

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2022

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory A. Booker presiding.

Present: Senators Booker [presiding], Menendez, Cardin, Murphy, Kaine, Van Hollen, Portman, Young, and Rounds.

Also Present: Senator King and Representative Norton.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY A. BOOKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator BOOKER. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing will come to order now.

I cannot tell you how excited I am. We have an extraordinary group of people who have dedicated their lives to public service, folks who are so talented they have many other options.

Each and every one of you sitting before me and the ranking member right now are defining patriotism in the sense of your willingness to sacrifice in the name of service to country, and I greet you in that spirit and I am very excited.

This is not just a perfunctory process. This is a celebration of what we are about as a country, a country run by our citizens who step forward to serve in difficult times.

I am honored to be here today next to Senator Rounds, a ranking member who gives me great confidence and hope for our Senate to be able to actually function and I am sure this is going to be a very functional hearing.

I want to just jump right in. The five people before us right now are Nathaniel Fick, who is to be the Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy. I am so happy that we are looking at cyberspace and digital policy and having someone up to lead that. We thank the President for that nomination.

We also have Mr. Michael Schiffer to be Assistant Administrator for Asia and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and we are very excited about that.

Perhaps at this point there should be a hush in the crowd because we are about to introduce someone from New Jersey. I want to introduce Ms. Rachna Korhonen, who is from, of course, the Garden State to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mali.

And then we have Lucy—Ms. Lucy Tamlyn to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, finally, Ms. Jessica Davis Ba to be Ambassador to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

And I am very happy to see—some of you have already seen one of my favorite people in the United States Senate, Senator Angus King from Maine. He is going to be introducing the man to his right, Mr. Nathaniel Fick.

Senator King, you are recognized. You can give your remarks. I know that we are in one of the most demanding weeks in the United States Senate. So after your remarks, no one will look askance at you if you leave and duck out.

You are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ANGUS KING,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE**

Senator KING. Senator, thank you very much.

I was excited when you said I was one of your favorite people. But then you qualified by saying, in the United States Senate.

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. So that narrowed it somewhat substantially.

I am delighted to be with you this morning and to introduce Nate Fick. But I want to begin by a little bit of a description of the office that he is going to be taking and how important it is.

As you and the Vice Chair know, I worked for several years on cybersecurity policy for this country as part of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission.

One of our principal recommendations was the creation of an office or a bureau in the State Department to deal with international issues relating to cyber and they can be anything from coordinating international response to a cyber attack to establishing norms and standards in cyberspace—a kind of Geneva Convention of cyber—and also participating in international panels that set standards for the internet that, frankly, this country has not been as active in as we should be.

This recommendation has been turned into something called the Cyber Diplomacy Act, which has passed the House and is going to be considered in the near future by this committee.

I commend it to you as an urgent piece of legislation. What it does is codify the concept of an office within the office of the State Department to confront and deal with these issues.

The idea is we want someone who gets up every morning thinking about the international ramifications of cyber and that is what this office will do.

Mr. Fick has been appointed to head a bureau of cyber policy in the State Department. But this is a creation of the Administration.

I commend the Administration for taking the initiative to create this office within the State Department. But I believe we also need legislation to codify the existence of the office so it is not something that may come and go with the whim of a particular Administration.

So you are going to be seeing the Cyber Diplomacy Act. I believe it was scheduled originally for today. It has been postponed because of the NATO activity this afternoon.

But I hope that you will give prompt consideration to that bill. It has been—has a lot of work gone into it and I look forward to working with you on it, hopefully, prompt enactment.

Let me introduce Nate Fick. He is from Maine.

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. Oh, sorry. Oh, yeah, there are some other things.

Actually, if you took a blank sheet of paper and tried to design a person to fit this new position, you would have come up with someone of Nate Fick's extraordinary qualifications and background.

A Marine—I made the mistake once of calling Senator Roberts a former Marine. He informed me there is no such thing as a former Marine. If you are a Marine, you are a Marine.

And he served in Iraq and Afghanistan, later served as the CEO of a nonprofit, Center for New American Security, at which time he dealt with issues of cyber and international ramifications of cyber.

He then has worked in the private sector as the CEO of a software company—again, involved in issues of cyber. He has a degree in policy from the Kennedy School and also business from the Harvard Business School. Immensely well qualified, very thoughtful, engaged in this issue, and I think, as I said, I cannot imagine a better candidate to fulfill this position and the fact that he is from the state of Maine is simply gravy.

But, Mr. Chairman, I commend Nathan Fick to you, and I apologize, I do have to go off to a hearing of the Rules Committee on the Electoral Count Act, which is a matter of some concern to all of us.

I appreciate your courtesy this morning and I look forward to working with the committee to advance this nomination.

Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. We are honored that you are here. The spirit of Joshua Chamberlain, one of the greatest American heroes who happens to be from Maine, is looking down upon the two of you with pride.

I now want to move on to a person of the 535 of us that serve in the United States Senate and Congress. This is one of the handful that when they walk in the room people take note.

We are very fortunate to have Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton here and she will be introducing—and forgive me, I have been sitting on the dock of the bay too long but Ms. Jessica Davis Ba, forgive me right now.

Ms. Norton, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
U.S. DELEGATE FROM WASHINGTON, DC.**

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. Can you hear me?

Senator BOOKER. I can. I am not sure if the microphone is on. Yes. You are good to go.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I appreciate the opportunity to introduce my constituent, Jessica Davis Ba, to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

She brings the experience and credentials to be an excellent ambassador. A fifth-generation Washingtonian who grew up in the

Shepherd Park neighborhood of the District of Columbia, Ms. Davis Ba has worked for the last 20 years in the State Department.

She currently serves as the senior adviser to the Bureau of African Affairs where she focuses on recruitment, selection, and retention of Foreign Service officers, in particular, officers of color.

Prior to this assignment, she served in Nigeria, Guinea, Kenya, Somalia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Chad. She also worked in the office of Vice President Kamala Harris as her special advisor for Africa and senior coordinator of the National Security Affairs team where she coordinated the work of advisers on national security and global issues and engaged on the Vice President's behalf with the National Security Council to develop U.S. foreign policy.

Ms. Davis Ba has been awarded numerous academic fellowships and State Department awards, including the One Team award and was named a, quote, "top 50 among 50", a U.S. national security and foreign affairs leader by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Diversity in National Security Network in 2021.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Ms. Davis Ba received a bachelor's degree in international relations and environmental studies and a master's degree in communications, specializing in the use of media to empower underrepresented people to make their own image and have their voices heard.

I very much appreciate the committee for moving on Mr. Davis Ba's nomination.

Senator BOOKER. Congresswoman, we, again, appreciate your presence here before us. We all take note of that and we thank you for that eloquent introduction.

You may take your leave at any time. I know there are a lot of demands on your time in a very busy day. So thank you very much for being here.

I would like to proceed now with the remainder of the introductions, if I may. The first, it is an absolute pleasure to introduce a particularly special nominee to every member and staffer on this committee today and that is Michael Schiffer, the President's nominee to be the assistant administrator for the Asia Bureau of USAID.

I would like to think that we on this committee taught him every single thing that he knows. But really, unfortunately, I must confess publicly it is probably the other way around. He has been an extraordinary staffer. He has been a senior advisor and counselor on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff coordinating Asia-related policy.

Mr. Schiffer brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to his job, where he has shown an extraordinary commitment to this committee, its mission, and to ensuring that U.S. foreign policy represents the best of our collective shared American values.

No matter how many rounds of text negotiations we put him through, he somehow has survived and is better for it.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, could I ask you to just yield for one moment?

Senator BOOKER. I will yield to you at any time, Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. I just want to add my appreciation to Mike Schiffer.

I chaired the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee and he was the principal staff person. And you are right, it was just the reverse. We have learned so much from his experience. He is such a dedicated public servant.

I know he will do well in the executive branch. We are going to miss him in the legislative branch. I just really want to thank him for his service on this committee and to the members of our committee.

Senator BOOKER. I thank you for that added hallelujah and amen we would call it in my church. I appreciate that testifying.

I just want to continue and say Mr. Schiffer served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and worked for the Honorable Dianne Feinstein, senator from California, as senior national security adviser and legislative director.

Prior to working for the Department of Defense, Mr. Schiffer worked for the Stanley Foundation where he was a program officer responsible for Asia programs. He was a Council on Foreign Relations Hitachi International Affairs Fellow in Japan, and he served as director of the International Securities Program at New York University's Center for War, Peace, and News Media.

In addition to his public service, Mr. Schiffer has also had some colorful life experiences, including managing a bed and breakfast in—I do not know why not New Jersey but in Hawaii. I look forward to quizzing the nominee on the best bagel spots for this New Jersey boy if I visit the island.

Mr. Schiffer's regional experience and intricate knowledge of Congress make him an excellent candidate to oversee the Asia Bureau's development assistance program's budget and allocation of resources.

As the U.S. grapples with complex challenges, immense opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region from strategic competition with China to the current global food crisis, from mitigating the impact of climate change to combating emerging infectious diseases, from preventing democratic backsliding to protecting the human rights of minority communities, there is a lot to do.

I look forward to hearing from him on the importance of U.S. engagement in the region and how USAID can foster sustainable, resilient, and innovative development.

I want to congratulate you on your nomination, and before I move on to the next nominee you should know that usually the tradition is that Chris Murphy on his birthday usually runs a marathon, but instead of doing the 27 miles today he is here to be here for you. So that is a particular honor.

All right. We now move to the great—we put her in the center to mark her importance—from New Jersey, I want to—again, Rachna Sachdeva Korhonen, I want to thank you for being here.

You hale from Hunterdon County, the mighty Hunterdon County, and you are joined today by your beautiful family, who I had a chance to briefly meet—your husband, Juha, your mother, Meena, and your two sons. I am grateful for them being here.

You are a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. You are currently serving as the executive director of the combined executive offices of the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

Previously, you were the counsel general and principal officer for the U.S. Consulate to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Your experience is vast. You led the management section of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka and in Washington you served as a special assistant to the Undersecretary for Management.

Among your other assignments you served in various capacities at embassies all across the Middle East. Before joining the State Department you worked in multiple leadership positions in the private sector and you bring that rare combination of private and public center experience at the highest of levels.

Now that I have listed your resume, let me say this. Once confirmed, you will bring leadership, experience, character, and a dedication and passion to this nation's security and economic success.

It is so valuable that you are before us right now, and Mali especially was once seen as a democratic leader. It has now become the epicenter of conflict and instability over the past decade, exemplifying the challenges we are having in the Sahel region.

Military officers we have seen have led to the overthrow of an elected president just as recently as August of 2020, which seemed, unfortunately, to be that part of a trend really fueling governance challenges in that entire region.

We know the crisis that we are seeing in the Sahel region and we know that in May of 2021 soldiers overthrew the civilian transitional leaders whom they had put in place and put in a transition president in 2021.

We know that Islamist insurgents affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are active in much of central and northern Mali.

Further, the conflict has affected parts of the country and parts of the country are experiencing serious crisis level food insecurity.

Mali has one of the world's highest rates of acute malnutrition. It is clear that the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Mali is not enough to prevent mass suffering, instability, and death and, potentially, the spread of greater and greater terrorist activities.

It is clear that the U.S. must do more and we must have the most talented people possible serving in our efforts in Mali.

So I want to congratulate you on your nomination. I am sobered by the challenges before you but I am looking forward to hearing from you on how you will assess the United States' priorities in Mali, how you will meet the challenges and bring your inner Jersey to bear on a difficult situation.

I now am grateful to have a privilege of introducing another person going to another very challenging region, Ms. Lucy Tamlyn.

Ms. Tamlyn is the nominee to be the Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo. She is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and is currently the Chargé d'Affaires for the U.S. Embassy in Sudan. We are very, very grateful for your work there currently.

Previously, she served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Central Africa Republic, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Benin, and as deputy chief of mission in the U.S. embassies in Portugal and in Chad.

In addition, she has experience at U.S. missions to the United States—to the United Nations and its specialized agencies as economic counselor at the U.S. mission to the Organization for Eco-

nomic Cooperation and Development and as a provincial reconstruction team leader in Erbil.

I will spare the committee this incredible resume I, literally, could read for another 10 more minutes. You have an extensive degree of service under presidents of both parties. You are a testimony, in my opinion, to what it means to dedicate your life to this nation's well being, its safety, and relationships around the world.

We know the challenges in the DRC. Under former President Kabila they were characterized by human rights abuses, corruptions, and impunity.

The new president vowed to address these issues. Yet, three years later, several senior military officers responsible for gross, gross violations of human rights remain at their posts and cooperation, again, appears—corruption, again, appears rampant.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts on how the U.S. can compete strategically in this incredibly important nation because we know that China is the largest consumer of DRC-mined cobalt and copper and the DRC's largest trading partner.

China firms reportedly control the majority of the DRC copper and cobalt mining projects and output. DRC is a critical supplier of rare earth metals and other materials for things like batteries for electric cars.

And so I am confident that Ms. Tamlyn's extensive experience as part of the Foreign Service make her eminently qualified, make you a great asset and an excellent choice by the President of the United States for this role.

Congratulations on your nomination. I look forward to hearing from you as well.

And, again, I am honored to be sitting next to my Ranking Member Rounds. I would like to turn to him for his thoughtful opening statement as well.

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

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of our nominees and to your families for your service to our country.

All of you have served our nation as either a service member, senior political appointee, or a career diplomat. You have made sacrifices in the service of your country and, in some cases, with much of your lives and sometimes those of your families spent away from home. I thank you for your service to our nation.

Mr. Fick, thank you for your service in the Marine Corps and your eagerness to continue to serve as our first ever Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy. Thank you for the opportunity to visit yesterday. It was very enlightening.

Cyberspace presents myriad opportunities and challenges for our national security, economy, and foreign policy. The United States, our allies, and partners face an increasingly complex and interconnected global security environment with threats in cyberspace posed by state actors, most notably Russia and the People's Republic of China, as well as nonstate actors.

We need to take a hard look at our foreign policy as it relates to cyberspace and how we can be proactively engaged to defend

U.S. interests. I appreciate your willingness to serve as the first leader of the State Department's newly created Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy, a very challenging assignment.

Mr. Schiffer, thank you for your service in the Department of Defense and your long service as a congressional staff member. I am glad to see an experienced senior advisor like you as the nominee for Assistant Administrator for Asia in USAID.

Across Asia, USAID plays an important role in helping countries achieve sustainable long-term growth and success. Through development partnerships such as the Quad between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States and with the Association of South-east Asian Nations, USAID supports developing countries in Asia to realize their development goals and contribute to a more prosperous and, hopefully, peaceful world.

USAID is a critical pillar of the U.S. foreign policy and I look forward to hearing how you plan to further U.S.-Asian relationships and provide development assistance to developing countries in Asia.

Ms. Korhonen, Mali, like other nations in the Sahel, faces the rise of Islamist militancy and other troubling trends. The eighth largest country in Africa, Mali, over the last few years, has had two coups, persistent insecurity, significant challenges in implementing the Algiers Accords, and the intervention of malign actors including the Wagner Group.

Mali will remain central to the Administration's strategy for the Sahel and to broader U.S. interests in the region. Beyond engagement with the current military junta in Mali and the other domestic challenges that Mali faces, the U.S. must also balance complex regional and multilateral interests related to the U.N. peacekeeping mission, counterterrorism operations, and the role of France as it draws down its presence, along with other Western partners.

So you have your work cut out for you, and I thank you, Ms. Korhonen, for being willing to serve the United States in Mali. I look forward to hearing how you will approach the complex issues you will face as a U.S. Ambassador, if confirmed.

Ambassador Tamlyn, you have served the United States in a number of challenging posts, including several in Africa. Your next post in the Democratic Republic of Congo, if confirmed, will be no less challenging.

I thank you for being willing to serve in the places we most need experienced ambassadors who understand Africa as well as the U.S. priorities and challenges on the continent.

In the DRC, the United States has been a strong partner to the Administration of President Tshisekedi since the controversial elections in 2018 that saw the end to more than two decades of rule by the Kabila family.

While there have been some efforts at reform, progress has been slow to deeply entrenched interests and power dynamics in the DRC as well as ongoing insecurity in eastern Congo that has become even more worrying in recent weeks with the resurgence of M-23.

Ambassador Tamlyn, I look forward to hearing from you and how you plan to pursue U.S. priorities in the DRC, if confirmed, par-

ticularly with the elections expected late next year and, once again, I most certainly appreciated your visit yesterday and look forward to your discussion with us today.

Ms. Davis Ba, you have had a long career serving the United States in some of the most challenging posts on the African continent. Your experience serving in both Chad and Nigeria, both important players in the continent, will serve us well in your new role as the U.S. Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, if confirmed.

If confirmed, you will need to engage our Ivoirian partners on a number of important issues to include preventing and countering violent extremism, trade and investment, global health, and the implementation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact.

I thank you, Ms. Davis Ba, for your willingness to continue to serve the United States in Africa in a country that is important to U.S. policy objectives for the entire region.

I am delighted to meet with all of you today and look forward to your comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you to my ranking member.

We are going to now proceed through your introductory comments. We are going to go from my left, actually, to my right, starting with Ms. Ba, ending with Mr. Fick.

A pro tip, though, as you prepare to go. Please introduce your family and friends behind you. If there is anything I know about getting on the good side of Tim Kaine there are three things he likes. In fact, there is three things he loves: family, friends, and big bald senators from New Jersey.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Ms. Ba, please proceed with your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF JESSICA DAVIS BA OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE

Ms. BA. Thank you so much, Senator.

Well, first, then I would like to introduce my family. I am joined with me today by my husband, Amadu Mahtar Ba, by my son, Alioune—he is the oldest of my five sons representing all of the Ba boys here today—and my mom, Janice Davis.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of this committee, it is the greatest honor of my diplomatic career to appear before you this morning as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

I appreciate the confidence of the President and Secretary Blinken for entrusting me with this opportunity of a lifetime. If confirmed, I will advance our bilateral relationship and build upon our enduring partnership for the benefit of all Americans and all Ivoirians.

I am here today to continue my family's legacy of service. We are Washingtonians. We are educators, public servants, and veterans.

We are patriots who have chosen life in our nation's capital dedicated to improving our country and our global community.

I made my first solo trip overseas in high school to volunteer with Operation Crossroads Africa and decided then to pursue life in the international community.

If confirmed, I will serve and lead to empower all people to achieve their greatest potential and make a difference in our world. I recognize the enormity of this moment that I share with my family, who support me every step of this journey. I have introduced to you already my husband, Mahtar, and our five sons, and if confirmed they will accompany me to Abidjan.

We have served to advance common values in the interests of the United States in Nigeria, Guinea, Somalia, Kenya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Chad. My late grandmother, Doris Haynes, a retired D.C. public school principal, accompanied us, celebrating her 90th birthday in Nairobi.

Through our service, my parents, Janice and Joseph Davis, my brother, Jay, and his family and our friends discover the world through our lived experience.

This is an important moment for the people of Côte d'Ivoire. They have taken bold strides to strengthen democracy through political dialogue and reconciliation. With its national development plan, the country is building the foundation for a prosperous future.

Ivoirians are investing to reap democratic dividends and, if confirmed, I will prioritize partnerships to achieve our common goals, aspirations, and vision for the future.

I will encourage Côte d'Ivoire's political leaders to continue on the path towards peace, fortifying democratic institutions with every single step. Through our embassy programs we are prioritizing freedom of expression, political competition, and universal human rights. We will emphasize greater participation of women in the economic, political, and social fabric of the nation.

The partnership between the United States and Côte d'Ivoire is vital to meet the unprecedented global and regional challenges of this moment. Terrorist activity is on the rise in west Africa as violent extremist organizations in the Sahel seek to expand their influence into coastal states.

Côte d'Ivoire's neighbors are besieged by extraconstitutional changes in power and disinformation is prevalent in Ivoirian social media. The unjustifiable war in Ukraine has increased food and fuel prices for the people of Côte d'Ivoire and around the world.

Yet, through all these challenges, our partnerships remain strong. Together, we strengthen democracy, expand economic prosperity, and increase security.

Côte d'Ivoire's economic performance is extraordinary, with enormous potential for increased trade and U.S. commercial investment and, if confirmed, I will expand opportunities for American companies to unleash innovation and contribute to a private sector that encourages transparency, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth.

A country is strongest when its citizens experience safety and security. If confirmed, I will work closely with you, members of this committee, and colleagues across the U.S. Government to increase

health security, enhance Ivoirian military capabilities, and strengthen community resilience.

I will capitalize on new opportunities provided by the Global Fragility Act, landmark legislation made possible through bipartisan congressional support.

If confirmed, I will lead our mission to strengthen democratic institutions, deepen economic and cultural ties, and expand partnerships based on mutual respect between the United States and Côte d'Ivoire.

Thank you so much for your consideration, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ba follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JESSICA DAVIS BA

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is the greatest honor of my diplomatic career to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. I appreciate the confidence of the President and Secretary Blinken for entrusting me with this opportunity of a lifetime. If confirmed, I will advance our bilateral relationship and build upon our enduring partnership for the benefit of all Americans and all Ivoirians.

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If confirmed, I will serve—and lead—to empower all people to achieve their greatest potential and make a difference in our world.

I recognize the enormity of this moment that I share with my family who support me on this journey. My husband Mahtar and our five sons—Alioune, Ibrahim, Omar, Ismael and Soulayman. We have served to advance common values and the interests of the United States in Nigeria, Guinea, Somalia, Kenya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Chad. My late grandmother, Doris Haynes, a retired D.C. public school principal joined us, celebrating her 90th birthday in Nairobi. Through our service, my parents—Janice and Joseph Davis, my brother Jay and his family, and our friends discover the world through our lived experience.

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increase health security, enhance Ivoirian military capabilities, and strengthen community resilience. I will capitalize on new opportunities provided by the Global Fragility Act, landmark legislation made possible with bipartisan Congressional support. If confirmed, I will lead our mission to strengthen democratic institutions, deepen economic and cultural ties, and expand partnerships based on mutual respect between the United States and Côte d'Ivoire.

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

Senator BOOKER. We thank you for that presentation.

And I would like to now move to Ms. Lucy Tamlyn.

STATEMENT OF HON. LUCY TAMLYN OF RHODE ISLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, Senator.

To start off, I would like to introduce my cousins, Jessie and Kevin, who are here behind me.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee for the Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo—that is, DRC.

Representing the United States abroad is something that I have done together with my husband, Jorge Serpa, and children, Ben and Filipa, who, unfortunately, were not able to be here today. I thank them for their unwavering support and their enthusiasm across many continents.

In a career spanning 40 years of service, I have most recently served as Chargé d'Affaires in Sudan, Ambassador to the Central African Republic, and Ambassador to the Republic of Benin.

I feel privileged to have served in the countries where we are, literally, on the front lines, where U.S. diplomacy really matters, and side by side with colleagues who answer the call, despite the personal, family, and health sacrifices entailed.

Looking after the safety of the embassy community and ensuring that each and every American or local employee can flourish and bring his or her best to the job in an environment free of harassment and discrimination is my highest priority as a leader.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the United States has important interests in the DRC. This enormous country is home to 47 percent of Africa's tropical rainforests. The minerals and metals under its soil, if responsibly extracted, will help power the globe's transition to clean energy.

The DRC's dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative population of over 100 million are eager to engage with the United States.

Our cooperation with the DRC has strengthened dramatically under the tenure of former Ambassador Mike Hammer. African Growth and Opportunity Act access has been reinstated.

Through the Privileged Partnership for Peace, Prosperity, and Preservation of the Environment, we are broadening our engagement with President Tshisekedi's Government across the full range of issues to include security, democracy and human rights, anti-corruption, the environment, health, and business climate.

If confirmed, I commit to nurturing and strengthening this ambitious agenda which is good both for the DRC and for the United States' health, economy, and the environment.

In this continent sized country, U.S. assistance is helping tackle persistent health threats, notably Ebola, working to advance shared climate goals, and promoting responsible and accountable mineral supply chains.

We are supporting efforts to fight the pervasive trafficking of persons, natural resources, and wildlife, which feeds corruption and violence.

Other countries, notably the People's Republic of China, fully grasp the DRC's potential. We want the Congolese people to know that corrupt mineral exploitation deals, illegal logging, and environmental devastation is not inevitable and that there are alternatives.

If confirmed, I commit to using all our diplomatic tools including leveraging visa ineligibilities and sanctions to help the Congolese fight corruption.

Right now, reducing violence in the DRC's eastern region is critical. The region must not be allowed to stumble into another devastating interstate conflict.

If confirmed, I will work closely with regional institutions and partners to deescalate tensions and pressure nonstate armed groups to stand down.

The DRC is also home to the world's largest U.N. peacekeeping mission. This investment, of which the United States carries a quarter of the cost, must be held to the highest standards of performance and demonstrate its ability to protect civilians and conduct proactive operations against armed groups.

I take this opportunity to express my condolences to the families of the three U.N. personnel killed in Butembo on July 26.

Finally, free and fair elections held in 2023 will be a particular focus of my diplomatic engagement, if confirmed. The future leaders of the DRC are for its citizens to decide, but the international community can play an important role in helping to strengthen democratic institutions, supporting civil society, and calling out without hesitation when we see signs of democratic backsliding.

I recognize that, if confirmed, I will be assuming leadership of a post in a country of enormous size, complexity, and promise. The large portfolio of U.S. assistance requires astute direction, prioritization, and coordination. Chronic staffing shortages, a situation not unique to Kinshasa, need to be managed to ensure that we do not burn out and lose the next generation of Africa hands.

Across all of these activities, I commit to ensuring the efficient and effective use of the resources entrusted to us by the U.S. taxpayer.

I look forward to your advice and counsel on these challenging tasks and I am very happy to take your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tamlyn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LUCY TAMLYN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary

Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Representing the United States is something that I have done together with my husband, Jorge Serpa, and children Ben and Filipa. I thank them for their unwavering support and enthusiasm across many continents.

In a career spanning 40 years of service, I have most recently served as Chargé d'Affaires in Sudan, Ambassador to the Central African Republic, and Ambassador to the Republic of Benin. I feel privileged to have served in countries where we are literally on the front lines, where U.S. diplomacy really matters, and side by side with colleagues who answer the call despite the personal, family, and health sacrifices entailed. Looking after the safety of the Embassy community and ensuring that each and every American or local employee can flourish and bring his or her best to the job in an environment free of harassment and discrimination, is my highest priority as a leader.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the United States has important interests in the DRC. This enormous country is home to 47 percent of Africa's tropical rainforests. The minerals and metals under its soil, if responsibly extracted, will help power the globe's transition to clean energy. The DRC's dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative population of over 100 million are eager to engage with the United States.

Our cooperation with the DRC has strengthened dramatically under the tenure of former Ambassador Mike Hammer. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) access has been reinstated. Through the Privileged Partnership for Peace, Prosperity, and Preservation of the Environment we are broadening our engagement with President Tshisekedi's Government across the full range of issues, to include security, democracy and human rights, anti-corruption, the environment, health, and business climate. If confirmed, I commit to nurturing and strengthening this ambitious agenda which is good for both the DRC and the United States' health, economy, and environment.

In this continent-sized country, U.S. assistance is helping tackle persistent health threats, notably Ebola, working to advance shared climate goals, and promoting responsible and accountable mineral supply chains. We are supporting efforts to fight the pervasive trafficking of persons, natural resources, and wildlife, which feeds corruption and violence.

Other countries, notably the People's Republic of China, fully grasp the DRC's potential. We want the Congolese people to know that corrupt mineral exploitation deals, illegal logging and environmental devastation is not inevitable, and that there are alternatives. If confirmed, I commit to using all our diplomatic tools, including leveraging visa ineligibilities and sanctions, to help the Congolese fight corruption.

Right now, reducing violence in the DRC's eastern region is critical. The region must not be allowed to stumble into another devastating inter-state conflict. If confirmed, I will work closely with regional institutions and partners to deescalate tensions with neighbors and pressure non-state armed groups to stand down.

The DRC is also home to the world's largest U.N. peacekeeping mission. This investment, of which the United States carries a quarter of the cost, must be held to the highest standards of performance and demonstrate its ability to protect civilians and conduct proactive operations against armed groups. I take this opportunity to express my condolences to the families of the three U.N. personnel killed in Butembo on July 26.

Finally, free and fair elections held in 2023 will be a particular focus of my diplomatic engagement, if confirmed. The future leaders of the DRC are for its citizens to decide, but the international community can play an important role in helping to strengthen democratic institutions, supporting civil society, and calling out—without hesitation—when we see signs of democratic backsliding.

I recognize that, if confirmed, I will be assuming leadership of a post in a country of enormous size, complexity, and promise. The large portfolio of U.S. assistance—which cuts across every conceivable area from security to health to conservation—requires astute direction, prioritization, and coordination. Chronic staffing shortages—a situation not unique to Kinshasa—need to be managed to ensure that we do not burn out and lose the next generation of Africa hands. Across all these activities, I commit to ensuring the efficient and effective use of the resources entrusted to us by the U.S. taxpayer.

I look forward to your advice and counsel on these challenging tasks and I am very happy to take your questions.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you for that important and informative opening statement.

We now are going to turn to Ms. Korhonen and your opening statement.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF RACHNA SACHDEVA KORHONEN OF NEW JERSEY, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

Ms. KORHONEN. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Mali. I appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown in me through this nomination.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, other members of Congress, and staff to advance U.S. interests in Mali.

Mr. Chairman, I joined the Foreign Service because of 9/11. That eventful day woke the need for service in me. I did not choose the Foreign Service. It chose me. It has taken me to India, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Saudi Arabia twice, and, if confirmed, hopefully, to Mali.

A few months ago, Secretary Blinken appropriately observed that Mali remains a linchpin for future stability in the Sahel. We have deep concerns about that stability and deep concerns about the extremism and terrorism that is spreading tentacles in the region.

This is, ultimately, about the people of Mali and their aspirations for peace, their aspirations for development, and respect for human rights. Security partnerships in Mali have shifted in the last year with the departure of European counterterrorism forces and the arrival of the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. The human rights violations and abuses allegedly committed are not only horrific but will push aggrieved civilians into the ranks of terrorist groups.

If confirmed, I will work to counter Russian disinformation attempts to veil the true harm and cost of Wagner's actions.

Additionally, the United Nations' Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali—MINUSMA—is facing unprecedented challenges due to restrictions placed on it.

I will advocate for the free movement of MINUSMA peacekeepers and for conditions that allow resumption of accountable international security assistance to counter the spread of terrorism across the country.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading Embassy Bamako in advancing U.S. interests in Mali. Our main interests include bringing the country back to a constitutional democracy that helps all of its citizens, furthering economic development, and countering the incursion of terrorism that threatens not only Mali but the rest of the Sahel.

We welcome the agreement to a 24-month timeline between the Economic Community of West African States—ECOWAS—and the transition government. If confirmed, I look forward to shaping U.S. activities to encourage constructive participation in Mali's democratic transition and 2024 elections.

Malians have shown before that they can be the shining light of the region. U.S. assistance in Mali promotes democracy and improves governance while supporting sustainable livelihoods. USAID's health programs reach 80 percent of Mali's population—80 percent.

