chosen or competing for a place on Team USA prior to the 2022 Olympics.

Question. Do you support a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Olympics? Why or why not?

Answer. I understand this is a strongly bipartisan issue that many in Congress are focused on and I understand why. If confirmed, I will closely consult with key stakeholders in developing our approach, ideally a shared approach with allies and partners, in advance of and during the 2022 Olympic Games. I will review this issue in light of the PRC's abhorrent human rights record, including genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Do you support a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Olympics? Why or why not?

Answer. The PRC has an abhorrent human rights record, including the commission of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang. I believe the United States should continue to speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and deter future abuses, including a potential diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Olympics. I personally support such a diplomatic boycott as a way of signaling U.S. disapproval of the PRC's behavior.

Question. The CCP has cracked down on the most basic rights of the people of Hong Kong. How will you address the human rights abuses occurring in Hong Kong?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the PRC and Hong Kong Governments' increased efforts to wield the National Security Law as a tool to curtail the exercise of human rights, dismantle civil society, and silence dissenting views. If confirmed, I will support the United States' continued efforts to press the PRC to abide by its international obligations and commitments; to cease its dismantlement of Hong Kong's democratic institutions, autonomy, and rule of law; to immediately release and drop all charges against individuals unjustly detained in Hong Kong; and to respect the human rights of the people of Hong Kong.

Question. Do you believe that reaching a climate agreement should be the top priority in our dealings with China? If so, why?

Answer. Addressing the climate crisis with urgency is a top priority for the administration, but without question, so is protecting human rights. I believe human rights should not be given a back seat even as other issues come to the fore. The administration has said rights are not a negotiating chip in engagements with the PRC or any other country for greater action on climate. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that that approach continues.

Question. If not, what should be our top priority instead?

Answer. The administration's Interim National Security Strategy states that "we will only succeed in advancing American interests and upholding our universal values by working in common cause with our closest allies and partners, and by renewing our own enduring sources of national strength." If confirmed, I will seek to ensure the promotion of our democratic values are at the center of U.S. foreign policy, including in our dealings with China.

Question. The PRC Government and Chinese companies have been implicated in corruption at home and in its dealings with other countries around the world. If confirmed, will you commit to highlighting corrupt Chinese practices and prioritize assistance to help counter corruption, including corruption caused or exacerbated by the Chinese Government or Chinese companies?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Several countries have forcibly returned Uyghurs fleeing persecution and abhorrent human rights abuses by the Chinese Communist Party. How will you and interagency partners work with other nations to discourage, and eventually end, this practice?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners to urge third countries to act to avoid complicity in the PRC's human rights violations and abuses committed against Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minorities from Xinjiang, including by providing protection to and preventing the forcible return of individuals seeking to flee the PRC's repressive policies.

Question. Do you consider the human rights abuses committed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against the Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minorities, including forced sterilization, to constitute a genocide? If not, please explain.

Answer. Yes. As Secretary Blinken has said, the PRC has committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. These atrocities remain ongoing.

Question. The Chinese Government continues to "Sinicize" religions, which the Congressional Executive Commission on China describes as "a campaign that aims to bring religion in China under closer official control and into conformity with officially sanctioned interpretations of Chinese culture." These policies affect Christians, Muslims, Han Buddhists, Taoists, and many others. What can the Biden administration do to support freedom of religious practice for the people of China, free from interference and enforced conformity?

Answer. I share your concerns regarding the ongoing deterioration of freedom of religion or belief in the PRC. The PRC demonstrates blatant disregard for freedom of religion or belief and exercises extreme hostility toward members of all religious and spiritual communities, including predominantly Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, Protestants, Catholics, and Falun Gong. These communities have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government.

The PRC is engaged in human rights abuses—and in the case of Xinjiang, genocide and crimes against humanity—that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences.

If confirmed, I will speak out consistently with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities and abuses, and I will consider all appropriate tools to promote ac-

countability for those responsible and to deter future abuses. I will also continue to urge the PRC to uphold its international commitments with respect to freedom of religion or belief for all individuals and call on the international community to condemn with a united voice the PRC's atrocities in Xinjiang.

Question. The Vatican extended its agreement with the Chinese Government that establishes a process for appointing bishops in China. Under the Agreement, bishops in China are in communion with Rome but also approved by the Chinese Government. The details of this agreement have never been made public. Despite the agreement, Catholic bishops not affiliated with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association continue to face persecution. Do you believe this Vatican-China agreement advanced human rights and religious freedom in China? If so, why? If not, why not?

Answer. As I understand, despite the provisional agreement between the Holy See and Beijing, the PRC continues to repress Catholics, particularly clergy and laypersons who refuse state control of religion. In his book published late last year, Pope Francis characterized Uyghurs in the PRC alongside members of other religious and ethnic communities as persecuted due to their beliefs.

If confirmed, I would encourage the Holy See to speak out publicly against the PRC's human rights violations and abuses of members of minority religious and ethnic communities. I would also encourage the Holy See to hold the PRC Government accountable to the terms of the provisional agreement and make the terms of the agreement public to promote accountability for the PRC's commitments.

Question. If confirmed, will you prioritize religious freedom issues in China in your diplomatic engagements with Vatican officials? What will you emphasize to them in these engagements?

Answer. The Holy See has a long history of promoting freedom of religion or belief, including through advocacy and interfaith dialogue, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with the Vatican on this issue. If confirmed, I would encourage the Holy See to speak out publicly against the PRC's human rights violations and abuses of members of minority religious and ethnic communities. I would also encourage the Holy See to hold the PRC Government accountable to the terms of the provisional agreement and make the terms of the agreement public to promote accountability for the PRC's commitments.

Question. Xi Jinping has emphasized the desire to ensure that Hollywood filmmakers use their position to "tell China's story well". This translates into Beijing's overreach into and censorship of Hollywood films through explicit censorship requirements for the Chinese market, boycotts and economic pressure, and acquisitions of industry corporations by Chinese companies. As Hollywood director Judd Apatow recently said, "Instead of us doing business with China and that leading to China being more free, what has happened is that China has bought our silence with their money".

- Will the Biden administration, including yourself and other senior State Department officials, engage the film industry regarding the pernicious impact of censorship by the Chinese Government and other authoritarian governments on freedom of expression and other principles that are fundamental to the political system of United States?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What are your views on the implications and consequences of Beijing's tactics in Hollywood for the PRC's overall strategy to exercise malign influence across various types of U.S. media? What other types of media in the United States are at risk of being subjected to tactics we are seeing used by Beijing to influence Hollywood?

Answer. I am concerned by the PRC's campaign of disinformation and censorship, which extends well beyond its borders and directly impacts the information environment in the United States. The PRC's attempts to control freedom of expression are not limited to Hollywood or U.S. media but extend into cultural, academic, and social media spaces as well.

If confirmed, I will engage with governments and nongovernmental actors, including media organizations and private institutions, to promote freedom of expression and support U.S. entities in resisting PRC malign influence and coercion. I will also work closely with partners and allies to build resilience to, and jointly confront, the PRC's efforts to control the global information environment.

Question. China is starting to build extraterritoriality into its laws and regulations, not just the Hong Kong National Security Law but also numerous other laws

and regulations. Please describe what you think the implications are for human rights abroad and for the United States in particular.

Answer. The PRC continues its efforts to reshape the international rules-based order to advance its own interests, including by utilizing its laws and regulations to commit transnational repression. These actions threaten global peace and stability and threaten human rights and democratic institutions and actors in the United States and globally.

If confirmed, I will work closely with our partners to address these challenges from a position of strength, reengage in international institutions, and resist attempts to rewrite the rules that govern these institutions. I will use all available diplomatic tools to promote accountability for these egregious abuses and support human rights defenders and civil society organizations seeking protection.

Question. Will you commit not to advise or support entrance into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis. I believe these two goals are complementary.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you commit not to advise or support entrance into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests and focus on what Beijing does—not what it says it will or won't do. I will not advise that the United States sacrifice vital U.S. interests or our values for PRC promises on climate change. We can speak the truth about the PRC's human rights abuses and atrocities and promote accountability for them while working to reverse the effects of climate change.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests, including a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea that ensures freedom of navigation. I believe this goal is consistent with and supportive of the President's goals on climate change.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you commit not to recommend decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests, including the continuation of activities that protect and promote the rules-based order in the South China Sea such as freedom of navigation exercises. I will not recommend decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend making changes in our defense relationship with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address climate change while deepening and strengthening strategic alliances including in the Indo-Pacific region in line with U.S. interests, including the protection and promotion of human rights; I believe these goals are complementary.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you commit not to recommend making changes in our defense relationship with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis while deepening and strengthening strategic alliances including in the Indo-Pacific region in line with U.S. interests, which include the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights; I believe these goals are complementary. If confirmed, I will support cooperation with the PRC where it is in line with these objectives.?

Question. Will you commit not to recommend delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address climate change while deepening and strengthening strategic partnerships including with Taiwan in line with U.S. interests, including the protection and promotion of human rights; I believe these goals are complementary.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you commit not to recommend delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support President Biden's commitment to policies that address climate change while deepening and strengthening strategic partnerships including with Taiwan in line with U.S. interests, including the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights; I believe these goals are complementary. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, I will seek to enhance the U.S. relationship with Taiwan, including the defense relationship, as a way of implementing the President's vision of a foreign policy with democracy and human rights at the center.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you commit not to recommend deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests and to work alongside U.S. allies and partners to confront the PRC's anti-competitive, market distorting, and coercive behaviors. I will not recommend against pursuing policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend terminating sanctions against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support policies that advance U.S. values and interests. I will make recommendations regarding sanctions and Entity List designations that promote and protect human rights and labor rights, including forced labor and I will recommend those not be lifted until there is progress on human and labor rights. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis.

Question. Will you commit not to recommend dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to advocating for U.S. policies that protect and promote human rights and hold PRC and CCP officials accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including the ongoing atrocities in Xinjiang and campaign of repression targeting Tibetans, Hong Kongers, lawyers, and human rights

defenders. I believe this can be done in a manner consistent with the President's commitment to policies that address the climate crisis.

Question. Recently the Government of Bangladesh has forcibly moved Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazaar to Bhasan Char, an island in the Bay of Bengal. This move was done without consultation with donor countries and international organizations. If confirmed, do you commit to discussing this move with Bangladeshi Government officials?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will uphold the U.S. Government's long-standing commitment to ensure movements of displaced persons are informed and voluntary. I recognize and appreciate the generosity Bangladesh has shown in hosting nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees since they fled horrific atrocities and abuses in Burma in 2017. I believe that the United States, as the leading contributor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Rohingya crisis, also has a responsibility to ensure Bangladesh respects these refugees' human rights, including freedom of movement. If confirmed, I will work with other donor countries and international organizations to message consistently to Bangladeshi authorities that any transfers must be in full coordination with humanitarian organizations and align with humanitarian principles.

Question. Do you commit to pressing the Bangladeshi officials to ensure that no further moves before the United Nations conducts a thorough and independent technical and protection assessments to determine the safety, feasibility, and desirability of relocating refugees Bhasan Char?

Answer. Yes. I understand the United States has consistently recognized and appreciated the challenges and responsibilities that the Rohingya humanitarian response has placed on the Government and people of Bangladesh. If confirmed, I will commit to supporting consistent, strong U.S. messaging to urge Bangladesh to permit the U.N. to conduct a comprehensive technical and protection assessment on Bhasan Char. I would also commit to working with Bangladesh and humanitarian groups to ensure that such relocations are voluntary and based on informed consent without pressure or coercion.

Question. Do you support United States security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Yes. U.S. national security benefits when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and do not unduly restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we develop and maintain such important security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, guided by President Biden's insistence that U.S. interests and values are inseparable.

Question. Do you believe that U.S. security alliances and partnerships can contribute to improving human rights records in relevant countries?

Answer. Yes, I believe U.S. security alliances and partnerships as important aspects of foreign policy can and should be used for positive effect on countries' human rights records. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation.

Question. Do you consider the Philippines to be a strategically important ally of the United States? Please explain your position.

Answer. Yes. The U.S. alliance with the Philippines is one of the oldest and most strategically important in East Asia. Continued engagement with the Philippine Government is vital to regional security. At the same time, in that engagement, I believe it is crucial for the U.S. to emphasize the importance of shared values including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to sustain a stable, bilateral partnership. If confirmed, I will raise human rights concerns—from arbitrary and unlawful killings to targeting the independent press—at every possible opportunity with the Government of the Philippines.

Question. What is your assessment of the U.S.-Philippine relationship and its importance to U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region more broadly?

Answer. The United States' effort to build a network of allies and partners that can credibly and collectively respond to shared security threats has the benefit of strengthening the free, open, and inclusive regional order, which is in our national interest. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue that goal while helping to ensure that our engagement with those partners and allies includes promotion of human rights and accountability for abuse. I believe that respect for human rights is integral to maintaining strong and sustainable countries and partnerships.

Question. Do you support continuing a robust security partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including through appropriate arms transfers consistent with existing U.S. law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support continuing a robust security partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including through appropriate arms transfers consistent with existing U.S. law and provisions that promote and protect human rights.

Question. Do you support United States security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Yes. U.S. national security benefits when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and do not unduly restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we develop and maintain security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, guided by President Biden's insistence that U.S. interests and values are inseparable.

Question. Do you believe that U.S. security alliances and partnerships can contribute to improving human rights records in relevant countries?

Answer. Yes, I believe U.S. security alliances and partnerships as important aspects of foreign policy and can be used to positive effect on countries' human rights records. While security alliances have manifold reasons to exist, the important role they can also play as a joint investment in promoting democracy and human rights is central to also advancing U.S. national security. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation.

Question. Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State consults with Congress before taking action on issues that could jeopardize U.S. access to or create significant tensions in our relationships with key defense partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially those in Southeast Asia?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with Congress, as appropriate, on our actions and engagements with partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region, including those partners and allies in Southeast Asia.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State consults with Congress before taking action on issues that could jeopardize U.S. access to or create significant tensions in our relationships with key defense partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially those in Southeast Asia?

