

**Statement for the Record**  
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**Nominee for USAID Assistant Administrator for the Middle East**  
**U.S. Agency for International Development**  
**Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**September 25, 2018**

Senator Isakson, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to come before you today as the President's nominee for Assistant Administrator of the Middle East Bureau at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It is a privilege to appear before this Committee, and I am grateful for the confidence President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Administrator Green have placed in me.

As I begin my remarks, I would like to recognize the outstanding leadership of Hal Ferguson and Maria Longi, who have headed USAID's Middle East Bureau for the past two years. Maria's knowledge and dedication, acquired during a distinguished career across the U.S. Government, reflect the best qualities of the Career Senior Executive Service. Hal's experience at the International Republican Institute and his background in the Middle East enabled him to step right into his new role at USAID, and I look forward to working with him if confirmed.

I would especially like to thank my family, friends and professional colleagues who have supported and encouraged me to pursue this opportunity. In particular, I would like to recognize my wife, Laura, and our three children, Ellen, Hannah and Jack. They all know the importance of public service, and I am here today with their full support.

We are a Foreign Service family. Like thousands of other families who represent America in some of the toughest places on earth, we have had an unusual life. Our decades abroad have given us tremendous respect for the men and women – and kids – who serve USAID and the U.S. Government overseas and in Washington.

If confirmed, I will bring the experience I have gained over 30 years with USAID, including by leading the Agency's Task Force to Defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and by serving as USAID Mission Director in Nigeria, West Bank and Gaza, and Serbia and Montenegro; and by working as Deputy Mission Director in Iraq and Jordan.

I am particularly grateful to have the opportunity to once again be working in the Middle East – a part of the world that has great significance for me and my family. Laura and I have embraced the culture of the Middle East, and the region has played a significant role in our children's upbringing. It was a joy to watch my oldest daughter's high school graduation at the Roman

amphitheatre in Jerash, in Jordan; and we were extremely proud to hear our son sing *Ha Tikva* at his high school graduation in Israel.

During my career, I have seen significant changes at USAID, especially since September 11, 2001. I am proud that we are a much stronger, smarter and more flexible organization. Our role in foreign affairs and national security has evolved dramatically. We have a much closer, more integrated working relationship with our interagency colleagues, most importantly at the Department of State and the Department of Defense. We have emerged as thought leaders on the drivers of fragility in the countries where we work, and have accumulated a deep understanding of what drives extremism and social division. This knowledge has enabled us to be much more helpful to our interagency colleagues as we collectively grapple with challenges across the globe, especially in the Middle East. If confirmed, I look forward to further strengthening these important capacities and relationships.

The complex political, humanitarian, and development situation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) presents both challenges and opportunities for USAID's work. USAID can help the people of the region meet their challenges. The Middle East Bureau is responding to immediate crises in the region, building on positive trends where they exist, and laying the foundation for future U.S. Government engagements beyond assistance programs. USAID's priorities for the MENA region include 1) supporting core U.S. national security objectives; 2) mitigating the human impact of ongoing conflicts; and, 3) fostering inclusive development and reform as opportunities arise. If confirmed, I look forward to leading that work.

With the support of Congress, USAID's Middle East Bureau supports development and stabilization programming across the region. The U.S. Government also provides significant humanitarian assistance in much of the region, including in Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. If confirmed, I will provide strong oversight of USAID's programs in the Middle East, and ensure those programs respond to the needs and aspirations of the people in the region by facilitating inclusive economic growth, supporting democratic processes, strengthening civil society, and addressing other key challenges, such as helping religious and ethnic minorities across the region.

The Middle East poses many challenges, both politically and developmentally, but it also presents enormous opportunities to showcase what has been done right through the generosity and commitment of the American people. Without being naïve, I am optimistic about the broad direction of events in the Arab world. We know that the people who suffer the most from the violence in the Middle East and North Africa are the people of the region themselves. The people of these countries are ready for constructive change, to engage with the global community in building a prosperous, peaceful future, a future consistent with their culture and history. The United States can support those aspirations. If confirmed, I commit to partnering with the people of the Middle East and North Africa to help them on that journey to self-reliance.

Senator Isakson, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to be considered for the position of Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for the Middle East at USAID. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.