NIH, CDC, have built solid public health systems that met the Ebola challenge in the past, helped mitigate the impact of COVID, and promise to make inroads in the global fight against malaria.

These programs are closely integrated with our democracy and counterterrorism goals in a well coordinated interagency effort.

If confirmed, I will work together with our interagency and our international partners to maintain strong partnerships for development and stability. We are committed to the Malian people and their aspiration for responsive democratic governance.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of Americans and American interests, including all mission personnel.

Moreover, I will carefully and diligently ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars through effective leadership of U.S. Embassy Bamako's strong interagency team.

Mr. Chairman, you see sitting before you the ultimate American dream. I am a proud immigrant girl from New Jersey who has had the good fortune to be nominated to represent the best country on Earth.

So much of who I am belongs to my parents, Paul and Meena Sachdeva. Dad is watching me from New Jersey. Mom is right behind me. I wish my grandfather was alive. He would have been so proud.

But the most important person in my life is my husband, Juha, also sitting behind me. I would not be here today without him. He and our three children—Varun, Vicram, both of whom are here, and Veera, who is hanging out somewhere in Europe, are what really make my life worth living.

I am deeply grateful to them for their support and their love. I could not have done this without them.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with all of you and would hope to welcome you to Bamako during my tenure.

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

[The prepared statement of Ms. Korhonen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RACHNA SACHDEVA KORHONEN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee: I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Mali. I appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown in me through this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress and staff to advance U.S. interests in Mali.

Mr. Chairman, I joined the Foreign Service because of 9/11. That eventful day woke the need for service in me. I did not choose the Foreign Service; it chose me. It has taken me to India, Iraq, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, and Saudi Arabia (twice) and, if confirmed, to Mali.

A few months ago, Secretary Blinken appropriately observed that "Mali remains a linchpin for future stability in the Sahel and we have deep concerns about that stability and deep concerns about the extremism and terrorism that is spreading

tentacles in the region. This is ultimately about the people of Mali and their aspirations for peace, their aspirations for development and respect for human rights.”

Security partnerships in Mali have shifted in the last year with the departure of European counterterrorism forces and the arrival of the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. The human rights violations and abuses allegedly committed are not only horrific but will push aggrieved civilians into the ranks of terrorist groups. If confirmed, I will work to counter Russian disinformation attempts to veil the true harm and cost of Wagner’s actions. Additionally, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is facing unprecedented challenges due to restrictions placed on it. I will advocate for the free movement of MINUSMA peacekeepers, and for conditions that allow the resumption of accountable international security assistance to counter the spread of terrorism across the country.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading Embassy Bamako in advancing U.S. interests in Mali. Our main interests include bringing the country back to a constitutional democracy that helps all its citizens; furthering economic development; and countering the incursion of terrorism that threatens not only Mali but the rest of the Sahel. We welcome the agreement to a 24-month timeline between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the transition government. If confirmed, I look forward to shaping U.S. activities to encourage constructive participation in Mali’s democratic transition and 2024 elections. Malians have shown before that they can be the shining light of the region.

U.S. assistance in Mali promotes democracy and improved governance while supporting sustainable livelihoods. USAID’s health programs reach 80 percent of Mali’s population. NIH and CDC have built solid public health systems that met the Ebola challenge in the past, helped mitigate the impact of COVID, and promise to make inroads in the global fight against malaria. These programs are closely integrated with our democracy and counterterrorism goals in a well-coordinated interagency effort. If confirmed, I will work together with our interagency and international partners to maintain strong partnerships for development and stability. We are committed to the Malian people and their aspiration for responsive democratic governance.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of Americans and American interests, including Mission personnel. Moreover, I will carefully and diligently ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars through effective leadership of U.S. Embassy Bamako’s strong interagency team.

Mr. Chairman, you see sitting before you the ultimate American dream. I am a proud immigrant girl from New Jersey who has had the good fortune to be nominated to represent these United States. So much of who I am belongs to my parents Paul and Meena Sachdeva. I wish my grandfather were alive; he would have been so proud. But the most important person in my life is sitting behind me, my husband, Juha. I would not be here today without him. He and our three children, Varun, Vicram, and Veera are what make life worth living. I am deeply grateful to them for their support and love.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with all of you and would hope to welcome you to Bamako during my tenure. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you for, frankly, that inspiring opening statement about your life and your appreciation of the gravity of the work that you are doing.

Mr. Schiffer, we are turning to you. This could be a very brutal hearing for you because, as I learned from studying the Gospels, you are really not appreciated when you come home.

So if you would like to try to do anything you can to prepare the ground for what—the tilling that might happen after your opening statement, you may go ahead.

[Laughter.]

**STATEMENT OF ROLFE MICHAEL SCHIFFER OF NEW YORK,
NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOP-
MENT**

Mr. SCHIFFER. I am not entirely sure how to follow up on that, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if I can get under the table as opposed to be sitting here on this side of the dais.

But my thanks to you, my thanks to Ranking Member Rounds. It is, indeed, a much less pleasant experience being on this side than where I am used to sitting behind all of you. But, hopefully, I will manage to survive.

I am deeply humbled to be coming before this committee today to serve as the nominee as Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau at USAID and I am deeply humbled also by the trust placed in me by President Biden and Administrator Power.

If confirmed, I will seek to contribute to USAID's efforts to build an enduring U.S. diplomatic and development presence in the Indo-Pacific, the most strategically vital region of the globe, and I am honored to be here today seeking your trust to join with the dedicated staff of USAID to undertake this important work on behalf of the American people.

I am joined today by my former wife and friend, Wendy Wasserman, and my daughter, Josie. Josie's support and encouragement and all that she has had to put up with over the years, including this right now, means everything to me.

My partner, Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, and her son are not able to join me today. But Stephanie's wisdom has contributed much to making me capable of seeking your advice and consent to undertake this task and I owe her a debt which can never be repaid.

So, too, my mother and sister, and my father, who is no longer with us, but whose ethical teachings and moral guidance have long been my lodestar.

I also want to express my appreciation and support for Chairman Menendez and all that he has provided me with over the years. His tireless commitment to building a nation in a world consistent with our highest values and aspirations, especially at times when those values have been uniquely stressed both at home and abroad, has been nothing short of inspirational.

And last but, certainly, not least, I want to express my thanks to all the members and the staff of this committee. You all know how strongly I feel about the work that you all do, that we all do—I think I can still say that—and how torn I am to leave.

If confirmed, I pledge that I will work with you in genuine consultation and partnership and I trust that you will keep me honest should I falter in that pledge.

As we face the challenges of the 21st century, including the realities of strategic competition with China, I can think of few undertakings more important than extending USAID's mission to drive sustainable and inclusive development, regional prosperity, and stability in Asia.

It is central to our national interest to help meet the region's humanitarian needs, contribute to free and open regional architecture, and to work with the people and governments of the region

to safeguard their sovereignty, build vital civil societies, and to promote democratic governance, confront human rights violations, and to combat gender inequality, corruption, and kleptocracy.

And, as I know members of this committee appreciate, we do this work not just because it is the right thing to do, although it is certainly that, but because working alongside allies and partners in the region to build a more capable and connected Indo-Pacific community is vital for America and benefits American workers and families.

As the President's Indo-Pacific strategy states, the United States has long recognized the Indo-Pacific as vital to our security and prosperity, and we have pursued partnership in the region since our very founding as a nation.

There is no shortage of challenges in the region. Climate change poses an existential threat across Asia, from Pacific islands threatened with rising tides to the fragile ecosystem of the Tibetan Plateau.

More than 300 million still live in extreme poverty and food insecurity threatens the lives and livelihoods of millions. Unmet basic education and health care needs, democratic backsliding, and immense infrastructure requirements are just a few of the challenges the region faces.

But just as there is no shortage of challenges so, too, there is no shortage of opportunities to foster deeper local partnerships, greater innovation through localization, and more meaningful results to drive development progress, not simply development programs.

If confirmed, I look forward to pursuing opportunities to work with our partners, particularly in the Pacific, on climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and resilience, and a sustainable future, as well as opportunities to enable high-quality development finance and public-private partnerships to further the President's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.

Equally important will be furthering good governance, anti-corruption, human rights, and supporting civil society actors in the region. We can do this by building deeper relationships with our development partners, including the Quad, so that together we are more efficient and effective in meeting regional needs.

Likewise, we can strengthen our work with our ASEAN partners to build real functional problem-solving architecture.

Thank you all for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schiffer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROLFE MICHAEL SCHIFFER

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds. I have to say, it is a much less pleasant feeling to be on this side of the dais than the one that I am accustomed to, sitting behind you. I am deeply humbled and honored to come before the committee today as the nominee to serve as Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau at USAID, and by the trust placed in me by President Biden and Administrator Power.

If confirmed, I will seek to contribute to USAID's efforts to build an enduring US diplomatic and development presence in the Indo-Pacific, the most strategically vital region of the globe. And I am honored to be here today seeking your trust to join with the dedicated staff of the USAID to undertake this important work on behalf of the American people.

I am joined by my former wife Wendy Wasserman and my daughter, Josie. My partner, Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, and her son, Adrian, are not able to join me today, but Stephanie's wisdom has contributed much to make me capable of the challenge I seek your advice and consent to undertake—and I owe her a debt that can never be repaid. So too my mother and sister, and my father, who is no longer with us—and whose ethical and moral teachings are my lodestar.

I also want to express my appreciation for the support that Chairman Menendez has provided me over the years. His tireless commitment to building a nation and a world consistent with our highest values—even at times when those values have been uniquely stressed both at home and abroad—has been nothing short of inspirational.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to express my thanks to all the members and staff of this committee that I have served with for the past decade. You know how strongly I believe in the work of this committee and how torn I am to leave. If confirmed, I give you my pledge to work with you in genuine consultation and partnership, and I trust that you will keep me honest should I falter.

As we face the challenges of the twenty-first century—including the realities of strategic competition with China—I can think of few undertakings more important than extending USAID's mission to drive sustainable and inclusive development, regional prosperity, and stability in the Asia Region. It is central to our U.S. national interest to help to meet the region's humanitarian needs, contribute to a free and open regional architecture, and work with the people and governments of the region to safeguard their sovereignty, build vital civil societies and to promote democratic governance, confront human rights violations, and to combat gender inequality, corruption and kleptocracy.

And, as I know the members of this committee appreciate, we do this work not just because it is the right thing to do—although it is certainly that—but because working alongside allies and partners in the region to build a more capable and connected Indo-Pacific community is vital for American security and prosperity and benefits American workers and families.

As the President's Indo-Pacific Strategy states, “the United States has long recognized the Indo-Pacific as vital to our security and prosperity,” and we have pursued partnership in the region since our very founding as a nation.

There is no shortage of challenges in the region: climate change poses an existential threat across Asia, from Pacific Island countries threatened with rising tides to the fragile ecosystem of the Tibetan Plateau. More than 300 million still live in extreme poverty, and food insecurity threatens the lives and livelihoods of millions. Unmet basic education and healthcare needs, democratic backsliding, and immense infrastructure requirements are a few of the challenges that the region faces.

But just as there is no shortage of challenges, so too there is also no shortage of opportunities to foster deeper local partnerships, greater innovation through localization, and more meaningful results to drive development progress, not simply development programs.

If confirmed, I look forward to pursuing opportunities to work with our partners, particularly in the Pacific, on climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and resilience, and a sustainable future; as well as opportunities to enable high-quality development finance and public-private partnerships to further the President's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. Equally important will be furthering good governance, anti-corruption, human rights and supporting civil society actors in the region. We can do this by building deeper relationships with our development partners like the Quad so together we are more efficient and effective in meeting regional needs. Likewise, we can strengthen partnerships with our ASEAN partners to build real functional problem solving architecture.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to any questions that you may have.

Senator BOOKER. We are grateful for that opening testimony.

We are going to now turn to Mr. Fick for his opening testimony.

STATEMENT OF NATHANIEL FICK OF MAINE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE FOR CYBERSPACE AND DIGITAL POLICY

Mr. FICK. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished committee members, I am honored to appear before you today as nominee to be the first ever U.S. Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy.

Joining me behind me, both physically and metaphorically, are my wife, Margaret, and our daughters, Ella and Kate. They are constant proof for me that, despite the digital world's importance, life's true rewards are found right here in the physical one.

My parents, Neil and Jane, are watching from Maine. They instilled in me a strong sense of family, of integrity, and of public service.

I feel as if all the threads of my professional life come together in this role, from combat service as a Marine Corps infantry officer, to leading a national security research organization, to building and leading a cybersecurity software company.

American technology leadership is critical to the credible promotion of our values, to sustaining our economic strength, and to our national security. It is the next frontier of American diplomacy.

Our future will be shaped by the infrastructure, standards, norms, and policies that determine how digital technologies are developed, deployed, and used. We are in a global contest for a democratic future in which we can all use technology to reach our full potential and against an authoritarian future in which technology is harnessed to repress free expression and destabilize open democratic societies.

Countries such as the People's Republic of China and Russia have a very different vision for cyberspace and the use of digital technologies, which is why American leadership matters in this arena alongside like-minded allies and partners.

Recognizing this context and building on the ongoing work of the Department, Secretary Blinken established the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy earlier this year with the strong bipartisan support of this committee and others.

If confirmed, I pledge to partner with the committee and with all of Congress to further elevate and integrate cyber and digital policy in U.S. diplomacy and diplomacy in U.S. cyber and digital policy.

There are three key areas where, if confirmed, I would partner with the committee to make progress.

First, we must strengthen adherence to the framework of responsible state behavior that all U.N. member states have endorsed. This framework affirms that international law applies to state conduct in cyberspace and lays out norms that, although voluntary and nonbinding, guide what states should and should not do in cyberspace.

And yet, norms are more effective in binding together our allies than they are in dissuading our adversaries. To reduce the frequency and severity of damaging cyber incidents, we must collaborate across the U.S. Government and with partners around the world to deter malicious cyber activity and impose meaningful consequences on states that engage in it and those that willfully harbor cyber criminal organizations.

Second, we must promote a global digital economy that lets U.S. companies and their workers compete on an equal playing field around the world. This includes preserving the free flow of data across international borders while protecting users' privacy and the confidentiality and integrity of the data.

We must support open transparent standards in the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance that has enabled decades of

innovation, and we must promote new innovations, such as Open Radio Access Networks, and work to ensure the security of the entire telecommunications ecosystem upon which we all rely.

Third, we must at every turn champion a positive vision for digital freedom and digital inclusion while working to combat digital authoritarianism. This means partnering with civil society, the private sector, and other governments to understand how digital technologies can help people exercise their human rights and reach their full potential.

We must harness these technologies to strengthen democratic governance instead of allowing them to be used for repression. I approach each of these missions with great respect for the dedicated public servants at the Department of State, who have ably championed U.S. interests as cyber and digital issues have become a foreign policy imperative.

If confirmed, I will dedicate my time and energy to building the new bureau into an enduring institution with the talent and resources it needs to advance U.S. interests around the world through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance.

I appreciate the trust President Biden and Secretary Blinken have expressed in asking me to serve in this new role.

I thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fick follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT FOR NATHANIEL FICK

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished committee members, I am honored to appear before you today as nominee to be the first-ever U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy. Thank you for considering my nomination.

Joining me here are my wife, Margaret Angell, and our daughters, Ella, and Kate. They are constant proof for me that, despite the digital world's importance, life's true rewards are found in the physical one.

I feel as if all the threads of my professional background—from combat service as a Marine Corps infantry officer, to leadership of the Center for a New American Security, to building and leading a cybersecurity software company—come together in this role.

American technology leadership is critical to the credible promotion of our values, to sustaining our economic strength, and to safeguarding our national security. It is the next frontier of American diplomacy.

The infrastructure, standards, norms, and policies that determine how digital technologies are developed, deployed, and used shape our future. We are in a global contest for a democratic future in which we can all use technology to reach our full potential and against an authoritarian future in which technology is harnessed to repress free expression and destabilize open, democratic societies. Countries such as the People's Republic of China and Russia have a very different vision for cyberspace and the use of digital technologies, which is why American leadership matters in this arena, alongside like-minded Allies and partners.

Recognizing this context and building on the ongoing work of the Department, Secretary Blinken established the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy earlier this year with the strong bipartisan support of this committee and others. If confirmed, I pledge to partner with this committee and all of Congress to further elevate and integrate cyber and digital policy in U.S. diplomacy—and diplomacy in U.S. cyber and digital policy. And I will continue to build a State Department team that has the expertise and experience to advance national security, economic prosperity, and human rights in this digital age.

There are three key areas where, if confirmed, I would partner with the committee to make progress. First, we must strengthen adherence to the framework of responsible state behavior that all U.N. member states have endorsed. This framework affirms that international law applies to state conduct in cyberspace and lays out norms that—although voluntary and non-binding—guide what states should and

should not do in cyberspace. And yet, norms are more effective in binding together our allies than they are in dissuading our adversaries. To reduce the frequency and severity of damaging cyber incidents, we must collaborate across the U.S. Government and with partners around the world to deter malicious cyber activity and impose meaningful consequences on states that engage in it and those that willfully harbor cybercriminal organizations.

Second, we must promote a global digital economy that lets U.S. companies and their workers compete on an equal playing field around the world. This includes preserving the free flow of data across international borders—while protecting users' privacy and the confidentiality and integrity of their data. We must support open, transparent standards and the multistakeholder model of Internet governance that has enabled decades of innovation. And we must promote new innovations such as Open Radio Access Networks and work to ensure the security of the entire telecommunications ecosystem upon which we rely.

Third, we must, at every turn, champion a positive vision for digital freedom and digital inclusion while working to combat digital authoritarianism. This means partnering with civil society, the private sector, and other governments to understand how digital technologies can help people exercise their human rights and reach their full potential. We must harness these technologies to strengthen democratic governance instead of allowing them to be used for repression. We must help more people—including those coming online for the first time—build resilience to threats they may face, including abuse or foreign influence operations.

I approach each of these missions with great respect for the dedicated public servants who work at the Department of State who have ably championed U.S. interests as cyber and digital issues have become a foreign policy imperative. If confirmed, I will dedicate time and energy to building the new Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy into a strong institution, with the talent and resources it needs to advance U.S. interests around the world through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programs.

I appreciate the trust President Biden and Secretary Blinken have expressed in asking me to serve in this new role, one so important for the future of the American people and our shared global future. I thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I look forward to your questions.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Fick, we thank you so much for your opening statement. I would like to, without any objection from my ranking member, to defer to Senator Menendez for his opening round of questions.

Then we are going to come back to the ranking member. Then we are going to proceed to Senator Kaine. I am going to be here for the duration so I can save my questions for last, depending on who shows up.

And with that, I would like to turn to my senior senator, senior to me in time in the Senate but also senior to me in sagacity, tenacity, and audacity.

[Laughter.]

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

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I am going to record these comments.

Anyhow, let me thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the ranking member for presiding over this nomination hearing. One of the most important things we do as members of the committee is oversee nominations and we need the help of all of our colleagues in getting through the nominees.

I appreciate both you and the ranking member for doing it and thank you for the courtesy of being able to go first. I have some other issues.

Congratulations to the nominees before us today. We thank you and all of your families for your service to our country.

Let me take a few minutes of personal privilege to speak about Michael Schiffer, who has been my longtime senior advisor and counselor on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

He is one of the leading foreign policy minds in Washington, having also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia. He is a respected expert on Asia with a network of relationships across the continent.

I never forgot when I first started visiting Asia when I was on the committee in 2006 and started going with Michael to visit Asia, and it would be very interesting to me when heads of state, including when I was chairman of the committee previously, would say hello, Mr. Schiffer, before they would say hello to me. So it just goes to the depth of relationships he has.

I have long relied on Michael's counsel, expertise, and judgment and dealing with some of the most vexing issues facing the committee, and no one is more qualified or more deserving of this nomination than he is.

He is dedicated and committed to a values-based foreign policy that champions freedom, human rights, and democracy, and he will be a strong advocate for those principles across the continent and will work to ensure that AID's programming reflect our values and our interests.

And he is someone who does not hesitate to speak his mind. Stories about his willingness to speak truth to power abound. But do not worry, Michael, I will not share them here today.

But it is an important quality that will serve him well in the executive branch as he ensures that USAID has a seat at the table and a voice in the interagency process. It is precisely that kind of leadership that we need in the Administration today, someone that knows the right approach on assistance to Asia and how to get it there.

So I appreciate all of those great assets and I will not continue with my remarks on you because then my time will be eaten up for questions. So I will include them for the record.

Michael, thank you for your excellent work with us.

Mr. Fick, to be the Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Diplomacy is the new frontier for us. The State Department unveiled the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Diplomacy in April this year.

Last week, the committee introduced the State Department authorization of 2022 which contains a version of the Cyber Diplomacy Act that would authorize the CDP bureau in statute and thus support its long-term viability.

What would be your top priorities as Ambassador at Large for the bureau as it finds its footing in the department?

Mr. FICK. Thank you, Senator, for the question and also for having me here today.

I have three immediate top priorities and I think of them as concentric rings moving from innermost to outermost. Because the bureau is new, the first and innermost priority is building the team and establishing a culture both in the bureau and in the Department where a fluency and expertise in digital technologies is seen as important to the careers and futures of career Foreign Service Officers and members of the civil service.

I can imagine a future where any candidate to be a chief of mission is expected to have an understanding of these issues because they are a substrate that cut across every aspect of our foreign policy.

The second priority, this second ring, moving outward, is to assert the State Department's rightful place in the interagency process on topics of cybersecurity and digital policy.

And then third are all the policy challenges out there in the world. The wolf closest to the door, so to speak, in my view, is the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the threats and opportunities it provides in the digital space for us; and then I believe our strategic competition with China along digital lines is probably the defining strategic question of my generation.

The CHAIRMAN. I am glad to hear you say about making sure that the equities of the State Department at the table in the interagency process are owned because, from my perspective, sometimes the State Department does not get its due as it relates to its critical role in the context of the interagency process. So that will be an important one.

And I hope that you will, upon confirmation, create a productive relationship with this committee. This committee has members that are very interested in this domain and want to engage with you in the days ahead.

Mr. FICK. I commit to that, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And if I may, Mr. Chairman, one other question.

Ms. Korhonen—did I pronounce it correctly? Okay.

The Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2021, which is law, which I sponsored, not only calls for a strategy for the Sahel, it calls for a specific strategy for Mali as part of the overall approach.

We had a hearing where representatives from State, DOD, and USAID shared the Administration's approach, and as I mentioned at that time we look to have input into the strategy as a result of that hearing.

Could you briefly outline for me the draft five-year strategy for Mali? How does that strategy differ from the approach of previous Administrations with respect to balancing the so-called three Ds in Mali?

Ms. KORHONEN. Thank you. I have not seen a five-year strategy for Mali.

I, however, do know that the department and our interagency partners are working together on multiple issues in Mali and I would say that, if confirmed, my priorities will be that we help and support the transition government to come to democratic governance, to elections that they promised with ECOWAS in March 2024. Really happy to see that deadline.

I also know that this—just this past Sunday, the Algerian President Tebboune called for the Malian transition government to hold elections and, in fact, on Monday there was a meeting—a decisional meeting for the Algiers Accord.

So I would say elections, transition to democratic governance, working through the Algerian Peace Accords, support of MINUSMA is—are the things that I would really be looking at in terms of what should be happening in Mali in the next five years.

I believe that is kind of where the department is going at this point.

The CHAIRMAN. We look forward to working with you because the law that we authored, ultimately, seeks to create a clear vision of where we go and a strategy to achieve it versus working ad hoc.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the courtesy. I have questions for all of the nominees. I am going to submit them for the record in deference to my colleagues.

I would ask you to give me substantive answers. If you do, then you will advance to a business meeting. If you do not, we are going to have to wait for the substantive answers.

So I do hope you will give me substantive answers to the questions that we will propound to you and, again, congratulations to all of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Ranking Member?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Once again, it is good to see the qualifications of the members in front of us here at this time.

Mr. Fick, the deployment of secure fifth-generation, or 5G, networks is critical not only for U.S. networks but throughout the world with our allies and partners. Meanwhile, countries like China pose a serious threat to our foreign allies and partners through companies such as Huawei.

The fiscal year '21 NDAA established a multilateral telecommunications security fund executed by the Secretary of State to support the development and adoption of secure and trusted telecommunications technologies with our partners and allies. Appropriations for this fund were passed as part of the CHIPS legislation last week.

If confirmed, how do you plan to use this fund to work with our partners and allies to develop secure and trusted alternatives to Huawei and how will you leverage this fund to encourage development of innovative new technologies like Open Radio Access Networks known as ORAN?

Mr. FICK. Thank you, Senator.

I strongly share the sentiment expressed in your question and believe very strongly that global telecom security is essential. I believe that the U.S. cannot do it alone. By its very nature this is a global network of hardware and infrastructure and, if confirmed, I would work to deploy the resources appropriated in the CHIPS Act.

I think from my seat still on the outside looking in I applaud the passage of the Act. Two particular examples for consideration might be partnering with the European Commission under the Trade and Technology Council in order to finance the deployment of secure infrastructure to third countries. That is something that I would very quickly want to explore.

Another example would be expanding work with the Quad countries in order to promote Open RAN deployments in the Indo-Pacific, and you have my commitment that I would engage with the committee and with Congress before and during any implementation.

Senator ROUNDS. Very good. Thank you.

Ms. Korhonen, just last week the State Department ordered the departure of nonemergency U.S. Government personnel from Mali due to heightened risk of terrorist attacks.

Regardless of how long this ordered departure persists, if confirmed, you will serve as chief of mission at a high risk post for U.S. personnel. How will you approach your role as chief of mission in this environment where, despite significant challenges, the staff of the U.S. embassy have important work to do?

Ms. KORHONEN. Thank you, sir.

My first priority absolutely will be the safety and security of American citizens and mission personnel.

The attack on July 22nd was just about 10 miles from the embassy. The situation is serious and we must proceed with an abundance of caution.

I believe my experiences in serving—in the past serving at high threat posts will serve me well, if I am confirmed. I also understand that Mission Bamako enjoys high morale and, if confirmed, it will be my goal to sustain that positive work and life experience while we navigate Mali's myriad challenges together.

Thank you.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Ambassador Tamlyn, what is your view on the prospects for credible elections in DRC next year?

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, sir.

The Congolese have the right to free, fair, and on time elections and they want that, and we know that the path to a more prosperous and stable DRC lies through a good election and a consolidation of their democratic experience.

It is a country with immense challenges because of its size and the logistics that are needed. The institutions, we know, are weak. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities would be to immediately review the planning that is underway to prepare ourselves and the country for elections and there are three things in particular that we need to look at.

The first is progress on national preparations—how are they doing in terms of voter rolls, procurement, and the census that may need to take place.

The second thing is how is our assistance helping in the right places, and then, finally, what is the enabling environment. You cannot have a credible election if there is not an even playing field for all of the candidates and if rights of freedom of assembly or freedom of expression are not fully supported.

Finally, a credible election does not just happen overnight. It is something that you need to be preparing for, and planning for, for a good period of time in advance and that includes messaging to the Government clearly what our expectations are.

So I hope to be able to do that and also work closely with international partners so their messaging is strong and consistent across the board.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I do have questions for the other nominees, but in the interests of allowing our other members to move forward I think I will defer them and allow the other members to ask questions first.

Senator BOOKER. I recognize Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

I could ask questions for about an hour of this panel because I think I could learn a tremendous amount. But let me make two comments and then, really, one question that will be for you, Ambassador Tamlyn.

First, to Nathaniel Fick, when my son, Nathaniel, was a senior in high school in December of 2007 and came to me and said, Mom and Dad, I want you to know that I have been talking to a Marine recruiter for the last few months, I noticed that he had your book "One Bullet Away" on his bookshelf, and I think—it was a surprise to us when he told us this—I think your writing was influential in his decision.

He had an eight-year career as a infantry officer with two deployments, is now a reservist. But I just wanted to say you have influenced a lot of people in a lot of your previous capacities, but that book in particular, and maybe just—maybe even the Nathaniel coincidence was one—helped create a really talented Marine officer in my oldest son.

Mr. FICK. Thank you, sir.

Senator KAINE. And then, Mr. Schiffer, I will just say it is really a treat to see you back. You performed such good service during my time on this committee and you are so well suited for the position.

Ambassador Tamlyn, I am going to take my questions to you in a completely different direction because I feel like the five of you are very qualified for the positions that you are going to be going to and I am going to support you all.

But when we have foreign relations folks who are posted in countries right now that I am concerned about, I often ask about your current post rather than the one to which you will be nominated and I am very, very worried about Sudan and I think I am going to just talk to you a little bit about that.

The reports just within the last few days from CNN that Sudanese gold has been plundered by Russians to support the Ukrainian war has led to street protests in Sudan, and I am interested that the Sudanese Government has reacted to these reports by cracking down on plunderers? No. Cracking down on those who revealed the information that demonstrated that Russia was plundering their gold reserves.

What do you think this very shocking reporting portends for Sudan and what advice would you have for the committee about the way we should approach the U.S.-Sudanese relationship, given the significant number of challenges in Sudan right now?

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, Senator.

I think that the path ahead to deal with this and other issues is supporting a civilian-led transitional government.

What we have seen following the revolution is that only a civilian-led government is capable of tackling these issues, of bringing transparency to bear on the events happening in the country, putting in place more responsible government institutions, and thinking about these issues and trying to figure out a better way of doing them.

So that is our major focus right now. We are working very closely with all of the stakeholders involved to support a civilian-led transitional government, and what we have made clear as well is that until there is a credible civilian-led transitional government that has the broad support of the Sudanese people, U.S. assistance will not be available.

Senator Kaine. The reporting is just a few days old and, again, it is really shocking. I would encourage all my colleagues to read it—I mentioned many have—and I applaud CNN for doing such good work on it.

Do you think thus far the reaction in Sudan of the public would suggest that it would increase the public demand for a stable civilian government that could, hopefully, avoid just shocking malfeasance of the kind that has been reported?

Ms. Tamlyn. There is no debating this issue. I would say about 100 percent of the Sudanese population seek a civilian-led government. There is very clear consensus across the board for many reasons but including this one because I think there is a great concern about the natural resources of the country not being used for the benefit of the people.

I think it simply underscores the importance of moving swiftly forward on this transition.

Thank you.

Senator Kaine. Thank you. With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Booker. I am grateful for that yielding of about a minute of your time. I am sure Senator Portman respects that tremendously.

Senator Portman. Yes.

Senator Booker. Sir, we yield to you now for your questions.

Senator Portman. It is a good model to emulate.

Senator Booker. Yes.

Senator Portman. First of all, I want to thank Chairman Booker and Ranking Member Rounds for holding this hearing, and I know that these nominees have all served their country already but I want to thank you for stepping up to serve again.

And with regard to Africa, enormous potential often overlooked, and so for our nominees heading to African countries we need your U.S. presence there.

I am heading to Africa, to east Africa mostly, with Senator Coons in a couple of weeks and we look forward to that visit. But there are so many questions I could ask about that.

But I am going to focus on something else, which is Mr. Fick and, again, appreciate your service including in the Marine Corps.

What I am concerned about is that we have overlapping responsibilities and authorities with regard to our cyber defense and this has been something I have worked on for a while with very little result, actually.