Answer. Our alliances and partnerships are a strategic advantage over our competitors and the strength of this network of defense relations cannot be taken for granted. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting with Congress, as appropriate, on our actions and engagements with all partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region, including those partners and allies in Southeast Asia.

Question. How will you prioritize Internet Freedom within the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor bureau and across the Department?

Answer. I strongly believe that the same human rights people have offline must be protected online, including the rights to freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I will support DRL's efforts to promote internet freedom by raising our concerns bilaterally and building and participating in multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder coalitions such as the Freedom Online Coalition, where we play a leadership role. I will support investment in global internet freedom programming to support digital safety, policy advocacy, technology, and re-

search to help global internet users overcome barriers to accessing the open internet.

Question. Do you believe that internet shutdowns are a threat to human rights?

Answer. Yes. In May, Secretary Blinken condemned the use of partial or complete government-imposed internet shutdowns, among other tactics, to prevent the exercise of freedom of expression online. I believe that in addition to restricting the exercise of human rights, including the right to expression and assembly, internet shutdowns disrupt access to essential services such as healthcare and emergency services, and negatively impact the economy. If confirmed, I will support DRL's efforts to address internet shutdowns by raising our concerns bilaterally, continuing our participation in multilateral fora that are working to raise awareness such as the G7, and supporting our efforts in multi-stakeholder coalitions such as the Freedom Online Coalition, where we play a leadership role.

Question. The Department has been focused on the idea of "internet freedom" as a key programmatic effort to combat and counter malign influence and authoritarian governments. How will you bring more cohesion to the various internet freedom programs throughout the department?

Answer. I will support DRL's continued leadership of the State Department's efforts to promote internet freedom globally through a variety of bilateral and multilateral engagements as well as through foreign assistance programming. I understand that DRL works to advance the U.S.-led vision of the open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet, governed in a manner consistent with international human rights standards and democratic norms. I also believe growing concerns around digital authoritarianism or tech governance are tremendously important policies on which DRL needs to engage given how these tools are used to undermine democracy and restrict fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will ensure that DRL continues to coordinate throughout the Department on internet-related issues, such as cybersecurity, disinformation, and emerging technologies.

Question. Do you believe that these programs are effective in providing training and tools to civil society?

Answer. Yes, I believe that DRL's global internet freedom programs are effective in providing training and tools to civil society. My understanding is that since 2008, the State Department has invested over \$320 million in global internet freedom programs, which support digital safety, policy advocacy, technology, and research to help global internet users overcome barriers to accessing the open internet. These programs support leading anti-censorship tools that allow millions of internet users worldwide to safely connect to the uncensored internet, which helps to advance U.S. business opportunities abroad, foster the free sharing of information across borders, and counter political repression around the world. They also help to protect journalists and activists operating in repressive environments from online censorship and cyber-attacks. I believe these efforts ensure that users have access to diverse information and perspectives, which play a critical role in combatting corruption, countering disinformation, undermining extremist narratives, strengthening democratic norms, and promoting accountability for violations of human rights.

Question. If confirmed, how would you expand internet freedom programming to additional countries with shrinking civil societies and/or space for free online expression?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize this critical programming and apply DRL's deep expertise on regional and country-level threats to human rights online to direct resources to where they are most needed. I believe that the Department should apply available resources to innovative technical programs, including surging and sustaining support for critical anti-censorship platforms, in order to counter technical developments in censorship and surveillance by repressive governments, and further develop programs to provide protection against accelerating cyber threats to civil society and independent media. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues—and Congress—to expand these vital programmatic efforts.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that information collected by the bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations (CSO) and then used by the bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor are harmonized and used for the improvement of programmatic efforts?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to foster what I understand is a productive relationship between DRL and CSO. DRL will utilize all data sources available to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs.

Question. The White House-led Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (the Task Force) was designed to serve as a focal point for the relevant Federal departments and agencies, policy makers, and civil society working to identify and address the early warning signs of atrocities. How does the task force define success?

Answer. I will work with the various interagency players in the task force, if confirmed, to refine and clearly articulate our successes, but ultimately the goal is to identify the various risk factors for atrocities and then address, mitigate, and ameliorate them, thereby reducing the likelihood of an atrocity occurring. This measurable reduction in risk is success.

Question. How would you, if confirmed, use this data as the Assistant Secretary of DRL?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest and most effective decisions possible including where to focus diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, allocation of resources, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues.

Question. What efforts can the task force undertake to amplify public messaging on signs of atrocities and/or other conflict indicators?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek out opportunities to encourage the Task Force to present atrocity prevention messaging in whatever fora are available, including multilateral and within the civil society and non-governmental space. If confirmed, I will also consult with interested Members of Congress.

Question. What efforts can DRL undertake to amplify public messaging on signs of atrocities and/or other conflict indicators?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek out opportunities to amplify atrocity prevention messaging in whatever fora are available: multilateral, with DRL's extensive networks in the civil society and non-governmental space, and with partners across the interagency. I also believe in some cases calling out human rights abuses and looking for ways to course correct and address impunity can be an important way to respond to signs of atrocities before they worsen. If confirmed, I will also consult with interested Members of Congress. I understand the Secretary participated in the rollout of this year's Elie Wiesel annual report and I will further expand this high-level involvement and attention.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will collaborate with the State Department and interagency to use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Afghanistan to support our goal goals and objectives. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and potential to partnerships with likeminded colleagues, depending on the policy goals under consideration. I will also regularly engage civil society members that fled Afghanistan to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that does not create additional security risks.

Question. The White House-led Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (the Task Force) was designed to serve as a focal point for the relevant Federal departments and agencies, policy makers, and civil society working to identify and address the early warning signs of atrocities. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Tigray?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the atrocities underway in Tigray, the dehumanizing rhetoric, clear indications from the U.N. that the region is "sliding into famine," and the government's recent decision to eject U.N. humanitarian officials from the country. I am grateful for this committee's activity on Ethiopia and its repeated efforts to draw attention to the Tigray crisis and Ethiopia's growing instability. If confirmed, addressing the crisis in northern Ethiopia would be one of my top priorities. I would use all appropriate tools available within the Task Force to ensure the USG's response to ongoing atrocities in northern Ethiopia continued to involve a whole-of-government, coordinated response. And I would work through the Task Force to ensure that the United States continues to use every available tool to urge all parties to end the conflict in northern Ethiopia, cease all gross violations of human rights, hold those perpetrators accountable, and allow full and unhindered humanitarian access so that those in need receive urgently needed assistance.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Burma?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the most informed decisions possible on what tools to utilize in Burma. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic assistance, sanctions regimes, other forms of support for civil society, public messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage civil society members that fled Burma to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn't create additional security risks.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the most sound decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Venezuela. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, assistance, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage civil society members that fled Venezuela to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn't create additional security risks.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Yemen?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Yemen. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, assistance, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage Yemeni civil society members, including individuals who have fled Yemen, to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn't create additional security risks.

Question. How would you use the tools available within the task force and within the department to provide assistance to Syria?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available sources of data and information to make the soundest decisions possible in what tools to utilize in the case of Syria. These tools include but are not limited to diplomatic efforts, programmatic efforts, assistance, sanctions regimes, support for civil society, messaging, accountability and justice efforts, and where and when to partner with likeminded colleagues. I will also regularly engage Syrian civil society members, including individuals who have fled Syria, to better understand the situation on the ground and what the most viable pathways are to offer support in a way that doesn't create additional security risks. I will also assess what is already funded by DRL and what additional support would be useful.

Question. Do you commit to regular, quarterly briefings to Congress on the efforts of the Task Force as well as those within the Department?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to continuing what I understand is a productive, ongoing, regular conversation between the Department and interested congressional members and committees about atrocity prevention efforts.

Question. State Department employees have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID-19 working from home, and Department management issues. What is your understanding of morale throughout the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)?

Answer. As a nominee I have not discussed morale issues with anyone at DRL, but I understand that the bureau is full of passionate and experienced civil service and foreign service officers committed to advancing human rights and democracy around the world and pushing back against authoritarianism and democratic backsliding. The Biden administration's public commitment to putting human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy, and its demonstrated pledge to advancing the human rights of all persons, are important validations of DRL's centrality to the mission of the State Department.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across DRL?

Answer. If confirmed I would seek to hold regular meetings with each office within DRL to really get to know the bureau, the work, and the teams. I also would

conduct “deep dive” reviews to understand each team’s long-term vision, current priorities, and the challenges they face. If confirmed, I would be as accessible as possible to the entire bureau, keeping an “open door” policy and blocking off regular times on the schedule to meet with any DRL staff. If confirmed, I won’t only be there to lead the bureau, but also to support the team, amplify and advance shared priorities, and reward hard work. Morale is in part about leadership, team strengthening, and seeing “wins” on the board, but it is also dependent on proactive recruitment and retention policies. To that end, if confirmed I would strive to continue to strengthen the bureau’s reputation as one of career-enhancement and excellence. I would also support DRL staff’s career development within the wider State and foreign affairs community. I would seek to rely on the expertise that already exists in the bureau to ensure staff feel empowered, are heard, and know that they are having impact. Responsibility and accountability for the A/S are essential, but I would be equally focused on encouraging problem-solving by staff while making sure they know I’m in their corner and ready to contribute as needed so that together we can tackle the challenges that come our way. That’s what I’ve always done and it’s what I’ll do at DRL if confirmed.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across DRL?

Answer. I am excited by the potential, if I am confirmed, to help guide DRL into a team that is even better unified to promote and support human rights and democracy around the globe in a genuine and principled manner. Foremost, I would seek to create opportunities for DRL’s offices to collaborate more closely on functional issues like counter-authoritarianism, technology and human rights, and arms sales/security assistance. Part of creating that unified mission and vision will mean defining goals with the staff, within the framework the President and the Secretary have set, and then empowering the experts to implement them with encouragement and top cover. Once our goals are set, if confirmed, I will encourage DRL colleagues to reinforce relationships with allies in and out of the building—including in Congress. Finally, I would want to make sure we’re learning lessons whenever possible and course-correcting whenever necessary. Programs and policies need to be closely integrated and matched with the current moment, which means being flexible and open to changing direction as needed.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for Assistant Secretaries of State. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I believe effective leaders need to surround themselves with an empowered team. My support of my team means they will support me; we all bring complementary skills to the table. At DRL, if confirmed, I would seek to encourage staff to think boldly and take risks to advance our shared goals, knowing that I will have their back. I want to empower problem-solving before elevating. I want to build trust through our mutual belief in the power of the United States to do good in the world, and through our shared work to overcome the challenges in seeing that belief fully realized. Good management also sometimes requires engaging more senior principals and responding to their needs while simultaneously providing direction to staff. If confirmed I will seek to balance both while helping staff value how their work fits into a larger picture. Humility and humor are key to me, balanced with clarity of purpose and a calm, steady approach.

Question. How do you believe your management style will translate to a Department setting, where resources may not be readily available and your workforce are career employees?

Answer. My hope is that my style may be refreshing and invigorating for career employees, for whom I have great respect and admiration. They deserve someone who believes in them. I believe strongly in the talent and expertise of the bureau, so I want to elevate and support them in areas where I am able, even if resources are not readily available. Sometimes support is less about more money and bigger offices, and more about a leader who will listen and take action. I’ve spoken to a number of former DRL Assistant Secretaries who served in administrations of both parties, to hear their guidance on policy, vision, and management strategies. I believe there is a lot to learn from their experiences.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on the Department leaders to integrate themselves into Bureau operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. No matter one’s appointment authority, I think any Assistant Secretary’s goal is to maximize the contributions that every member of the team can make and understanding how the bureau operates is essential to good management and good policy making. If confirmed, I intend to take the time to understand how DRL has

operated, what the culture has been, and what's worked, what needs to be fixed, and what disagreements, if any, need to be resolved so we can function as a united team. I am not afraid to make tough decisions if there's a need but will want to do so after a full review and adequate consultation.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No, it is never appropriate or constructive, and as a leader I have never and will never tolerate such behavior.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate performance reviews for both Foreign and Civil Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performance in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes. Constructive feedback is an important part of holding staff accountable for their work, holding supervisors accountable for their management, and ensuring strong work products. If confirmed, I will make sure all formal evaluations are completed on time and with a high degree of specificity. For those whom I may not directly oversee, I will put time on my calendar to ensure we are discussing their goals, concerns, and accomplishments.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage the managers in your bureau to provide clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes, I would, because such feedback is essential to helping high achievers continue to excel, helping other employees become high achievers, and retaining talent in a competitive environment.

Question. If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the DRL Bureau to counter malign Russian Government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to countering malign Russian Government influence around the world, including in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will take a comprehensive view of this complex problem and its effects on democracy and human rights in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will advocate for the use of all of our tools to counter Russian malign influence in the hemisphere, including diplomatic engagement, technical exchanges, foreign assistance, and public diplomacy. DRL's existing policy and programmatic lines of effort focused on anti-corruption, civil society, and strengthening rule of law should continue, and undercut Russian malign influence and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region.

Question. If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the DRL Bureau to counter malign Chinese Government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) represents a serious challenge to U.S. interests and values in the region, with its growing security ties and infrastructure investments. If confirmed, I will lead our team to meet this challenge by advancing our positive agenda for the hemisphere and working with likeminded partners—whether aligned governments or regional organizations. We will build on our shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We will welcome our allies and partners' expertise and resources to support the region's COVID-19 response, entrepreneurship, and sustainable infrastructure. We will support high-standard investment in infrastructure and transparent economic development that creates jobs essential for regional pandemic recovery.

Question. Are China's growing commercial ties and investments in Latin America a threat to human rights in the hemisphere? Please explain.

Answer. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) aggressive efforts to expand market share for state-affiliated firms, carrying out of infrastructure projects, implementation of disinformation campaigns, and export of surveillance and censorship tools play a direct and indirect role in human rights violations and abuses in Latin America. The lack of transparency in the PRC's transactions and its increase of the region's dependence on debt financing enables corruption. The PRC's infrastructure projects often ignore both labor and environmental laws, undermining individual workers' rights and labor standards more generally. The PRC's manipulation of media outlets silences investigative journalists who hold human rights abusers publicly accountable while suppressing negative stories of the PRC's activities in the re-

gion. The proliferation of untrusted vendors' surveillance and control equipment in the region also increases the risk to human rights defenders and those willing to expose human rights violators. The PRC's activities take place throughout the region and result in countries adopting policies inconsistent with democratic values.