We seem to keep adding more and more top cybersecurity positions to our Government and the org chart troubles me. More importantly, what troubles me is that without accountability I am worried that things will happen and it is too easy to point fingers. As we saw after the Colonial Pipeline incident, you probably recall, everyone was pointing fingers.

So we have this top position of the deputy national security adviser for cyber already, which is obviously international in orientation. We have the federal CISO, of course, at OMB. We have the National Cyber Directorate, which was established by this Congress after a commission report that indicated we needed a national director.

We have the CISA director at Department of Homeland Security. One could argue that we also have at every agency and department others but, in effect, they are reporting up at least to somebody.

But your position that you are being nominated for is a new one and I think it overlaps with the Office of the National Cyber Director. The legislation says that that director “shall serve as the principal advisor to the President relating to coordination of diplomatic and other efforts to develop norms and international consensus around responsible state behavior in cyberspace,” end quote.

So I just want to know from you, one, are you sensitive to this issue and aware of it. And, again, as someone with a military background, I imagine you share some of my concerns and I would like to hear those if you do and how you intend to conduct yourself in this role so that you can fit into this construct.

Congress is not very good at org charts so it really will be the responsibility of the individuals who have these jobs to work together and to not allow the gaps in accountability, in particular, with regard to the National Cyber Director’s role, which seems to overlap directly with the State Department Cyber and Digital Policy Bureau functions, responsibilities.

How would you work collaboratively across all departments to assure that we are not being duplicative and ensure that we have accountability?

Mr. FICK. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate the question and the sentiment behind it.

I think in addition to my military experience, my experience building and leading a business instilled in me an appreciation for a clear chain of command and appreciation for clear and well defined swim lanes, an appreciation for accountability, and kind of a wry sense that it is always easy to add but it is hard to subtract, and so I come to this role with a heightened sense of concern about the issue that you raise.

And that said, I have had—I have a strong conviction that this role actually fills a gap that has existed in our Government.

When I was leading a business and working with the Government in this space, CISA has a strong presence here. The White House has a strong presence here. The Defense Department has a strong presence here, and the State Department has not, and I believe that diplomacy should be our tool of first resort. I believe in the intrinsic value of diplomacy.

And so I think this role actually does fill an important gap in the cyber and tech responsibilities across the Government. I have known Director Inglis and Anne Neuberger and Jen Easterly in different capacities for more than a decade.

I have full confidence that we can carve out the right swim lanes and I hope that as the—if confirmed as the inaugural ambassador leading this office, we could create clear lines of responsibility that outlive any individual.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you. I appreciate the fact you recognize the overlap and the potential conflicts and most importantly, again, just the notion that accountability is necessary for us to be sure we are covering our bases with regard to this growing threat that we face as a country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BOOKER. We are going to go now to Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. I also appreciate the manner in which you conduct this hearing.

Senator BOOKER. I am very grateful for that, sir.

Senator CARDIN. I am glad that you are grateful.

[Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. Let me also acknowledge what Senator Rounds indicated during his opening comments that all five of our nominees have a career of public service and you have dedicated yourselves to helping our country.

We know that is a family sacrifice and we thank you and your families for your incredible service to our nation, and we are very pleased that you are willing to take on these incredibly important responsibilities, in one case a new position, in other cases some critically important countries, and the position at USAID.

Mr. Schiffer, as I said earlier as you were being eulogized by our chairman because you are leaving us—that is the reason—your service here was incredible. I thank you very much. I enjoyed all of our opportunities together and you have some real challenges at USAID, and I want to talk a little bit about Burma, if I might.

It is a tragic situation. The current government there and its—the human rights records are horrible. So how do we help the people who have been victimized by what has happened in Burma?

How does the United States play a constructive role to try to get help out to the people that have been dislocated and abused as a result of Burmese Government?

Mr. SCHIFFER. Senator Cardin, thank you for your kind comments and let me also thank you for your leadership on Burma over the years.

I share, as you know, your sense in the tragedy that has befallen that country since the coup in 2021 and the challenges that we have in Burma right now.

I think it is absolutely vital that the United States stands with the people of Burma and that we do all that we can, working with our partners in the region—our ASEAN partners—to assure that there is humanitarian access so that we can provide assistance to those who are in the country as well as to provide assistance, whether it is shelter, nutritional assistance, food assistance, educational opportunities, to those that have been displaced to camps either in Thailand or in Bangladesh. I think there is a deep moral obligation.

And then, secondly, I think we have a continued obligation to work with civil society actors who remain in Burma who are trying valiantly to create additional space so that democracy and genuine ethnic and national reconciliation might once again get traction in that country, and to work with them to try to lead Burma back to a path of democracy and responsible governance.

I have no illusions about how tough it is. I have no illusions about the challenges that we face with the military junta in Naypyidaw.

But this is important work and, if confirmed, it is one of the issues I intend to throw myself into.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Ms. Tamlyn, I want to talk a little bit about DRC. There has been, obviously, a challenge in the past. The Government appears to want to make a commitment to fight corruption and I would be interested as to how we can assist in that regard.

They also have an election coming up in 2023 that we would like to see how we could be—assist to make sure that is a free and fair election.

So just tell me your strategies and commitment to the human rights agenda and the democracy agenda to assist in regards to what is necessary to fight corruption and to ensure that we have free and fair elections, the best that we can in that country.

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, Senator.

Those would, certainly, be among my highest priorities if confirmed, because we know that human rights abuses and corruption actually eat away at any prospects for the DRC to emerge as a prosperous and stable country. So it is in their interests and it also has to be the sine qua non of our partnership with them that they are making progress on that.

Through what we call the Privileged Partnership for Peace, Prosperity, and Preservation of the Environment, which is kind of a portmanteau for a lot of activities that are undergoing, we have a strong human rights and democracy component and we also, of course, are working to support the elections.

I just mentioned a couple of things that we are doing. But let me note that after the last elections we did not fail to call out actors who had been engaged in corrupt practices and undermining the elections, and I think that that stands out as quite the warning, and we, certainly, need to make sure that we keep those tools ready if we see the same kind of circumstances repeating themselves as far as corruption or bad actors that threaten the integrity of the elections.

And similarly, on human rights and corruption we need to hold the leaders accountable for that and I think that is something that, if confirmed, would be part of my dialogue with leaders of the country to make sure that they understand how it is not just a question of words but actions in terms of addressing problems of corruption whether it is in the military or in other parts of the Government.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. I agree. You have our support here in the Senate to amplify those issues, particularly if we believe that attention is needed in order to get the right results. So thank you.

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BOOKER. We thank the stalwart senator from Maryland and now we move to the one senator in the entire United States Senate who is, indeed, forever young.

[Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. With apologies to Rod Stewart, thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Fick, last year I introduced legislation with Senator Warner and the Chairman of this committee that would establish an inter-agency tech partnership office housed at the State Department.

This office would spearhead the United States' global efforts to forge robust technology partnerships with like-minded partners and allies with a special focus on norms and standards, joint research, and export controls and investment screens.

I believe that if America is to truly compete and exceed the Chinese Communist Party's whole-of-government approach to tech domination we must harness all the tools of allies and partners and work together.

Consistent with the bipartisan vision of the CHIPS and Science Act, which just passed Congress and the President of the United States will sign into law in a few weeks, we are trying to formalize this effort to crowd in the talent and treasure of other countries in co-developing technologies so that we can have common standards and really marshal all of the collective wherewithal that we have as we think about this generational competition with the CCP.

Do you believe that the State Department is best positioned within the federal government to lead creation of this interagency tech partnership office? Does the State Department have the resources and the ability to harness the necessary expertise within State and beyond to spearhead this effort?

Mr. FICK. Thank you, Senator.

I do believe that the State Department as the nation's lead foreign policy agency should lead on the partnership aspects of technology collaboration.

I appreciate also that this is a cross cutting issue inherently. It has defense elements, it has intelligence elements, it has economic elements, et cetera. And so I would not expect these efforts to sit exclusively in the State Department.

But I do think as far as partnerships go the State State Department is properly positioned to lead and I think—I believe that the creation of this role helps to elevate and integrate those functions at the State Department, and if I am confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to work with you on this vision. I share a strong sense of its importance and do not believe that we can do it alone.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you for that. I would look forward to that opportunity, sir.

I have also noted with great interest the conclusions of the report of the independent task force that you co-chaired for the Council on Foreign Relations, "Confronting Reality in Cyberspace." The report calls for more cohesive links between our national security strategy and our policy for digital competition.

Could you comment on where the U.S. can make meaningful progress on this aspect of our foreign policy and where you envision your role to be in making that policy and implementing it, if confirmed?

Mr. FICK. Yes, Senator.

As I said in my opening statement, I believe that technology is the next frontier of diplomacy. I believe that diplomacy is our tool of first resort in international relations, and so by extension I think

that this is a cross-cutting substrate that is part of every aspect of our national security strategy and foreign policy.

And so my hope, if confirmed in this role, is to provide kindkind of coherence to our tech diplomacy and ensure that we as a government first, and we as a leader of like-minded allies and partners are coordinating our efforts because we have a competitor out there with a very different vision of what our global technology future should look like. I look behind me here at my children and think that this is fundamental to shaping the world that they will grow up in.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, sir. Got some mic issues here.

And, lastly, I will just ask you and if you can answer in fairly short order, going back to the report I referenced, in lieu of sanctions what tools are available to the United States to strengthen adherence to a framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace?

Mr. FICK. Senator, I believe that we have not fully extended deterrence into the cyber domain. I believe that American power has been a force for stability in the world since the end of World War II and our adversaries seek to do mischief or harm us using digital means because they know what the consequences are in the physical world and we should be marshaling every ounce of our diplomatic, economic, informational, and if necessary military power to ensure that we extend deterrence into this new domain.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Young?

Senator YOUNG. Yes, I am through.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much for your questions. Thank you very much. Yes, I will get a staffer to help you with your microphone next time.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, my friend. As always, your thorough questions are informative and important. So thank you.

I want to start and jump in.

Ms. Ba, you have been spared the scorn in questioning of my colleagues. So I want to jump in with you on some really—what I think are really important issues.

I have great concern that we are heading as a globe spiraling into the greatest food insecurity our planet has ever seen, affecting more people than ever and, obviously, this is an issue for Côte d'Ivoire.

And so I would like to know from you what is the largest impact of Russia's war in Ukraine on the agricultural sector in the country and what are some thoughts of yours to help to deal with any food insecurity that is going to result?

Ms. BA. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

Indeed, the impact of the war has made—exacerbated foods insecurity in Côte d'Ivoire and across Africa. Agriculture is one of the most important sectors for Côte d'Ivoire. It is one of the largest exporters of cocoa—the largest exporters of cocoa in the world.

And so we are looking to continue and to deepen these partnerships in the agricultural sector with the U.S. companies that are already active in the country but also to set and to strengthen a business climate to encourage other American companies, because

when American companies are working in partnership in Côte d'Ivoire and across the region we see innovation.

And so, if confirmed, I would be focused on strengthening the role of American companies—the American model—to be able to look at how to not only deal with the immediate crisis of food security but also to be able to create the conditions so that small-scale farmers, larger farmers, women, young people, can have livelihoods in the agricultural sector and to be able to feed themselves and to be able to sustain their lives in the long term.

Senator BOOKER. I want to ask you just a personal issue. I worry about our economic relationships often with African nations when we are often sustaining relationships that reflect the colonization of the past.

And so when you look at Côte d'Ivoire, the Government's National Development Plan emphasizes efforts to diversify beyond raw commodity exports, which I think is really important for the development of countries and their strength.

They look to promote domestic processing of cocoa beans or raw cashews into more finished products, which I think is a very healthy economic evolution.

How can the U.S. support this initiative in diversifying their agricultural sector while also ensuring that the other priorities—human rights and more—continue to be sustained for the evolution of their economy?

Ms. BA. Thank you for that as well, Senator.

Economic opportunity is really the foundation of security very often. They go hand in hand, and good governance, transparency, accountability is also part and parcel.

So, if confirmed, I would be looking at how to have integrated approaches in all that we do and, really, to bring the best of the United States to bear in Côte d'Ivoire, to be able to engage with young people, because very often young people—77 percent of the population of Côte d'Ivoire are below the age of 35—they need to be able to see opportunity and they need to be able to see what is possible.

And the American model is different than a colonial model and traditional models, and we have incredible companies. We can help Côte d'Ivoire diversify their economy, looking into other industries as well like cultural industries.

But when we look at American companies encouraging different models that can look at corporate social responsibility and to be able to broaden from an integrated perspective, economics, good governance, as well as security.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

I would like to go quickly to Mr. Fick. We often look at the issues of cyberspace, digital policy, in terms of our fears, concerns, and understandable worries.

But I would like to maybe frame my question in the opportunity side and really ask you that—about the April 28th Biden administration's announcement that 61 nations joining with them, really, for the Declaration of the Future of the Internet, which really affirms the U.S. and other signatories' commitments to an open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, secure Internet that also protects human rights.

And I guess I would like to know how do you envision the CDP Bureau's role in pursuit of this new global partnership and what aspects of the declaration you are going to be prioritizing.

Mr. FICK. Senator, thank you for taking us from thinking about this issue solely in terms of strategic competition and affording an opportunity to talk about the positive affirmative vision for what technology can do globally, and I think the Declaration for the Future of the Internet is exactly that.

It is an aspirational framework and it is one that has a lot of power as a galvanizing set of principles to help build a voluntary coalition of like-minded partners and allies who share our view of an open, free, interoperable, secure digital future.

If confirmed, I would use this role to try to expand the number of states who are signatories to that document and do it by telling a positive—again, affirmative story of the power of technology.

And I think about my colleagues down the table who may be representing the United States in parts of the world where for the first time in human history, literally, at their fingertips young people can have all of the world's information available to them and that is—that is an incredibly powerful transformative force.

Senator BOOKER. All right.

I made a mistake. I am going to end my questioning—I tend to leave my questions till the very end. We are going to go to Senator Van Hollen, who is an extraordinary partner and important member of this committee.

Then we are going to go back to some procedural questions I have for the entire panel that I should have asked at the top. Then I have some of the most grueling, brutal questions I have ever asked somebody for Mr. Schiffer, and then we are done. I think everybody else is going to submit for the record.

Mr. Schiffer, please get ready for me to come at you hard.

But, Mr. Van Hollen, go ahead.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to all of you and I look forward to supporting all of your nominations. You have already been committed to public service in various forms and I think you will all do a terrific job in the posts for which you have been nominated.

Mr. Schiffer, we are going to miss you here but look forward to working with you.

Mr. Fick, I was really glad to see Secretary Blinken announce the establishment—the formal establishment of the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy. I understand the concerns raised by Senator Portman but I think you addressed them well and I do believe that you will establish those lanes of responsibility.

And I was glad to hear the Chairman talk about the upside of the Internet. I mean, there are places all over the world where it has become a forum that brings people together to support freedom of expression, human rights.

Of course, authoritarian regimes recognize that, which is why they are so determined to block off access to that kind of information. We have seen Putin doing that in Russia. We have seen President Xi do it in China.

And so it is a challenge for us to make sure that that model is not exported to countries around the world, which China is, cer-

tainly, trying to do in places like Africa where we have many nominees appointed to be ambassador.

So I just look forward to following up with you. I also serve on the Appropriations Committee. The authorizers have, I think, on a bipartisan basis supported this mission and I want to make sure that the appropriators do so.

In the interests of time I look forward to continuing the conversation with you down the road.

Mr. FICK. Thank you, Senator. It is mutual.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you.

Let me turn, if I could, to you, Ambassador Tamlyn, and I heard your opening statement from my office and appreciate your answers to questions here.

So the DRC, as you well know, is an incredibly complicated place with all sorts of rivalries and conflicts, especially in the east, and my question for you is what do you think is at the heart of those conflicts and what can you do as a U.S. Ambassador to try to address them in the long-term interests of stability in the DRC?

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, Senator. That is a really important question because I think too often we get derailed by saying he did something, they did something, somebody did something, who is to blame, and you really have to look at the root causes of the conflict.

And in my view, it has to do with lack of governance and it has to do with a very valuable part of the country in terms of its natural resources. So there is, inevitably, competition both inside the country as well as outside the country for access to those resources.

And in the absence of a strong government providing services to the people you have instead a whole network of armed groups, which provide some form of local governance but usually not a very good form of local governance.

So what can we do to tackle this situation? We need to work very closely with regional organizations and with leaders in the region to make sure that tension is deescalated, that the region does not fall into another conflict because we have seen how devastating that was.

So it is very important that leaders get the message and, believe me, the State Department has been messaging recently to leaders on the importance of reducing tensions, of cooperating and having dialogue with neighbors and using those regional bodies and mechanisms to try to resolve conflicts.

I think also some of our programming, which tries to address root causes of conflict, which can be traced to exploitation of minerals in a nonsustainable and a nonaccountable, nontransparent way, if we can address that, that helps some of those local grievances and, again, supporting the Government to be the kind of government that provides the security and services to the people that they aspire to.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you for hitting on all those points, and I know that Senator Booker raised the issue of rare earth minerals in his opening statement. That, obviously, is part of what is at the heart of this—a lot of these conflicts, and so look forward to working with you on that as well.

I do want to bring to your attention a great Marylander who has been very involved in the DRC. His name is Pastor Weaver. He is

the pastor of one of the largest AME churches in Maryland. He is the president of the Pan African Collective. He has established a school, the Weaver School, in the DRC that has over 900 students in primary and secondary school, 20 percent of them orphans.

Our former ambassador, Mike Hammer, visited the school, and so my ask of you is once you get settled there if you would also go out to see the school. I think it is a great example of the faith-based community here in the United States supporting important humanitarian educational efforts in Africa.

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, Senator.

If confirmed, it would be my pleasure to go and visit.

Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BOOKER. I am very grateful for you, Senator Cardin.

So I am going to get my Schiffer questions done. Prepare yourself, sir. There will be five questions. I hope you can answer them as quickly as possible. Then we will have procedural questions and then, I think, we are a wrap.

So, Mr. Schiffer, obviously, there is a crisis in Sri Lanka right now. The president fled and resigned amongst a really full-scale economic crisis and protests. There was a new Sri Lankan president that was elected by the parliament very closely affiliated, unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your views here, but I imagine it is unfortunately, that does not have public confidence.

I am really wondering about USAID and what we could do to sort of guide or alter our policies there and how we might respond quickly to support any meaningful democratic process, institution capacity building, civil society bolstering, in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. SCHIFFER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I mean, the situation in Sri Lanka has been, truly, in a different way but similar to Burma tragic over the past several months.

My understanding is that USAID has sought to engage to provide for the immediate humanitarian assistance, given the economic crisis on the ground and in Sri Lanka, and that we—the USAID is part of the larger set of activities to coordinate with other partners in the region, including through the Quad, to look to support proper governance in Sri Lanka.

I think this is a long-term rebuilding process. It is an issue that, if confirmed, I do intend to look at closely and come back to this committee and to you to consult and to get your guidance.

Senator BOOKER. I really hope we can have that conversation.

All right, sir. This is the speed round, four last questions, the last chance this committee is going to have to verbally question you before you leave us. We all have abandonment issues as senators so prepare yourself.

Your first question—you are an Asia expert, correct?

Mr. SCHIFFER. Allegedly.

Senator BOOKER. Then you will be able to tell me, sir, the Han Dynasty from—in China from the year 200 BC to the year 220 AD, what were the three biggest accomplishments of the Han Dynasty?

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Let the record show you could not answer.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Number two, sir. There is a significant movement going on in parts of Asia that you, I am sure, have heard of that is called K-pop. Could you please tell me your three favorite male K-pop bands?

Mr. SCHIFFER. There is only one K-pop band and that is BTS. So that is my answer.

Senator BOOKER. That is wrong, and let the record show that you got yet another answer wrong.

And then, finally, you know that modern mathematics was really innovated in Asia—the extraordinary accomplishments in math and science.

So my final question for you, sir—three wrong answers for an Asia expert—but my final question for you, sir, is what is the square root of 1,256?

Mr. SCHIFFER. Am I allowed to call on a family member?

Senator BOOKER. You cannot phone a friend, sir.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Let the record show you are 0 for 3 in your final moments before the United States Senate highest—longest serving committee, the Foreign Relations Committee. What an ignominious way to end, sir, and I am very disappointed in you.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. But, however, you are greatly still loved by people on both sides of the aisle. Your service has been extraordinary.

I want to say right now I have got to do these perfunctory questions. They are important, though. I would hope that there would be a hearty yes from all of you in unison. You do not have to harmonize your yeses but I would like to hear them, if possible.

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

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

Senator BOOKER. Let the record show I heard yeses from all of them.

Number two, do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

Senator BOOKER. Let the record show I heard all the yeses.

Number three, do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

Senator BOOKER. That was not as loud and vocal but I did hear everyone.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. The last question is do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefing and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

I want to conclude by saying what I said at the top, Mr. Ranking Member. These are extraordinary Americans. You all have very

distinguished service under your belt in the public and the private sector.

You are now taking posts of critical importance that are not only of critical strategic national security and economic possibility importance for our nation but also, as leaders on this planet, really important for humanity.

There is a story about Abraham Lincoln at a time when he was trying to hold our nation together—another time of crisis—and he finished this incredible speech that you all know, the second inaugural address—“with malice towards none, with charity towards all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right.”

Afterwards, he was at a reception and people were crowding around him, pulling him in different directions. But he was pushing through the crowd to find his friend. The friend almost did not get in—he was an African-American man—until someone recognized this regal man yet humble in spirit and they brought him into the reception.

Lincoln found this Black man and said to him, “I must know what you thought of my speech.” And the man, again, regal in stature but humble of spirit, said, “Mr. President, you should attend to your other guests,” and he waved him off and said, “I need to know what you thought of my speech. My friend, please tell me.”

Now, this would be the last time in American history these two men would ever speak to each other, and as Lincoln waited the great Frederick Douglass spoke up and he said, “Mr. President, it was a sacred effort.” A sacred effort.

You all, should you be confirmed, are continuing that spirit in this country. The work you do is sacred. The difference that you can make will be extraordinary.

I wish you and your families the best on the journey that you are about to embark upon and may God bless you and always bless the United States of America.

There will be questions for the record. I thank my ranking member, and now I need to enter two letters into the record before gaveling out, and they are here.

I would like to, without objection from my colleague and my friend—I would like to introduce two letters for the record in support of Mr. Fick’s nomination.

No objection being heard, it is so ordered.

[The information referred to above is located at the end of this transcript.]

Senator BOOKER. Again, the record will remain—for this hearing will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, August 4th. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than that date, and as you heard from Senator Menendez, please make them thorough.

Again, congratulations to the nominees’ families.

Senator ROUNDS. May I—

Senator BOOKER. Please. Please.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would just say, look, the United States Senate has not only the responsibility for advice and consent but also for the oversight and, thus, the reason for the questions by the Chairman as to being able

to appear and it is a very important part of the job that we have here.

I thank you for your answers in that specific regard but also for, once again, as we have all tried to express, your interest in serving our country and, in particular, your families' participation as well, which is sometimes very, very challenging.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the hairless, or I should say, errorless way in which you conducted yourself today with this committee hearing.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. With that final dad joke, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:56 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JESSICA DAVIS BA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Two years ago, President Ouattara made the decision to run for a third term in office, triggering the most serious unrest in Côte d'Ivoire since the conflict in 2011. His main political rivals, like him, are from an older generation of political elites. How would you assess the state of democracy in Côte d'Ivoire, and what will you do as ambassador, if confirmed, to empower democratic voices-especially from the youth and marginalized communities-and improve governance in the country?

Answer. Ivoirians overwhelmingly prefer democracy to any other form of government—a conclusion based on independent polling by Afrobarometer. If confirmed, I will stress the common democratic values shared by the Americans and Ivoirians—participation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability—assured through the democratic process. Although the 2020 presidential election period was marked by several incidents of violence, the national legislative elections in March 2021 were conducted freely and fairly with broad participation from opposition parties. The next election cycle is expected to begin in 2023 for municipal and regional seats, followed by presidential and legislative elections in 2025 and 2026, respectively. If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. support throughout the election process, expanding outreach and coordination with partners in country and with multilateral institutions like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. I will urge all actors to participate peacefully and to hold those responsible for any violence accountable. Côte d'Ivoire's future depends on free and fair elections that are held peacefully with an inclusive and transparent electoral process. If confirmed, I will urge the Government and political parties to engage in a real process of reconciliation through continuation of their own National Political Dialogue. To champion participation, especially by women young people, and marginalized communities, I will encourage Ivoirians to get their national ID cards and register to vote. Our Embassy will continue to support the culmination of a larger voter literacy effort that ensures increased civic awareness and involvement for the average citizen, particularly women, youth, and other marginalized communities. If confirmed, I will also urge the Government to make voter registration as easy as possible for all eligible voters to ensure robust participation. I will prioritize opportunities to leverage our programs and convening power to support democratic institutions and the democratic process.

Côte d'Ivoire, like other countries in coastal West Africa, is vulnerable to the spread of violent extremism from the Sahel. In response to this threat, the Administration has targeted five countries in coastal West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, priorities under the Global Fragility Act. While these countries face some similar challenges, there are also marked differences between them, including very different systems of governance. For example, Ghana is a relatively strong democracy, and Guinea is currently under military rule. The five countries also vary in terms of income level, social cohesion, and state capacity.

Question. How does the violent extremist threat manifest itself in Côte d'Ivoire? Do you believe that our current assistance programming to counter violent extremism in Côte d'Ivoire is appropriately balanced between defense, diplomacy, and development?

Answer. Violent extremist organizations based in the Sahel have announced their intention to target Côte d'Ivoire and other coastal West African states. In the last two years, over 20 attacks, mainly targeting security services have occurred in the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire along the border with Burkina Faso. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, I will work with a broad range of stakeholders within the Ivorian Government and civil society to ensure that implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (SPCPS) includes the appropriate balance of defense, diplomacy, and development tools to support Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan and government-community cooperation to build resilience against this threat. If confirmed, I will work with the interagency Embassy team as well as our regional partners at the USAID-West Africa regional mission, USAFRICOM, and my counterparts in Guinea, Ghana, Togo, and Benin to support the Ivorian people at the community, national, and regional level. In implementing the SPCPS, I will prioritize constant evaluation of our investment of U.S. assistance, re-balancing any emphasis of our approach to build on opportunities to counter violent extremism.

Question. How will you ensure that resources and programming implemented through the Global Fragility Act are appropriately tailored to the requirements of Côte d'Ivoire?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with various stakeholders within the Ivorian Government and civil society to ensure programming through the Global Fragility Act, implemented according to the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (SPCPS), is aligned with Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan and facilitates meaningful government-community cooperation. Specifically, the tools we will use to implement the SPCPS can reinforce local and national early warning systems and action plans to prevent the spread of violent extremism; support existing community-led platforms, such as civilian-military committees to foster trust between marginalized communities and security forces; professionalize law enforcement and other government officials to engender trust with the communities they serve; and strengthen legal capabilities to hold violent extremist actors accountable. If confirmed, I will also emphasize the unique tools each of our interagency partners brings to the challenges in Côte d'Ivoire to ensure efficient and effective whole-of-government action to achieve the U.S. objective of long-term peace and stability. Under my leadership, through interagency coordination and planning, U.S. Embassy Abidjan will tailor USG assistance to the specific needs of local communities to reinforce their resilience against the threat of violent extremism, while creating opportunities to build trust with state authorities. To implement this long-term plan, U.S. Embassy Abidjan plans to hire additional staff to collect and analyze data to ensure that USG resources and programming are contextually relevant, most effectively to the requirements of communities in various regions of Côte d'Ivoire.

Democracy and Human Rights

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

Answer. Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to championing democracy and respect for human rights. Most of my overseas tours were in countries in which the U.S. Government focused on building government and civil society capacity, where I worked to advance democracy and respect for human rights. I learned that individual actions can make a difference to shape outcomes that support others in defending their rights when they may not have the resources or freedom to do alone in constrained democratic space. In Guinea, I led our Embassy's effort to empower trade unions through the creative use of the Human Rights and Democracy Fund. U.S. assistance helped bring unions together across sectors in a country where the authoritarian regime curtailed human rights and weakened civil society. The labor coalition organized and began peaceful protests against then-President Lansana Conte. When the regime responded with violence, the labor leaders continued to mobilize Guineans to demand change. When security forces stormed the headquarters of one of the unions, I mobilized our Embassy colleagues across agencies who weighed in with their counterparts to ensure due process. The labor leaders credited our embassy with saving their lives. We continued to support the unions and I shared best practices from American labor and civil rights movements. When the Government responded with violence, we urged the Government to engage its citi-

zens in peaceful dialogue. The labor movement led general nationwide strikes that eventually pushed the president to appoint a more inclusive cabinet and they won a promise for democratic elections for the Guinean people to chart their own future.

From this experience, I recognized that my actions to support democratic coalitions and build partnerships to advance universal human rights could make a difference. U.S. support inspired confidence in Guinea's citizens to stand up for their rights and build a movement that opened new opportunities for democratic renewal. I took lessons from Guinea to each of my subsequent assignments. For example, in Somalia, I negotiated among warring parties in the Djibouti Peace Process for the election of a new transitional federal government integrating wider representation of moderate voices. In Kenya, I engaged women, youth groups, and the private sector to support a peaceful referendum and electoral process. In Iraq, I insisted that the U.S. police training program include human rights instruction in every aspect of our engagement, even when the Iraqi Government requested that we remove these program components. I worked with the African Union to strengthen its elections monitoring and collaborated with partners and AU member states to invest more resources to support elections across the African continent. In Chad, I engaged at the highest level of the Government to link our assistance to accountability for human rights violations. We centered all partnerships for security sector reform on building more transparent institutions for the benefit of the people of Chad. I consistently open space for those seeking to make their voices heard and create opportunities to leverage U.S. assistance resources to support human rights and advance democracy. If confirmed, I will bring this experience to support the aspirations of the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

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

Answer. One of the biggest challenges to democratic development in Côte d'Ivoire is ensuring that the Government can meet the needs of all its citizens, particularly vulnerable groups in the North of the country. The United States is deeply concerned about increased violent extremism along the northern Ivoirian border. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has expressed its support for the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (SPCPS), the implementation of which will support the Government's efforts to address many of these needs in the region. One of the main lines of effort for the U.S. Strategy is to focus on building trust between security forces and the communities they serve.

More broadly, Côte d'Ivoire has never experienced a peaceful transition of power. The 2021 legislative elections were a significant step towards reconciliation and socio-political cohesion. The ongoing national political dialogue is making important progress. However, this progress remains fragile and if confirmed, I will ensure the United States supports the people of Côte d'Ivoire as the country moves towards the 2023 local elections and the 2025 presidential election.

As part of the effort to build social cohesion, the United States has called on the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to respect the human rights of all individuals in Côte d'Ivoire, notably freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, and to ensure that all those arrested are afforded fair trials. Through implementation of the SPCPS, Embassy Abidjan is planning to support a judicial advisor to support Côte d'Ivoire's justice sector reforms. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out for democratic pluralism, rule of law, press freedom, and respect for human rights.