Question. Are Russia's activities in Latin America a threat to human rights in the region? Please explain.

Answer. Russia's engagement in the region is marked by disinformation, military and equipment sales, and energy deals, all with implications for human rights in the region. The Biden administration is committed to countering disinformation and imposing costs on Russia for its aggression and malign activities across the globe. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor closely Russia's activities in the region, including its relationships with Cuba, the illegitimate Maduro regime in Venezuela, and the Ortega-Murillo Government in Nicaragua. I will work with colleagues and the interagency to promote and protect human rights, combat disinformation, and combat corruption and reduce impunity in Latin America.

Question. According to the 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, fentanyl and other highly potent synthetic opioids continue to be the most lethal category of illicit substances in the U.S. The 2020 DEA report on fentanyl flows to the United States indicates that Mexican transnational criminal organizations are producing increased quantities of fentanyl and cartels such as the Sinaloa and the New Generation Jalisco cartel are the primary trafficking groups responsible for smuggling fentanyl into the U.S. from Mexico.

- Please explain how illicit drug trade impacts human rights in Mexico.

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in Mexico are a threat to public health, safety, and human rights. Crime and violence are at record-high levels in Mexico, with as many of three-fourths of all homicides tied to organized crime. Mexico reported 34,515 homicides in 2020 and 34,648 in 2019, a rate of around 29 per 100,000 inhabitants.

As to other human rights abuses, for example, indigenous persons in isolated regions reported incidents of forced labor, in which cartel members forced them to perform illicit activities or face death. Minors were recruited or forced by cartels to traffic persons, drugs, or other goods across the border. Migrants were also recruited by criminal organizations to conduct illicit activities. To enable their criminal activities, TCOs corrupt democratic institutions and put the safety and livelihoods of ordinary citizens at risk. If confirmed, I will continue the State Department's work with government partners in Mexico to build institutional capacity to dismantle TCOs and hold them accountable for their behavior.

Question. The Ortega regime in Nicaragua has repeatedly failed to take action to pass meaningful electoral reforms—which the U.S., OAS, EU and U.N. have called for. The U.S. has leveraged sanctions and diplomatic tools, but what other options are on the table?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the United States' ongoing efforts to rally international pressure on the Ortega-Murillo Government, through public statements by Secretary Blinken, regular media engagements by Department leadership, and bilateral and multilateral diplomacy with our partners, such as joint public condemnations that call out the Ortega-Murillo Government's attacks on democracy. If confirmed, I will support continued use of the diplomatic and economic tools available to the Department, such as sanctions and visa restrictions.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing and maintaining policies and programs to create acceptable conditions for free and fair elections in Nicaragua?

Answer. Yes. As Secretary Blinken stated on August 7, the Nicaraguan electoral process, including its eventual results, has lost all credibility. The Ortega-Murillo Government has made no effort to honor its agreement with the opposition to begin electoral reforms ahead of the November election. To the contrary, it has changed the legal code and implemented new, vague laws based on Russian legislation that restrict human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will support continuing U.S. policies and programs in support of the Nicaraguan people's desire for a return to democracy.

Question. What strategies would you employ to improve the capacity of the democratic opposition to coalesce and become a credible challenge to Ortega?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to build the capacity of and strengthen civil society organizations that work to promote human rights protections, democratic governance, and transparency.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. What strategies would you employ to improve the capacity of the democratic opposition to coalesce and become a credible challenge to Ortega?

Answer. President Ortega has ensured the rigged elections on November 7 will proclaim him victorious. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to hold the Ortega-Murillo Government accountable. Through USAID and the Department of State, we will continue to support Nicaraguan civil society organizations, independent media, and human rights defenders as they fight to restore democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. We will continue to work with democratic actors, inside and outside of Nicaragua, to promote consensus-building and unification around their efforts to challenge President Ortega and Vice President Murillo's authoritarian government. Our continued support will help to demonstrate to the Nicaraguan people that the international community has not forgotten them.

Question. Please describe the long-term implications for Nicaragua and the region if Ortega fraudulently extends his time in office.

Answer. The Ortega-Murillo Government will not have a democratic mandate following fraudulent elections in November. The June resolution of the Permanent Council of the OAS stated just this—that the measures adopted by the Government of Nicaragua do not meet the conditions for transparent, free and fair elections to which all member states have committed under the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Thus, it is foreseeable that a fraught election could further isolate the government internationally and rekindle domestic unrest. At the same time, a fraudulent election in Nicaragua could embolden other autocratic governments in the region. The consolidation of power under Ortega and Murillo will also have migration implications for the region, as an increasing number of Nicaraguans decide to leave their country due to continued repression. If confirmed, I will support consideration of all diplomatic tools to address the fraudulent elections in Nicaragua.

Question. Should the U.S. support an internationally-accompanied negotiation between the Ortega regime and the Nicaraguan democratic forces, as the Biden administration is supporting in Venezuela? Please explain.

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Nicaraguan people's expressed desire for democracy. I will collaborate with the embassy in Managua and Department staff in Washington to continue to work with civil society and the international community to support opposition voices in Nicaragua and within the Nicaraguan diaspora. It is past time for free and fair elections so the people of Nicaragua can turn the page on the corrupt and repressive Ortega-Murillo Government.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Should the U.S. support an internationally-accompanied negotiation between the Ortega regime and the Nicaraguan democratic forces, as the Biden administration is supporting in Venezuela? Please explain.

Answer. The United States continues to seek to increase bilateral and multilateral pressure on the Ortega-Murillo Government. With President Ortega and Vice President Murillo throwing the leading opposition figures in jail and crushing all political dissent, the repressive conditions in Nicaragua do not support the prospect of negotiations. If confirmed, I will continue to support the unilateral and multilateral efforts to hold the Ortega-Murillo Government accountable and explore with allies a coordinated path forward to address the electoral sham scheduled for November 7.

Question. Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to harbor U.S. fugitives?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals toward Cuba, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on this issue.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to harbor U.S. fugitives?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals toward Cuba. In May, the administration certified Cuba as a Not Fully Cooperating Country with U.S. counter-terrorism efforts, which I fully support. If con-

firmed, I will consult closely with my counter-terrorism and other colleagues in reviewing the facts and legal standards in determining my position on whether Cuba should be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST).

Question. Would you advise establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba while it continues to provide safe harbor to fugitives from the U.S. justice system?

Answer. I am aware that Cuba harbors several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on or convicted of charges of political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades. If confirmed, I will support the regular U.S. calls on Cuba to return fugitives from justice and would look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Would you advise establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba while it continues to provide safe harbor to fugitives from the U.S. justice system?

Answer. I am aware that Cuba harbors several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on or convicted of charges of political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades. If confirmed, I will strongly support the regular U.S. calls on Cuba to return fugitives from justice and would not advocate for increased diplomatic engagement unless it would enhance respect for human rights and democracy in Cuba.

Question. If confirmed, would you support Cuba's removal from the SST list without verifiable assurances that it would cease to foster a permissive environment for international terrorists in Venezuela?

Answer. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be used for states that are terrorists, based on fact, analysis, and intelligence. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until there's full clarity that the government in question has taken all steps necessary to relieve themselves of the criteria needed for such a designation. Regardless of the state sponsor of terrorism designation, I do believe other corresponding punitive measures are an important tool to be used on repressive governments and/or officials. I will consult closely with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward, including on the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. If confirmed, would you support Cuba's removal from the SST list without verifiable assurances that it would cease to foster a permissive environment for international terrorists in Venezuela?

Answer. I am very concerned about the support Cuba has provided to the Maduro regime to engage in human rights abuses against the Venezuelan people. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism (SST) designations should be based on fact, law, and analysis. I believe an SST designation should not be lifted until the government in question has taken all steps necessary to meet the criteria needed for rescission. The administration has committed to carefully reviewing decisions made in the prior administration, including the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. If confirmed, I am committed to carefully reviewing the facts and the law in determining my views on whether Cuba should continue to be designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism and to consulting closely with Congress on the issue.

Question. Please describe the trajectory of Cuban involvement in Venezuela.

Answer. Cuba has long had deep engagement in Venezuela's military and intelligence services. Fidel Castro was a close confidant and advisor to Hugo Chavez. With Cuba's support, the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, has ignored the Venezuelan people's calls for change and a return to democracy, and learned from Cuban advisors how to spy on its own citizens and suppress dissent. Venezuelan secret police have perfected the torture tactics, systems of social control, and mechanisms of repression that Cuban authorities have used against their own people for decades. If confirmed, I would seek to thwart such abuses.

Question. Do you agree that Cuban military and intelligence support is the linchpin to Maduro's survival in Venezuela?

Answer. Cuba shields the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, from some of the effects of international economic and diplomatic pressure, while providing the intelligence and muscle that improves Maduro's ability to cling to power. I understand that Cuban military and intelligence advisors actively support Maduro through the provision of security forces, intelligence officers, and by providing direction to Venezuelan authorities. They equip the Maduro regime with the tools he needs to repress any domestic or internal dissent, including in his military. Cuba also provided thousands of medical professionals to Venezuela, before and during the COVID-19 crisis, allowing Maduro to avoid the domestic political consequences of his failed economic and health policies. Allegations of forced labor and using the mission to conduct political interference and intelligence collection on behalf of Maduro are widely reported by former participants. If confirmed, I would seek to stem these practices.

Question. Please describe your views on the most effective approach to persuade the Cuban regime to play a more positive role in Venezuela.

Answer. I understand the United States will continue to coordinate closely with likeminded nations, including within the EU and OAS, to promote a negotiated solution to the crisis in Venezuela. The aim is to counter interference and raise the costs to Cuba for supporting any anti-democratic actions or human rights abuses by the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela. I support this approach.

Question. Please explain your views on how the international community can exert pressure on Cuba for its involvement in Venezuela.

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the United States' efforts to continue to exert pressure on Cuba through Secretary Blinken's public statements, regular media engagements by Department leadership, bilateral diplomacy with other countries in the region, and multilateral diplomacy. I would also continue U.S. efforts to protect and support the human rights of Cubans and to empower them to determine their own future.

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba and Venezuela if the United States were to elevate its diplomatic relations with Cuba by nominating and confirming an Ambassador.

Answer. I believe the protests that began on July 11 have demonstrated how important it is for U.S. diplomats to engage directly with the Cuban people. I understand the U.S. diplomatic corps will continue to engage directly with and support civil society, including human rights defenders and political dissidents, as part of an overall effort to empower the Cuban people and their desire for freedom. If confirmed, I would strongly support such continued engagement.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba and Venezuela if the United States were to elevate its diplomatic relations with Cuba by nominating and confirming an Ambassador.

Answer. Our primary goal in Cuba and Venezuela is to promote democracy and respect for human rights and any potential change in our diplomatic relations must serve to further this goal. The United States must ensure that any changes to our diplomatic engagement do not negatively affect our ability to support the societal demands in Cuba and Venezuela for democratic reforms. If confirmed, I will closely evaluate the impact of potential changes to diplomatic engagement on the administration's ability to promote democracy and human rights.

Question. Please describe your understanding of the role of military-controlled firms in the Cuban economy.

Answer. The Cuban Government exercises significant control over most of Cuba's important economic sectors. For example, the Cuban Government benefits from remittance fees that are handled through its remittance processor, Financiera Cimex S.A. (FINCIMEX), which is a military-controlled entity. State-owned stores as well as the medical missions program are also an economic boon for the Cuban Government, which significantly marks up prices in the stores and keeps a large portion of medical workers' salaries. The Armed Forces Business Enterprise Group (GAESA), which is led by Raul Castro's son-in-law, is involved in all sectors of the economy. The Cuban military controls tourism, including through ownership of Gaviota Hotels.

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba if U.S. policy were to facilitate or allow financial transactions that benefit military-controlled firms in Cuba.

Answer. Democracy and human rights are at the core of the administration's efforts toward Cuba. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses through efforts that maximize benefits to the Cuban people and minimize or eliminate any benefits to the Cuban Government and its military. I look forward to consulting with Congress on these efforts.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba if U.S. policy were to facilitate or allow financial transactions that benefit military-controlled firms in Cuba.

Answer. I share your concerns about Cuba's military, intelligence, and security services' role in serious human rights abuses against the Cuban people, and I recognize the military's role in the Cuban economy. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses, including by minimizing or eliminating any financial benefits to the Cuban Government and its military.

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba if U.S. public and private engagement with Cuba were to disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people?

Answer. Democracy and human rights are at the core of the administration's efforts toward Cuba. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses, including efforts that maximize benefits for the Cuban people and minimize or eliminate any benefit to the Cuban Government and its military. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on these efforts.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Please explain your views on the impact it would have on human rights conditions in Cuba if U.S. public and private engagement with Cuba were to disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people?

Answer. I share your concerns about Cuba's military, intelligence, and security services' role in serious human rights abuses against the Cuban people, and I recognize their role in the Cuban economy. I would oppose any move that would disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services at the expense of our efforts to lift the Cuban people out of oppression. If confirmed, I will further the administration's goals to support the Cuban people and hold the regime accountable for its abuses, including efforts that maximize benefits for the Cuban people and minimize or eliminate any benefit to the Cuban Government and its military intelligence, or security services.

Question. According to the State Department, in 2019, the Government of Cuba maintained an estimated 50,000 medical personnel in more than 60 countries under conditions that represent forced labor. The U.S., United Nations, independent media outlets and NGOs have documented and called out the Cuban regime's exploitative and coercive practices toward its doctors participating in its overseas medical programs.

Can you describe your understanding of how Cuban doctors are forced into participating the program and sent to a foreign country, as well as the conditions by which they live while in this program?

Answer. I understand that former participants in Cuba's overseas medical programs have stated that the Cuban Government coerced some participants to remain in the program, including by withholding their passports and medical credentials; restricting their movement; using "minders" to conduct surveillance of participants outside of work; threatening to revoke their licenses to practice medicine in Cuba; retaliating against their family members in Cuba if participants left the program; or imposing criminal penalties, forced exile, and family separation if participants did not return to Cuba as directed by government supervisors.

Question. Can you describe how these programs only go to serve the Cuban Government at the expense of the Cuban people?

Answer. The export of professional services, including medical missions, remains Cuba's largest source of foreign exchange earnings. I understand that it is difficult to ascertain the exact amount of proceeds due to a lack of transparency in bilateral agreements with host countries. Contracts often involve direct payments to the Cuban Government with former participants reporting receiving roughly 10 to 25 percent of the amount paid by the host governments to the Cuban Government for their services. In addition, there are reports of in-kind transfers of medical equipment for medical professionals in South Africa and of oil for doctors in Venezuela and Algeria.

Question. Do you consider the Cuban regime's overseas medical missions to be exploitative human trafficking efforts?

Answer. I understand there are documented reports of widespread abuse and exploitation of medical professionals within the medical program, including allegations that the Cuban regime coerced some participants to remain in the program, including by withholding a large portion of their salaries; restricting their movements; using "minders" to conduct surveillance of participants outside of work; threatening to revoke their medical licenses; retaliating against their families in Cuba if participants leave the program; or imposing criminal penalties, exile, and family separation if participants do not return to Cuba as directed by government supervisors. I agree with the Department of State's conclusion that these practices are "clear indicators of human trafficking." If confirmed, I will urge countries to take the necessary measures to protect Cuban medical workers and to seek transparency on contractual agreements between the Cuban Government and the medical professionals.

Question. Do you commit to instructing our Embassies in countries that accept Cuban medical missions to communicate to host governments to inform them of the Cuban regime's forced labor practices?

Answer. I am very concerned about the human and labor rights abuses within the Cuban medical missions program. If confirmed, I will highlight these issues with host governments and work with our officers in the field and foreign government officials, at the highest appropriate level, to urge them to take necessary measures to protect Cuban medical workers and to seek transparency on contractual agreements between the Cuban Government and medical professionals. I will encourage countries to put steps in place to prevent exploitation and forced labor, and to proactively monitor these programs, given persistent allegations that the Cuban Government are compelling medical professionals to work.

Question. Please describe your understanding of the relationship between the Government of Cuba, the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN), and the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

Answer. I understand members of the Colombian-origin National Liberation Army (ELN), including senior leadership, traveled to Cuba in 2018 for now-defunct peace negotiations with the Government of Colombia. When negotiations failed, Cuba continued to provide safe haven to ELN leadership. In January 2019, ELN claimed responsibility for a deadly bombing in Colombia. Citing peace protocols signed before the ELN negotiators traveled to Cuba, Cuba has refused to extradite ELN leaders to Colombia. With respect to Venezuela, Maduro and his associates use criminal activities to help maintain their hold on power, fostering a permissive environment for known terrorist groups, including the ELN and its sympathizers. The Cuban intelligence and security apparatus has infiltrated Venezuela's security and military forces, helping Nicholas Maduro to maintain his stranglehold over his people while allowing terrorist organizations to operate.

If confirmed, I will commit to closely reviewing the status of ELN leadership in Cuba and consulting with Congress as the Biden-Harris administration reviews U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Question. Considering the well-documented ties between the Maduro regime and the ELN, and Cuba's harboring of ELN terrorists, why should the Cuban regime not be included in the list of States Sponsors of Terrorism?

Answer. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be used for states that are terrorists, based on fact, analysis, and intelligence. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until there's full clarity that the government in question has taken all steps necessary to relieve themselves of the criteria needed for such a designation. If confirmed, I will consult closely with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward, including on the previous administration's decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.

Question. Considering the well-documented ties between the Maduro regime and the ELN, and Cuba's harboring of ELN terrorists, why should the Cuban regime not be included in the list of States Sponsors of Terrorism?

Answer. I am very concerned about Cuba's harboring of members of the ELN. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be based on fact, law, and analysis. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until the government in question has taken all steps necessary to meet the criteria needed for rescission. If confirmed, I am committed to carefully reviewing the facts and the law in determining my views on whether Cuba should continue to be designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism and to consulting closely with Congress on the issue.

Question. Over the last three decades, Colombia has emerged as source of economic and stability in the region, in great part due to the success of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and Plan Colombia. Yet, policy decisions made during the negotiations of the 2016 deal with the FARC created new challenges for Colombia and our relations. Coca production in Colombia steadily increased since 2013, reaching 212,000 hectares in 2019. In March 2020, the United States and Colombia announced a joint action plan to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production by 50 percent by the end of 2023. The plan would make full use of all available tools, including rural development, interdiction, as well as manual and aerial eradication.

- Would you agree that achieving this goal by 2023 would deliver significant health and security benefits for Americans here at home?

Answer. Yes. Significant and sustainable reductions in coca cultivation and cocaine production will deliver significant health and security benefits for Americans by reducing the amount of cocaine flowing to the United States. The U.S. Government's new counternarcotics strategy for Colombia pursues sustainability through an integrated, bilateral focus on integrated supply reduction, rural security and development, and environmental protection. Integrated implementation of these pillars will reduce cocaine-related overdoses and violence in the United States, and slow migration caused by narco-trafficking-related violence in drug-transit countries. If confirmed, I would support this approach.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the nexus between growing coca cultivation and violence against human rights defenders in Colombia.

Answer. The enormous profit margins associated with the cocaine trade mean that narco-trafficking organizations will violently oppose any interference in their money-making activities, whether it be from the Colombian Government for prosecuting offenders; human rights defenders and social leaders for their efforts to support crop substitution and public advocacy on behalf of rural communities; or competition from rival criminal organizations. Narco-trafficking organizations will target anyone who interferes in their illicit business model.

In areas with significant narcotics trafficking, coca cultivation, and where organized criminal groups exercise significant control, human rights challenges abound, including killings of social leaders, including human rights defenders. I understand that a review by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) of social leader murders in 2020 found that 93 percent occurred in areas the Colombian National Police identify as being under the control of criminal organizations. The UNODC has found that in Cauca, the department with the highest level of social leader killings, the probability of a social leader being killed is 4.3 times higher in areas where coca is grown. I understand that Embassy Bogotá's integrated counternarcotics and rural security strategy aims to reduce coca cultivation while also expanding state and CNP presence to rural areas to reduce the influence of armed groups and curtail the violence they perpetrate against social leaders and the general public. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. Please explain your understanding of the nexus between community participation in Colombia's National Program for Integral Substitution and the rate of social leaders' killings.

Answer. Narco-trafficking organizations' profits depend upon having farmers who either work directly for them or from whom they buy coca. The National Program for Integral Substitution (Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos—PNIS) seeks to convince farmers to switch to the cultivation of legal commodities. As the Government's authority is weaker in rural areas, the farmers are vulnerable to threats from the narco-trafficking organizations.

I understand that INL invests an average \$10 million annually to implement human rights programming that seeks to improve protections of human rights defenders (HRDs) and help Colombian authorities pursue accountability for crimes against HRDs. Since its creation, INL has assisted the unit of specialized human rights prosecutors in the Attorney General's Office with training, mentoring, and equipment and is now working with specialized human rights judges to provide similar assistance. If confirmed, I would support these efforts and look for ways to build on them.

Question. Do you agree that the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela is the direct result of the political and security conditions imposed by the Maduro regime in that country?

Answer. Yes. Since 2015, nearly 5.7 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee the economic, political, and humanitarian crisis caused by the Maduro regime's abuses, corruption, and mismanagement, making it the largest external displacement of persons in the Hemisphere's history. I understand the United States supports a wide range of life-saving humanitarian programs for Venezuelans, such as food assistance; emergency shelter; access to health care, water, sanitation, and hygiene supplies; support for livelihoods; and protection for vulnerable groups including women, youth, LGBTQI+, and indigenous people. If confirmed, I would support the continuation of that assistance.

Question. Can the humanitarian crisis be resolved on Maduro's watch?

Answer. Maduro could resolve the underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis by restoring democracy and respect for human rights, as well as taking the necessary steps to rebuild the Venezuelan economy. Venezuelans are suffering from one of the worst economic and humanitarian crises outside of a war in modern history. Since 2017, more than 5.6 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee their country.

The Maduro regime mismanages the economy, plunders public coffers, and impedes access to critical humanitarian assistance, including lifesaving food and nutrition aid. If confirmed, I will work to open more possibilities for humanitarian workers, organizations, and assistance to reach the Venezuelan people in Venezuela and beyond, to meet their most urgent needs. I am deeply committed to the Venezuelan people and strongly support their desire for free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and the return to the rule of law and democracy, which can only have a positive impact the humanitarian crisis.

Since 2017, the United States has provided more than \$1.2 billion in humanitarian, economic, development, and health assistance to help Venezuelans, including more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance, both inside Venezuela and throughout the region. On September 22, the United States announced more than \$336 million in additional humanitarian, economic, development, and health assistance at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Of this total, nearly \$247 million is for humanitarian assistance and more than \$89 million is for economic, development, and health assistance. The United States is the largest donor of foreign assistance for the Venezuela regional crisis, having provided over \$1.9 billion in funding since Fiscal Year 2017. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. There has been more than a dozen failed attempts at negotiating with Maduro. They have occurred in an environment of engagement during the Obama administration, and under the pressure of punitive measures implemented by the Trump administration.

- Is the United States using all available tools to create the appropriate conditions for a successful negotiation with the Maduro regime to transition to democratic rule in Venezuela?

Answer. I understand the United States continues to support a negotiated, Venezuelan-led solution to the Venezuelan crisis that leads to free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and a return of the rule of law and democracy in Venezuela.

I also understand the State Department continues to prioritize coordination with its closest regional partners, as well as its European partners, to improve the effectiveness of our sanctions, address growing humanitarian needs, and support a negotiated, political solution. I understand the United States remains steadfast in our support to the Venezuelan people in their struggle for the restoration of democracy and rule of law. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. There has been more than a dozen failed attempts at negotiating with Maduro. They have occurred in an environment of engagement during the Obama administration, and under the pressure of punitive measures implemented by the Trump administration. Is the United States using all available tools to create the appropriate conditions for a successful negotiation with the Maduro regime to transition to democratic rule in Venezuela?

Answer. The United States supports a Venezuelan-led solution to the crisis, which the Venezuelans have decided must be a negotiated solution that leads to free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and a return to rule of law and democracy in Venezuela. The United States will continue to advocate for pressure from regional and European partners to pursue this end. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. Please explain how the United States could work with the European Union—and specifically Spain—to create the right conditions for a credible transition to democratic rule in Venezuela.

Answer. I understand the Department regularly engages with the international community bilaterally and in multilateral fora to raise awareness of human rights violations and abuses in Venezuela and to get other countries and international bodies to join us in pressing the Maduro regime to uphold democracy and respect human rights. If confirmed, I would support these efforts and look for creative ways to double down on these efforts, including support for justice and accountability measures, programs that strengthen democratic institutions, transparency, rule of law, inclusion, empowerment, and access to information.

Answer. Will you, if confirmed, advocate for the release of the nine American Citizens currently held on political charges and against their will in Venezuela? How will you work with the regional bureau and Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will advocate for the release of all American citizens currently held on political charges and against their will in Venezuela. I will consult with all relevant Bureaus and Offices, including the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, to resolve these cases.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Will you, if confirmed, advocate for the release of the nine American Citizens currently held on political charges and against their will in Venezuela? How will you work with the regional bureau and Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs?

Answer. The safe return of wrongfully detained U.S. nationals is a top priority for the Biden administration. Using wrongful detention as a bargaining chip represents a threat to the safety of everyone traveling, working, and living abroad. The U.S. opposes this practice everywhere. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs and WHA to identify how DRL can help ensure the safe return of the nine American Citizens currently held on political charges in Venezuela and any other American who is wrongfully detained.

Question. In September 2020, the U.N. Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela cited evidence of unlawful executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture in the country since 2014, amounting to crimes against humanity. If confirmed, what tools will you use to ensure every person responsible is punished for their actions and brought to justice?

Answer. I understand the United States will continue to hold the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, and regime-aligned individuals accountable for their human rights abuses by applying a wide array of diplomatic and economic tools, including employing sanctions and visa restrictions. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

Question. In December 2020, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) accused the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of failing to take swift action after allegations that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's Government committed crimes against humanity. Do you support the ICC opening a formal investigation into these allegations?

Answer. I understand the United States is committed to promoting accountability for human rights violations and abuses in Venezuela, which is a party to the Rome

Statute of the ICC. If confirmed, I will promote the importance of accountability for the horrific violations and abuses that continue to be committed in Venezuela. Where domestic systems are unable or unwilling to genuinely pursue the justice that victims deserve and that societies require to sustain peace, international courts such as the ICC can play a meaningful role in advancing accountability. I understand the United States is united with like-minded democracies in denouncing human rights violations and abuses that have occurred in Venezuela and in calling for accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the victims.

I understand the United States is aware of the ICC Prosecutor's ongoing evaluation of whether to open an investigation into the situation in Venezuela.

Question. Please explain your understanding of how the Maduro regime operates as a narco-terrorist regime.

Answer. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including dissident FARC factions and the ELN—exploit the lack of rule of law created by the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, to traffic narcotics. President Biden has been clear that he believes Maduro is a dictator and that his administration will stand with the Venezuelan people and their call for a restoration of democracy through free and fair elections. I agree with the “VERDAD Act” and the administration that there must be a negotiated solution to the problems in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with allies, such as Colombia, to combat drug trafficking in the Andean region in ways that are both meaningful and economically sustainable. I also will support U.S. Government efforts to increase multilateral pressure on Maduro, call for the release of political prisoners, and implement sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. Please explain your views on the role of the Venezuelan military in narcotics trafficking.