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

Answer. Supporting good governance and democracy in Côte d'Ivoire is a key goal of our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to capitalize on their advancements towards increasing respect for democracy, and human rights and fundamental freedoms through their National Dialogue and Reconciliation plan. I will also work with Ivoirian civil society and opposition groups to encourage their participation in the democratic process. If confirmed, I will address potential impediments to democratic ideals and institutions, including security concerns and economic inequality. I will engage personally with the Ivoirian Government, civil society, and opposition groups to ensure that all voices are heard, and all interests are represented at the local and national government level. Specifically, through an interagency collaborative effort with State and USAID, I will promote fairer voter registration processes through civic education,

voter list analysis, and efforts to increase the accessibility of electoral data for all citizens of Côte d'Ivoire.

If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, political parties, civil society organizations, and other diplomatic missions to promote political reforms, reinforce democratic institutions, and strengthen electoral institutions and processes to promote free and fair elections. I will also support the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and encourage all Ivoirians to participate in local and national elections as low voter confidence and participation could become an impediment to a robust democracy.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I would utilize all available U.S. assistance tools and programs to support democracy and governance in Côte d'Ivoire and prioritize programs that best support U.S. goals in the country. The continued use of available State Department and USAID regional and centrally managed resources are crucial to advancing democracy and respect for human rights in Côte d'Ivoire. If confirmed, I would also seek to leverage the Government of Côte d'Ivoire's strong MCC Compact to encourage further reforms that improve transparency and reduce corruption. In 2019, A Compact Program between Côte d'Ivoire and MCC to improve transportation conditions and to promote new employability and productivity skills entered into force. U.S. assistance and the partnerships forged through the MCC Compact will be critical to driving economic growth and reducing poverty in the country, particularly for women and youth.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to regularly meeting and hearing directly from civil society and political actors who support strengthening Côte d'Ivoire's democracy and civil society. I would build on interagency Embassy efforts to urge the Government to incorporate opposition voices and civil society in their political dialogue and national reconciliation plan. I would also continue to encourage the Government to build trust by allowing NGOs and civil society true freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continuing and strengthening the relationships our mission has built with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties. I will strive to support the efforts of these figures and parties to develop a more inclusive political environment in Côte d'Ivoire, including their participation in the government-initiated dialogue with opposition parties. I will urge the Government to ensure the freedom of association and peaceful assembly for all political actors, even those with whom they do not agree. The upcoming 2023 local elections are a key steppingstone for young people, women, and minorities, in particular, who want to enter politics because they offer more opportunities for seats than national-level elections. Through public statements, State Public Diplomacy and USAID programming, and direct engagements, I will advocate for a political environment that is inclusive of women, youth, minorities, and people throughout Côte d'Ivoire who might otherwise be marginalized.

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

Answer. Restrictions on the press, politically motivated arrests, excessive limitations on applications for political gatherings, self-censorship, and suspensions of press outlets have no place in a strong democracy. If confirmed, I would, along with the rest of my Embassy team, prioritize work with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to prevent restrictions on media outlets and reporters and to remind the Government and all people that freedom of expression, including for members of the press is key to maintaining a healthy democracy. If confirmed, I will commit to meeting

regularly with independent and local press outlets in Côte d'Ivoire as a visible sign of support for freedom of expression, including for members of the press.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage civil society and government counterparts to build on the embassy team's progress and programs to combat disinformation and propaganda perpetuated by foreign state and non-state actors. A well-informed population is required for a functioning democracy, and I will prioritize our efforts to build a stronger information and media ecosystem to combat misinformation and disinformation. I will support embassy programs to educate journalists about the dangers of disinformation, including training that offers recent examples like the disinformation circulated on the efficacy and safety of COVID-19 vaccines and on Russia's war in Ukraine. USAID and State Public Diplomacy will continue to work with social media influencers, local radio stations, and community storytellers to deconstruct misinformation and disinformation, particularly in northern communities, to address issues pertaining to violent extremism and attempts to distance the population from the state.

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

Answer. Côte d'Ivoire's law, including related regulations and statutory instruments, provides for the right of workers, except members of police and military services, to form or join unions of their choice; provides for the right to conduct legal strikes and bargain collectively; and prohibits discrimination by employers or others against union members or organizers. It further prohibits firing workers for union activities and provides for the reinstatement of dismissed workers within eight days of winning a wrongful dismissal claim. The law protects unions' ability to conduct their activities without interference. Worker organizations in Côte d'Ivoire have been independent of the Government and political parties. Despite strong legal frameworks, forced labor and labor trafficking have been documented in key economic sectors. Concerns regarding government enforcement of worker rights' protections, including on child labor and forced labor, remain. If confirmed, I and my team will encourage the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to enforce the legal rights of organized labor, civil society, and workers. By putting the right tools in the hands of labor inspectors, business owners, workers, and service providers, we can advance greater transparency and accountability, prevent bad actors from profiting on the backs of workers, and better identify when grueling or poorly paid work becomes involuntary forced labor, thus violating international standards and national laws.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support the human rights of all residents of Côte d'Ivoire and their ability to live free from discrimination based on their identity, ethnicity, or medical status. Through collaboration with Ivorian NGOs, the Embassy supports programming that promotes the human rights and representation of women and LGBTQI+ persons in politics, increases their access to the Ivorian economy, and increases public-private partnerships to encourage citizen participation and local governance. Embassy Abidjan's PEPFAR program directly improves access to and quality of HIV services for members of the LGBTQI+ population through engagement with the Ministry of Health, LGBTQI+-led organizations, and external stakeholders, including UNAIDS. Under my leadership, we will not compromise on these important American and global ideals. If confirmed, I will work hard to encourage Côte d'Ivoire to continue this positive trajectory.

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

Answer. Violence and discrimination targeting LGBTQI+ persons remain a challenge in the country, primarily due to societal norms. Homosexuality is not illegal, but it is not widely accepted. Same-sex marriages are not recognized as legal unions in Côte d'Ivoire, and legal protections against discrimination do not exist. A 2022 effort in parliament to provide legal protections against discrimination was withdrawn in the face of public opposition. LGBTQI+ persons in Côte d'Ivoire report being stigmatized by their families, communities, religious leaders, and health providers.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Côte d'Ivoire?

Answer. If confirmed, I will call on the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to investigate allegations of violence and discrimination targeting LGBTQI+ persons. I also commit to continuing the Embassy's strong slate of programming around LGBTQI+ issues in Côte d'Ivoire. I will pledge to work with the LGBTQI+ community and follow their lead, under the principle of "do no harm," to promote respect for the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons. PEPFAR's ongoing engagement with Ivorian civil society to improve HIV/TB services and respect for the human rights of every member of the LGBTQI+ community presents an additional opportunity for my direct engagement and advocacy.

Congressional Consultations

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief members of congress and/or their staff each time you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to respond promptly to all appropriate requests for briefings and for information by this Committee. Congress has an important role to play in foreign policy legislation and during the implementation process. Our foreign policy is stronger when the two branches of government coordinate, and I look forward to strengthening the coordination between our two branches.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Question. Last week we held a hearing on the important work of the State Department's Chief Diversity Officer and the important role diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts play in maintaining our countries' competitive edge on the global stage. How do you anticipate fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at Embassy Abidjan?

Answer. Throughout my State Department career, I have championed a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment and have encouraged policies that advance these values. If confirmed, I intend to bring that same spirit to Embassy Abidjan by supporting post's inclusive hiring and selection procedures and to expand recruiting to ensure we have the greatest expertise and diversity of experience represented in our mission. I will ensure active community participation in Embassy Abidjan's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Council and support initiatives the Council proposes. I will also encourage every member of the Embassy to make recommendations on how we can be more inclusive and equitable in our operations, practices, and policies. Embassy Abidjan has already been active in this area, with monthly dialogues on these issues, and institutional innovations such as cross-cultural training, Mission-wide mentorship programs, and targeted hiring for persons with disabilities. I commit to listening to both local and U.S. colleagues to ensure that we continue to make progress on these gains.

Question. What specifically will you do to prioritize and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, while also combating racism, discrimination, and inequality among locally employed staff in Côte d'Ivoire?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make clear that Embassy Abidjan will have a zero-tolerance policy for racism and discrimination, in keeping with Equal Employment Opportunity laws. I intend to ensure that all employees working in Embassy Abidjan, whether they are locally employed staff, eligible family members, or U.S. direct hires, feel supported and have the tools and opportunities they need to contribute to our priorities. I will seek input on ways to make our operations, programs, and outreach more equitable including by maintaining an open office policy and welcoming the contributions and ideas of all working in our mission. I will also actively support Embassy Abidjan's existing mentorship programs for First and Second Tour Officers, Mid-level U.S. Direct Hires, and our Locally Engaged Staff. I will ensure our Embassy meets the professional development needs of staff and that everyone feels safe, welcome, and empowered to contribute to our mission objectives.

Question. In addition to focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our workforce, will you commit to engaging more equitably in operations and programming, particularly with potential partners and communities that traditionally have been marginalized, excluded, or underrepresented in ours and others' donor and partnership efforts? How do you anticipate utilizing local expertise, knowledge, and capacity to meet our foreign policy goals?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with partners and communities that have been traditionally marginalized, underrepresented or excluded in donor or

partnership efforts. Throughout my State Department career, I have expanded outreach and encouraged new partnerships through U.S. programs to communities that have historically been marginalized. I will bring this commitment to Abidjan, working across U.S. Government agencies to evaluate existing operations and programs to identify opportunities where our assistance and partnerships can be more inclusive. In particular, I will focus on integrating women and young people, ensuring we reach all regions of Côte d'Ivoire, including through creative deployment of the internet, including social media. Learning from local expertise and knowledge is critical to building successful programs and to advance U.S. foreign policy goals.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JESSICA DAVIS BA BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In December 2020, President Ouattara was sworn in for a controversial 3rd term as president of Côte d'Ivoire. The issue of the 3rd term was a significant issue in Côte d'Ivoire, and taken against a backdrop of multiple coups in the region since 2020 is part of a worrying trend.

- As U.S. Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, how will you engage with Ivorian stakeholders ahead of the 2024 elections to ensure a peaceful democratic transfer of power?

Answer. Ivoirians overwhelmingly prefer democracy than any other form of government—a conclusion based on independent polling by Afrobarometer. If confirmed, I will stress the common democratic values shared by the Americans and Ivoirians—participation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability—assured through the democratic process. Although the 2020 presidential election period was marked by several incidents of violence, the nationwide legislative elections in March 2021 were conducted freely and fairly with broad participation from opposition parties. The next election cycle is expected to begin in 2023 for municipal and regional seats, followed by presidential and legislative elections due in 2025 and 2026, respectively. I will prioritize U.S. support throughout the election process, expanding outreach and coordination with partners in country and with multilateral institutions like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. If confirmed, I will urge all actors to participate peacefully and to hold those responsible for violence accountable. Côte d'Ivoire's future depends on free and fair elections that are inclusive, transparent, and peaceful.

If confirmed, I will urge the Government and political parties to engage in a real process of reconciliation through continuation of their own National Political Dialogue. To champion participation, especially by women, young people, and marginalized communities, I will encourage Ivoirians to get their national ID cards and register to vote. I will also urge the Government to make registering as easy as possible for all eligible voters to ensure participation is as high and robust as possible. I will ensure Embassy efforts around political participation and inclusivity continue through the election cycles, such as the ongoing USAID programming to encourage political reconciliation in communities affected by the election-related violence of 2020 and State and USAID efforts to increase political participation among historically underrepresented groups, in particular youth and women. I will prioritize opportunities to leverage our programs and convening power to support democratic institutions and the democratic process.

As concerns about the spread of violent extremist organizations across the Sahel increases, U.S. strategy for preventing violent extremism has shifted focus to the countries of coastal West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire. As part of this strategy, coastal West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, was selected as a target for implementation of the Global Fragility Act.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador, how will you balance engaging with Ivorian stakeholders on important domestic issues while also recognizing that Côte d'Ivoire is part of a broader U.S. strategy to prevent violent extremism?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, I will work with various stakeholders within the Ivoirian Government and civil society to support efforts to address domestic issues, such as uneven economic growth and access to basic services, while also encouraging meaningful Ivoirian participation in multilateral bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. Together, these approaches will help Côte d'Ivoire improve its resilience to the threat of violent extremism emanating from the Sahel. If confirmed, I will work with the entire Embassy team to ensure that we achieve the correct bal-

ance of supporting the people inside Côte d'Ivoire, while maintaining an active role and voice in regional engagement and strategies.

Question. Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest producer of cocoa, and Côte d'Ivoire and its immediate neighbor Ghana produce approximately 60 percent of the world's cocoa. While Côte d'Ivoire is a source of cocoa for numerous American and European chocolate companies, the industry is also working to combat worrying levels of child labor in the production of cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

- As U.S. Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, how will you engage with both the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and American chocolate companies to address the issue of child labor, while also balancing the important role cocoa plays in the Ivorian economy and to American companies?

Answer. Côte d'Ivoire has made significant efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government has addressed child labor conditions through the adoption, elaboration, and amendment of several policies, laws, and programs. These efforts included finalizing the National Action Plan for the Fight Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor, revising the Labor Code, adopting an Anti-Trafficking law in 2016, signing a cross-border cooperation agreement with Ghana, drafting a document specifying types of permitted light work, and revising the list of hazardous work.

I am aware of heightened concerns about child labor in the cocoa sector and, if confirmed, I and my Embassy Team as well as interagency colleagues will work closely with the Ivorian Government, other countries, NGOs, and the chocolate industry to address them. I will continue to work with the Ivorian Government and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) through the Child Labor Cocoa Coordinating Group (CLCCG). U.S. companies expressed concern about the expiration of the Harkin-Engel Protocol, which offered a forum for public and private sector engagement on efforts to reduce child labor in the production of cocoa.

I am also aware of the important place that the cocoa sector has in the Ivorian economy and of the investment that U.S. companies have made in the cocoa sector, which is improving livelihoods in this region. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's close dialogue and coordination with U.S. and international cocoa companies which do business in Côte d'Ivoire. Realizing that poverty and limited access to education are significant drivers of child labor, if confirmed, I will continue our active support of sustainable and resilient economic growth, women's economic empowerment, improving access to education, and improving health services. Our efforts to increase law enforcement capacity will help Côte d'Ivoire deal with those who use and traffic in child labor. Together, we can incorporate holistic solutions to combat the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa sector.

State Department Management and Public Diplomacy

Question. Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Abidjan?

Answer. Embassy Abidjan's strong morale has been driven by community-led investments in the mission's institutions, including mentorship programs for both local and U.S. employees, its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Council, greening initiatives, and active employee associations. I intend to continue supporting these vital organizations and making the most out of employee and family member contributions along the way. However, maintaining this positive momentum in the face of external challenges and rapid growth will require additional resources to ensure we can build upon our promising relationship with the host government.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Abidjan?

Answer. If confirmed, maintaining morale of all members of Mission Abidjan will be of utmost importance for me. I intend to work closely with my staff, understand their concerns and seek ways to find immediate remedies for issues that we can address in Abidjan. For those issues where our community requires additional support, I will communicate staff needs back to Department leadership. I believe that the best work comes from well-resourced teams that support one another towards achieving common goals and advancing U.S. policies. I will work across the interagency and with Washington to ensure that future growth meets U.S. strategic objectives and can be supported effectively by post's management platform.

Recent growth has dramatically increased the number of eligible family members resident at Embassy Abidjan. Our Foreign Service family members contribute directly to mission morale, and if confirmed, I will ensure that those family members are also supported by improving educational options in country and ensuring that

eligible family members who wish to work find meaningful employment at Embassy Abidjan.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Abidjan?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that all employees working in Embassy Abidjan, whether they are Locally Engaged Staff, eligible family members, or U.S. direct hires, feel supported and heard in their work. I maintain an open office policy and welcome the contributions and ideas of those working in our mission. I will also actively support Embassy Abidjan's existing mentorship programs for First and Second Tour Officers, mid-level U.S. Direct Hires, and our Locally Employed Staff and ensure that they meet the professional development needs of staff. Throughout my State Department career, I have valued and encouraged a diverse and inclusive work environment, and if confirmed, I intend to bring that same spirit to Embassy Abidjan by supporting post's inclusive hiring and selection procedures and active community participation in Embassy Abidjan's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Council events. Most important, I will convene regular conversations across the Mission to reinforce a shared vision by listening to the input of our staff and assessing progress on our Integrated Country Strategy.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I would describe my management style as collaborative. Over the last two decades, I have created diverse teams to develop a shared vision for how we collectively implement U.S. policy priorities. I seek input broad input from colleagues, stakeholders, and partners to inform the most effective strategies to achieve our policy priorities and integrate these perspectives into plans that I share with all those consulted. My leadership and management style is focused on empowering staff, delegating responsibilities to experts, and removing roadblocks to achieve results. I prioritize communication to gain the benefit of regular feedback and to facilitate decision-making. If confirmed, I will prioritize collaboration and partnerships, including from Congressional representatives, to achieve U.S. policy priorities in Côte d'Ivoire.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. Absolutely not. Under no circumstances is that ever acceptable. And, if confirmed, I will not tolerate that behavior by any member of the Embassy Abidjan community. I will clearly emphasize my expectation that all members of our team treat one another and all people with whom we come into contact with mutual respect.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. The relationship between an Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission is fundamental to the success of an Embassy. From my experience serving as a DCM, I recognize the importance of establishing the positive and productive leadership necessary for the Mission to achieve its goals. If confirmed, I will build a relationship of trust with my primary advisor—the Deputy Chief of Mission. As the Embassy's leadership team, I envision a partnership focused on ensuring every member of our Mission has the tools and support they need to protect Americans and advance American interests in Côte d'Ivoire. I will prioritize communication, teamwork, and ensure my Deputy Chief of Mission is prepared to serve as Chargé d'affaires, a.i. as required.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to entrust my Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) with the responsibilities akin to those of a Chief Operating Officer (COO). I will model the Embassy Front Office on Department bureaus, building on best practices in which the Assistant Secretary functions as Chief Executive Officer and the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary as COO. I will entrust the DCM to manage the effective operations of the Embassy. To ensure the entire Mission is engaged in crisis preparedness and emergency planning, I will entrust the DCM to chair the interagency Emergency Action Committee to make considered recommendations on the safety and security of our Embassy and all Americans in Côte d'Ivoire. While both the DCM and I will have responsibility for coaching and mentoring the Embassy Team, if confirmed, I will also ask the DCM to play the primary role in building on existing initiatives to create an inclusive, safe culture for our community. It will be my pri-

ority to ensure my DCM feels empowered to strengthen management controls and oversight on all aspects of Embassy operations so that we are deploying taxpayer resources to the greatest effect.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes. I believe that providing accurate and constructive feedback is important, both through formal evaluations and continuously as we carry out our mission. This kind of dialogue is important both for Locally Engaged Staff and U.S. Direct Hire employees, and I hope to build that culture in Abidjan. I will ensure that each Foreign Service Officer has accurate and timely EERs and that all staff have the appropriate evaluations of their performance. I will require all managers to offer direct feedback about the performance of their staff, listening actively to what their team needs to contribute more to priority embassy goals. If confirmed, I fully intend to reward those who succeed in their roles in the mission, providing an incentive for all to achieve their work objectives.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes. I would support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees to improve performance and reward high achievers. I also want employees to feel comfortable taking calculated risks and pursuing innovative approaches to advancing our policy. This requires honest dialogue and a culture of trust between employees and supervisors. I intend to promote this approach, if confirmed.

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 fellow foreign diplomats stationed in Côte d'Ivoire. In your opinion, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. In my experience, it is imperative that U.S. diplomats leave their office space and meet business, civil society, development, media, and government leaders in the country in which they work. If confirmed, I will compel my staff to work safely and responsibly in the economic capital of Abidjan, and throughout Côte d'Ivoire, to achieve our foreign policy goals. For example, to fulfill their roles in technical and financial oversight of USG funds, it is critical for Embassy staff to regularly engage with field-level beneficiaries and implementing partners. As such, the management, logistical, and security support to facilitate this field presence will be among my priorities. Throughout my career I have valued, both personally and professionally, the relationships I have fostered outside the office to achieve Mission goals. Therefore, I also intend to travel throughout Côte d'Ivoire, inviting members of the mission team across sections to join me, to ensure that the United States is visible outside of Abidjan.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. While the COVID-19 pandemic has limited our ability to meet local populations in person, face-to-face contact is vital to the successful advancement of U.S. policy goals in Côte d'Ivoire. If confirmed, I will listen to my team to understand what personnel, financial, or technological resources they need from the Department to carry out our mission effectively. I will advocate to obtain these resources to support engagement, including creative use of media platforms to amplify and sustain access and engagement with local populations.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Côte d'Ivoire?

Answer. The population in Côte d'Ivoire is generally receptive to U.S. messaging, and our team continues developing creative ways to reach all populations in the country. Challenges include the COVID-19 pandemic, poor transportation options, and greater insecurity in certain parts of the country. Populations outside of the economic capital of Abidjan feel isolated and marginalized. As such, I understand the Public Diplomacy team in Côte d'Ivoire is focused on programming in remote areas, both at our American Spaces in the northern parts of the country and by optimizing travel by all Mission members to different regions of Côte d'Ivoire. I understand the team also creatively employs technology to reach populations that are not easily ac-

cessible in person. As in many other parts of the world, our Mission team is attentive to activity in the public diplomacy arena from global competitors.

Question. What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has made getting out of the office for Public Diplomacy work very challenging, but I understand Mission members have been traveling more widely in recent months as conditions in Côte d'Ivoire have improved. Poor transportation infrastructure and security concerns in the country make travel even more of an undertaking, but Mission members understand it is critical to get outside the walls of the Embassy to perform public diplomacy work effectively. I understand the Country Team coordinates very well together to make sure Mission members can move throughout Côte d'Ivoire to ensure outreach, including to marginalized communities. The media environment in the country continues to develop positively, and our team is actively engaged in supporting those efforts to ensure free and equal access to information for all persons in Côte d'Ivoire. It is critical to link life-saving interventions, such as those supported by PEPFAR and the Global Health Security Agenda, with Public Diplomacy to ensure appropriate communication of USG funding impact. I will encourage coordination and communication among sections such that the Public Affairs Office is well-positioned to disseminate the myriad examples of fruitful USG collaboration in Côte d'Ivoire. If confirmed, I will encourage and support all members of the Mission to take part in public diplomacy to engage Ivoirians across sectors and regions.

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. I believe it is critical for our public diplomacy team to remain in close touch with colleagues at the State Department in Washington, balancing the requirements and guidance from Washington with the priorities 'in the field' to tailor messaging to local realities. Our Public Diplomacy teams must develop and maintain excellent relationships with colleagues in Washington and across the region in order to ensure that messaging is coordinated and that there are no surprises on either side. I understand our team in Côte d'Ivoire works hard with Washington and regional colleagues to ensure synchronized and accurate messaging around all of the U.S. Government's work.

Question. "Anomalous health incidents," commonly referred to as "Havana Syndrome," have been debilitating and sidelining U.S. diplomats around the world for years. They have caused serious, negative consequences for U.S. diplomacy, yet many believe that the Department is not doing enough to care for, protect, and communicate to its personnel.

- If confirmed, do you commit to taking this threat seriously?

Answer. Yes, I commit to addressing this threat. I am deeply troubled by potential anomalous health incidents that have affected U.S. Government personnel and their family members. Serving one's country overseas should not come at the cost of one's health. I agree that such incidents may pose a threat to the well-being of U.S. personnel and must be taken extremely seriously. I understand Embassy Abidjan has put in place standard operating procedures and communicated them widely to the mission community so action can be taken swiftly and seamlessly if any AHIs are reported. If confirmed, the health, safety, and security of Embassy staff, their family members, and all those supporting the mission will be my highest priority.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to talking as openly as you can to Mission Abidjan personnel?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to regularly share new information on this issue consistent with ensuring the integrity of ongoing investigations. I commit to ensuring that our staff have the resources they need to remain safe and resilient in the face of these challenges.

Human Rights and International Organizations

Question. In the State Department's 2021 Report on Human Rights, Côte d'Ivoire is noted for significant human rights issues including arbitrary killings; harsh or life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrests; politically motivated reprisals; problems with an independent judiciary, restrictions on freedoms of expression; corruption; and more.

- If confirmed, how would you work with the host government to address these issues?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to address human rights issues by directly supporting and advocating on be-

half of both local civil society organizations and international human rights organizations. Furthermore, the United States has called on the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to respect the human rights of all individuals in Côte d'Ivoire, notably freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, and to ensure that all those arrested are afforded fair trials. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out for democratic pluralism, rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Question. What steps could you take with prison authorities of the state to improve life-threatening prison conditions?

Answer. There are several programs from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) that facilitate the development and improvement of correctional systems. If confirmed, I intend to thoroughly review our current programs and consider others that will support the transformation of Côte d'Ivoire's prison systems.

Question. The report additionally notes that within prisons, human rights groups report that security officers subject prisoners to abuse such as denial of needed medicine and medical attention, electric shock, and beatings. Authorities acknowledge that abuse might happen and go unreported due to prisoners' fear of reprisal, and impunity was a problem with security forces.

- How could you engage with security officials to improve upon reporting practices to address prisoner abuse?

Answer. While INL programs are designed to create accountability with correctional system leadership, I understand there are ongoing Embassy efforts to increase engagement with Government of Côte d'Ivoire leadership to increase familiarity with policies and practices that are consistent with international human rights law.

In the State Department's 2022 Report on Trafficking in Persons, Côte d'Ivoire is currently Tier 2, showing efforts to improve towards meeting minimum requirements to eliminate trafficking. However, the Government is lacking in key areas such as a lack of law enforcement training to investigate and identify victims, national anti-trafficking committee meetings did not meet or coordinate anti-trafficking activities, and the Government did not allocate a dedicated budget for the anti-trafficking committee for the third year in a row.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with government officials to implement a specialized system of training to develop anti-trafficking law enforcement officers?

Answer. Noting that Côte d'Ivoire acknowledges the problem of human trafficking and has demonstrated political will to combat it, with several high-profile events, I am committed to supporting their efforts to combat this devastating practice.

Question. What steps would you take to encourage the host government to address the lack of resources allocated to the anti-trafficking committee in order to facilitate more operational capacity?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for increased Government of Côte d'Ivoire investment in its anti-trafficking committee. Simultaneously, I commit to supporting the growth and development of anti-trafficking civil society organizations (CSOs). Through advocacy to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and creative efforts to spotlight effective Ivorian anti-trafficking CSOs, our Embassy will continue to support awareness and action to combat trafficking. I will encourage expanded partnership with the anti-trafficking committee and other institutions committed to address this scourge.

Question. Côte d'Ivoire has constitutional provisions for freedom of religious belief and prohibition of religious discrimination, as well as emphasizing religious tolerance as fundamental to the nation's unity. Religious leaders and local law enforcement partner with subnational governmental groups to try to prevent violent extremism and protect communities from the growing threat of terrorism in the Sahel region.

- If confirmed, how could you work with these groups to continue to develop relations that counter violent extremism in the region?

Answer. Faith-based communities have a powerful role to play in supporting democratic institutions, advancing human rights, and promoting peace. If confirmed, I will work to support these efforts through positive U.S. messaging, direct support for cooperation and coordination between these parties, and funding for innovative anti-extremism strategies. I will continue my predecessor's ongoing engagement with religious leaders across faith communities to ensure open communication about the threat of violent extremism, respect for human rights, and global health.

Question. Embassy officials have met with the Government to discuss the state of religious freedom and tolerance to gather insight on levels of violence or discrimination and promote cooperation amongst Christian and Muslim groups.

- What is your assessment of the state of religious tolerance in the country?

Answer. The constitution provides for freedom of religious belief and worship, consistent with law and order, and prohibits religious discrimination. It emphasizes that religious tolerance is fundamental to the nation's unity, peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion and forbids speech that encourages religious hatred. Religious leaders regularly come together for issues related to social cohesion and public health. For example, they partnered with local law enforcement and subnational government leadership on security matters to prevent violent extremism and protect their communities from the growing terrorist threat emanating from the Sahel.

Question. How could you continue to build upon these discussions with the host government to further improve religious tolerance?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue our long history of engaging at all levels of Embassy Abidjan with various religious communities to demonstrate U.S. support for religious tolerance. I will also use public diplomacy, including around religious holidays, to demonstrate respect for all faiths.

Question. The Office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel (MSP) in the State Department's bureau of International Organizations is leading a whole-of-government effort to identify, recruit, and install qualified, independent personnel at the U.N., including in elections for specialized bodies like the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). There is an American candidate, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, who if elected would be the first American and first woman to lead the ITU. She is in a tough race that will require early, consistent engagement across capitals and within the U.N. member states.

- If confirmed, do you commit to demarching the Côte d'Ivoire Government and any other counterparts necessary to encourage their support of Ms. Bogdan-Martin?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to demarching the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and others in support of Ms. Bogdan-Martin. It is vital that we continue to engage on behalf of American candidates in multilateral institutions.

Question. If confirmed, how can you work with the International Organizations (IO) bureau and other stakeholders to identify, recruit, and install qualified Americans in positions like the Junior Program Officer (JPO) program at the U.N.?

Answer. I have always encouraged Americans of all backgrounds to pursue work in the international community, recruiting new members of the U.S. Foreign Service while also encouraging opportunities to serve in the U.N. and in other international organizations. If confirmed, I will continue to recruit and mentor to retain excellent officers in our unique careers. I have extensive experience coordinating with the IO Bureau to advocate for U.S. candidates in senior positions in the U.N. and its specialized agencies. At the U.S. Mission to the African Union, we used this multilateral platform to advocate for U.S. policy priorities and American candidates. If confirmed, I will continue to coordinate with the IO Bureau to encourage Americans to secure more opportunities at every level of the U.N. and its specialized agencies. I will also continue to recruit Americans to serve internationally, including through the U.N. Junior Program Officer program, to have more American leaders in these organizations that are vital to advancing U.S. interests.

Question. Côte d'Ivoire has a low rate of voting coincidence with the U.S. in the U.N. General Assembly and in the Security Council. What is your assessment of this issue?

Answer. Although African states find themselves in a difficult situation when it comes to voting patterns, this is a problematic trend that must be addressed through relationship building, increased bilateral ties, and effective short- and long-term messaging. Côte d'Ivoire was one of very few African countries to vote at least three times with the United States on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, demonstrating courage and conviction.

Question. If confirmed, what concrete actions can you take to engage with the Government on anticipated votes in the U.N. system that would increase their voting coincidence with the U.S.?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to deepen our partnership on multilateral priorities, including upcoming votes in the U.N. system. I will foster initiatives designed to improve trust and relationships between the Gov-

ernment of Côte d'Ivoire and U.S. leadership in Abidjan, New York, and Washington, D.C.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JESSICA DAVIS BA BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In May, Secretary Blinken said that the People's Republic of China is the "only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it." The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) clearly holds all the reins of power in the People's Republic of China and has used this power to commit genocide in Xinjiang, flood our communities with fentanyl, and emit by far the largest quantity of greenhouse gases. With their absolute control of Chinese society and industry, the CCP could stop all of these destructive actions tomorrow if they so choose.