Answer. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including dissident FARC factions and the ELN—exploit the lack of rule of law created by the Maduro regime, which the United States does not recognize as the Government of Venezuela, to traffic narcotics. President Biden has been clear that his administration will stand with the Venezuelan people and their call for a restoration of democracy through free and fair elections. I agree with the “VERDAD Act” and the administration that there must be a negotiated solution to the problems in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with allies, such as Colombia, to combat drug trafficking in the Andean region in ways that are both meaningful and economically sustainable. I also will support U.S. Government efforts to increase multilateral pressure on Maduro, call for the release of political prisoners, and implement sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. Please explain your views on the relationship between the Maduro regime and U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations, FARC and ELN

Answer. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including dissident FARC factions and the ELN—exploit the lack of rule of law created by the illegitimate Maduro regime to traffic narcotics.

Question. In Africa, DRL focuses its programs on non-presence countries or where limited democracy, rights and governance (DRG) investments are made by USAID. Do you agree with this approach? Why?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure DRL continues to consider many factors in determining where to support democracy and governance program goals, including those mentioned above. I believe it is important for DRL programming to continue to support U.S. policy objectives on the continent—while also maximizing effectiveness and avoiding duplication—through close coordination with other funders, including USAID. I understand that DRL's approach to programming, however, is different from other bureaus within the Department and other U.S. agencies due to

its close connection with activists and human rights defenders on the ground and programmatic flexibility which allows it to address emerging opportunities and challenges. Recognizing this, I believe DRL should remain invested in certain countries with a USAID presence, such as Sudan and Nigeria, where DRL's programming can complement and amplify other programs and given long-standing and sensitive human rights concerns that could complicate aspects of the bilateral relations.

Question. In your role as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, if confirmed, how will you follow through on administration statements that "Africa is a priority for the Biden administration"? How will you demonstrate—through DRL's work and in your engagements within the Department—that the U.S. respects and values our African partners while being clear about our values and expectations, particularly as it relates to respect for democratic norms, human rights and rule of law?

Answer. Promoting and advancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a top priority for the United States in Africa. If confirmed, I would seek ways to support democratic advancement on the part of governments and stand with citizens, civil society, and the private sector to hold their governments to be more responsive and accountable. I would also travel regularly to the continent and meet with a range of actors, including opposition leaders and members of the independent media. In diplomatic engagements, I would encourage close attention to free and fair elections and attempts to manipulate term limits, the context in which elections are held, respect for democratic norms, media freedom, and the health of civil society.

Question. Across Africa, the USG has invested in a number of early warning early response (EWER) systems focused for conflict prevention and mitigation. What is your assessment of EWER systems as an effective conflict prevention tool in Africa?

Answer. I understand EWER systems across Africa provide communities at risk for conflict and atrocities practical means to take a lead role in their own protection. I believe by creating low-cost, easy to use means of communicating with security providers and other communities at risk, these USG-supported programs have empowered previously unprotected or ignored communities and have evidently prevented escalations of conflict in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria especially at the grassroots, community-level.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Across Africa, the USG has invested in a number of early warning early response (EWER) systems focused for conflict prevention and mitigation.

What is your assessment of EWER systems as an effective conflict prevention tool in Africa?

Answer. EWER systems across Africa enable vulnerable and remotely located communities at risk for conflict and atrocities practical means to take a lead role in their own protection. I believe that by creating low-cost, easy to use means of communicating with security providers and other communities at risk, these U.S. Government-supported programs have empowered previously unprotected or ignored communities and have evidently prevented escalations of conflict in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. I understand U.S. Government investments also seek to support EWER systems that can be easily adapted and managed by local actors, ensuring sustainability and ownership at both the government and community level.

Question. Do you feel they are a good investment of U.S. resources given limited resources for conflict prevention and resolution in Africa?

Answer. Yes. I understand these early warning systems use radio and SMS to communicate, and that the training required to use them is cost-effective. Trained community members can in turn train others in their operation, and partnerships with telecom and security providers ensure that the communication channels remain available at a very low cost. I believe their sustainability and effectiveness make them a good investment of limited resources in this field.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Do you feel they are a good investment of U.S. resources given limited resources for conflict prevention and resolution in Africa?

Answer. Yes, especially when paired with training and capacity support for community members to identify violence trends and forecast risks to prevent attacks before they happen. Preventing violence and interrupting cycles of retaliatory intercommunal violence helps save lives and is a more impactful and cost-effective intervention than responding to conflict once it has broken out. Moreover, I understand that these early warning systems use radio and SMS to communicate, and the training required to use them is cost-effective. I understand trained community members can in turn train others in their operation, and partnerships with telecom and security providers ensure that the communication channels remain available at a very low cost. Their sustainability and effectiveness make them a good investment of limited resources in this field. While sophisticated defense systems have their place in protecting vulnerable populations in Africa, EWER systems that utilize technology already in regular use in at-risk locations can be much more effective in alerting populations in real time by being readily accessible, quick to stand up, and easy to use.

Question. Are you supportive of DRL investing in EWER systems in Africa? If yes, in what circumstances are they appropriate?

Answer. Yes. I believe EWER systems can be appropriately deployed in a number of situations where security providers are either slow or reluctant to provide quality protection for communities at risk for conflict due to ethnic, religious, resource, or other reasons. I understand due to the ease of use, DRL-supported EWER access is not limited to only a certain subset of users; indeed, we have seen tangible success when groups often overlooked for leadership roles—youth and women—have been empowered to use these systems. DRL's EWER systems are also appropriate and effective even where the government is the primary perpetrator. I believe in those circumstances, the alerts can be directed to alternative sources for response, such as local civil society or regional or international actors.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

Question. Are you supportive of DRL investing in EWER systems in Africa? If yes, in what circumstances are they appropriate?

Answer. Yes. EWER systems can be appropriately deployed in any number of situations and locations where security providers are either slow or reluctant to provide quality protection for communities at risk for conflict due to ethnic, religious, resource, or other reasons. I understand that due to their ease of use, DRL-supported EWER access is not limited to a certain subset of users and has demonstrated success when groups often overlooked for leadership roles—youth and women—have been empowered to use these systems. I believe DRL's EWER systems are also appropriate and effective where the Government is the primary perpetrator of abuses. In those circumstances, the alerts can be directed to alternative sources for response, such as local civil society or regional or international actors. I understand DRL also seeks to deepen its programs' coordination with security actors active in locations of mutual priority to ensure that information sharing is maximized.

Question. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, democratic gains are under threat as long-serving rulers manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to remain in power, while stifling dissent and limiting the activities of opposition parties and candidates. In 2020 alone, we saw ruling parties and incumbent leaders apply authoritarian tactics under the guise of democracy, including in Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and in the last year, four coups d'état have occurred in Chad, Guinea and two in Mali:

What is your perspective on balancing the sometimes competing U.S. priorities of security and democracy and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when some of our top security partners—including Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Chad and Mali—periodically or consistently engage in undemocratic practices or experience undemocratic and unconstitutional transitions of power?

Answer. A 2019 Afrobarometer study encompassing survey data from 34 African nations found that 68 percent of Africans believe democracy is the best form of government, while 78 percent reject strong-man rule and 72 percent oppose military rule. While it is in the U.S. interest to support African states facing security crises, we must make clear to African leaders who flout democratic norms that respect for human rights and democratic institutions is in their best interest, as well as that of their people, and their country. Without meaningful democratic governance, African states will not be well-positioned to expand peace and security and foster economic growth.

Question. In your view, which should take priority in Africa?

Answer. I firmly agree with President Biden's stated commitment to place respect for human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy. I also believe considering the human rights and democracy components of U.S. security engagement is an important element of policy development and can help guide and strengthen how the administration engages in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in countries with weak or nascent democracies. If confirmed, I look forward to participating in an interagency policy process as the Biden-Harris administration develops a fresh U.S. approach for Africa that addresses our national interests in Africa including respect for human rights and democratic norms, as well as security.

Question. How can the U.S. better engage the African Union on issues related to democracy, human rights, corruption, and rule of law?

Answer. I understand that democracy and governance is a core pillar of the U.S. High Level Dialogue with the African Union (AU), and one through which the U.S. Government works to advance the shared values of promoting democratic institutions and human rights on the continent throughout the year. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Ambassador to the AU as well as the AF bureau to seek policies that continue to counter corruption; promote constitutional reform undertaken in a democratic and transparent manner; mitigate conflict; protect civilians; support transitional justice; protect the independence of accountability mechanisms, such as the African Commission of Human and People's Rights; and promote political space for civil society. I also welcome the strategic use of U.S. foreign assistance resources to advance shared democracy, human rights, and good governance priorities through the AU, such as the ongoing technical assistance in support of the AU Assembly presidency in an effort to advance democracy and human rights, and training for youth experts on the AU's transitional justice policy.

Question. In the last three years, Sudan and Ethiopia embarked on unexpected democratic transitions. While the U.S. was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing adequate resources has been a challenge in both cases:

- As Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, how will you work inside DRL and with the Africa Bureau to be better prepared to contribute financial and diplomatic resources to support democratic transitions and opportunities that emerge unexpectedly in Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek to build on democratic openings across the Africa continent and in close coordination with the recently confirmed A/S for Africa to ensure we are coordinating closely and maximizing our resources and aligned in our policy approach. I would work to develop and coordinate strategic U.S. diplomatic engagement and assistance on democracy and human rights for countries in transition, working closely with the Africa Bureau, as well as colleagues from throughout the J Family, USAID and beyond.

Question. What lessons have the challenges to the transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia taught us about how to best support unexpected democratic transitions in the medium and long term?

Answer. The challenges in the transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia have taught us that the democratic transition process is extremely fragile and that success requires sustained medium and long term support but also that civil society—and women in particular—are important partners to understand alternative perspectives in transitioning countries.

If confirmed, I would work to support democratic institutions, so that they're strong, accountable, able to govern capably, and have the capacity to support credible and inclusive elections, enabling a peaceful transition to a democratic state; promote the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms including through legal reforms; and promote comprehensive transitional justice measures and credible, independent justice mechanisms.

Question. Russian malign activity in Africa is of increasing concern, particularly given credible reports of election interference, the engagement of Russian mercenaries, including Wagner Group, in Northern Mozambique, and Russia's security sector support to the Touadera administration (which includes an exemption to the U.N. arms embargo) in the Central African Republic (CAR).

- In your opinion, what should the U.S. be doing in Africa to counter malign Russian interference in elections, other democratic processes, and to reduce its influence over elected leaders?

Answer. I understand that the United States supports efforts by African nations to develop strong peace and security institutions to improve access to justice through capacity building and technical assistance. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen coordination within the Department of State, across the U.S. Government, and with likeminded partners such as the European Union and France to ensure our efforts are aligned and mutually supportive to strengthen African governments' abilities to mitigate conflict, stop human rights abuses and violations, hold those responsible for such actions accountable, and help countries achieve stable democracies that do not require the short-term security assistance of malign external actors. As has been demonstrated in multiple contexts, governments that partner with groups like Russian-supported Wagner become weaker, poorer, and less secure. As a practical matter, leaders in such countries lose control of their militaries and natural resources. Specifically, to counterbalance Russia's influence, if confirmed, I will pursue opportunities to stand up to Russian malign influence and reaffirm America's commitment to countries that uphold democracy and human rights. Additionally, I will work with partners to develop security alternatives for governments facing conflict and poverty.

Question. The recent coups d'etat in Mali are recent examples of the fragility of the Malian state. What is your assessment of the status of the Algiers Accord and prospects for its implementation?

Answer. The events in May of this year underscore just how important it is that Mali conducts free and fair elections on time in February 2022 and that the Head of the Transition and the Prime Minister of the Transition should not under any circumstances be candidates for the forthcoming presidential election. Without a legitimate government in place, it will be very difficult to make progress on the key provisions of the Algiers Accord.

Question. In your opinion, should the Algiers Accord remain the primary framework for peacebuilding and governance in Mali? If so, why? The recent coups d'etat in Mali are recent examples of the fragility of the Malian state.

Answer. In my opinion, the United States should continue to support the Algiers Accord, because, if implemented, it would play a substantial stabilizing role in Mali and the region. In particular, Accord provisions that concern decentralization and government services for marginalized populations will help respond to ongoing grievances that erode state legitimacy and fuel conflict.

Question. In light of the recent coups d'etat in Mali and Chad, would you agree that Niger is the U.S.' most important democratic ally in the Sahel? If yes, do you feel that U.S. democracy and governance support to Niger is sufficient to reflect the importance of this strategic relationship? If no, why not?

Answer. Niger is a democratic example for the region, especially for the transition governments in Mali and Chad. In February, the transition from former Nigerien President Issoufou, who voluntarily stepped down after two terms, to President Bazoum was Niger's first handover from one democratically elected president to another. Mauritania similarly achieved its first peaceful democratic transition of power in 2019. I understand Niger is a strong partner of the United States on matters of regional security through its participation in the G5-Sahel Joint Force, MINUSMA, the MNJTF, and D-ISIS Coalition. U.S. democracy and governance support to Niger totaled \$1.78 million in FY 2021. I believe greater U.S. democracy and governance support to Niger would further strengthen Nigerien democratic institutions and serve as a bulwark against growing regional anti-democratic trends.

Question. Given the ongoing political and constitutional crisis in Somalia, do you feel U.S. policy toward Somalia requires a re-think? If no, why not? If yes, in what alternative ways should the U.S. support democracy and human rights in Somalia?

Answer. I believe that it is always important for the United States to reflect upon its policies and seek to ensure that its approach will bring about the best possible outcome, and this is especially true when there is a crisis. I understand the administration recently completed a comprehensive policy review for Somalia, which identified addressing the political dynamics at the root of the current political situation as necessary for advancing long-term stabilization goals for the country.

If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that implementation of U.S. policy toward Somalia helps resolve the political and constitutional crisis and supports long-term democracy and human rights objectives. If confirmed, I will welcome your engagement and make myself available to brief you on these efforts.

Question. Immediately following the indirect selection of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (aka Farmajo) as President of Somalia in 2017, the U.S. engaged with the

Somali Government in Mogadishu on the premise that Somalia would hold one-person-one-vote direct elections in 2020.