- Is the Chinese Communist Party a threat to the United States?

Answer. Certain activities by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) represent a challenge to U.S. economic, political, and security interests globally and on the African continent. The PRC has used its influence abroad in ways that undermine laws, agreements, and institutions which has the effect of undermining rule of law and democratic principles. Our engagement with Africa is neither influenced by, nor a reaction to, China or any other third party. The U.S. Strategy Toward Africa recognizes the tremendous opportunities that exist to advance shared interests alongside our African partners. Secretary Blinken said on May 26, we will invest, align, and compete with the PRC to defend our interests and build our vision for the future. If confirmed, I will invest in our partnership with Côte d'Ivoire; align our concerns, including by highlighting the risks associated with PRC engagement that could impact Côte d'Ivoire's security, democracy, and sovereignty and U.S. interests. I will ensure that our vision of regional security and prosperity provides the basis for a positive U.S.-Côte d'Ivoire partnership that competes successfully with the type of relationship offered by the PRC.

Question. Does the Chinese Communist Party undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests?

Answer. We are prepared to work together with the People's Republic of China (PRC) where our interests intersect, in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere, and where it is essential for global peace and prosperity. Issues like climate change, the global drug trade, and COVID-19 directly threaten our prosperity and security, and we need to work with the PRC—just as much as the PRC needs to work with us—to solve these problems without borders. This is especially true in Côte d'Ivoire.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the People's Republic of China in Côte d'Ivoire?

Answer. If confirmed, I am prepared to work together with the People's Republic of China (PRC) where our interests intersect in Côte d'Ivoire and remain in line with core U.S. values, including where it is essential for global peace and prosperity. Issues like climate change, the global drug trade, and COVID-19 directly threaten our prosperity and security, and we need to work with the PRC—just as much as the PRC needs to work with us—to solve these problems without borders. As Secretary Blinken has said, we cannot allow the disagreements that divide us stop us from moving forward on the priorities that demand that we work together, for the good of our people and for the good of the world.

Question. Côte d'Ivoire, like other African countries, is dependent on food imports from Russia and Ukraine. While the United States has diligently worked to release Ukrainian grain through means other than Black Sea ports currently under Russian attack, Côte d'Ivoire and other countries are struggling with the impact of reduced food resources. Côte d'Ivoire also uses Chinese technology for digital surveillance, raising human rights concerns.

- How do you assess Côte d'Ivoire's efforts to secure reliable sources of food for its people?

Answer. Ivorian authorities have imposed a set of temporary measures to control rising living costs and improve food security, including price ceilings on staple foods and a suspension of custom duties on wheat imports. These measures will mostly benefit the poorest Ivorians, who spend a larger share of their incomes on essential goods. Also, the above actions will enable Côte d'Ivoire to source food from different places; however, with commodity prices expected to remain high into 2023, further

measures by the government to respond to the rising cost of food and inflation may be necessary.

Question. How would you highlight to Côte d'Ivoire's Government the dangers of using Chinese technology?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize American technology and other options for the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to consider as it expands its infrastructure to meet the needs of the Ivoirian people. We know the People's Republic of China is determined to become the world's technology leader by any means necessary and has a well-resourced and comprehensive plan to achieve that ambition. The State Department is working with allies and partners to build secure, resilient, and diverse supply chains; to protect sensitive technologies, data, and critical infrastructure; and to ensure strategic competitors cannot exploit our own innovative ecosystems to gain military or national security advantage.

Question. What would be the impact to the United States of a prolonged food security crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with public and private sector partners and across U.S. Government agencies to help Côte d'Ivoire avert a prolonged food security crisis. Côte d'Ivoire has been experiencing a level of political stability for the past decade that has enabled the country to make great economic progress and effectively address the country's once daunting food insecurity and malnutrition issues. A prolonged food security crisis could result in loss of life and productivity and endanger Côte d'Ivoire's stability, making it more vulnerable to insecurity, democratic backsliding, and malign influence. A food security crisis would result in an increased need for humanitarian and development assistance, which could then put a higher burden on the United States as one of the Côte d'Ivoire's most important partners to advance sustainable development goals. Likewise, much of the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa could see similar struggles with a prolonged food security crisis precipitating more instability in the region and loss of previous food security and nutrition gains. A result could be increased needs for humanitarian assistance as well as other unforeseen consequences of increased food security-related instability.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that Côte d'Ivoire reduces its dependence on Russia for food and fertilizer so that it is more resilient to food shocks in the future?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize partnerships to strengthen the agricultural sector that supports the livelihoods of millions of Ivoirians. Investments by the United States through initiatives like the McGovern-Dole school program in Côte d'Ivoire, which feeds over 125,000 children in rural northern areas every day, help reduce dependence on Russia. Resiliency to food shocks begins with consistent programming that meets essential food security needs and draws from a state's agricultural strengths. If confirmed, I will seek to develop and expand programs that harness and build upon Côte d'Ivoire's most traditional food crops, such as yam, cassava, and plantains, that are geared towards increasing domestic food production and security. Côte d'Ivoire has tremendous potential to become a net food exporter, and I will work to identify productive partnership opportunities to further the United States' interests.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JESSICA DAVIS BA BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The State Department has a number of posts in its Bureau of African Affairs that are classified as "historically difficult to staff"; if confirmed, how would you engage the Foreign Service workforce to encourage qualified individuals to serve in Abidjan or other posts in Africa?

Answer. I believe that the best work comes from well-resourced teams that support one another towards achieving common goals and advancing U.S. policies. Embassy Abidjan has experienced rapid growth in the last two years, presenting additional challenges as the post also continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. If confirmed, I will work across the interagency and with Washington to ensure that future growth meets U.S. strategic objectives and can be supported effectively by post's management platform.

The Bureau of African affairs continues to engage with the Department at the highest levels to improve incentives for working at our most difficult posts, including Abidjan. Throughout my State Department career, I have valued and created

a diverse and inclusive work environment where every member of our team has the opportunities to contribute to our shared goals. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in Abidjan and Washington to nourish such an environment and recruit from a diverse and inclusive talent pool—the best that the State Department has to offer. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts to ensure meaningful family employment at Embassy Abidjan, which helps with recruitment, morale, and to close staffing gaps at this historically difficult to staff post.

Question. With Côte d'Ivoire as a signatory to Beijing's Belt and Road initiative, how do you see the trade relationship evolving between Beijing and Abidjan?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to deepen the trade relationship between the United States and Côte d'Ivoire. The role of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Côte d'Ivoire's economy is growing and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire welcomes investment, including from the PRC. Côte d'Ivoire imports nearly \$2.3 billion worth of PRC goods a year but exports only about \$576 million in Ivorian goods to the PRC, mostly raw rubber. Ivorian complaints regarding PRC- Côte d'Ivoire trade mainly concern the quality of PRC workmanship and the lack of technology transfer. In addition, there is evidence that increased Chinese activity has led to a greater demand for trafficked animals. The Ivorians recently rejected a PRC overture to begin negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), as officials worried it would disturb Côte d'Ivoire's relationship with ECOWAS. I will work with our interagency team and Washington to leverage U.S. Government tools to support American companies to demonstrate best practices and to make trade with the United States more attractive than our competitors.

President Ouattara and his ministers openly welcome American investment. They remain very pro-American but are pragmatic considering the country's massive need for foreign direct investment (FDI), resulting in an open-for-business attitude towards the PRC and others. If confirmed, I will continue to support the expansion of U.S. investment in Côte d'Ivoire to provide an alternative to PRC offers.

Question. What kinds of opportunities and potential do you see for American companies within the Ivorian private sector, and where should we first focus our efforts?

Answer. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is eager for more U.S. private sector investment. With total bilateral trade in 2021 almost \$1.6 billion, Côte d'Ivoire is currently the United States' largest francophone Africa trading partner, and the United States is Côte d'Ivoire's fifth largest trading partner. The most promising areas for U.S. investment are currently in energy, including renewables, construction equipment and material, agro-processing, agricultural services and products, and telecommunication equipment and services.

Opportunities in the energy sector are abundant. Côte d'Ivoire has oil and gas reserves and has also committed to increase renewable energy generation to 42% by 2030. The Ivorian Government is also focused on expanding infrastructure projects to make the country's economic growth more inclusive and not focused on the Abidjan area in the South. Finally, Côte d'Ivoire's leadership is anxious to improve the value chain capabilities for the country's massive output of agricultural products. The U.S. Government can use tools such as Prosper Africa to support U.S. and Ivorian businesses in this area. Secretary Blinken met with Ivorian Prime Minister Patrick Achi in March 2022 to discuss ways in which the United States and Côte d'Ivoire can strengthen the bilateral economic partnership. If confirmed, I will work closely with private sector partners and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to expand opportunities for U.S. private investment.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JESSICA DAVIS BA BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. What does Côte d'Ivoire need to do to prevent the spread of violent extremism within its borders? What tools and lessons of the Global Fragility Act will you draw on to help the Ivorian Government and society become resilient in the face of these challenges?

Answer. Côte d'Ivoire must take a holistic approach to prevent the spread of violent extremism. Security investments alone are insufficient. Such an approach should include targeted investments in democratic governance, private sector solutions, and social services, as well as in the security sector. Côte d'Ivoire's top leaders have expressed a commitment to values such as accountability, democratic governance, social peace, and earning the support of the population, to withstand the

strains imposed by violent extremism spreading from the country's northern neighbors, especially Mali and Burkina Faso. Côte d'Ivoire has taken progressive steps to invest in the north through new social programs focused on youth, major infrastructure development, and expanding the presence of security forces in at-risk areas for terrorist attacks.

If confirmed, I will work with various Ivoirian Government and civil society stakeholders to ensure that the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (SPCPS), under the Global Fragility Act, is aligned with Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan and facilitates meaningful government-community cooperation. Specifically, the tools offered by the SPCPS can reinforce local and national early warning systems and action plans to prevent the spread of violent extremism; support existing community-led platforms, such as civilian-military committees to foster trust between marginalized communities and security forces; professionalize law enforcement and other government officials to engender trust with the communities they serve; and strengthen legal capabilities to hold violent extremist actors accountable.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Government to continue these efforts and to explore opportunities, including with the private sector, for partnerships to expand services and livelihoods. I will lead our interagency team in Abidjan to use all of our diplomatic, development, and defense tools to support the Government's efforts to build resilience to violent extremism in the northern region and throughout the country.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. LUCY TAMLYN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Is DRC on track to hold elections in 2023 as required?

Answer. Under prevailing conditions, there is no reason why free and fair elections cannot be held as scheduled in December 2023 in accordance with the DRC's constitutional deadline. Some important steps have been taken, but Congolese officials across the country will have to accelerate preparations—both technical and political—over the next several months to ensure the elections are free and fair including in eastern DRC.

The DRC conducted gubernatorial elections in May in 14 of 26 provinces, which were largely peaceful and included accredited national and international observers, including U.S. Embassy staff and representatives from other diplomatic missions. This election was an encouraging, if limited, sign for the ability of DRC authorities to conduct elections in December 2023. In June, the DRC parliament adopted revisions to the DRC's 2006 electoral law, but measures aimed at ensuring transparency in 2023 and preventing the irregularities that marred previous election cycles failed to pass. Key issues in the process ahead include voter registration, the identification of the voting centers, publication of the electoral calendar, the appropriation and release of an adequate budget, and invitation and accreditation of electoral observers. While there is no doubt that greater progress needs to be made, particularly on political measures, there is still time for free and fair elections to be held.

Question. What is the U.S. doing to support timely, credible, transparent, and peaceful elections in DRC in 2023?

Answer. One of the Administration's top policy priorities in the DRC is to support long-term stability through free and fair elections. The Department continues to press the DRC Government and National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) to adhere to the planned electoral timeline, to maximize opportunities to be transparent on electoral processes and outcomes, and to ensure an open political environment for the Congolese people to express their views peacefully. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Molly Phee and Acting Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) Lisa Peterson both stressed this message in meetings with CENI President Denis Kadima during a visit to Washington, D.C. in late February.

We are employing the full range of foreign policy tools in support of the elections in 2023. This includes international pressure in coordination with European and African partners as well as the U.N.; public messaging; diplomatic engagement, including senior-level visits; and technical assistance to support a transparent and credible process. DRL is actively expanding its suite of human rights and democracy programs in the DRC to lay the groundwork for increased citizen participation in and understanding of the electoral process. Total U.S. Government support for the elections and election observation is over \$13 million.

Question. How are these activities different from what we did in 2018, when U.S. support for domestic election observers and other election support activity did not result in a timely, transparent, or credible process?

Answer. Unlike in 2018, President Tshisekedi and his top aides have publicly committed to conducting free and fair elections in accordance with constitutional deadlines. Although there are deficiencies, the current President of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) Denis Kadima has also committed to well-managed elections in 2023 that are free and fair.

Embassy Kinshasa and other U.S. representatives have consistently messaged that the United States expects the DRC to conduct elections in accordance with constitutional deadlines that are free and fair and that reflect the will of the Congolese people. The United States is working alongside other likeminded countries to ensure a consistent message on the importance of these elections to help consolidate DRC's democratic transition. USAID is providing technical support to CENI, countering disinformation, and improving access to accurate information about electoral processes, and supporting civil society led civic and voter education. USAID is also readying plans to assist independent domestic and international observation efforts to improve confidence in the integrity of the outcomes. The United States has also encouraged President Tshisekedi to make a formal request to the United Nations to provide logistical and technical support to the elections.

Question. Will you commit to briefing the committee on your election strategy 90 days after arriving at Post, if confirmed?

Answer. Yes, I will work with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs to keep the committee apprised of developments.

Question. Under former President Kabila, the DRC was characterized by human rights abuses, corruption, and impunity. President Tshisekedi vowed to address these issues. Three years later, however, several senior military officers responsible for gross violations of human rights remain at their posts and corruption again appears rampant.

Has the human rights situation and fight against corruption and impunity improved since the 2018 elections?

Answer. President Tshisekedi has taken steps to promote respect for human rights. Since the beginning of his term, he has freed Kabila-era political prisoners, promoted respect for human rights, including for people living with disabilities and vulnerable persons, and affirmed the freedom of peaceful assembly. In July 2022, the Government of the DRC promulgated a new law on the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights. In 2020, the DRC achieved the ranking of Tier 2 Watch List in the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report after making key achievements that year. Despite enormous institutional hurdles, including limited awareness of TIP and an ineffective judicial system, DRC's law enforcement and victim protection authorities have secured important victories in the fight against human trafficking. In the past two years, the Government broke up a transnational child trafficking ring, convicted perpetrators of sex trafficking in Kinshasa, and launched a national TIP awareness campaign. The Congolese military (FARDC) has taken significant and successful strides to eliminate the recruitment and use of children in its ranks.

Significant challenges do remain in the DRC, but unlike during the Kabila era, the United States is the Tshisekedi administration's partner of choice, and it is aware that our partnership relies on respect for human rights.

Question. What actions will you take if confirmed to make it clear to the DRC Government that respect for human rights and the rule of law are essential for DRC's future and DRC's ability to partner with the U.S. and U.S. companies looking to invest in DRC?

Answer. If confirmed, advancing the protection of human rights and the rule of law would be among my highest priorities. We know that allegations of human rights violations and abuses and corruption eat away at any prospects for the DRC to emerge as a prosperous and stable country. Respect for human rights and a strong focus on anti-corruption efforts are in the DRC's interest. Embassy Kinshasa has consistently stressed the importance of respecting human rights, including freedom of expression (including for members of the press) and the right of peaceful assembly. For eastern DRC especially, the Embassy has continually and strongly urged armed groups and Congolese security forces to end all human rights violations and abuses, end all attacks on civilians, and ensure that those responsible for such acts be held accountable. The United States and the DRC also held its first bilateral Human Rights Dialogue in 2021. If confirmed, I would continue partnering closely with the DRC Government to make progress on these key issues.

Question. Preserving what is left of the Congo forest basin is essential for the health of our planet. The DRC Government has previously emerged as a leader in Africa on preservation of the environment. In July, however, the DRC Government announced its intention to sell 30 oil blocks in forested areas. If drilling occurs in these areas, it could release disastrous amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. Until recently the DRC Government appeared committed to preserving the environment and the Congo forest basin which is home to rainforest, peat bogs, and carbon sinks essential for the health of the planet. In July however the DRC Government's policy seemed to shift with the announcement of the sale of 30 oil and gas prospecting blocks throughout the rainforest.

- How do you explain this shift?

Answer. The DRC Government is attempting to balance achieving long-term global climate goals such as their COP26 commitments with addressing immediate pressing development needs including poverty and hunger. Embassy Kinshasa is discussing the auction of the oil and gas prospecting blocks with the Ministry of Hydrocarbons, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Presidency, urging that verifiable environmental impact assessments be conducted prior to any oil exploration. In the past, the Government has acknowledged the potential for oil in these sensitive areas but has foregone plans to exploit potential reserves in the interest of the environment. Embassy Kinshasa is hoping to partner with the DRC to pursue alternative development pathways that help secure improved livelihoods for the Congolese people and help DRC meet its climate and environmental commitments.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to work with the Congolese to balance the necessary preservation of what is left of Congo Forest basin and the DRC's economic development objectives and needs?

Answer. In February 2021, in line with President Biden's prioritization of combatting the climate crisis, the U.S.-DRC Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity added "Preservation of the Environment" to its core pillars. To advance his environmental agenda, President Tshisekedi elevated the position of Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development to one of four Vice-Prime Minister positions in the cabinet. To this role he appointed Eve Bazaiba, an experienced activist and politician.

The DRC could contribute significantly to the fight against climate change if it follows President Tshisekedi's declared intention to take bold steps to combat deforestation and strengthen environmental protections. The DRC is home to 47 percent of Africa's tropical rainforests. The U.S. Government has a wide range of programs across agencies to support both the necessary conservation of the Congo Basin forest and the DRC's economic development objectives and needs. A few examples include the SilvaCarbon program, jointly funded with the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and other agencies which mobilizes private sector finance for activities aligned with forest conservation and restoration, including through carbon markets and results-based payments programs; USAID's Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) that focuses on using a people-centered approach to biodiversity and habitat protection, using protected areas (PAs) as anchors for sustainable development, fostering public private partnerships (PPPs) for PA management, and leveraging natural capital to promote green economies; and the Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade (PPA), a multi-stakeholder forum created in 2011 to support the creation of conflict-free supply chains from the DRC/Great Lakes region. The United States also engages with other like-minded donor countries through the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, which helps coordinate conservation and sustainable management of Congo Basin forest ecosystems.

If confirmed, I will leverage these programs and others to work with the Congolese to balance the necessary preservation of sensitive areas of the Congo Forest basin and the DRC's economic development objectives and needs.

Question. The recent re-emergence of the M23 rebel group has significantly destabilized eastern DRC. In June, the U.N. peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) reported that the M23 is surprisingly well armed and may outgun U.N. peacekeepers. U.N. experts reported that Rwandan troops are operating alongside M23 inside DRC. In addition to executing civilians and displacing tens of thousands, the group has shot down a U.N. helicopter, killing U.N. troops. MONUSCO's inability to effectively contain M23 has heightened tensions between MONUSCO, the Congolese people and the Congolese Government resulting in the tragic deaths of civilians and U.N. peacekeepers.

- The last time M23 emerged in DRC, in 2012, they did so with Rwandan support. Do you agree that Rwandan support for M23 or the presence of Rwandan troops inside DRC is unacceptable?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, should the United States speak out publicly against Rwanda's support for the M23 and the presence of Rwandan troops in DRC?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What steps is the Administration taking to reduce tensions between MONUSCO and the Congolese, and bolster MONUSCO's effectiveness with regard to combatting armed groups and providing civilian protection?

Answer. I am deeply concerned that recent anti-MONUSCO protests have turned violent and included attacks on MONUSCO facilities and resulted in peacekeeper and protester casualties. At the same time, I was appalled by the July 31 shooting of civilians by peacekeepers in Kasindi and welcomed the Secretary-General's swift response and strong statement calling for accountability. MONUSCO is by no means perfect, but it is an essential part of creating conditions for peace in eastern DRC.

For decades, the people of eastern DRC have suffered violence and insecurity, primarily perpetrated in recent years by armed groups and sometimes by DRC's own security forces. Corrupt networks have profited from the illicit exploitation of the region's natural resources. Currently, the M23 armed group with reported backing by the Government of Rwanda is controlling territory near the Uganda border and killing civilians. Addressing the current crisis, and the long-standing underlying issues including the role of DRC's neighbors, is a priority for the State Department. The State Department has maintained steady engagement with senior host nation officials as well as key partners to encourage de-escalation of regional tensions, the termination of the M23 offensive, and progress on the demobilization of all armed groups. Secretary Blinken visited Kinshasa August 9-10 and Kigali August 10-11, following Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's travel August 4-5 to Uganda. The Bureau of African Affairs' Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Massinga discussed this issue in depth with the Foreign Ministers of the DRC, Rwanda, and Angola at the African Union (AU) mid-year coordination meeting in Lusaka from July 17-18. Our key message is reinforcing the need to respect the DRC's territorial integrity and to terminate any proxy support to armed groups on all sides. The United States is supportive of the African-led mediation efforts, which have provided important venues for direct discussions among regional heads of state. If confirmed, I will work closely with Washington to ensure that our engagement in Bujumbura, Kampala, Kigali, and elsewhere is coordinated and responds to the regional dynamics that have long influenced the crisis.

MONUSCO has an important role to play in improving the situation. The U.N. Mission continues to carry out its mandate for the protection of civilians. If confirmed, I look forward to frequent interactions with MONUSCO leadership and close coordination with USUN as plans for the Mission's transition move forward.

Question. Will you commit to briefing the committee 30 days after you arrive at post on your assessment as to Rwandan presence in eastern Congo and its support for the M23 along with your recommendations for a set of diplomatic interventions to address such if confirmed?

Answer. Yes, I will work with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs to keep the committee apprised of developments.

Question. The DRC has vast critical mineral reserves, with reserves of cobalt, a necessary component of batteries. As we turn to new technologies like electric vehicles, which require batteries, to address the worsening climate crisis, we face new security risks as China controls significant parts of clean energy supply chain. I am especially concerned about critical minerals in countries like the DRC, as I outlined in a letter I sent to Under Secretary Fernandez back in January.

- What has State done to address the issues outlined in the letter I sent in January about concerns with Chinese monopolization of critical minerals in the DRC?

Answer. The Department shares your concerns regarding the issues identified in your letter, including the People's Republic of China's (PRC) concentrated influence over mining and processing of clean-energy minerals. In May 2021, President Tshisekedi announced his intention to review mining deals with the PRC that include unfavorable terms for the DRC. This is an ongoing process, and the United States has informed the DRC Government of our support for its decision to review contracts and pursue greater accountability in the sector. Economic development

should promote democratic governance, respect for human rights, and transparency. The United States is providing more than \$30 million in assistance to help the DRC promote responsible and sustainable mining practices and is actively looking at new engagements in the sector.

To elevate bilateral diplomacy around critical minerals, the State Department has worked closely with other agencies and encouraged them to engage with the DRC. In the past year, high-level delegations from the National Security Council, Department of Labor, and Department of the Treasury have visited the DRC to engage on critical minerals. Additionally, during a visit to Washington, DC by DRC Minister of Mines Antoinette N'Samba Kalambayi in mid-March, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Jose Fernandez signed with the Minister a Memorandum of Understanding for the Department's Bureau of Energy Resources to support Congolese efforts to strengthen sector governance and predictability for investors and maximize benefits of mineral resource development for the Congolese people.

We echo the long-standing calls from African capitals that PRC actions must respect host country laws, particularly regarding human and labor rights, the rule of law, and protections for the environment. I am confident that, in a level playing field, U.S. companies will be a partner of choice for the DRC. By elevating environmental, social, and governance standards and advancing mining-sector reforms in key countries, we aim to reduce the advantage gained by PRC companies that benefit from lax standards. By focusing on the entire supply chain, from mining to refining and processing to end uses, as well as recycling, we provide a holistic approach to securing the critical minerals needed for the energy transition. Finally, through increased information sharing, attention to financing, and minerals-focused diplomacy and commercial engagement, we are taking a forward-looking rather than reactive approach to working with likeminded countries with collective interests toward countering PRC influence and meeting climate and sustainability goals.

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

Answer. As Ambassador in Benin, I used my access to senior government officials to highlight growing limitations on freedom of expression, including for members of the press, and to advocate for a regulatory framework which would not disadvantage the independent media. As Ambassador in the Central African Republic, I worked closely with a group of like-minded countries and institutions to warn against efforts to amend the constitution prior to the 2020 elections which could have potentially extended the term of the incumbent president. As Charge d'Affaires in Sudan, I repeatedly urged the highest authorities to release opposition leaders held under questionable detention terms, cease violence against protestors, and investigate allegations of gender-based violence. These actions made clear to the host country interlocutors the importance of respect for human rights and democracy for advancing our partnership with the country in question and sent a clear message to human rights defenders that we would stand with them.

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

Answer. The most pressing challenge to democracy and democratic development in the DRC is the protracted insecurity in the East. It is the overriding concern of the DRC Government and public with increased calls from civil society for greater U.S. engagement. In May 2021, to deliver on his promise to restore security in eastern DRC, President Tshisekedi declared a "State of Siege"—effectively martial law—in two of the most troubled provinces, North Kivu and Ituri, installing military governors and ramping up Congolese military (FARDC) operations against ISIS-DRC and armed groups in the region. Reports of human rights violations and abuses have accompanied the State of Siege. The U.N. and human rights groups have documented continued violations including extrajudicial killings by FARDC and police while military governments have restricted civil society and political activists and prosecuted some for criticizing the State of Siege. Despite President Tshisekedi's efforts to pursue constructive relationships with eastern neighbors, the resurgence of the March 23 Movement (M23) armed group with reported backing by the Government of Rwanda has strained DRC-Rwanda relations to crisis levels. The U.N. Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and other stakeholders' efforts have been insufficient to stem the persistent armed conflict. Amid growing tensions over

regional conflict, violent protests in late July have resulted in deaths of MONUSCO peacekeepers and demonstrators alike amid belated calls for calm from Congolese authorities.

Responsibility for organizing the presidential and parliamentary elections due by the end of 2023 falls on the DRC's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI). Preparations are late in large part due to the delayed formation of a new CENI leadership team. A new CENI board took office in October 2021 led by President Denis Kadima. Since his appointment, Kadima has earned cautious praise from erstwhile opponents for frank and open communication and indications of independence, but broader concerns on CENI management and integrity persist. A revised electoral law promulgated in July includes slight improvements for transparency and gender; however, a series of broader proposed reforms were rejected by Tshisekedi's Sacred Union supermajority, further fanning opposition concerns about electoral process.

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

Answer. We know that democracy is more than just free and fair elections and we are employing the full range of foreign policy tools in support of the elections in 2023 given their critical importance to the DRC's democratic trajectory. This includes international pressure in coordination with European and African partners as well as the U.N.; public messaging; diplomatic engagement, including senior-level visits; and technical assistance to support a transparent and credible process. The Department continues to press the DRC Government and National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) to adhere to the planned electoral timeline, to maximize opportunities to be transparent on electoral processes and outcomes, and to ensure an open political environment for the Congolese people to express their views peacefully. Secretary Blinken also stressed the need for free, fair, transparent, and on-time election during his visit. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Molly Phee and Acting Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) Lisa Peterson both stressed this message in meetings with CENI President Denis Kadima during his visit to Washington, DC in late February.

DRL is actively expanding its suite of human rights and democracy programs in the DRC to lay the groundwork for increased citizen participation in and understanding of the electoral process. Ensuring the success of commitments on the elections process will require sustained attention to financial logistical technical and political challenges. USAID is the largest donor working in elections and is currently the only donor providing technical support to CENI. Recently USAID announced \$13 million to finance international and domestic election observation and other election activities. More broadly, the Department seeks to engage the DRC on supporting its democratic aspirations through its participation in the Summit for Democracy, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, and bilateral Human Rights Dialogue.

If confirmed, I will leverage and expand these efforts where possible to support democracy in DRC. Through these actions, I hope to see DRC on a positive trajectory that enables it to realize its democracy and its vast potential for the benefit of the Congolese and American people, as well as Central Africa and the world.

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

Answer. U.S. Government assistance resources, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, are important tools to support democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG). DRG programs strengthen the ability of the Government of the DRC and civil society organizations to deliver basic services, mobilize domestic resources, and encourage greater citizen participation in political processes. U.S. assistance supports free and fair elections, improves transparent and accountable government processes and rule of law, and improves access to information so that citizens may participate fully in the democratic process and make more informed decisions. DRG programs contribute to citizen's empowerment to hold institutions accountable and effectiveness of public and private institutions to deliver public services. If confirmed, I will leverage these resources to support democracy, respect for human rights, and good governance. If confirmed, my priorities will include strengthening transparency and electoral administration; improving civic and voter education; empowering the population, including women and youth, to meaningfully participate

in elections; and helping marginalized communities to understand and access political processes.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights, and other NGOs in the United States, and with local human rights NGOs and other members of civil society in DRC.

Embassy Kinshasa regularly meets and engages with NGOs and civil society groups, hosting roundtables and leveraging these relationships for outreach and to advance policy goals. Embassy Kinshasa has continually engaged with counterparts in Ministries of Human Rights, Justice, Defense, Interior, and Communications to discuss human rights issues, including freedom of expression (including for members of the press) and the right of peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I will continue this engagement and expand where possible to proactively address any efforts by the DRC Government to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures.

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

Answer. Embassy Kinshasa regularly meets with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties, both to seek their perspectives and to make clear that the U.S. priority is for the DRC to conduct free and fair elections that reflect the will of the Congolese people in accordance with constitutional deadlines. Embassy Kinshasa has also continually engaged with relevant ministries to advocate for specific measures to encourage genuine political competition, including revisions to the electoral law aimed at ensuring transparency and the invitation and accreditation of electoral observers. Total U.S. Government support for the elections and election observation is over \$13 million.

If confirmed, I commit to continuing these efforts and expand them where possible, and to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties. If confirmed, I will advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage alongside my embassy team with DRC on freedom of expression, including for members of the press, and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory, or other measures. If confirmed, I commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in DRC.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Legally, LGBTQ+ status or conduct is not criminalized in the DRC, but the law also does not expressly protect LGBTQ+ persons; some LGBTQ+ persons have been subjected to selective enforcement of “public indecency” mechanisms that are not applied to heterosexual adults. Authorities rarely take steps to investigate, prosecute, or punish officials who committed violence or abuse against LGBTQ+ persons, whether in the security forces or elsewhere in the Government.

Freedom of association for members of the LGBTQ+ community is poorly guaranteed. Activists have noted that the process for registering NGOs was burdensome

and very slow, and LGBTQI+ groups were denied registration. LGBTQI+ activists assert that other human rights organizations exclude LGBTQI+ rights organizations, due either to religious belief or a belief that LGBTQI+ rights are not human rights.

LGBTQI+ persons are vulnerable within the health system. LGBTQI+ activists reported that there were many cases of “corrective” rape against both men and women. When the survivors went to a health clinic for care, they were either rejected for being LGBTQI+ or the staff at the health clinic practiced so-called “conversion therapy” practices and tried to “dissuade” them from being LGBTQI+.