- Was this a realistic expectation to set in 2016 or has U.S. policy been based on a fundamentally-flawed assumption?

Answer. I am not aware of the deliberations that followed the indirect selection of Farmaajo as President of Somalia in 2017, but I am aware that one-person-one-vote direct elections have not yet come about in Somalia.

Question. How do you view the prospects of one-person-one-vote direct elections in Somalia in the future?

Answer. Somalia is a deeply challenging context, but I am always hopeful about the prospects for democracy and the tenacity of people to pursue a governance system that truly affords them fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting efforts towards more inclusive, representative governance in Somalia, to include one-person-one-vote elections when feasible.

Question. Is it an appropriate approach to orient U.S. democracy and governance programs toward a specific electoral event in Somalia? If no, what is a more prudent approach for building democratic institutions and norms?

Answer. I believe that democracy is an evolving process. While elections are seminal events that often serve as milestones for measuring democratic progress, they are insufficient markers for building or consolidating a democratic state. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that U.S. democracy support continues to be holistic in its response to challenges and focuses on building institutions and support norms globally. I understand that while DRL does not currently have any programs in Somalia, any future investment should be strategically targeted in coordination with interagency efforts to further democratic priorities in country.

Question. Is it your view that a coup d'etat occurred in Guinea on September 5, 2021 to depose President Alpha Conde?

Answer. On September 5, military officers led by Colonel Mamdy Doumbouya deposed duly elected President Alpha Conde and seized power. Doumbouya's dissolution of the constitution and government plunged Guinea into a political crisis. COL Doumbouya now exerts de facto control over the Guinean Government.

Question. What is your assessment of the challenges to democracy and human rights in Liberia?

Answer. Corruption is endemic in Liberia and affects nearly every facet of life. In 2019 and 2020, Liberia ranked 137 of 180 countries and territories on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, having fallen from 120 in 2018.

Recent editions of the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report note that restrictions on freedom of expression are among the most significant human rights issues in Liberia. Journalists sometimes perceive the Government's approach to them as antagonistic and sometimes self-censor as a result. Individuals protesting against the Government must apply for a permit from the Ministry of Justice before organizing demonstrations, though the laws and regulations regarding permits remain unclear. Other significant human rights issues in Liberia include violence against women, including widespread female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls; ongoing impunity for serious human rights abuses and violations, and harsh prison conditions and lengthy pretrial detention; and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons.

Question. Do you feel that issues of justice and reconciliation from Liberia's civil wars has been adequately addressed? If no, what options for justice and reconciliation in Liberia should be explored?

Answer. Liberia's 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission report recommended a mix of criminal accountability and restorative measures to address the crimes committed during the country's civil wars to include prosecution of gross violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law and monetary reparations and memorialization of victims. To date, I understand the Liberian Government has not implemented the majority of the recommendations from the TRC report. Efforts to promote justice and reconciliation in Liberia must be Liberian-led. This is not to say that all Liberians feel their issues from that long war have been resolved, and questions about how the administration can continue to support those needs remain important. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States stands ready to be a partner to Liberia in justice and reconciliation efforts and will continue to encourage the Liberian Government and people to pursue such efforts.

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

Answer. The trend of elected leaders seeking to change constitutions or laws in order to remain in office, or transfer power to members of their family, is deeply concerning and undermines critical governing institutions that bring stability. President Biya has been in power for nearly 40 years and is among the world's longest ruling leaders. If confirmed, I will seek to promote democracy, respect for human rights, and accountability in Cameroon and will use a range of tools to do so.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

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

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the trend of unconstitutional changes in power in Africa and efforts to manipulate constitutions and laws in a manner that undermines democratic transfers of power, including in favor of successions within families. While Cameroon's constitution is clear regarding the presidential transition process, it has not been tested in more than 40 years. It is important that the Government and people of Cameroon work to strengthen institutions to ensure a democratic transition should the President be unable to complete his term. An unconstitutional transfer of power to any would-be successor could exacerbate current challenges and lead to instability. If confirmed, I will work with our Embassy in Yaoundé and like-minded partners to engage the Cameroonian Government and civil society actors interested in strengthening Cameroon's democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and accountability. I will also reaffirm the United States' strong support for countries to respect their constitutions during transitions in power and to oppose extra-constitutional changes or maneuvers to facilitate successions within families.

Question. As Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, if confirmed, how can DRL better support a resolution to the Anglophone Crisis and the significant and longstanding challenges to democratic elections and democratic governance in Cameroon?

Answer. I share your concerns about the ongoing violence in Cameroon and the crisis in the Anglophone region. Secretary Blinken's decision to restrict the visas of individuals responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon is a concrete example of options the Department of State can exercise to push for peace and dialogue. If confirmed, I will seek to promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses and ensure any Cameroonian security force unit that may be nominated for assistance is fully vetted for allegations of gross violations of human rights, consistent with the Leahy law.

My focus would be to continue urging all parties to end violence and to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. I would make clear U.S. support for the Swiss Government's effort to advance mediation between the Government and separatist armed group leaders and encourage the Cameroonian Government take concrete steps to move this effort forward. I would also continue to pursue engagement with African nations, France, other likeminded partners, and U.N. Security Council member states to find ways to promote a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence.

Question. DRL has led the USG's efforts to support electoral processes and a democratic transition in CAR since the lead up to CAR's 2016 elections. In your opinion, what areas are most critical for U.S. democracy, governance and human rights support to focus on in CAR in the post-2020/21 election period?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with colleagues throughout the State Department and interagency and with likeminded governments to identify areas where interventions may advance democracy, governance, justice and accountability, and respect for human rights in the Central African Republic (CAR). I understand that the United States has historically supported CAR's efforts to develop strong institutions and strengthen rule of law through capacity building and technical assistance.

I am deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses by the CAR Armed Forces and Russian-supported mercenaries, respectively, and reports of violence by armed groups against civilians and increased use of IEDs. I am equally concerned by credible reports of money laundering and a wide range of illicit trafficking and believe the U.S. has a role to play in further investigating these allegations and ensuring they do not undermine CAR's electoral process. The CAR Government's pending commission of inquiry will be critical to demonstrating its commitment to justice and accountability. If confirmed, I will seek to strengthen the CAR Government's ability to expand access to justice for more Central Africans, prevent human rights abuses and violations, promote accountability for those responsible, and help the country achieve stability and security without calling on malign actors for short-term security assistance.

Question. What is your perspective on the performance of the Tshisekedi administration to date?

Answer. Since President Tshisekedi took office in 2019, the DRC has released unjustly detained individuals; established an anti-trafficking agency; and realized the highest-level corruption conviction in DRC history. These were among the steps that merited the reinstatement of DRC's AGOA eligibility. I was pleased to see the first U.S.-DRC Human Rights Dialogue occur in June 2021 with the support of the Tshisekedi administration and if confirmed, I will aim to advance and deepen the commitments made during that dialogue.

Question. Do you feel that the Tshisekedi administration is in a position to continue to advance reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption, the security sector and the natural resources sector?

Question. I understand that under the Tshisekedi administration, the DRC saw the highest-level corruption conviction in that country's history. If confirmed, I would work with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and partners in the DRC to help address corruption and encourage accountability for corrupt actors with all available tools. The DRC has a long history of corruption and abuse in the mining and security sectors so a core component of any strategy must be engaging on both issues in a meaningful way that can bring about a more professional and effective security sector and a mining sector that truly benefits all Congolese. Essential to doing this work will be close collaboration with local communities and civil society groups.

I believe that the United States should support the Congolese Government's efforts to stabilize eastern DRC by addressing the drivers of escalating violence, including holding those in the military responsible for corruption and human rights abuses and violations to account.

Question. In your view, how can the U.S. best continue to support democratic reforms in DRC, including prospects for free, fair and transparent elections in 2023?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize to DRC leaders the early imperative of undertaking the legal, financial, and technical preparations necessary for free and fair elections in 2023, including reform of the Independent National Electoral Commission. To be credible, the 2023 elections must be inclusive, conducted transparently and impartially, and held in accordance with constitutional deadlines. If I am confirmed, I would work to ensure appropriate resources are in place to help our Congolese partners with this important task.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the legitimate victor of a free and fair electoral process in 2023?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work diligently to support a free and fair electoral process and a constructive election environment in the run up to and including the 2023 elections. The declared winner of the presidential election should reflect the will of the Congolese people at the ballot box through a transparent, impartial, and inclusive electoral process.

Question. What is your assessment of the current human rights situation in Burundi?

Answer. Since the election of President Ndayishimiye, the Burundian Government has lifted bans on media outlets associated with the political opposition, freed imprisoned journalists and human rights defenders, increased efforts to address trafficking in persons, and taken steps to end abusive practices by the ruling party's youth militia. However, I am also aware of the recent report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, which documents ongoing human rights violations, the absence of adequate democratic space, ongoing targeting of journalists, denial of freedom of association to civil society, and a lack of meaningful structural

reform. If confirmed, I will engage with colleagues from across the State Department and the interagency to address the current human rights situation in Burundi.

Question. Do you feel the democracy and human rights situation in Burundi has improved or declined in Burundi since President Nkurunziza's death and the inauguration of President Ndayishimiye? How?

Answer. I understand that Burundi's 2020 elections took place in a markedly different atmosphere from that in 2015 and were characterized by a competitive process with relatively little violence. Since the election of President Ndayishimiye, the Burundian Government has lifted bans on media outlets associated with the political opposition, freed imprisoned journalists and human rights defenders, increased efforts to address trafficking in persons, and taken steps to end abusive practices by the ruling party's youth militia. However, I am also aware of the recent report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, which notes the absence of any structural reform to "durably improve the [human rights] situation" and multiple ongoing human rights violations and other concerns. If confirmed, I will engage with colleagues across the State Department and the interagency to assess the approach of President Ndayishimiye's administration and review Burundi's progress on democracy and respect for human rights.

Question. In your opinion, have the conditions in Burundi adequately changed for the Departments of State and Treasury to consider terminating the Burundi Sanctions Program?

Answer. I understand the Burundi sanctions program has been a valuable tool to deter abuses and promote accountability among those connected with the 2015 violence and instability in the country. If confirmed, I will engage with the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Bureau of African Affairs, and the Department of the Treasury to assess whether Executive Order 13712 remains an effective tool to advance our foreign policy goals in Burundi, including improved respect for human rights. I will also consider the use of all available tools to respond to human rights violations and abuses in Burundi.

Question. Do you feel that the upgrading of Burundi from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List in the 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report was an objective reflection of the efforts of the Burundian Government, specifically its justice sector, to make good faith efforts to improve the TIP situation in Burundi?

Answer. I understand that Burundi's 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report tier ranking as Tier 2 Watch List was based on the Burundian Government's increased efforts, including by the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Interior, at the direction of the Office of the President, to counter trafficking in persons. These efforts included increasing investigations and prosecutions of suspected trafficking offenses, convicting traffickers, and referring victims to assistance. The Government also developed and implemented the country's first-ever national data collection system on law enforcement's efforts to combat human trafficking and trained officials on its use. If confirmed, I commit to working with Burundi to ensure it continues to prioritize countering trafficking in persons.

Question. Kenya will have elections in 2022. In your opinion, are planned levels of USG support to Kenya's electoral process adequate?

Answer. I understand that the United States has invested significant resources over the last two decades in support of free and fair elections and democratic reform in Kenya, covering a broad set of programming areas. If confirmed, I would assess the electoral climate and work with colleagues to determine whether planned levels of U.S. Government support are adequate for the 2022 general elections in Kenya and whether additional funding, if available, would be merited. I believe continued U.S. engagement and programs for the August 2022 elections can help Kenya, one of four U.S. strategic partners in Africa, conduct credible elections and forestall the violence and instability that have too often plagued prior election cycles. I strongly support the ongoing efforts to enhance accountability and transparency of the election process, support anti-corruption efforts, promote initiatives to mitigate possible election-related violence and protect human rights, strengthen civic engagement and voter education, and improve the information and media environment.

Question. While there was hope that the end of Mugabe's 37 year reign as president of Zimbabwe would usher in democratic and economic reforms that would enable the beleaguered country to cast off its pariah status, the three years of leadership under President Mnangagwa has demonstrated a continuation, if not worsening, of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and kleptocratic behavior

of the ZANU-PF regime. What tools does the U.S. have at its disposal that are underutilized to encourage democratic and economic reforms in Zimbabwe?

Answer. The Government of Zimbabwe's authoritarian and corrupt practices, including the targeting of opposition political figures, journalists, and members of civil society through harassment, arrests, and detentions are matters of great concern. I greatly appreciate that this committee has publicly called out repressive actions taken by the Zimbabwe government. The State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Harare also issue condemnations when appropriate and publicly voice support for the courageous Zimbabwean women and men who speak out against government corruption and abuses. I understand the U.S. supports governance programs that improve electoral processes, refine citizen advocacy strategies, and enhance public accountability measures. It provides support to those the Zimbabwean Government singles out for abuse, and imposes targeted sanctions to promote accountability for corrupt actors and those who abuse human rights and undermine democratic processes. If confirmed, I will work with this committee, civil society, regional neighbors, and likeminded partners to direct more attention to the situation in Zimbabwe so that, together, we can increase the pressure on the Government to respect democratic principles and human rights. If confirmed, I will also work with interagency partners to mobilize sanctions programs to promote accountability for those individuals who are currently active in corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. An area of considerable debate has been the value of reincorporating political party programming into the U.S.' portfolio of democracy assistance to Zimbabwe. Do you commit to working with the Africa Bureau to review the Department of State's posture on political party support to Zimbabwe?

Answer. The Government of Zimbabwe has systematically weakened the opposition through manipulated court rulings, harassment and incarceration of key figures, and thinly veiled actions to install pliant political figures in parliament since it took power after the 2018 election.

If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe, as well as how to better engage civil society organizations, build confidence in the electoral commission, and encourage more regional engagement.

Question. As Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, would you support the investment of DRL resources into programming that would support investigative journalism and research to better understand corruption and kleptocratic networks in Zimbabwe?