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

Answer. In the spirit of “do no harm” and “nothing about us without us,” if confirmed, I will work to ensure Embassy Kinshasa consults with members of local LGBTQI+ civil society so that U.S. Government efforts will not inadvertently cause backlash or negative repercussions for members of the local LGBTQI+ community. If confirmed, I commit to promoting respect for human rights, including for members of the LGBTQI+ community, with relevant government officials, such as the Human Rights Minister and the Minister of the Interior. If confirmed, I also commit to engaging with other like-minded Embassies to create a coalition that can take steps to advocate for the protection and inclusion of members of the LGBTQI+ community, encourage the inclusion of LGBTQI+ identity groups in the broader human rights community in the DRC, and discuss the human rights of members of the LGBTQI+ community with religious leaders.

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

Answer. Yes, I will work with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs to keep the committee apprised of developments.

Question. Last week I convened a hearing on the important work of the State Department’s Chief Diversity Officer and the important role diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts play in maintaining our countries’ competitive edge on the global stage. How do you anticipate fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at Embassy Kinshasa?

Answer. In June 2020 Embassy Kinshasa established a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council. A survey conducted by the council revealed a desire for increased mentorship at the Mission, especially among locally employed staff, as well as concerns about weak social and collegial bonds between locally employed staff and U.S. Direct Hires (USDH). In response, the DEIA Council created programming to bring the community together, using Pride Month as a trial run. Since these first steps the DEIA council has strengthened locally employed staff unity by assisting with the local staff committee leadership elections, as well as strengthened Congolese-American bonds within the Embassy through new social programming focused on sharing local meals and stories. To address the demand for mentorship, Embassy Kinshasa instituted a mission-wide mentorship program and put an emphasis on greater cross-cultural activities.

Looking after the safety of the Embassy community and ensuring that all American and locally employed staff members can flourish and bring their best to the job in an environment where they feel included and equal is my highest priority as a leader. If confirmed, I will prioritize recruiting and retaining staff to meet our mission’s objectives, supporting the physical and mental health of the Embassy community, and setting expectations for how to accomplish mission priorities while maintaining work/life balance. If confirmed, I commit to strong two-way communication with all Mission personnel, including locally employed staff on this subject.

Question. What specifically will you do to prioritize and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, while also combating racism, discrimination, and inequality among locally employed staff in DRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with Embassy Kinshasa’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council to promote their efforts and make clear that combatting racism, discrimination, and inequality for all members of the mission is a priority for me and my leadership team. If confirmed, I look forward to fostering the council’s mentorship program and participating in cross-cultural activities. Ensuring that all members of the mission team can flourish and bring their best to the job in an environment where they feel included and equal is my highest priority as a leader. If confirmed, I commit to strong two-way communication with all Mission personnel, including locally employed staff on this subject.

Question. In addition to focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our workforce, will you commit to engaging more equitably in operations and programming, particularly with potential partners and communities that traditionally have been marginalized, excluded, or underrepresented in ours and others' donor and partnership efforts? How do you anticipate utilizing local expertise, knowledge, and capacity to meet our foreign policy goals?

Answer. Our locally employed staff and other local partners are invaluable resources to implement U.S. foreign policy objectives. Their local expertise, knowledge, and capacity are essential to understanding the dynamics in DRC. If confirmed, I will rely on this expertise to maximize our impact. If confirmed, I commit to engaging more equitably in operations and programming, particularly with potential partners and communities that traditionally have been marginalized, excluded, or underrepresented in ours and others' donor and partnership efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. LUCY TAMLYN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What is your perspective on the situation in Eastern Congo and the role of the United States in addressing the persistent insecurity challenges and complex regional dynamics, both bilaterally and through multilateral organizations, namely the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission MONUSCO?

Answer. For decades, the people of eastern DRC have suffered violence and insecurity, primarily perpetrated in recent years by armed groups and sometimes by DRC's own security forces. Corrupt networks have profited from the illicit exploitation of the region's natural resources. Currently, the M23 armed group allegedly supported by Rwanda is controlling territory near the Uganda border and killing civilians. Addressing the current crisis, and the long-standing underlying issues including the role of DRC's neighbors, is a priority for the State Department. We have maintained steady engagement with senior host nation officials as well as key partners to encourage de-escalation of regional tensions, the termination of the M23 offensive, and progress on the demobilization of all armed groups. Secretary Blinken will visit Kinshasa August 9-10 and Kigali August 10-11, following Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's travel August 4-5 to Uganda. The Bureau of African Affairs' Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Massinga discussed this issue in depth with the Foreign Ministers of DRC, Rwanda, and Angola at the African Union (AU) mid-year coordination meeting in Lusaka from July 17-18. Our key message is reinforcing the need to respect the DRC's territorial integrity and to terminate any proxy support to armed groups on all sides. The United States is supportive of the African-led mediation efforts, which have provided important venues for direct discussions among regional heads of state. If confirmed, I will work closely with Washington to ensure that our engagement in Bujumbura, Kampala, Kigali, and elsewhere is coordinated and responds to the regional dynamics that have long influenced the crisis.

MONUSCO has an important role to play in improving the situation. The U.N. Mission continues to carry out its mandate for the protection of civilians. I am deeply concerned that recent anti-MONUSCO protests have turned violent and included attacks on MONUSCO facilities and resulted in peacekeeper and protester casualties. At the same time, I was appalled by the July 31 shooting of civilians by peacekeepers in Kasindi and welcomed the Secretary-General's swift response and strong statement calling for accountability. MONUSCO is by no means perfect, but it is an essential part of creating conditions for peace in eastern DRC. If confirmed, I look forward to frequent interactions with MONUSCO leadership and close coordination with USUN as plans for the Mission's transition move forward.

Question. What lessons were learned from the 2018-2020 Ebola outbreak and more recent experiences with COVID-19 in DRC that we must apply to future outbreaks of infectious disease in DRC? How will you approach coordinating multiple U.S. departments and agencies responding to such an outbreak as U.S. Ambassador?

Answer. The Congolese, international health professionals, NGOs, and U.S. Government responders all made heroic contributions to defeat the 2018-2020 Ebola outbreak in eastern DRC—the second largest in history. Applying lessons learned from this outbreak—whether understanding the epidemiological threat, quickly cementing a response structure and plan, or early and locally driven community engagement, including preventing exploitation within the response—is critical for re-

sponding to future outbreaks in the DRC and region, whether Ebola or COVID-19. Addressing these and other types of outbreaks require continued investment in the health system, leveraging our interagency health platforms that focus on capacity building at national and provincial level governments. With U.S. Government support, the DRC has contained six Ebola outbreaks in the past four years alone, declaring the most recent outbreak over in July.

If confirmed, I will work to maintain the U.S. role as the DRC's most trusted partner on health. Our contributions to the 2018-2020 Ebola response were a natural expansion of our longstanding support for the Congolese health system. The United States has provided over \$1.7 billion in health assistance to the DRC over the past 20 years. In 2019, the DRC was designated as a U.S. Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) intensive support partner country, increasing the DRC's longer-term preparedness capacity to combat health-security threats. Since September 2021, the United States has provided over 3.9 million COVID-19 vaccine doses with the people of the DRC, both in partnership with COVAX and through the African Union's African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT).

U.S. support to the Congolese health sector has been a whole-of-government approach, bringing together the Departments of State, Defense, Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and USAID. If confirmed, I will work across all U.S. Government departments and agencies to respond to outbreaks and strengthen Congolese health systems. As we did with previous outbreaks, if confirmed, I would welcome CDC, National Institute of Health (NIH), and USAID health and disaster response experts to the DRC for quick engagement with our Congolese and international organization partners. If confirmed, I would support the wide variety of U.S. Government health assistance programs. For example, the CDC has trained more than 300 Congolese field epidemiologists, "disease detectives" who respond to COVID-19 and other outbreaks. USAID led a public-private partnership with the Merieux Foundation to construct a state-of-the-art biomedical lab in eastern DRC that serves as a regional lab to address global health issues such as Ebola and COVID-19. I understand more than one-third of the Congolese population is covered by U.S. Government programs in HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, nutrition, malaria, and TB interventions reaching at-risk communities. Outbreak response requires constant vigilance and constant coordination, and if confirmed I will work across U.S. Government partners to communicate and align for the most effective response.

Question. Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Kinshasa?

Answer. U.S. Embassy Kinshasa is doing important work in a challenging environment. The Embassy is historically difficult to staff, with multiple staffing vacancies. This means many people are assuming the work of multiple employees working in outdated, inadequate office facilities. New facilities for our personnel are long overdue; groundbreaking for construction of a New Embassy Compound to replace and consolidate Kinshasa's three separate compounds is expected to begin in early 2023. In the meantime, Embassy Kinshasa is pursuing upgrades across its three current sites. Infrastructure challenges such as telecommunications are very real, for both U.S. and local personnel. Travel times to and from the United States also affect our staff's well-being. Embassy staff, including locally employed staff, face physical and mental health hazards, including losses due to COVID-19.

Throughout, this team has shown great resilience. I understand Embassy Kinshasa prioritizes improving morale through the community liaison office's outreach, field trips, town halls, and social events for staff to connect with leadership.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Kinshasa?

Answer. Looking after the safety of the embassy community and ensuring that each and every American and local employee can flourish and bring his or her best to the job in an environment free of harassment and discrimination is my highest priority as a leader. If confirmed, I will prioritize recruiting and retaining staff to meet our mission's objectives, supporting the physical and mental health of the Embassy community, and setting expectations for how to accomplish mission priorities while maintaining work/life balance. I commit to strong two-way communication with all Mission personnel, including locally employed staff on this subject.

Question. How do you intend to create unified mission and vision at Mission Kinshasa?

Answer. I recognize that, if confirmed, I will be assuming leadership of a post in a country of enormous size, complexity, and promise. The large portfolio of U.S. assistance requires astute direction, prioritization, and coordination. Chronic staffing

shortages, a situation not unique to Kinshasa, need to be managed to ensure that we do not burn out and lose the next generation of Foreign Service Africa experts. If confirmed, I will lead regular discussions with all agencies present at post to establish and review goals, develop strategies and tactics to achieve objectives, and ask that section leaders perform similar reviews with their staff.

Question. Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. My management style starts with listening to individuals, understanding their strengths and communicating my expectations clearly. I seek to ensure that all staff have the support, resources, and training necessary to do their jobs. I also seek to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities to do their best every day and adhere to the highest standards of ethical behavior in an environment of respect. If confirmed, I will bring special attention to ensuring that new entrants and first-time section heads have the support and mentoring necessary to succeed.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with and rely on my deputy chief of mission for strategic planning, counsel, management of personnel, and implementation of U.S. activities and policy engagement to accomplish strategic objectives. If confirmed, I will work with my deputy chief of mission to articulate and maintain high ethical standards and create a culture of diversity, inclusion, and respect.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ask the deputy chief of mission to ensure coordination and collaboration across sections and agencies to support Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) objectives. I will ask the deputy chief of mission to oversee post management with a focus on workforce planning and performance. I will also ask the deputy chief of mission to lead recruitment efforts for our embassy positions and work with other agencies to ensure that their personnel feel fully integrated into Embassy Kinshasa's policy formulation and implementation. If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with the deputy chief of mission on policy implementation and ensure that in my absence, the deputy chief of mission has the knowledge, skills, and confidence to fully take on the responsibilities of the chief of mission.

Question. In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes, I do.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes.

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 fellow foreign diplomats stationed in the DRC. In your opinion, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. Mission Kinshasa will be most effective if it can engage with Congolese populations outside of the capital, while respecting the safety standards determined by embassy security personnel. Despite limited infrastructure in the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, Embassy Kinshasa staff routinely overcome significant logistical challenges to travel outside of the capital to engage DRC Government officials, civil society, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, media, and members of the international community throughout the country. I understand Embassy Kinshasa's Eastern Congo Unit, for example, travels monthly to the East to, among other things, provide U.S. Government oversight for the \$1.16 billion U.N. peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO). USAID officers travel countrywide to oversee hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. development and humanitarian assistance. This travel is critical to ensuring a full understanding of the political, economic, and security challenges in this zone which has been a flashpoint for conflict.

Other section personnel need to travel to learn about consular, economic, and political issues across the DRC and to provide oversight of U.S. assistance. In my previous assignments, I have made sure that a robust regional security officer-approved travel plan was fully integrated into mission planning. I understand that Embassy Kinshasa's Travel Security Working Group routinely evaluates security conditions throughout the country to determine suitability for mission travel, and RSO puts in place security mitigation measures to overcome security challenges. If confirmed, I intend to continue these best practices.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed and as security and health conditions permit, I will encourage U.S. diplomats to engage actively, broadly, and in-person with local populations in and outside Kinshasa. If confirmed, I will encourage active engagement through social and virtual media to supplement this outreach. If confirmed, I intend to travel regularly throughout the DRC and use those visits to facilitate contacts for the rest of my team.

Question. Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts. What is the public diplomacy environment like in the DRC?

Answer. The Congolese public has embraced social media and public diplomacy, and in turn these have been strategic tools for advancing U.S. policy objectives and amplifying key messages. For example, following President Felix Tshisekedi's April 2019 visit to Washington the United States and DRC launched a "Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity," with a fifth "P" (Preservation of the Environment) added in February 2021. Over the years #PP4PP then #PP4PPP has become not just a hashtag, but the signature framework for strengthening U.S.-DRC ties, advancing common values and objectives, and capturing comprehensive bilateral engagement and activities. If confirmed, I am committed to using public diplomacy as one of the many tools to connect with Congolese populations and advance U.S. foreign policy.

Our colleagues at Embassy Kinshasa regularly use our network of American Spaces in Kinshasa, Matadi, Lubumbashi, Goma to support programming (virtual and in person) to extend our reach. Embassy Kinshasa's LOBA USA podcast, now in its second season, is available online and broadcast on 45 community radio stations throughout the country. The Embassy leverages its robust network of exchange alumni through alumni engagement grants and activities. Our cultural programming has partnered with popular music stars to amplify strategic priorities such as COVID vaccination and conflict resolution. Finally, our innovative use of virtual English instruction in conjunction with our spaces has reached a new generation of Congolese youth.

Question. What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. The DRC's population is overwhelmingly young and many either do not have access to quality education or must leave school because of economic hardship. Telecommunications infrastructure is poor. The limited access to internet or other telecommunications infrastructure by many Congolese limits the opportunities for and impact of virtual engagements which would be especially valuable in a country as large as DRC, where travel for in-person engagements is often difficult. Women in particular often do not have access to technology. The difficult educational landscape also impacts the acquisition of English, which in turn impacts the ability of Embassy Kinshasa to leverage opportunities such as exchanges or study abroad programs that require English proficiency. If confirmed I will seek to find opportunities to overcome these challenges and attract a new generation of Congolese to our programs and platforms.

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 closely with Main State and the interagency to appropriately amplify our messages to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Question. "Anomalous health incidents," commonly referred to as "Havana Syndrome," have been debilitating and sidelining U.S. diplomats around the world for years. They have caused serious, negative consequences for U.S. diplomacy, yet many believe that the Department is not doing enough to care for, protect, and communicate to its personnel. If confirmed, do you commit to taking this threat seriously?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to talking as openly as you can to Mission Kinshasa personnel?

Answer. Yes.

Question. In the State Department's 2022 Human Rights report, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was noted as having numerous significant human rights issues such as unlawful killings, disappearances, torture, political prisoners, issues of judiciary independence, serious abuses in conflict to include civilian harm, enforced abductions, use of child soldiers, restrictions of expression, corruption, and more. If confirmed, do you commit to directly addressing these issues with the host government?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, how could you work with the DRC, international organizations, and NGOs, to improve the human rights situation in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, the human rights and democracy agenda would be among my highest priorities. We know that allegations of human rights violations and abuses and corruption eat away at any prospects for the DRC to emerge as a prosperous and stable country. Respect for human rights and a strong focus on anti-corruption efforts are in the DRC's interest. I understand the Embassy has consistently stressed the importance of respecting human rights, including freedom of expression (including for members of the press) and the right of peaceful assembly. For eastern DRC especially, I understand the Embassy has continually and strongly urged armed groups and Congolese security forces to end all human rights violations and abuses, end all attacks on civilians, and ensure that those responsible for such acts be held accountable. The United States and the DRC also held its first bilateral Human Rights Dialogue in 2021. If confirmed, I would continue partnering closely with the DRC Government to make progress on these key issues.

Question. In the State Department's 2022 Trafficking in Persons report, the DRC remained on the Tier 2 watch list for not meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The Government did not demonstrate increasing efforts compared with previous reporting periods; the Congolese National Army (FARDC) officers unlawfully recruited and used children, including in combat roles; authorities penalized victims of acts traffickers compelled them to commit; no anti-trafficking legislation was drafted for a third straight year; and only due to a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute a significant effort to eliminate trafficking was the DRC granted a waiver from being downgraded to Tier 3. If confirmed, how could you work with the DRC to implement its written plan?

Answer. The United States is the Tshisekedi administration's partner of choice, and it is aware that our partnership relies on respect for human rights, including doing all they can to hold traffickers criminally accountable, protect trafficking victims, and prevent trafficking in persons. Through USAID's Counter Trafficking in Person's \$3 million activity, implemented by the Organization for International Migration (IOM), the U.S. Government continues to work with the Tshisekedi administration's Agency for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons, other government institutions, the judiciary, law enforcement, and civil society organizations to implement the DRC's National Strategy on Countering Trafficking in Persons. This includes strengthening the DRC Government's ability to collect data, investigate and prosecute traffickers, protect and provide services to victims of trafficking, and sensitize the public and officials to trafficking in persons in the DRC. State and USAID have also supported the DRC Government's comprehensive draft legislation on trafficking in persons. USG agencies continue to advocate at all levels of government for its immediate passage.

Following the DRC's third consecutive Tier 2 Watch List ranking in 2022, it will be subject to an automatic downgrade to Tier 3 in the 2023 TIP Report if it does not meet the criteria for an upgrade to Tier 2 or Tier 1. If confirmed, I will support the DRC Government's implementation of its anti-trafficking national action plan and continue to urge action on the prioritized recommendations in the 2022 TIP Report.

Question. How would you engage with the host government to reduce the recruitment and use of children in combat and other military related positions?

Answer. Embassy Kinshasa has continually engaged with the DRC Government on the need to improve respect for human rights and explained the risks to our bilateral relationship if unlawful recruitment and use of children is not addressed. At the same time, the U.S. Government implements a variety of programs designed to assist the DRC military on this path. Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding for DRC enables the

United States to continue increasing professionalization of the military, allowing it to provide security within its territory while respecting human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL). In addition, PKO and IMET funding has supported areas such as military justice, civil-military relations, human rights training, IHL training, English language training, military engineering, and resource management and logistics for security forces in DRC. These efforts not only enhance security provision, but also helps make the security forces a more transparent, accountable institution. Building on this successful cooperation, the United States signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the DRC Government in August 2020 to launch new cooperation in civil military operations (CMO), strategic communications, engineering, and English language training. We are also working with the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) to revamp its human resources infrastructure which, among other things, would allow for enhanced accountability.

These efforts have produced results. The number of prosecutions of both state and armed group actors for crimes involving human rights violations and abuses, including unlawful recruitment and use of children, remains high, as are the number of children separated from armed groups. This past July, the U.N. Secretary-General, in his annual report on children and armed conflict, welcomed “the commitment of the [DRC Government] to sustain the gains made in preventing child recruitment and use, including through screening mechanisms.” He also commended the DRC “for its efforts to hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable and urge them to continue to do so, including for cases of child recruitment and use, and for cases of sexual violence.” If confirmed, I will leverage these tools and our close relationship with the DRC to aid its commitment to reduce the unlawful recruitment and use of children.

Question. In the State Department’s 2021 International Religious Freedom report, the DRC remains a country of operation for ISIS, attacking civilians in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces. U.S. officials have met with government authorities, urging security forces and political leaders to refrain from violence and respect the civil rights of society. What actions would you take with the host government to build on previous U.S. engagement and promote religious freedom and tolerance?

Answer. The United States and DRC are dedicated to the defeat of ISIS. In March 2021, the U.S. designated ISIS-DRC (also known as Allied Democratic Forces) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). The Allied Democratic Forces is designated under the U.N. 1533 DRC Sanctions Regime. In November 2021, Secretary Blinken also designated ISIS an Entity of Particular Concern for the fifth consecutive year, as a non-state actor that has engaged in particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The DRC joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in 2019 and is increasingly engaged with the Coalition, having participated in the 2022 D-ISIS Ministerial as well as the most recent Communication Working Group meeting held in Washington in July.

With their influence on a wide range of civil and political issues, including elections, religious leaders throughout the DRC are close partners of our embassy in Kinshasa. Embassy Kinshasa has continually engaged with counterparts in Ministries of Human Rights, Justice, Defense, and Interior to discuss issues of freedom of religion or belief, including government relations with religious organizations. U.S. engagement prioritizes ensuring that the DRC Government respects human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and to freedom of religion or belief. Ambassador Hammer met with religious leaders frequently and, if confirmed, I would continue these efforts to engage with government representatives and civil society groups to help ensure freedom of religion or belief for the people of the DRC.

Question. How could you work with security forces to increase pressure towards removal of ISIS operation within the country?

Answer. Starting last November, the Ugandan defense forces (UPDF) have been conducting a military intervention in eastern DRC targeting ISIS-DRC, named Operation Shuja. The Ugandans are conducting this mission with the DRC Government approval. MONUSCO is not mandated to work alongside the UPDF, but we have constantly urged and tried to ensure operations are deconflicted with MONUSCO and the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and that all forces operating in DRC respect human rights.

The DRC joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in 2019 and is increasingly engaged with the Coalition; having participated in the 2022 D-ISIS Ministerial as well as the most recent Communication Working Group meeting held in Washington in July. Closer coordination with DRC security forces will require reform within the FARDC. U.S. training for the FARDC and increased military to military cooperation

are items very high on the agenda of the Government of the DRC but deepening our ties will require commensurate commitment to reform by the Government. To strengthen DRC's ability to prevent and respond to violent conflict, I will, if confirmed, continue to engage with the DRC Government on the need for security sector reform, including respect for the rule of law and human rights and the implementation of a community-based national disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program.

Question. The Office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel (MSP) in the State Department's bureau of International Organizations is leading a whole-of-government effort to identify, recruit, and install qualified, independent personnel at the U.N., including in elections for specialized bodies like the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). There is an American candidate, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, who if elected would be the first American and first woman to lead the ITU. She is in a tough race that will require early, consistent engagement across capitals and within the U.N. member states. If confirmed, do you commit to demarching the DRC and any other counterparts necessary to encourage their support of Ms. Bogdan-Martin?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, how can you work with the International Organizations (IO) bureau and other stakeholders to identify, recruit, and install qualified Americans in positions like the Junior Program Officer (JPO) program at the U.N.?

Answer. The Junior Professional Officer program is one of the key opportunities offered by the U.N. to encourage young professionals interested in serving in international organizations, and it provides them with hands-on experience across various U.N. agencies. The International Organization Affairs Bureau (IO) and the U.S. Mission to the U.N. (USUN) are well placed to ensure we have sufficient resources, tools, and staffing to support more positions for American citizen JPOs in the U.N. system. With these resources, we can work strategically to increase the number of JPO opportunities funded by the U.S. Government into key agencies and bodies that work on U.S. priorities, expand our recruitment and outreach activities to ensure these opportunities are widely known and available to interested U.S. citizens, and provide tools and services to strengthen our competitiveness in placing qualified American citizens into the U.N. system. If confirmed, I will aid the efforts of IO and USUN from Kinshasa where possible.

Question. The DRC has a low rate of voting coincidence with the United States in the U.N. General Assembly and in the Security Council. What is your assessment of this issue?

Answer. The U.S.-DRC relationship has strengthened significantly since the 2019 inauguration of President Felix Tshisekedi. However, a new DRC Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, was only just appointed in January 2022, and I note that in 2022 the DRC supported resolutions in U.N. bodies that called out Russia for its attack on Ukraine and aligned with U.S. priorities at the United Nations. If confirmed, I will work through the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and others in the Department of State to ensure U.S. foreign policy objectives are shared and understood across Kinshasa, Washington, and New York.

Question. If confirmed, what concrete actions can you take to engage with the Congolese on anticipated votes in the U.N. system that would increase their voting coincidence with the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work through the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and others in the Department of State to ensure U.S. foreign policy objectives are shared and understood across Kinshasa, Washington, and New York. I will meet with DRC Government officials at the highest levels when appropriate to encourage aligned voting coincidence.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. LUCY TAMLYN BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In May, Secretary Blinken said that the People's Republic of China is the "only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it." The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) clearly holds all the reins of power in the People's Republic of China and has used this power to commit genocide in Xinjiang, flood

our communities with fentanyl, and emit by far the largest quantity of greenhouse gases. With their absolute control of Chinese society and industry, the CCP could stop all of these destructive actions tomorrow if they so choose.

- Is the Chinese Communist Party a threat to the United States?

Answer. Certain activities by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) represent a challenge to U.S. interests globally and in the Africa region. As Secretary Blinken said on May 26, we will invest, align, and compete with the PRC to defend our interests and build our vision for the future.

Question. Does the Chinese Communist Party undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests?

Answer. We are prepared to work together with the People's Republic of China (PRC) where our interests intersect, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere, and where it is essential for global peace and prosperity. Issues like climate change, the global drug trade, and COVID-19 directly threaten our prosperity and security, and we need to work with the PRC—just as much as the PRC needs to work with us—to solve these problems without borders.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the People's Republic of China in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

Answer. We are prepared to work together with the People's Republic of China (PRC) where our interests intersect, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere, and where it is essential for global peace and prosperity. Issues such as climate change, the global drug trade, and COVID-19 directly threaten our prosperity and security, and we need to work with the PRC—just as much as the PRC needs to work with us—to solve these problems without borders. If confirmed, I will invest in our partnership with the DRC, align our concerns highlighting the risks associated with PRC engagement that could impact the DRC's security and sovereignty and U.S. interests, and ensure that our vision of a positive partnership and regional security and prosperity competes successfully with the PRC.

Question. China has a large peacekeeping presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where China Molybdenum, a Chinese mining company, has an 80 percent stake in one of the world's largest cobalt mines and the largest copper mining operation in the DRC. The DRC has given Chinese companies valuable concessions to develop the rich critical mineral resources, like cobalt, in the country. Cobalt is critical to the U.S. information technology and defense industries. Beijing's involvement in the peacekeeping mission in the DRC, and its heavy involvement in the DRC's cobalt sector, raises concerns that it is using its involvement in the peacekeeping system to protect its economic interests. The Trump Administration pushed the DRC Government to revisit these Chinese concessions.

- If confirmed, what will you do to convince the DRC to renegotiate, or even revoke, mineral concessions given to Chinese companies?

Answer. The United States supports the Government of the DRC's decision to review mining contracts and pursue greater accountability in the sector. In May 2021, President Tshisekedi announced his intention to review Chinese mining deals with unfavorable terms for the DRC. This is an ongoing process, and the United States has informed the DRC Government of our support for its decision to review contracts. Further, economic development should promote democratic governance, respect for human rights, and transparency. The United States is providing more than \$30 million in assistance to help the DRC promote responsible and sustainable mining practices and is actively looking at new engagements in the sector. As one example, USAID's new Constructing Competitive Responsible Minerals Trade project in the DRC provides trade and investment facilitation support with businesses that support responsible, transparent, and conflict-free mining from the DRC. We support responsible minerals sourcing and trading and work closely with the private sector to support conflict-free mineral supply chains. We created the Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals, working with USAID and the Department of Labor, U.S. companies, and civil society organizations to improve governance systems needed for ethical supply chains of conflict minerals in the DRC and Great Lakes region.

We echo the long-standing calls from African capitals that PRC actions must respect host country laws, particularly regarding the human and labor rights, the rule of law, and protections for the environment. We want to ensure U.S. companies can compete on an even playing field, promoting entrepreneurship, infrastructure development, energy access, capacity-building, and fair practices. I am confident that, in a level playing field, U.S. companies will be a partner of choice for the DRC. If con-

firmed, I hope to see the DRC on a positive trajectory that enables it to realize its vast potential for the benefit of the Congolese and American people, as well as Central Africa and the world.

Question. I understand that you served as Ambassador to the Central African Republic (CAR) from January 2019 to January 2022. During this period, the Government of the CAR essentially became a branch of Russia's mercenary, The Wagner Group. To this day, the CAR Government is staffed with the associates and friends of those Russian officials currently planning and managing Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine. Valery Zakharov, an FSB agent, serves as a national security advisor, Russian Air Force General Oleg Polguyev is an advisor to the Defense Minister, and another FSB agent, Vladimir Tintorenko, is an advisor to the Prime Minister.

- During your tenure as Ambassador to CAR, were you aware of growing Russian entanglement with the CAR Government?

Answer. Yes, I was aware and I raised our concerns about the Wagner Group and Russian presence with the highest levels of the Government. The United States Government has severely limited its security assistance to the Government of CAR in response to the CAR Government's decision to continue collaborating with these actors while we evaluate next steps.

Question. Did you advocate for U.S. policies that would encourage the CAR Government to remove Wagner Group and Russian presence in CAR? Please elaborate.

Answer. We raised our concerns about the Wagner Group and Russian presence with the highest levels of the Government, and severely limited our security assistance to the Government of CAR in response to their decision to continue collaborating with these actors while we evaluate next steps. We informed the CAR Government that future assistance would be limited should they continue that relationship. We have encouraged the CAR Government to end impunity for violence and seek partners that respect human rights.

Question. With regard to the DRC, is the Chinese Communist Party making efforts to increase its own influence within that government?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has extensive interests in the DRC. The DRC is now tied with the PRC as the third-biggest producer of copper in the world, and the DRC produces approximately 70 percent of the world's cobalt. Exports of copper and cobalt provide 75 percent of the DRC's export revenue, and the PRC is both the largest consumer of DRC-produced copper and cobalt and the DRC's largest trading partner. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with the DRC Government to cement the United States as the DRC's partner of choice.

Question. If confirmed as Ambassador to the DRC, what will you do to ensure that the Chinese Communist Party does not establish the same level of influence there as the Russian Wagner Group did in CAR under your watch?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) interest in the DRC is primarily economic. The PRC is the largest consumer of DRC-produced cobalt and copper and the DRC's largest trading partner. The United States has a long history of support for the DRC, including over \$20 billion in assistance, much of which has gone to address health and humanitarian emergencies. Socially responsible U.S. business practices compare favorably against PRC business models. Congressionally mandated annual reporting, such as the Human Rights Report, the Findings of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, and the Trafficking in Persons Report shine a spotlight on exploitative business practices and Executive Orders ensure that products made with forced labor and child labor do not reach U.S. markets. We are working with international partners and multilateral organizations, such as the International Labor Organization, to advance due diligence standards and practices in global supply chains and support internationally recognized worker rights. This message resonates with Congolese citizens, and the Congolese media have highlighted labor abuses in PRC-run companies.

We respect the ability of countries to decide for themselves whether to partner with the PRC. At the same time, we want the DRC to have options, to benefit from long-term sustainable economic growth, and to ensure it has the information it needs to make informed decisions. If confirmed, I will continue to amplify Embassy Kinshasa's work advancing a vision for economic development that promotes democratic governance, respect for human rights, and transparency. If confirmed, I will invest in our partnership with the DRC, align our concerns highlighting the risks associated with PRC engagement that could impact the DRC's security and sov-

ereignty and U.S. interests, and ensure that our vision of a positive partnership and regional security and prosperity competes successfully with the PRC.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. LUCY TAMLYN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. How do you view China's diplomatic and economic engagement in the DRC?

Answer. The DRC's economic resources make it an attractive destination for any foreign investor, including the People's Republic of China (PRC). We do not seek to limit the DRC's partnerships with other countries. We want the DRC to have options and to ensure it has the information it needs to make informed decisions.

In this regard we echo the long-standing calls from African governments that PRC economic engagement should respect host country laws, particularly those relating to labor rights and environmental protections. We want the Congolese people to know that corrupt mineral exploitation deals, illegal logging, and environmental devastation is not inevitable. We also want to ensure that U.S. companies can compete on an even playing field. We believe the DRC benefits more from its partnership with the United States. The U.S. Government's commitment to responsible business conduct shapes global standards that ensure that rights are respected around the world. DRC officials tell us that they prefer investments by American enterprises because they know a U.S. corporation will respect host country laws and labor rights and protect its workers.

Question. What is the host government's main interest in engaging with China?

Answer. The DRC is now tied with the PRC as the third-biggest producer of copper in the world, and the DRC produces approximately 70 percent of the world's cobalt. Exports of copper and cobalt provide 75 percent of the DRC's export revenue, and the PRC is both the largest consumer of DRC-produced copper and cobalt and the DRC's largest trading partner.

Question. Do you view our work in Kinshasa as sufficient to counter malign PRC economic activity?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fully support the U.S. Government inter-agency endorsed Integrated Country Strategy's (ICS) vision for economic development that promotes democratic governance, respect for human rights, and transparency. Under the ICS, USAID initiatives are supporting investment and trade opportunities in DRC's minerals, energy, and agricultural sectors with a particular focus on responsible natural resources exploitation. Congressionally mandated reporting, such as the Human Rights Report, the Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the Trafficking in Persons Report help shine a spotlight on exploitative business practices, and Executive Orders ensure that products made with forced labor and child labor do not reach U.S. markets. We are working with international partners and multilateral organizations, such as the International Labor Organization, to advance due diligence standards and practices in global supply chains. These messages resonate with Congolese citizens, and the Congolese media have themselves highlighted labor abuses in PRC-run companies.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. LUCH TAMLYN BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. What is your perspective on the situation in Eastern Congo and the role of the United States in addressing the persistent insecurity challenges and complex regional dynamics, both bilaterally and through multilateral organizations, namely the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission MONUSCO?

Answer. For decades, the people of eastern DRC have suffered violence and insecurity, primarily perpetrated in recent years by armed groups and sometimes by DRC's own security forces. Corrupt networks have profited from the illicit exploitation of the region's natural resources. Currently, the M23 armed group allegedly supported by Rwanda is controlling territory near the Uganda border and killing civilians. Addressing the current crisis, and the long-standing underlying issues including the role of DRC's neighbors, is a priority for the State Department. We have maintained steady engagement with senior host nation officials as well as key partners to encourage de-escalation of regional tensions, the termination of the M23 of-

fensive, and progress on the demobilization of all armed groups. Secretary Blinken will visit Kinshasa August 9-10 and Kigali August 10-11, following Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's travel August 4-5 to Uganda. The Bureau of African Affairs' Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Massinga discussed this issue in depth with the Foreign Ministers of DRC, Rwanda, and Angola at the African Union (AU) mid-year coordination meeting in Lusaka from July 17-18. Our key message is reinforcing the need to respect the DRC's territorial integrity and to terminate any proxy support to armed groups on all sides. The United States is supportive of the African-led mediation efforts, which have provided important venues for direct discussions among regional heads of state. If confirmed, I will work closely with Washington to ensure that our engagement in Bujumbura, Kampala, Kigali, and elsewhere is coordinated and responds to the regional dynamics that have long influenced the crisis.

MONUSCO has an important role to play in improving the situation. The U.N. Mission continues to carry out its mandate for the protection of civilians. I am deeply concerned that recent anti-MONUSCO protests have turned violent and included attacks on MONUSCO facilities and resulted in peacekeeper and protester casualties. At the same time, I was appalled by the July 31 shooting of civilians by peacekeepers in Kasindi and welcomed the Secretary-General's swift response and strong statement calling for accountability. MONUSCO is by no means perfect, but it is an essential part of creating conditions for peace in eastern DRC. If confirmed, I look forward to frequent interactions with MONUSCO leadership and close coordination with USUN as plans for the Mission's transition move forward.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO RACHNA SACHDEVA KORHONEN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. If confirmed, how will you implement this 5-year strategy given there will be a military junta in place for nearly two of the five years?

Answer. The interagency Sahel strategy seeks to build the political resolve of Sahel governments to regain public confidence at the national and local levels by providing the equitable delivery of government services, law enforcement, and justice. The Mali Integrated Country Strategy and USAID Country Development Cooperative Strategy are the baseline strategies for Mali and were informed by the Sahel Strategy. We can make progress on these goals during the transition period, as the transition government seeks also to make reforms that will strengthen the foundation of Mali's democracy. We provided technical support to the electoral law passed in June that creates a single electoral management body, a best practice that election experts have called for repeatedly. We stand ready to assist the transition government as it moves towards a constitutional referendum and elections.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to updating me on the implementation of the strategy within 180 days of arriving at post?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to promptly accommodate requests for briefings and for information by you and this Committee, including on the implementation of the strategy. Our foreign policy is stronger when the two branches of government communicate, and I would look forward to strengthening that communication.

Question. Do you believe personal travel bans or other sanctions on military officers who seize power unconstitutionally, or who engage in gross violations of human rights are a useful tool?

Answer. As I understand it, our policy objective has been to work with the transition government to get Mali back on the path to democracy. We continually review all tools available to us and determine what is the best tool to use to advance foreign policy goals. Imposing visa restrictions or financial sanctions as a blanket response to adverse political activity may be incongruent with the task of working with the transition government to undertake reforms that are demanded by their people to form the foundation of a more responsive democratic system. My understanding is that following the May 2021 military takeover, we cut security assistance programs valued at \$9.1 million that had continued under available authorities. Ending security assistance, which the Mali coup leaders monitor closely as military officers, had a more significant impact. When we have credible information that a foreign official has been involved in a gross violation of human rights, we are required by law to designate that individual under Section 7031(c). If confirmed,

I commit to continually assessing whether visa restrictions or financial sanctions should be imposed.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to reviewing the approach we have taking, and sending to me in writing, your assessment of how such sanctions could usefully be applied within 90 days of arriving at post?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the approach we have taken and sending to you in writing, my assessment of how such visa restrictions or financial sanctions could usefully be applied within 90 days of arriving at Post. I also commit to continuously assessing whether visa restrictions or financial sanctions should be imposed during my Ambassadorship, if confirmed.

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

Answer. During my time in Sri Lanka, we encouraged the newly elected government to include all factions in the Government but to also provide accountability for wartime abuses. We achieved some successes on both counts, but it was slow and cumbersome requiring a lot of effort from multiple parts of the US Government. Our biggest success was to encourage the Sri Lankan Parliament to work together with Congress on training and exchanges, a partnership that exists until today that is codified in a USAID project lasting multiple years. During my time in Kirkuk, Iraq, I was able to convince the Turkmen faction to stand in local elections after they threatened to boycott. Their participation in the elections resulted in elections that were accepted by all parties and that laid the foundation for governance and democracy in Kirkuk.

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

Answer. There are many challenges to democracy and democratic development in Mali. Mali has suffered three military seizures of power in the past ten years. Weak governance, a severe security crisis, poor development, and acute food insecurity are some of the many difficulties of life in Mali. The failure of government to address these problems has led to a loss of faith by many Malians in their government and in democracy. This frustration is particularly apparent in the north, where the minority populations have long felt ignored by Bamako. Additionally, corruption is rampant, though during the transition we have not seen the same high-level corruption as in previous regimes. Political parties are numerous but often do not think beyond the special interests of Bamako. The arrival of the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group was accompanied by a spike in pro-Wagner and pro-Russian sentiments across social media as well as disinformation linked to Wagner financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin that has muddled the media environment. Warnings by the transition government to support the Malian Armed Forces reportedly led to self-censorship by the press. Some critics of the transition government have been arrested. Women continue to play a secondary role in Malian society and the transition government has fallen short of meeting the law that requires thirty percent of elected or appointed officials to be women. Finally, the transition government's plan to tackle security does not extend to addressing root drivers of conflict, and as evidenced by allegations of human rights abuses and violations, will increase the distrust Mali's people feel toward their government.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will assist the transition government as it moves towards a constitutional referendum and elections, building on the partnership established when the United States provided technical assistance in support of the creation of the recent electoral law. I will support programs aimed at bolstering the capacity of civil society and the media as well as programs to counter disinformation. I will amplify the voices of women who are working to make a difference in their communities and for their country. Through these actions, I hope to work with Malians to set them on a path to responsive democratic governance that will lead to a more stable Mali.

Mali's return to democracy and the reforms necessary to create a strong foundation for that democracy are ultimately in the hands of the transition government.

We cannot want it more than they do. If confirmed, I will be an advocate for the Malian people and press for the democracy they deserve.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will utilize all available U.S. foreign assistance programs and tools to strengthen democracy and good governance in Mali. State Department and USAID resources are critical to achieving our policy goals and advancing our values in Mali. I will prioritize available assistance necessary to restore democratic governance in Mali.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with civil society members, human rights and other non-government organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Mali. I understand the Embassy conducts such engagements regularly and I plan to build on their good work. I will advocate for unimpeded operation by NGOs and civil society, who do much to address root drivers of instability, both with the transition government and publicly should it be deemed helpful.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties. I will encourage political figures and parties to consider the equities of all Malians, not just those in Bamako, and to run on platforms built on substance, not personality. I will advocate with the transition government for opposition figures to be able to participate fully in the political process as Mali holds legislative elections, a constitutional referendum, and presidential elections by March 2024. I will advocate with the transition government for opposition figures to be able to speak freely without fear of reprisal. I will advocate for press freedom, so that disinformation does not interfere in political debates and dialogues. I will advocate for access and inclusivity for women, members of minority groups, and youth within political parties. I will urge the transition government to meet any related requirements under national law, such as the 30 percent appointment of women in the Cabinet and the National Transition Council. I will press for the expeditious implementation of the Algiers Accord, so Mali's democracy more fully represents its northern citizens.

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

Answer. I am very concerned about the decrease in press freedom and the rise of disinformation that has accompanied the arrival of the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. If confirmed, I plan to prioritize addressing and countering disinformation. A well-informed citizenry is required for a functioning democracy, so I support the continuation of current embassy and Department programs to educate and train journalists about the dangers of disinformation and procedures to publicly refute dangerous disinformation, such as fact-checking. I will commit to meeting regularly with local press in Mali and extolling the dangers of disinformation and promoting the benefits of a free press.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize building on the embassy team's ongoing work and programs to counter disinformation and propaganda perpetuated by foreign and non-state actors. I will also build on the close relationship created between the embassy team and the Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) as they prioritize exposing and countering state-sponsored disinformation. The GEC recently released a public-facing bulletin to expose the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, Rus-

sian oligarch Yevgeniy Prigozhin, and Russia's disinformation networks in Africa, and the bulletin spotlighted several recent cases of disinformation in Mali. I will engage the transition government on the destabilizing effects of disinformation and the need to protect press freedom.

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

Answer. Labor unions are an important and influential part of Mali's society, and the International Trade Union Confederation has noted the significant efforts of labor unions to strengthen social dialogue and progress on climate change, social protection, universal health insurance, decent work, migration and education. Mali continues to face significant challenges on labor as almost 90 percent of workers are in the informal economy, about 12 percent of children are engaging in child labor, and women still do the lion's share of unpaid care and domestic work, including some forms of descent-based slavery. I will engage the transition government on the right of workers to organize, including to form independent trade unions, and encourage legal remedies for labor abuses.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my position to promote respect for the human rights and dignity of all in Mali, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. A hallmark of Mali's society is its diversity. A country that unites across its differences will always be stronger and more resilient.

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

Answer. LGBTQ+ individuals in Mali experience physical, psychological, and gender-based violence, with some individuals subjected to "corrective" punishment. Police frequently refuse to intervene when such violence has occurred. As the transition government considers members of the LGBTQ+ community to be "immoral," promoting respect for freedom of association remains difficult. The law prohibits conduct pertaining to "attacks on morality," thereby criminalizing, on a de facto basis, consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults, as well as non-sexual association. The transition government actively enforces this law. Most LGBTQ+ individuals in Mali isolate themselves and keep their sexual orientation or gender identity hidden. LGBTQ+ individuals frequently drop out of school, leave their places of employment, and do not seek medical treatment in order to hide their sexual identity and avoid social stigmatization.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in the Republic of Mali?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, promoting and advancing respect for the human rights of LGBTQ+ persons is a foreign policy priority for this Administration. If confirmed, I will advocate for the human rights and dignity of all in Mali, including LGBTQ+ persons. In the spirit of "do no harm," I will meet with LGBTQ+ civil society members and seek their advice on how the U.S. Embassy can best support them.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to promptly accommodate requests for briefings and for information by this Committee. Our foreign policy is stronger when the two branches of government communicate, and I would look forward to strengthening that communication.

Question. Last week we held a hearing on the important work of the State Department's Chief Diversity Officer and the important role diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts play in maintaining our countries' competitive edge on the global stage. How do you anticipate fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at Embassy Bamako?

Answer. Secretary Blinken recently said "The rich diversity of the United States is a core source of our national strength and a cherished part of our national identity. As the agency that represents the United States to the world, the U.S. Department of State has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to build a diplomatic work-

force that reflects America's diversity. Diversity makes us stronger and more creative. It is how we bring to bear people's many ideas, experiences, expertise, and contributions for the benefit of our organization and our country. We simply cannot advance America's interests and values around the world without a workforce that is truly representative of the American people."

I will stand up for fairness, equity, inclusion and accessibility at work. I will integrate these principles into my leadership at Embassy Bamako. Throughout my State Department career, I have valued and encouraged a diverse and inclusive work environment, and if confirmed, I intend to bring that same spirit to Embassy Bamako by supporting post's inclusive hiring and selection procedures.

Question. What specifically will you do to prioritize and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, while also combating racism, discrimination, and inequality among locally employed staff in the Republic of Mali?

Answer. I will hold all of our staff at Embassy Bamako to the same standard. Mali is a country rich and diverse in culture and Embassy Bamako reflects that diversity. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that all employees working in Embassy Bamako, whether they are locally employed staff, eligible family members, or U.S. direct hires, feel supported and heard in their work. I maintain an open office policy and welcome the contributions and ideas of those working in our mission.

Question. In addition to focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our workforce, will you commit to engaging more equitably in operations and programming, particularly with potential partners and communities that traditionally have been marginalized, excluded, or underrepresented in ours and others' donor partnership efforts? How do you anticipate utilizing local expertise, knowledge, and capacity to meet our foreign policy goals?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with partners and communities that have been traditionally marginalized, underrepresented or excluded in donor or partnership efforts. Learning from local expertise and knowledge is critical to building successful programs and foreign policy goals.

Embassy Bamako has a truly diverse workforce from all parts of Mali, and I hope we can leverage that for our strategic goals for democracy, governance and services for all.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO RACHNA SACHDEVA KORHONEN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage the current Government in Mali on the issue of return to constitutional democratic rule?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to stand firmly with the Malian people in their aspirations for democracy, peace, development, and respect for human rights. I will press the transition government to keep its promise to return the country to the Malian people through democratic governance. The reforms the transition government has committed to undertake, such as constitutional reform, will build a foundation for a stronger, more responsive democracy in Mali and if confirmed, I will encourage the transition government to undertake these reforms expeditiously. I will also caution them that some reforms are the work of generations and will need to be handed over to a democratically-elected government. I echo Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield's observation "that a Mali isolated from its community of nations and ECOWAS is not where Mali wants to be." I share her wish to work with the Malian transition government to bring Mali back into the community of nations where it belongs. In order to rebuild relationships with its neighbors, the transition government first needs to demonstrate commitment to the transition timelines and to work transparently with ECOWAS special envoy Goodluck Jonathan and the transition monitoring committee. If confirmed, I will seek to assist the transition government as it moves towards the constitutional referendum and elections, but we must see progress.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage the current Government in Mali on the issue of implementing what is salvageable of the Algiers Accord?

Answer. Full implementation of the Algiers Accord remains the best path to peace in northern Mali. The Accord itself addresses key grievances of northern populations and calls for important steps towards decentralization of power, security sector reform, development, and reconciliation. These priorities are now applicable to other areas of the country suffering from instability. If fully implemented, the Accord's

provisions will provide greater stability and facilitate efforts to address the growing terrorist threats in the country.

Since we assess that the main driver of instability in Mali and the broader Sahel is a lack of state presence and responsive governance, the tenets of the Algiers Accord are exactly the kind of improved governance measures we believe will address root causes of instability. If confirmed, I will underscore this fact to the transition government and urge full implementation of the Accord. The recent meeting among the signatory parties and the transition government's pledge to incorporate 26,000 ex-fighters into the Malian Armed Forces are positive steps. I will also stress that no level of international involvement can secure peace for Mali. The signatory parties themselves must be driving the effort to bring peace throughout Mali.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage the current Government in Mali on the presence of the Russian-affiliated Wagner Group in Mali as a security alternative following the departure of French Operation Barkhane?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to highlight the harmful effects of the Wagner Group, including the rise in allegations of human rights violations and abuses emanating from the campaigns of the Malian Armed Forces alongside the Wagner Group. I will stress that these allegations will put the resumption of U.S. security assistance in doubt after a democratically-elected government has taken office in Mali. I will address the limitations placed on the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) due to the Wagner Group and note how the Malian people are not receiving the full benefit of MINUSMA's efforts due to those restrictions. I will illuminate how Yevgeniy Prigozhin's disinformation network is harming Mali's media space, threatening peacekeeper safety, and manipulating the Malian people. I will underscore that Prigozhin's extractive partnerships will leave Mali poorer as it gives away resources that could be invested into the Malian Armed Forces and other government efforts aimed to tackle root drivers of instability.

Question. What is your view of the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission in Mali, MINUSMA, the deadliest peacekeeping mission in the world, particularly given the post-coup environment in Mali?

Answer. The United States strongly supports MINUSMA as the leading component of the international community's efforts to address the political and security crises in Mali, including by supporting the parties to make progress towards sustainable peace. MINUSMA also plays a critical role in the protection of Malian civilians and facilitating their access to basic services as well as humanitarian aid. The restrictions the transition government has imposed on MINUSMA, as well as the arrival of the Wagner Group, threaten the safety of MINUSMA peacekeepers and obstruct the implementation of the mission's mandate.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador, if confirmed, how will you engage MINUSMA leadership to ensure that mandate of the mission is appropriate for the existing political and security environment in Mali?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage regularly with MINUSMA leadership to determine how the United States can best support the mission's efforts to carry out its mandate, including through advocating with the transition government to ensure MINUSMA's freedom of movement. I will encourage transparent and timely human rights reporting, performance reporting, and reporting on the restrictions placed on MINUSMA as well as host nation Status of Forces Agreement violations. I will work with colleagues in Washington to ensure that MINUSMA's mandate and resources are aligned with the current realities and challenges on the ground.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador, if confirmed, how will you engage with leadership in the Africa Bureau at the State Department to ensure the mandate of MINUSMA is appropriate for the existing political and security environment in Mali?

Answer. If confirmed, I will provide colleagues in the Bureau of African Affairs with the on-the-ground perspective necessary for the Department to assess the mission's effectiveness and inform the interagency policy process. I will be an active participant in Department and interagency discussions on the future of MINUSMA.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador, if confirmed, how will you engage with leadership in the International Organization Affairs Bureau at the State Department to ensure the mandate of MINUSMA is appropriate for the existing political and security environment in Mali?

Answer. If confirmed, I will provide colleagues in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs with the on-the-ground perspective necessary for the Department to assess the mission's effectiveness and inform the interagency policy process. I will

be an active participant in Department and interagency discussions on the future of MINUSMA. I will gladly host members of the MINUSMA monitoring and evaluation missions in Bamako or virtually if necessary and ensure they receive access to all relevant interlocutors in MINUSMA and the transition government to inform their report on the status of MINUSMA and its ability to implement its mandate.

Question. Do you commit to being consistently engaged with interlocutors in Mali, as well as with the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs on U.S. efforts to secure the release of U.S. citizen hostages Jeffery Woodke and Sister Tennyson?

Answer. I am already acquainted with Special Presidential Envoy Carstens and his staff, and while we could not discuss the cases, I expressed my commitment to coordinate with him and other stakeholders consistently regarding efforts to secure the release of U.S. citizen hostages. The Department of State has no greater responsibility than the safety and security of U.S. citizens overseas. If confirmed, I commit to raising this important issue consistently with interlocutors in Mali.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with the host government on anti-trafficking work? Please describe these efforts in detail.

Question. If confirmed, I will stress the importance of tackling human trafficking and related issues with the transition government, which faces an automatic downgrade to Tier 3 next year. I will advocate for the National Transition Council to amend the 2012 anti-trafficking law to ensure that it can be used to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses involving hereditary slavery, and sentence convicted slaveholders to significant prison terms. Additionally, Mali continues to struggle with recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups supported by the transition government. These groups have signed action plans with the United Nations, and I will vigorously advocate for their full implementation and the cessation of all unlawful recruitment and use of children.

Question. According to the State Departments 2021 Human Rights report, Mali had significant human rights issues including arbitrary killings, forced disappearance, serious restrictions on free expression and media, targeting minority groups, among other serious incidents.

- If confirmed, how will you engage with the host government on these issues?

Answer. Respect for human rights is critical to a free and peaceful society. If confirmed, I will advocate for the full respect of human rights with the transition government, support civil society and a free media, and, in the spirit of “do no harm,” meet with members of minority groups to seek their advice on how the U.S. Embassy can best support them. I will highlight the allegations of human rights abuses and violations committed by the Malian Armed Forces in cooperation with the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, which are counterproductive to a viable counterterrorism operation that should seek to protect civilians.

Question. Do you commit to raising these issues directly?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to raising credible reports of human rights abuses and violations directly to the highest levels of the transition government to increase accountability for those responsible.

Question. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Bamako?

Answer. I understand morale at Embassy Bamako is high despite a challenging living and working environment. The challenges have pulled the team closer and only enhanced interagency cooperation.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Bamako?

Answer. The wellbeing of our people is paramount. If confirmed, I will make maintaining morale of utmost importance. I will work closely with my staff, understand their concerns about morale, and communicate those concerns back to Department leadership. In my experience, the best work comes from well-resourced teams that support one another in their work towards achieving common goals and advancing U.S. policies. If confirmed, I will maintain clear communication and articulate goals and priorities early on and often. I will work across the interagency and with Washington to ensure that future growth meets U.S. strategic objectives and can be supported effectively by post’s management platform.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Bamako?

Answer. I will involve everyone in creating our strategy and have buy in at all levels. I will lead by example and empower my team. If confirmed, I intend to en-

sure that all employees working in Embassy Bamako, whether they are Locally Engaged Staff, eligible family members, or U.S. direct hires, feel supported and heard in their work. I maintain an open office policy and welcome the contributions and ideas of those working in our mission. I will also actively support Embassy Bamako's existing mentorship programs for first and second tour officers, mid-level U.S. direct hires, and our Locally Employed Staff and ensure that they meet the professional development needs of staff.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. My management style is to lead from behind. To let the experts do their work while providing enough guidance so that there are no misunderstandings. I like to collaborate and make sure I provide everything in my power so that my team can get the job done. I am a positive person and I like to find the best in everyone. I like to coach, not coerce. I am also empathetic in my approach to leading teams. If confirmed, I will prioritize collaboration and partnerships, including from Congressional representatives, to achieve U.S. policy priorities in Mali. I am willing to give my time and myself to better my team. My management principles are as follows:

- *Act like a leader—Take action and glean insights on the results of those efforts.* Share everything seen and heard with teammates.
- *Regulate yourself—EQ is twice as important as technical skills and IQ in driving performance and achieving success.* Control emotional outbursts and redirect them in more productive ways
- *Become self-aware—Ask for feedback from colleagues.* Effective team performance begins with how the leader sees the situation.
- *Be persuasive—Establish credibility through expertise and relationships.* Reinforce your position with numerical data and stories. Connect emotionally with your audience.
- *Coach the team you have, not the team you want.* Most of us will not have the luxury of inheriting our “dream team”. We can encourage and bring out the best traits of our team members and find that rewarding in itself.
- *Surround yourself with people that fill your gaps.* You want a team that complements you. Lack of diversity on a team can create an echo chamber that keeps you from being aware of crucial issues impacting your business.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No, I do not.

Question. How do you envision your leadership relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. I hope to have a wonderful and honest partnership with my deputy chief of mission. We will work as a true team to ensure the U.S. Mission in Mali is best placed to advance U.S. interests.

Question. If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will entrust my DCM with the responsibilities akin to those of a chief operating officer. While both the DCM and I will have responsibility for coaching and mentoring the Embassy team, if confirmed, I will also ask the DCM to play the primary role in ensuring the career development of the first- and second-tour officers on the Embassy team. And I will be open to any ideas that the DCM has about functions in which s/he is particularly interested or where s/he has particular strengths.

Question. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes, I do.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

Answer. Yes, I will.

Question. In your opinion, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. Restrictions on movement due to the security environment have made outside meetings challenging but I understand diplomats at Embassy Bamako are still able to regularly meet contacts and provide robust, well-informed reporting to the Department. If confirmed, I will listen to my team to understand what resources they need to increase in-person interactions, outside Embassy walls. There must be a balance between mission, security concerns, and COVID-19 mitigation. I see great value in leaving the embassy compound and am committed to ensuring the safety of my teammates. If in-person interactions are unsafe, I will provide technological support to my team so that they are still able to fully accomplish our mission.

Question. How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to better access all local populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will listen to my team to understand what resources they need from the State Department to increase in-person interactions. If in-person interactions are unsafe, I will provide technological support to my team so that they are able to meet virtually with their contacts.

Question. What is the public diplomacy environment like in Mali?

Answer. The United States is very visible in all areas of public diplomacy in Mali: traditional media, social media, education, and cultural programs. The U.S. Embassy has strong relationships with media professionals in both state-owned and private media, including through the offering of trainings and exchange opportunities. Voice of America's Bambara-language service is a popular and trusted source of information for many Malians. As for social media, the U.S. Embassy's Facebook page is one of the most followed official pages in the country. Over the past year, Malian social media has become thoroughly infested with disinformation, much of it anti-Western and/or pro-Russian. Kremlin-linked proxies exploit instability to gain influence, particularly through disinformation and the deployment of the Wagner Group forces. The onslaught of disinformation has made some parts of the Malian public more skeptical about U.S. policies, but many Malians are still very positively disposed towards the United States. The demand for U.S. help in promoting the teaching and use of English in schools, the media, and the business environment is insatiable, especially as Malians are seeking to diversify partnerships away from reliance on France. The network of exchange alumni, especially those of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Mandela Washington Fellowship, are force multipliers for the United States. The demand for spaces in U.S. exchange programs is magnitudes beyond the spaces available.

Question. What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

Answer. The deteriorating security environment creates the most challenging obstacles to U.S. public diplomacy. Most public diplomacy work outside of Bamako relies on implementation through grant partners. Virtual programs to reach audiences outside the capital are hampered by poor internet quality and expensive internet. Given the burgeoning youth population (one of the youngest populations in the world), the number of positions in youth exchange programs cannot come close to meeting demand. The proliferation of disinformation has transformed the information landscape in ways unfavorable to U.S. interests. Not only has the Prigozhin enterprise deployed considerable resources to turn public opinion against France, Europe, and MINUSMA, but many Malians have enthusiastically taken to creating homegrown disinformation. A network of self-proclaimed "pan-Africanists," some of whom with confirmed links to the Kremlin, from across Africa have taken up the anti-French, pro-Russian cause and have turned Mali into a testing ground for spreading this contagion to neighboring countries. WhatsApp has become the most efficient—and most difficult to track—vector for spreading narratives inimical to U.S. interests. Facebook is widely used to propagate disinformation. TikTok is becoming a new tool for reaching youth with hostile content. The U.S. diplomats based in Bamako do not have the tools, staffing, and resources to counter this coordinated information operation. Rising influence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is also an issue to watch. While the PRC's presence is most obvious in the economic sphere, the PRC is also growing in influence in the public diplomacy space. For example, the Confucius Institute at the largest public university is well-resourced and very popular with students. The PRC has also played a large role in financing and constructing the new public university campus on the outskirts of Bamako, while the United States just this year opened a modest American Corner on that same campus.

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. I believe both Main State and our mission in Bamako have important roles to play when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences. Public diplomacy officials on the ground can use close relationships with local media to reach a broad array of Malians with our messaging. Officials in Washington—with a wider audience—offer a platform to amplify this messaging. If confirmed, I will ensure our mission and Main State coordinate on messaging to ensure it is as effective as possible.

Question. “Anomalous health incidents,” commonly referred to as “Havana Syndrome,” have been debilitating and sidelining U.S. diplomats around the world for years. They have caused serious, negative consequences for U.S. diplomacy, yet many believe that the Department is not doing enough to care for, protect, and communicate to its personnel.

- If confirmed, do you commit to taking this threat seriously?

Answer. Yes. I am deeply troubled by potential anomalous health incidents that have affected U.S. Government personnel and their family members. Serving one’s country overseas should not come at the cost of one’s health. I agree that such incidents may pose a threat to the well-being of U.S. personnel and must be taken extremely seriously. If confirmed, the health, safety, and security of Embassy staff, their family members, and all those supporting the mission will be my highest priority.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to talking as openly as you can to Mission Bamako personnel?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to regularly share new information on this issue consistent with ensuring the integrity of ongoing investigations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO RACHNA SACHDEVA KORHONEN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, how would you encourage the transition government to adhere to its agreement with ECOWAS for a 24-month political transition?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to stand firmly with the Malian people in their aspirations for democracy, peace, development, and respect for human rights. I will press the transition government to keep its promise to return the country to the Malian people through democratic governance. The reforms the transition government seeks to undertake, such as constitutional reform, will build a foundation for a stronger, more responsive democracy in Mali, and, if confirmed, I will encourage the transition government to undertake these reforms expeditiously. I will also caution them that some reforms are the work of generations and will need to be handed over to a democratic government. I echo Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield’s observation “that a Mali isolated from its community of nations and ECOWAS is not where Mali wants to be.” I share her wish to work with the Malian transition government to bring Mali back into the community of nations where it belongs. In order to rebuild relationships with its neighbors, the transition government first needs to demonstrate commitment to the transition timelines and work transparently with ECOWAS special envoy Goodluck Jonathan and the transition monitoring committee. If confirmed, I will seek to assist the transition government as it moves towards the constitutional referendum and elections, but we must see progress.