Answer. It is important to look into all options available that would help counter the corrupt and authoritarian actions of the Government of Zimbabwe. If confirmed, I will explore new funding options for DRL interventions in Zimbabwe while factoring how such programs would complement existing USAID programs in country to ensure effectiveness and avoid duplication of efforts, as well as the availability of funds, the timing of appropriations, and procurement lead times.

Question. Given the supermajority retained by the MPLA in the August 2017 legislative elections, has President Lourenco and his party used this legislative power to push through the necessary democracy and human rights reforms from the start of their current term in office as prioritized by the United States and the international community? If so, what are these specific democracy and human rights reforms? If not, what has the U.S. done to ensure that Angola's Government makes these necessary reforms?

Answer. I understand the Government of Angola has made significant progress in its efforts to combat corruption, including investigations and prosecutions of current and former government officials and adopting a new penal code which increased penalties for corrupt officials. The Government has also taken steps to hold officials accountable for human rights abuses. Though challenges remain, the Government has noted that human rights are a matter of national security and acknowledged the need for oversight provided by civil society organizations across the country. Since the release of the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Angola has demonstrated further commitment to combat human trafficking by increasing the criminal penalties for human trafficking; convicting and sentencing traffickers to prison; and conducting a national awareness campaign on human trafficking. Angola also modified its religious registration law to reduce restrictions on Islam and other religions. I understand the United States looks forward to discussing ways to build upon Angola's progress at their fourth Bilateral Dialogue on Human Rights in the coming months. If confirmed, I intend to use that and other opportunities to strengthen bilateral cooperation to support Angola's anti-corruption efforts, enhance

accountability mechanisms for human rights violations and abuses, advance democratic governance, and support protections for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to peaceful assembly and freedoms of expression, association, and religion or beliefs.

Question. While Angola's constitutional court rejected the opposition parties' legal petitions in the last election for alleged irregularities, what specific electoral reforms are needed to address some of the concerns raised in those petitions as well as to improve the overall electoral process for the 2022 polls?

Answer. The 2022 legislative elections will be an opportunity for Angola to demonstrate its commitment to democratic governance. A transparent planning process for the elections will aid in their success.

If possible, I would also like to see local elections held in conjunction with the legislative elections, noting that they would be the first to be held in recent Angolan history.

Question. The ruling MPLA under the leadership of President Lourenço introduced changes to the electoral law that would centralize the counting of votes instead of doing it at the level of each municipality and province. Given that centralized counting of votes is not a best practice in results management, particularly in terms of engendering confidence in the transparency and credibility of transmission of election results, how would the centralizing of vote counting be seen in your view? Given the concerns raised by opposition candidates in the 2017 elections through their legal petitions citing the lack of transparency by the electoral commission and alleged vote counting irregularities at the provincial level, would such a law engender greater confidence in the electoral process? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Answer. President Lourenço has shown a willingness to take into account the concerns of minority parties as well as the public demand for free and fair elections. The draft law could present logistical challenges in registering voters in remote areas, and constraints in the prescribed electoral timeframe could lead to low voter registration and participation abroad. As the law is debated and refined, the U.S. Government should continue to advocate for transparency and adherence to international norms.

I also note that on September 11, Angola saw its largest political demonstration since before the pandemic began in response to the draft election law, and that the peaceful nature of the march and the authorities' willingness to permit such a sizeable gathering, despite standing COVID restrictions, is a hopeful signal as Angola gears up for its 2022 legislative elections.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In 2016, the Washington Examiner quoted you as saying that the human rights situation in Cuba was improving. Specifically, you said that in "Cuba we've seen more engagement on HR issues." In 2021, you opposed the State Department's decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism:

- Do you believe that the human rights situation in Cuba is improving? And if so, what specific indicators are you looking at to make this determination?

Answer. I do not believe that the human rights situation is improving. In response to peaceful protests in July, Cuban security forces violently repressed the protests, arresting hundreds of demonstrators simply for exercising their rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as numerous human rights activists. If confirmed, I pledge democracy and human rights in Cuba will remain at the core of our Cuba policy.

Question. Can you explain why you oppose Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism?

Answer. As a nominee I do not have access to information that would enable me to have an informed opinion as to whether Cuba should be designated as a state sponsor of terrorism. I have long believed that state sponsor of terrorism designations should be used for states that are terrorists, based on fact, analysis, and intelligence. Similarly, I believe a designation should not be lifted until there's full clarity that the government in question has taken all steps necessary to relieve themselves of the criteria needed for such a designation. Regardless of the state sponsor of terrorism designation, I do believe other corresponding punitive measures are an important tool to be used on repressive governments and/or officials. If confirmed,

I will consult closely with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward, including on the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

Question. Are you aware that Cuba continues to provide safe haven to convicted criminals on the FBI's most wanted list, like Joanne Chesimard, who executed a New Jersey State Troop in 1973 and William Morales who was convicted in a U.S. District Court for possession of explosives and other crimes?

Answer. Yes, I am aware that Cuba harbors several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on or convicted of charges of political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades. If confirmed, I will support the regular U.S. calls on Cuba to return fugitives from justice.

Question. If confirmed, will you advocate for Cuba to be de-listed as a state sponsor of terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy, including the previous administration's decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. I will consult with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward.

Question. In July of this year, we witnessed the largest protests against the regime in 62 years. It's clear from the videos and messages shared, that these protests were clearly sparked by decades of mismanagement and human rights abuses by the regime. The unprecedented size and spread of these protests are directly related to ordinary Cubans' access to internet circumvention tools like VPNs. If confirmed, you will oversee the Bureau at State, which is responsible for U.S. assistance to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba.

- If confirmed, do you commit to support robust funding for the democracy movement in Cuba?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will use all tools at my disposal to support independent civil society and democratic actors in Cuba, including through robust funding for democracy and human rights programs. I believe that these programs, including those that promote internet freedom, are central to empowering independent civil society organizations and ordinary citizens to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba.

Question. If confirmed, will you support providing internet circumvention tools that allow Cubans unfettered and uncensored access to the internet?

Answer. I understand the United States provides funding—over \$70 million globally on an annual basis—to support the development, deployment, and operation of the latest secure and reliable technical solutions to counter Internet censorship, content blocking, and shutdowns, and other violations of Internet Freedom. I also understand U.S.-supported programming makes secure circumvention and communications tools available to internet users everywhere, including in Cuba. If confirmed, and with the continued appropriations support for these activities, I will ensure DRL continues these critical programs.

Question. In 2018, you tweeted in support for the anti-Semitic BDS movement, praising AirBnB for removing rental listings of homes located inside the West Bank.

- Do you still support this decision?

Answer. I firmly reject the BDS movement, which unfairly singles out Israel. If confirmed, I will work with Israel to counter efforts to delegitimize it around the world, while respecting the First Amendment rights of Americans and supporting U.S. businesses.

Question. Do you view the BDS movement as hateful and anti-Semitic?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has been clear that it resolutely opposes the BDS movement. I also have made clear that I firmly reject the BDS movement. The administration has stated it will always fully respect Americans' First Amendment rights, while also remaining a strong partner in fighting efforts to delegitimize Israel. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to support Israel's further integration into the international community, and to oppose the BDS movement and any efforts to delegitimize Israel.

Question. In July 2020, you praised an op-ed by Peter Beinert that argued for Israel to discard its identity as a Jewish State. This conflicts with longstanding U.S. support for Israel as a Jewish state.

- Can you clarify whether or not you fully endorse the views expressed by Beinert in this op-ed? Specifically, like Beinert, do you no longer believe in a Jewish state?

Answer. I believe that Israel is a democratic and Jewish state. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership.

Question. Can you clarify, is it “cruel” to limit Tehran’s support for groups that violate the human rights of ordinary people across the region?

Answer. The Iranian Government has a deeply troubling record on human rights both at home and abroad. If confirmed, I am committed to working to disrupt Iran’s efforts to repress, harass, harm, or otherwise violate the human rights of individuals in any part of the world, including via its support for violent partners and proxies, and to continuing to use a variety of tools, including sanctions, to counter Iran’s support for violent partners and proxies in the region.

Question. Has your opinion of the Iranian Government changed since Raisi’s election as President?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration’s Iran policy is designed to advance U.S. interests, which include deterring and punishing human rights abuses, regardless of who is in power in Tehran. If confirmed, I will ensure that we deploy all available tools to promote accountability for human rights violators.

Question. If the Iranian Government is still replete with nasty characters, do you believe that providing that regime with sanctions relief advances democracy and human rights in Iran?

Answer. The Iranian Government regularly denies Iranians their human rights, including through severe restrictions on the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, religion or belief, and expression. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to call out and stand up to Iran’s human rights abuses, and to maintain and impose sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals perpetrating human rights abuses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Recently, the United States and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency agreed upon a framework for cooperation which includes a mutual commitment to abide by the Foreign Assistance Act’s prohibition on assistance to UNRWA without adequate oversight of funding, specifically over funds which could end up in the hands of terrorist. But UNRWA has displayed an insufficient track record in exercising oversight of its funds, even after committing to our government to do so:

- At what point is it necessary to accept that the constant flow of U.N. support is enabling corrupt entities in the region and not actually helping bring about peace and security? What options exist for alternative, U.S.-led and U.S.-facilitated assistance?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration supports the work of UNRWA, which provides critical services to vulnerable Palestinian refugees. UNRWA is a lifeline for thousands of Palestinian refugees in the region. I understand the United States and UNRWA have reaffirmed a commitment to uphold the principles of accountability, neutrality, and transparency. I understand the Department is deeply engaged with UNRWA, including on key reforms related to efficiency, effectiveness, and importantly neutrality. I want to be clear—neutrality means antiracism, combatting anti-semitism and tolerance.

The Department is committed to ensuring U.S. government funding does not end up in the hand of terrorists, including Hamas. The administration provides assistance to trusted international organizations and NGOs in a manner consistent with U.S. law and does not direct assistance to Hamas. The Department takes oversight of U.N. operations, including UNRWA, seriously to ensure U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching the intended recipients.

Question. Do you agree with President Biden that further conditioning security aid to Israel would be “outrageous”?

Answer. Yes. The Biden-Harris administration remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel’s security and will work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership. If confirmed, I will support these efforts to strengthen our bilateral ties.

Question. Do you acknowledge that Israel’s security environment is unlike any other in the world, by means of its very existence?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Is the Human Rights Council serving the interests of the United States when it consistently displays bias against the state of Israel?

Answer. The U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) has flaws, including in particular the Council's problematic membership and its disproportionate focus on Israel. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring with colleagues the HRC can be as effective and balanced as possible, and will continue to advocate that the HRC treats Israel in the same way as the HRC handles any other country. When the United States has a seat at the table, we are able to advocate on Israel's behalf. The U.S. is hopeful about moving resolutions out of Agenda Item 7, which will be a step in the right direction. Advancing democracy and protecting human rights are vital to U.S. national security interests. U.S. leadership in multilateral venues, including the Human Rights Council helps focus international attention on the world's most egregious human rights situations such as Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Ethiopia, Burma, and help direct U.N. assistance to countries in transition like Sudan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MS. SARAH MARGON BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Cuba

Question. The Cuban regime annually proposes a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly condemning the U.S. for policies toward Cuba, and among other things calling for the embargo to be lifted. The U.S. has consistently voted against this measure, with the exception of 2016, when the Obama-Biden administration instead abstained from the vote. Long-standing policy of the U.S. to use its voice and vote to oppose this measure was restored under the Trump administration. The Biden administration has extended this policy, and this year UN Ambassador Thomas Greenfield voted against the Cuban-sponsored resolution condemning the United States' congressionally mandated trade embargo at the United Nations General Assembly.

Meanwhile, the United States Congress has been and remains committed to maintaining America's embargo on Cuba. The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-114) codifies the U.S. embargo. The executive branch is prevented from lifting the embargo without congressional concurrence through legislation until certain democratic conditions set forth in the law are met.

- Do you agree with the Congressionally mandated policy mandating an embargo?

Answer. The LIBERTAD Act codifies the bulk of the embargo and the circumstances under which it can be ended. Unless it is repealed or amended by Congress, the embargo can only be ended if the President determines Cuba has entered a transition to democracy. The administration is committed to implementing U.S. law while ensuring its policies advance the right to self-determination for the Cuban people, greater freedom for the Cuban people, and expanded support for pro-democracy, human rights, and independent media in Cuba. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting these goals as part of the administration's policy toward Cuba and consulting with Congress on ways to advance them that is consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Do you agree with the decision to vote against U.N. resolutions condemning the U.S. embargo?

Answer. Yes. Under LIBERTAD, the embargo is U.S. law. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the administration's policy approach to Cuba consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Please describe what policies you would take to deepen Congress's policy mandating an embargo of Cuba?

Answer. Democracy and human rights in Cuba are at the core of the administration's efforts to empower the Cuban people to determine their own future. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's goals to support the Cuban people to further strengthen Cuban civil society, and to increase pressure on the regime for its repression and human rights violations, as the Biden administration did this past July following the Government's brutal response to protests. I look forward to consulting with Congress on the way forward and to ensuring our policy towards Cuba is rooted in broad support for fundamental values.

Israel/State Dept

Question. On July 8, 2014 our Israeli allies launched Operation Protective Edge in response to a string of Hamas terrorist attacks and atrocities. The State Dept. among other things called on Israel to avoid civilian casualties and committed to

resupplying them with military technology they required to defend themselves. On July 31 you criticized that stance as “consistently inconsistent” in a post on Twitter. Your view is particularly worrisome because, if confirmed, you would contribute to decision-making related to providing resources to allies in crisis conditions.

- Please clarify what you meant by the criticism that the State Dept. being “consistently inconsistent” for urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties while seeking to resupply Israel.

Answer. I strongly support Israel’s right to self-defense and the United States’ continued commitment to Israel’s security. I also believe that mitigation of civilian casualty risks, consistent with U.S. law, should be considered for all U.S. arms sales. My tweet was an unnuanced expression of that objective. If confirmed, I will support the United States’ continued commitment to Israel’s security and will work to strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel partnership. Secretary Blinken also has underscored the U.S. expectation that Israel should do everything it possibly can to mitigate the risk of civilian casualties, which I believe is in line with our shared values and common strategic interests.

Question. Please describe human rights concerns that you believe are relevant to decisions related to supplying our Israeli allies with resources they need to defend themselves.

Answer. The U.S. commitment to Israel’s security is ironclad. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to Israel’s defense and security, including its qualitative military edge in the region, consistent with U.S. law and policy. The President has also made it clear that the rule of law and respect for human rights are front and center in U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will join this administration in insisting on adherence to our agreements on the use of U.S.-origin defense equipment by our allies and partners, compliance with the laws of armed conflict, and respect for human rights.

Question. In May 16, 2018 you criticized the United States Government on Twitter for being “virtually silent” on “Israeli security forces’ disproportionate attacks on Palestinians in Gaza.” This assessment is not a legal assessment: it is an institutional judgment about the role of U.S. Government officials. These assessments and others like them would be significant if you are confirmed for role as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Please list which Israeli actions in the context of your May 16, 2018 post you believe the U.S. Government should have been more vocal about?

Answer. I believe that the United States should continue to underscore the expectation that Israel, as a key democratic ally in the region, should do everything it possibly can to mitigate the risk of civilian casualties. It is critical for all parties to refrain from unilateral or disproportionate steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, such as annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, and incitement to violence.

Interbranch Cooperation

Question. In January 2020 Sens. Cotton, Cruz, and Braun sent an oversight letter to then-Attorney General Barr requesting that he “review the activities of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) and its sister organization NIAC Action for potential violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).” You criticized this request, and joined a letter saying that the Senators had used “tactics [that] have no place in our political process or our national discourse, and risk turning our Justice Department into a political tool.”

- Do you believe that the Senators’ letter asking for a review of activities has no place in our political process?

Answer. To the contrary, I believe Congress has a strong role to play in exercising vital oversight functions. In joining that letter, I was expressing concern about the potential for federal law enforcement power to be misused to intimidate or silence civil society organizations. If confirmed, I would seek to be in regular communication with Congress and meaningfully accommodate oversight requests.

Question. Please describe your understanding of the role that elected officials play in overseeing agencies charged with investigating potential violations of statutory regulations such as FARA, in the context of your potential role as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor?

Answer. Elected officials have an important oversight function. I commit to working with Congress to accommodate its need for information to conduct oversight.

Question. Do you agree with the assessment that the Chinese Government is engaged in a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the XUAR that is ongoing?

Answer. Yes. I agree that the PRC has committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, and that these crimes are ongoing.

Question. What role do you see for the State Department in countering that ongoing genocide, and more broadly the human rights atrocities being committed by the Chinese Communist Party?

Answer. The United States should continue to speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible for those abuses. If confirmed, I will advocate to continue concrete U.S. Government actions—in coordination with allies and partners whenever possible—to promote accountability for ongoing atrocities and genocide in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China, including through the imposition of visa restrictions, tightening of export controls, enforcement of import restrictions, imposition of financial sanctions, and multilateral initiatives. I will also look to engage the private sector on questions related to digital authoritarianism and the economic, legal, and reputational risks of supply chain links to entities that engage in human rights abuses, including forced labor in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China. Finally, if confirmed I will work with DRL colleagues and other non-governmental entities to ensure civil society is adequately supported to monitor, document, and respond to China's abuses—wherever they may occur.

Israel / Sovereignty

Question. The Obama-Biden administration's approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict was justified on the basis of a theory of regional relations in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevented broader Israeli-Arab rapprochement. Among other decisions, that administration implemented discriminatory policies that distinguished between Jewish communities in places Israel controlled before and after 1967. That approach culminated in December 2016, when the Obama administration maneuvered the United Nations Security Council into passing UNSCR 2334, which among other things denied Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and part of its capital Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter. The Trump administration systematically worked to hollow out and render UNSCR 2334 null and void. They did so, including by recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, by moving our embassy to Jerusalem, by seeking to end discriminatory approaches that distinguished legally and for the purposes of aid and trade between different Israeli communities, and by taking several other steps.

- Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights?

Answer. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration gives great weight to Israel's security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria, it would be irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door. The Biden administration has not reversed U.S. policy on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the Biden-Harris administration has not altered U.S. policy on this important issue. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The administration also recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of the Golan Heights?

Answer. I understand that U.S. policy regarding the Golan has not changed since the beginning of the Biden-Harris administration. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria, it would be irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to

be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. If confirmed, I will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has engaged in discriminatory policies, in response to which the private sector has an important role to play in not promoting or pursuing?

Answer. I believe all governments, including the United States and Israel, should work to end discrimination of any kind. If confirmed, I will work with all partners, including the private sector, to address discrimination and help ensure all people are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Question. If so, please describe which discriminatory Israeli policies you believe the private sector has an important role to play in not promoting or pursuing.

Answer. If confirmed, I will review all available evidence and work with all partners to address discrimination—whether targeting Israelis or Palestinians—and ensure full compliance with existing U.S. policy and law, while also ensuring that all people are treated with the fundamental dignity and respect they deserve.

Question. The Biden administration has repeatedly expressed commitments to providing assistance to Lebanon, including in the absence of any government or in the context of a government controlled or unduly influenced by Hezbollah. If confirmed, you would have a central role in evaluating the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and you would have significant equities in what a response would look like.

- Do you believe that it would be in America’s national security interest for resources to go to the Government of Lebanon even if that government was controlled or unduly influenced by Hezbollah?

Answer. Hizballah is a terrorist organization, and the United States undertakes rigorous measures to safeguard U.S. assistance from conferring benefits to Hezbollah or any other terrorist group, including thorough oversight, vetting, and robust risk mitigation practices. If confirmed, I would ensure the Department continues to support our vital interests in Lebanon through the ongoing but carefully allocated provision of U.S. assistance, including to Lebanese civil society, which helps to bolster Lebanon’s resiliency, stability, and security.

Question. On January 10, 2021, the State Department designated Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, and Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, three leaders of Ansarallah, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. On February 5, the Biden administration informed Congress of its intention to revoke those sanctions. The issue of humanitarianism was central to the public explanation of the decision: officials at the State Department have justified the delisting of what they described as the “broad” designation of Ansarallah on humanitarian grounds, e.g. that large parts of Yemen’s population live under areas controlled by the group. Since then, the Houthis have escalated their violence across the region, bombarding civilians in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Yemen was already one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in the world, in large part because the Houthis and their Iranian backers block aid, steal aid, and attack civilians.

- Please describe the role played by Iran and the Houthis in deepening the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

Answer. The Houthis, with continued Iranian support, remain intransigent and focused on their military offensive against Marib. The offensive is the single biggest threat to peace efforts and is exacerbating an already-dire humanitarian crisis, placing at risk the approximately one million internally displaced persons who found refuge in Marib after escaping fighting in other parts of the country. The Houthis also exacerbate the humanitarian consequences of the fuel situation at Hudaydah port by stockpiling fuel and manipulating fuel prices, driving up the cost of fuel far beyond the reach of most Yemenis. In addition, the Houthis continue to interfere in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration’s decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to provide humanitarian relief to Yemeni civilians in general.

Answer. The Biden administration revoked the terrorism designations of Ansarallah, sometimes referred to as the Houthis, in recognition of the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. I understand the administration listened to concerns voiced by the United Nations, humanitarian groups, and bipartisan members of Congress, among others, regarding potential impacts the designations could have had on Yemenis’ access to essential basic commodities. The short time that passed

between the designations and their revocations limited the impact the designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports. According to U.N. data, food and other humanitarian assistance items are moving through Yemeni ports at normal rates.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to provide humanitarian relief to Yemeni civilians in Marib.

Answer. The short time that passed between the designations and their revocations limited the impact that designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports. The situation has been especially critical in Marib, where the escalation of hostilities has caused additional needs and secondary displacement. Critically, delivery has safely continued of life-saving food, emergency shelter, water, and sanitation and hygiene supplies, as well as essential non-food items, such as blankets and water containers.

Question. In May 2014, you criticized the United States Government for having done "little to follow up" on calls to create distance between the U.S. and Nigerian security forces, who you described as "barely more palatable" than Boko Haram fighters who had kidnapped hundreds of girls. In contrast, many in Congress and across the federal government see the Nigerian Government as a critical national security partner.

- Do you continue to believe that the U.S. should limit security cooperation with the Government of Nigeria?

Answer. Nigeria faces numerous security threats, including terrorism, rural banditry, kidnapping for ransom, herder-farmer violence, separatist attacks, maritime piracy, and rampant criminality. I understand the U.S. Government's strategy takes a holistic approach to help Nigeria address insecurity by harnessing a range of security, governance, and development tools. Nigeria is an important national security partner and has taken some steps to investigate alleged abuses by both the police and the military, which are essential steps to addressing longstanding impunity. A central part of U.S. security cooperation is focused on helping Nigeria build capable, well-equipped, professional, accountable security forces that effectively respond to threats, protect civilians, and respect human rights. U.S. Government also supports rule of law capacity building efforts, community-based conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs, livelihoods programs, and provides humanitarian assistance to build resilience among conflict-affected populations.

If confirmed, I will support the U.S. goal of a stable and secure Nigeria while ensuring the United States continues to use its engagements with the Nigerian Government to prioritize respect for human rights and accountability for past human rights violations and abuses

Question. What specific steps do you envision pursuing in your role as Assistance Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, should you be confirmed, that would limit cooperation with either the Government of Nigeria or Nigerian security forces?

Answer. If confirmed, I would underscore that the United States expects the Nigerian Government and security forces to demonstrate a strong commitment to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and to prioritize accountability for past human rights violations and abuses. Assessing credible information of gross violations of human rights, consistent with the Leahy Law, and consulting with the Africa bureau would be an essential part of assessing whether cooperation should be limited. If confirmed, I would support the thorough vetting of Nigerian security force units, consistent with U.S. law, to ensure that we are not providing assistance to those units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

Question. How would you characterize the professionalism of Nigerian armed forces today?

Answer. Nigeria has an estimated 120,000 active-duty personnel in the military with a 70,000-person army. I understand the Nigerian Police Force lacks appropriate staffing and resources with only 375,000 police in a country of over 200 million citizens. The military is deployed on operations in 35 of the 36 states to support Nigeria's overstretched police force, but the reality is both are stretched.

According to the State Department's Human Rights Report, there were reports that members of the Nigerian security forces committed human rights abuses in 2020 and impunity remained a significant problem. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts across the U.S. Government as well as international partners to

convey the consistent message that we need to see steady improvement toward more professional and accountable Nigerian security institutions.

Question. How would you characterize the Buhari administration in the context of counter-terrorism operations?

Answer. Defeating Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, and other violent extremist organizations is essential for the security and prosperity of Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin. Violent extremist groups have caused at least 35,000 deaths in northeast Nigeria in the last decade, as well as displaced more than two million persons. In the Northeast, Nigeria is fighting insurgencies against ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram with an increasingly overstretched and undermanned Nigerian Army. Lacking manpower, the armed forces desperately need an increase in resources. Additionally, support for non-military responses to countering terrorism—including increased development, good governance, and economic opportunities remain vital. Beyond being stretched, limited capability and uneven local government willingness to intervene present counter-terrorism challenges.

Question. Which countries would you advocate to be added or removed from the State Department's Country of Particular Concern list?

Answer. The law gives the Secretary of State the responsibility of making CPC designations, which provides important leverage to engage on religious intolerance, a central human rights concern. The 2020 International Religious Freedom Report was released in May, and Secretary Blinken will now have his first opportunity to undertake the annual designations, and without prejudging Secretary Blinken's CPC designations, I am confident the Secretary will carefully review the religious freedom situation in all countries and make designations based on the criteria set forth in the IRF Act.

These designations are one of a range of tools the Department has to promote accountability for governments and non-state entities that are religious freedom violators, and it is a very important tool. If confirmed, I will support the implementation of the full range of these tools, in partnership with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

Question. In December 2020, the Department of State designated Nigeria as a country of particular concern (CPC) in response to pervasive and egregious violations of religious freedom. Do you believe Nigeria should remain or be removed from the State Department's Country of Particular Concern list?

Answer. There are serious human rights issues in Nigeria. Although I cannot forecast any decisions regarding potential designations, I share Congressional concern about religious freedom issues in Nigeria. Religious freedom is a key U.S. foreign policy priority and I understand the Department continues to closely monitor human rights and the religious freedom situation in Nigeria. As with every region, the causes of conflict in Nigeria are complex. In addition to religious differences, ethnicity, politics, lack of accountability, access to justice, and competition over land resources are also drivers of the violence. Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, as amended, the Secretary takes into consideration all relevant information available in his annual review of designations. If confirmed, I will make Nigeria a priority and I commit to work with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and Congress to address religious freedom concerns in Nigeria.

Question. Please describe the degree to which you consider anti-blasphemy laws to be acute threats to global or regional human rights?

Answer. I understand that the U.S. Government uniformly opposes apostasy, blasphemy, and anti-conversion laws, which are frequently used to oppress those whose religious beliefs differ from the majority. If confirmed, I will urge governments to eliminate such laws.

Laws against blasphemy or apostasy are too often used and abused by governments, as a means of protecting or extending their powers, to target political dissenters or members of religious or ethnic minority groups. These laws are also too often used and abused by individuals as a pretext to justify violence against those whose religion or ethnicity differs from their own or to settle personal grievances. When governments actively or passively support such individuals, instead of protecting members of minority groups, those in society who want to take the law into their own hands are empowered to use violence against these victims.

Therefore, I consider these laws to be acute threats to human rights, especially freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.

Question. If confirmed, how would you orient the bureau to mitigate the effects or erode the scope of blasphemy laws?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom to urge governments to annul these laws and to oppose the enforcement and abuse of these laws, especially enforcement with criminal penalties.

Question. Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. Yes. I recognize that there are times when unclassified information from various sources, taken together, can result in revealing classified information damaging to our national security. In those instances, that information must be secured. If confirmed, I commit to avoiding the over-classification of materials required by Congress for the oversight of the Department.