Question. To what degree do you assess that U.S. adversaries and their actors, such as the Wagner Group, successfully operate in Mali?

Answer. Russia enjoys a burgeoning relationship with the transition government, evidenced by numerous ministerial trips by transition government members to Russia in recent months. The Wagner Group, through its partnership with the Malian Armed Forces (FAMa), is participating in operations in the country. Ultimately, 1,000 Wagner forces will not achieve what 5,000 French forces could not. The tactics Wagner has allegedly used in Moura and elsewhere have resulted in a spike in human rights abuses. Wagner will not bring peace to Mali.

Question. Beyond support for international peacekeeping operations, what specifically would you do as Chief of Mission to discourage the Malian Government from relying on the aid of our adversaries—whether military or economic?

Answer. If confirmed, I will share with my Malian colleagues the harm caused by Yevgeniy Prigzhoin and the Wagner Group in multiple contexts, including in

Libya, Mozambique, Syria, and the Central African Republic. Countries that partner with Prigozhin and Wagner become weaker, poorer, more volatile and less secure. As a practical matter, leaders in such countries lose control of security operations within their territory. The steep costs in payments and mineral concessions that are demanded by Prigozhin's enterprises deprive national budgets and local citizens of critically needed resources. Prigozhin is best known for financing the Internet Research Agency (IRA), an entity that repeatedly attempted to interfere in the U.S. elections. Through companies that exploit Africa's natural resources, political operatives who undermine democratic actors, front companies posing as NGOs, and social media manipulation, Prigozhin spreads disinformation to influence African politics in the Kremlin's favor. The Wagner Group's alleged human rights abuses, including at Moura and Gossi, will only harm the transition government counterterrorism efforts by alienated the Malian people.

If confirmed, I will call on the transition government to take action to facilitate responsible and accountable security assistance efforts aimed at protecting and empowering the Malian people.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work as Chief of Mission to ensure continuing support of PEPFAR and other life-saving health programs?

Answer. USAID has partnered with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, civil society, and private sector for over 60 years and remains Mali's largest bilateral health donor. Our health programs reach 80 percent of Malians. USAID's health programs focus on strengthening communities' capacity to protect their own health and strengthen the health systems that underpin successful expansion of, access to, and use of high impact primary health care services in the areas of maternal and child health, voluntary family planning, and disease prevention and control. I view these health initiatives, including PEPFAR, as vital to our efforts to promote a more stable, peaceful, and resilient Mali. If confirmed, I will endeavor to ensure these programs are supported so we can continue this critical work.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO RACHNA SACHDEVA KORHONEN BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. What is your view of the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission in Mali MINUSMA, the deadliest peacekeeping mission in the world, particularly given the post-coup environment in Mali? As U.S. Ambassador, if confirmed, how will you engage MINUSMA leadership, and leadership in the Africa and International Organization Affairs Bureaus at the State Department to make sure that mandate of the mission is appropriate for the existing political and security environment in Mali

Answer. The United States strongly supports MINUSMA as the leading component of the international community's efforts to address the political and security crises in Mali, including by supporting the parties to make progress towards sustainable peace. MINUSMA also plays a critical role in the protection of Malian civilians and facilitating their access to basic services as well as humanitarian aid.

The restrictions the transition government has imposed on MINUSMA, as well as the arrival of the Wagner Group, threaten the safety of MINUSMA peacekeepers and obstruct the implementation of the mission's mandate. The United States has urged the transition government to enable MINUSMA to carry out its mandate unimpeded. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for MINUSMA in this regard.

If confirmed, I commit to continuing the sustained, senior-level engagement Embassy Bamako conducts with MINUSMA, both on the Force and Civilian sides. I will also continue to advocate with the transition government for MINUSMA to be able to carry out its mandate unimpeded. I will provide colleagues in the Bureaus of African and International Organization Affairs with the on-the-ground perspective necessary for the Department to assess the mission's effectiveness and inform the inter-agency policy process.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ROLFE MICHAEL SCHIFFER BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY ROUNDS

Question. In 2021, the Philippines had one of the highest per capita murder rates of land and environmental defenders in the world. What actions will you take as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Asia to ensure that USAID employees, including officers posted to the region, are trained on (1) effective engagement with

environmental defenders and extractive industry or agribusiness companies; (2) how to manage conflict between these groups; and (3) how to encourage businesses to engage responsibly with critics of their activities?

Answer. I have closely followed the Philippines for many years and am very familiar with the environmental and land defenders that you raise. I deeply admire their brave efforts in the face of very real danger in the Philippines. Their efforts are even more urgent in the face of the climate crisis, which impacts the Philippines in profound and numerous ways.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all relevant USAID staff give this issue the urgent attention that it deserves. I will make sure our staff are aware of and able to connect defenders and supporting organizations to available resources in each country, including those that may be supported by the USG, and other like-minded partner countries and actors. I will also help USAID partner with counterparts in the Philippines to work toward minimizing conflict.

Question. What actions will you take to push back against the authoritarian playbook of repression in the Indo-Pacific and make investments in democracy promotion, rule of law, and the protection of human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to take several actions to push back against the authoritarian playbook of repression in the Indo-Pacific and make investments in democracy promotion, rule of law, and the protection of human rights. Following on from the Administration's successful first Summit for Democracy in December 2021, I understand that USAID is launching new global democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programs that will complement ongoing DRG programming that supports fundamental democratic practices across the Asia Pacific. I understand that these new and ongoing programs include objectives to promote election implementation and oversight, enhance civil society—including women, youth, and labor engagements, bolster free media, fight corruption, build governing capacity, and strengthen the rule of law.

Also, I understand that USAID will continue to promote transparent, accountable and responsive institutions that build sustainable democracy and counter corruption. I further understand that USAID will also work to maintain the integrity of information technology spaces, promote and protect civil and political rights, strengthen the integrity of electoral processes, and support democratic champions wherever they are.

Using the strength of its field missions with dedicated career DRG officers, my understanding is that USAID focuses most of its assistance on bilateral programs managed by in-country staff.

Programs and approaches vary according to the country's context. However, for issues that are better addressed regionally, I understand that the Asia Bureau develops programs that are managed either from Washington or its regional missions.

Question. As noted in the Administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy, the Indo-Pacific is "the epicenter of the climate crisis." If confirmed, how will you work with partners and allies to ensure the international community provides adequate funding to address issues of both climate change mitigation and adaptation in this vulnerable region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies to ensure the international community provides adequate funding to address issues of both climate change mitigation and adaptation in this vulnerable region. I understand that USAID helps to build climate resilience across Asia, assisting their partner countries to address climate impacts on their doorsteps and reduce their climate impacts. Their assistance helps reduce emissions, protect critical ecosystems, accelerate Asia's transition to renewable energy, and build resilience against climate shocks. Achieving climate results through non-climate programs is critical to mainstreaming climate. I also understand that USAID pursues secondary objectives with indirect adaptation, clean energy, or sustainable landscape results, where appropriate, while staying focused on their primary development purpose.

The USAID Papua New Guinea Electrification Partnership (PEP) is one example of a unique multi donor clean energy initiative, cost-shared in collaboration with Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. PEP's goal is to increase PNG's electrification rate from 13 percent to 70 percent by 2030.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ROLFE MICHAEL SCHIFFER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Based on the strike that killed Ayman al-Zawahiri, it's clear that the Taliban are providing sanctuary for Al Qaeda. In addition, recent U.N. reports indicate that the Taliban and Al Qaeda remain tied by ideology and marriage, and al Qaeda is actively reestablishing a presence in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the Taliban's human rights record is appalling as evidenced by a recent Amnesty International report titled *Death in Slow Motion*, which captures the plight of Afghan women and girls.

- How do you intend to strike the right balance between providing for the needs of the Afghan people and preventing diversions to terrorism or entrenching human rights abusers?
- What mechanisms are in place to avoid diversions to the Taliban or Haqqani network?

Answer. I understand that USAID has worked in challenging and conflict-affected areas throughout its history and that the Agency has drawn on experiences from its over 20 years in Afghanistan, and other challenging environments—including Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and Colombia—to put in place strong oversight of U.S. Government assistance funds.

I further understand that all USAID humanitarian assistance is channeled through U.N. and international non-governmental organization partners, predicated on validated humanitarian need and the vulnerability of the supported communities and that no USG humanitarian assistance is provided to or through Taliban authorities.

I further understand that while USAID has legal authorizations in place to safeguard against sanctions violations, it still requires its partners to report any instances of diversion, fraud, waste, and abuse, including incidents involving the Taliban and Haqqani Network, and will suspend funding if necessary. Finally, I understand that USAID also vets key personnel of all of its implementing partners to ensure that no funds are diverted for nefarious purposes.

Question. In the West Bank and Gaza, USAID has a formal definition of 'direct benefit' that is operationalized in associated Mission Orders.

- What definition of direct benefit is USAID using in Afghanistan?
- Please describe the categories of USAID assistance to Afghanistan and the intended goals of such assistance.

Answer. "Direct assistance" is not defined legally and the term is not otherwise a term of art. I understand that USAID has been coordinating with the Department of State on application of the restriction and that State and USAID have agreed the scope of the restriction needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. I further understand that because the United States has not yet made a decision as to whether to recognize any entity, including the Taliban, as the Government of Afghanistan, the provision of assistance raises difficult questions regarding its potential application to Afghan Government entities (such as ministries, etc., which continue to exist and operate regardless of any U.S. recognition decision). It is my understanding that State and USAID expect that the restriction would apply to any assistance provided directly to the Taliban as a group and could also apply to entities controlled by the Taliban, depending on the circumstances.

I understand that USAID is doing a great deal alongside its international partners to address Afghanistan's most urgent humanitarian needs. The United States is the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and targets its humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations, focusing on provinces where levels of food insecurity are the most dire and where partners have an operational presence and the capacity to scale up.

Humanitarian assistance is necessary, but not sufficient, to help Afghanistan become economically capable of supporting its population. Therefore, I understand that USAID classifies non-HA assistance into two main areas of support: 1: basic needs through support to livelihoods and agriculture, education, and health sectors; and 2: human rights, and importantly the rights of women and girls.

In health, I understand that USAID programs support the COVID-19 pandemic response; help maintain basic service delivery, particularly maternal health services, prenatal and neonatal care; and increase access to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

I understand that livelihood assistance is helping to minimize the impact of economic disruption and instability on vulnerable households. Assistance is helping to

increase production of food and staple crops—such as wheat, soy, beans, and a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as the livestock and dairy sectors.

It is my understanding that on human rights, USAID supports the rights of women, children, journalists, human rights defenders, persons with disabilities, and members of minority groups. Together with State Department colleagues, they continue to press the Taliban to immediately cease repressive abuses and human rights violations. If confirmed, I look forward to furthering these critical efforts.

Finally, I understand that USAID has been able to sustain support to community-based education programs, private secondary and higher education programs, scholarships for Afghan students at the university level, and teacher training.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to upholding the statutory structure and organizational principles of the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID), whereby the agency operates as an independent agency under the foreign policy direction of the U.S. Secretary of State?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will uphold the statutory structure and organizational principles by which USAID formulates and executes U.S. foreign economic and development assistance policies and programs, subject to the foreign policy guidance of the President, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Council.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working in a bipartisan manner with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including by providing timely, accurate, and complete information on relevant U.S. foreign assistance programs in Asia?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working in a bipartisan manner with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including by providing timely, accurate, and complete information on relevant U.S. foreign assistance programs in Asia.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to upholding a zero tolerance policy for waste, fraud, and abuse in the programs under your purview?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to upholding a zero tolerance policy for waste, fraud, and abuse in the programs under my purview.

Question. If confirmed, will you also uphold a zero tolerance policy for USAID staff and implementing partners who engage in the sexual exploitation and abuse of the vulnerable communities they are meant to serve?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will uphold a zero tolerance policy for USAID staff and implementing partners who engage in the sexual exploitation and abuse of the vulnerable communities they are meant to serve.

Question. USAID has a diverse workforce, supported by 22 different hiring mechanisms, that has been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to persistent management challenges, budget uncertainty, and COVID-19 and its associated stresses. If confirmed, you will be responsible for overseeing 8 offices at headquarters, 15 bilateral missions in Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam), and 3 regional missions (the Regional Development Mission for Asia in Thailand, the Pacific Islands Regional Office based in the Philippines, and the Central Asia Regional office based in Kazakhstan). A number of these missions, including but not limited to Afghanistan, face significant security and access challenges.

- What is your understanding of morale within the Bureau for Asia?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities would be to make the Asia Bureau's morale as strong as possible. From my interactions with Asia Bureau staff, it is evident that staff rightly take deep satisfaction and pride in their work, and are firmly committed to USAID's mission. However, it is my understanding that the impacts of the COVID pandemic, compounded by crises and violence in several countries, such as Afghanistan and Burma, have impacted the morale of Asia Bureau staff. Nevertheless, staff are persisting in their life-saving and life-changing work.

Question. How do you intend to improve morale across the bureau?

Answer. representatives from the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management to gauge the state of morale. I will conduct listening sessions to hear from staff across the Bureau, work with staff to develop a plan of action to address any issues identified, and set an implementation timeline with built-in feedback loops, if confirmed.

Question. How do you intend to create a unified vision across the bureau and its bilateral and regional missions, while also accounting for the areas of overlap with other agencies, bureaus, offices, and initiatives?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the staff to develop a strategic vision for the Bureau that provides for clear goals and objectives while promoting cross-collaboration among teams. I will empower teams to develop contextualized implementation plans with clearly stated goals and results that derive from and support the Asia Bureau strategic vision and its priorities. I will also work with Bureau staff to continually highlight the importance of our unified vision and the factors that make for a successful “Team Asia” and ultimately a successful USAID. Where necessary, I will strengthen the Bureau’s various mechanisms for accountability and transparency, including performance reports, site visits, robust program evaluations and audits, if confirmed.

Question. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I would describe my management style as vision-driven and results-oriented. My goal is to create an inclusive, team-oriented environment where staff are held accountable for achieving results and feel empowered and supported by management. I believe in an inclusive, open, and collaborative approach to management, one that seeks to create an environment of constant feedback and learning for a culture that thrives on the free expression of ideas and unleashes the creative potential of the workforce. I believe in the importance of working across and with the entire organization to develop a shared strategic vision; translate that into practical, measurable implementable steps; align organizational resources and activities to do so—in an environment of shared ownership and mutual accountability. Clear communication, candid feedback and flexible decentralized decision-making that empowers employees to own and direct their own work, that monitors accountability and facilitates implementation, and that recognizes that different individuals and teams have different needs, are, in my view, key to a management approach that can create a high-performing, resilient and humane workplace.

Question. In your view, how would your management style translate in a USAID setting, where your workforce is composed of career foreign and civil servants, as well as a dizzying array of political appointees, Foreign Service Limited appointments, Participating Agency Service Agreements, contractors, and grantees?

Answer. My transparent and agile management style would allow me to effectively balance the Bureau’s competing priorities while holding everyone accountable for achieving the overall Agency and U.S. Government foreign policy objectives. Although USAID has a variety of hiring mechanisms, it is a workforce that has a competitive edge in being united by a common goal and a shared mission. Given the complex and dispersed nature of many of USAID’s programs, if confirmed, I intend to work with my colleagues to help create, build and sustain an organization for all employees at all levels, one that draws on our shared dependence and the commitment of all the members of the organization. I am also strongly of the view that diversity in a workforce, including diverse perspectives that come from different career experiences and modes of professional engagement only strengthen an organization, providing valuable insight that strengthen the ability of an organization to make better decisions, be more adaptive, and engage more effectively and creatively.

Question. As a political appointee rather than career foreign or civil servant, do you believe it is incumbent upon Agency leaders to integrate themselves into bureau operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I intend to immerse myself in understanding the nuances of USAID by listening to the Bureau’s workforce, both in DC and in the field, to ensure I fully understand the current objectives, programs, workstyle, and organizational strengths—and especially, given the challenges of the past several years and the changing nature of work, what the needs and aspirations of the organization look like within the broader construct of USAID operations, ambitions and culture. If confirmed, I plan to seek the views, perspectives and ideas of the widest possible range of staff and to work together with my team so that we can establish a clear vision and set of goals and objectives that is communicated throughout the bureau, to other elements of USAID and the USG, and to our implementing partners. I am acutely aware of the importance of understanding and being sensitive to different modes and methods of communication, aspirational thinking, and organizational habits—to marry the “policy” goals that the Biden-Harris administration seeks to pursue with an appreciation of USAID “process” and “practice” (or, in other words, culture)—to get things done, and done in a way that creates positive feedback, virtuous cycles, a healthy, motivated workforce, and forward organizational momentum.

Question. Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or in private?

Answer. No, I do not believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or in private.

Question. In order to incentivize and ensure employee excellence at USAID, accurate performance reviews for all categories of employees are critical, 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, I 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.

Question. If confirmed, would you support and encourage the managers in your bureau to provide clear, accurate, and direct feedback?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I would support and encourage the managers in the Asia bureau to provide clear, accurate, and direct feedback.

Question. Should the United States engage in highly risky public health research—such as gain-of-function research—in cooperation with countries that do not have adequate biosecurity standards, that have violated or failed to uphold the International Health Regulations, or where the United States cannot certify that such country is in compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention, including China?

Answer. I understand that USAID has never approved any work, including in China, that aimed to increase the ability of infectious agents to cause disease by enhancing its pathogenicity or by increasing its transmissibility (research known as “Gain of Function” studies).

I understand that prior to selecting countries to engage with on public health research activities, USAID conducts an assessment of countries’ capacity to responsibly conduct research by evaluating indicators that include but are not limited to, biosafety, biosecurity, IHR reporting compliance, willingness to share data, and political and security risks and that countries that underperform in these criteria are not selected for engagement.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure USAID’s research and development grants for public health research in Asia are fully vetted and do not flow to partners or sub-grantees engaged in such research? How?

Answer. I understand that USAID will build guidance into its Global Health Security projects that helps ensure implementing partners are adhering to rigorous biosafety and biosecurity protocols. I also understand that USAID requires regular reporting on implementing partners’ activities supported with Agency funding, which must adhere to the criteria laid out in the award. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to provide active review and oversight of awards made with Agency appropriated funds to monitor activities and the use of funds, and that funds do not support enhanced Potential Pandemic Pathogen research (i.e. research that makes a potentially pandemic virus more transmissible or pathogenic) through either the prime or sub-partners.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring full and complete compliance with current law, which prohibits the use of U.S. foreign assistance to perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning, support involuntary sterilizations, or lobby for or against the legalization of abortion overseas?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to ensuring compliance with all applicable statutory restrictions relating to abortion and involuntary sterilization.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION SUBMITTED TO ROLFE MICHAEL
SCHIFFER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Should the United States engage in highly risky public health research—such as gain-of-function research—in cooperation with countries that do not have adequate biosecurity standards, that have violated or failed to uphold the International Health Regulations, or where the United States cannot certify that such country is in compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention, including China?

Answer. I do not support USAID conducting research that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible in cooperation with such countries. Furthermore, it is my understanding that USAID does not engage in such highly risky public health research in any partner countries (research sometimes called “Gain of Function”)

and that USAID has not funded or conducted any studies or experiments anywhere in the world that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible.

I understand that prior to selecting countries to engage with on public health research activities, USAID conducts an assessment of countries' capacity to responsibly conduct research by evaluating indicators that include but are not limited to, biosafety, biosecurity, IHR reporting compliance, willingness to share data, and political and security risks and that countries that underperform in these criteria are not selected for engagement. If confirmed, I am committed to requiring that compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention is included as a country selection indicator.

Question. USAID, in coordination with the U.S. Department of State, manages United States contributions to COVAX.

- Do you agree that it is in the national interests of the United States, and the interests of our partners in Asia, to ensure that U.S. financial contributions to COVAX are not used to underwrite the purchase and distribution of sub-standard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines, particularly following the announcement that COVAX would, in fact, begin making major purchases of Chinese vaccines?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION SUBMITTED TO ROLFE MICHAEL
SCHIFFER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure USAID's research and development grants for public health research in Asia are fully vetted and do not flow to partners or sub-grantees engaged in such research? How?

Answer. Yes. I understand that USAID fully vets partners that receive public health research funding. I understand that in accordance with USAID's Operational Policy (ADS 303.3.9 Pre-Award Risk Assessment), this vetting includes, but is not limited to, requiring a USAID Agreement Officer to verify that the partner:

- does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)(beta.sam.gov);
- does not appear on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury for the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDNList/Pages/default.aspx>); and
- is not listed on the United Nations Security designation List (online at: <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq-sanctions-list.shtml>) prior to making an award.

If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with Agency leadership and with you on this issue.

I also understand USAID is building guidance into its Global Health Security projects with a life sciences focus to ensure implementing partners are adhering to rigorous biosafety and biosecurity protocols. Further, I understand that USAID requires regular reporting on implementing partners' activities supported with Agency funding, which must adhere to the criteria laid out in the award. If confirmed, I will reinforce USAID's continued practice of active review and oversight of awards made with Agency appropriated funds to monitor activities and the use of funds, and that funds do not support enhanced Potential Pandemic Pathogen research (i.e. research that makes a potentially pandemic virus more transmissible or pathogenic) through either the prime or sub-partners.

Question. If confirmed, how do you propose to counter China's vaccine diplomacy—or bullying—in the region?

Answer. Yes, I agree that it is in the interest of the United States and our partners for as many people as possible to be vaccinated with the highest-quality, U.S.-manufactured vaccines available. To that end, I understand that USAID and its interagency partners have delivered nearly 300 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 26 countries in Asia. I also understand that most of the Agency's Indo-Pacific partners have specifically asked for U.S.-manufactured vaccines. It is also my understanding that the U.S. contribution to COVAX was not used to purchase vaccines made in the PRC. The Biden-Harris administration is dedicated to its efforts to vaccinate the world and ensure broad availability of safe and effective vaccines to more countries in need, through COVAX and bilaterally, and I believe others should do the same.

I know that across Asia, USAID assists countries with vaccine readiness, vaccine advocacy campaigns, and vaccine delivery. From enhancing laboratory capabilities to installing liquid oxygen tanks, USAID's partnerships with the governments and

people have enabled them to respond to COVID-19, strengthen health systems, and better prepare communities for future pandemics.

The Biden-Harris administration supports the World Health Organization's goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the global population and pledged that the United States will be the world's vaccine arsenal. I understand that USAID plays a pivotal role in U.S. contributions to this goal by advancing the President's commitment to make 1.2 billion U.S.-made doses available for donation to low- and lower-middle-income countries. I understand that USAID will also continue to provide financial and technical assistance to deliver and administer vaccines through our leadership of the U.S. Government's Initiative for Global Vaccine Access (Global VAX), through which USAID has supported more than 100 countries.

Question. USAID overseas missions have a long history of stretching the boundaries when it comes to permissible uses of PEPFAR funds.

- If confirmed, will you commit to working closely with the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (OGAC) at the U.S. Department of State, USAID's Bureau for Global Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that USAID's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS in the region are efficient, effective, aligned and complementary to the work of OGAC?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy at the State Department, USAID's Bureau for Global Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other PEPFAR implementing agencies to ensure that USAID's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS in the region are efficient, effective, and aligned to PEPFAR's objectives.

Question. There has been a strong focus over the last two years on multilateral institutions to address global challenges.

- Recognizing that multilateral and bilateral programs are meant to work collaboratively, and that each have their own unique strengths and challenges, what would you consider to be the appropriate balance between multilateral and U.S. bilateral foreign assistance programs in the region?
- How important to U.S. public diplomacy efforts is "branding" United States foreign assistance in the region?
- Is working through multilateral or regional institutions worth the trade-off when it comes to the loss of branding and other public diplomacy opportunities in the region?

Question. I understand that in Asia, USAID will continue to engage like-minded partners directly, in-country, and through multilateral initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), U.S.-Taiwan Pacific Islands Dialogue, U.S.-Japan-Australia Trilateral Infrastructure Consultation, the Trilateral Pacific Security Dialogue, and others. I further understand that USAID will continue to deepen its collaboration with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, , and other like-minded partners and will seek to leverage its strong partnerships with regional institutions, including the Pacific Islands Forum, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Quad.

On the issue of balance between multilateral and bilateral assistance, I believe that balance depends on the country and the goals to be achieved by the assistance. Bilateral assistance allows the USG to achieve goals that further U.S. foreign policy objectives, allows for greater accountability and provides visibility around the assistance delivered. However, there are advantages to using multilateral channels when striving to pool resources and advance a common global cause. For example, USAID may choose to provide assistance through multilateral organizations such as the case of Burma where humanitarian assistance providers' lives could be put at risk should the assistance be branded as USAID assistance. I also believe that a better option could be a hybrid model where assistance is provided to multilateral organizations but is earmarked for specific purposes providing USAID the advantages of both options.

I believe appropriate branding sends a strong public diplomacy message, conveying that United States assistance is due to the generosity of the American people. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all USAID branding legal and policy requirements.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION SUBMITTED TO ROLFE MICHAEL
SCHIFFER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. If confirmed, how do you propose to counter China's vaccine diplomacy—or bullying—in the region?

Answer. It is my belief that the best way to counter the PRC's efforts is for the United States to remain the world's arsenal for vaccines, especially as there is a clear preference for U.S.-made vaccines. To date, USG vaccine donations have significantly outpaced those by the PRC. We also need to continue being assertive in publicizing our contributions; we must keep telling the story of how American innovation and donations—our effective vaccines—have directly contributed to easing the pandemic in communities around the world.

The Biden-Harris administration supports the World Health Organization's goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the global population. I understand that USAID plays a pivotal role in U.S. contributions to this goal by advancing the President's commitment to make doses available for donation to low- and lower-middle-income countries, and that the U.S. has been able to meet vaccine demand for 116 countries who have requested doses. I understand that USAID will also continue to provide financial and technical assistance to deliver and administer vaccines through our leadership of the U.S. Government's Initiative for Global Vaccine Access (Global VAX), through which USAID has supported more than 100 countries. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure these programs are adequately funded.

Question. Successive Administrations—both Democrat and Republican—have launched initiatives to “localize” U.S. foreign assistance, including by building the capacity of local partners to design programs and manage U.S. funds directly, rather than working as sub-awardees to large, U.S.-based development contractors and non-governmental organizations. Each of these initiatives has had mixed results.

- What is your view of “localization” in the context of USAID's work in Asia?
- How can the Bureau for Asia more effectively empower local partners through its program consultation, design, and implementation processes?
- Is it appropriate to set targets for “localization” and, if so, what would you consider to be reasonable and appropriate?

Answer. I support the vision of localization Administrator Power presented in her November 2021 speech at Georgetown University, “A New Vision for Inclusive Development,” in which she outlined USAID's commitment to build on past efforts in making its work more inclusive; and that the Agency will pursue this, in part, through localization. I understand that USAID will shift its programs and practices to expand and enhance its support for locally-led development, the process in which local actors—encompassing individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments—set their own agendas, develop solutions, and bring the capacity, leadership, and resources to make those solutions a reality. I agree with Administrator Power that around the world, when USAID's efforts are responsive to local priorities, and draw upon local capacities, diverse networks, and resources—results are more likely to be sustained by local organizations and institutions.

For the Agency and the Asia Bureau, I understand localization to mean channeling a portion of development and humanitarian awards directly to local civil society, business, and other institutions that are supported by and accountable to local communities. It means changing the power dynamics that have historically characterized the relationships among local actors, international prime partners, and donors, with renewed focus on empowering local actors and, within that goal, ensuring meaningful participation by marginalized populations, including women, people with disabilities, youth, indigenous populations, displaced persons, and ethnic and religious minorities.

I think it is appropriate to set targets to help motivate and track the Agency's localization efforts. I understand that the targets that the Administrator announced in November—25% of USAID's funding going to direct local awards over four years and 50% of the Agency's activities incorporating good practices to put local actors in the lead over ten years—are global targets. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress and with the Bureau and Mission staff, to identify appropriate targets given the unique context of the region.

Question. Many of our partners in the Indo-Pacific want to work with the United States on clean energy. However, they have to prioritize their immediate needs for power and distribution, and often that means continuing to rely on oil and natural gas. Indo-Pacific nations want to cooperate with the U.S. on energy sources like nat-

ural gas, but are running into roadblocks with their counterparts in this Administration.

- Do you commit that, if confirmed, you will advance policies and programs with our partners that make sense for them given their current energy needs?
- Do you commit that you will not reject outright cooperation with partners on natural gas, other cleaner fossil fuels, or nuclear energy, if that is what is practical for them to meet their energy needs?
- What will inform how you approach technical assistance and other capacity-building efforts with Indo-Pacific nations on energy?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to advancing policies and programs with our partner countries that make sense for them and will not outright reject any development solution to help our partners to meet their energy needs.

I understand that USAID has an adjudication process for reviewing fossil fuel projects under the Administration's International Energy Engagement Guidance. I am told that this guidance allows for support of carbon intensive energy sources necessary for geostrategic or development reasons when no other practical alternatives exist and the assistance will not prevent a country from meeting its decarbonization objectives.

As I understand, USAID's approach to energy sector reform and smart growth is to provide partner countries with the tools and capability needed to evaluate all of their options through an integrated resource planning (IRP) methodology. In addition, I understand that USAID assists countries in establishing open, transparent, competitive procurement processes, in order to obtain clean, affordable, and secure energy supplies.

Question. Do you commit to prioritizing infrastructure partners in the Indo-Pacific region, including through mechanisms such as the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network and the related Transaction Advisory Fund?

Answer. Yes.

Question. The President just announced the Project on Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), and you mentioned in your opening statement that you would be involved in its implementation.

- What is PGII's purpose?
- How will PGII and USAID existing infrastructure programs and tools interact? Is PGII going to subsume any responsibilities of USAID?

Answer. As I understand, the purpose of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) is to forge values-driven, transparent, impactful partnerships to meet the enormous infrastructure needs of low- and middle-income countries and, in so doing, to advance the United States' and our allies' economic and national security interests—for example, the integrity of supply chains.

PGII will mobilize strategic investments in areas vital to sustainable development and global security, including digital connectivity; climate and energy security; health and health security; and gender equality and equity. It will also mobilize strategic investment in hard infrastructure, like ports and rail.

To do this, PGII will promote the execution of projects in consultation and partnership with host countries and local stakeholders, develop clean and climate-resilient infrastructure, advance transparency and accountability, and support the policy and institutional reforms that are key to creating the conditions and capacity for sound projects and lasting results. PGII will coordinate the full suite of tools across the U.S. Government, as well as the G7, other governments, the private sector, multilateral development banks, development finance institutions, and others.

The U.S. aims to mobilize \$200 billion for PGII over the next five years through grants, federal financing, and leveraging private sector investments. As part of the announcement of PGII, USAID launched three projects: Digital Invest, a USAID blended finance program that seeks to mobilize investment capital to expand internet access and digital financial services for traditionally underserved consumers in developing markets; The Healthcare Electrification and Telecommunication Alliance, which seeks to enhance health services and assist in COVID-19 response efforts by providing reliable, renewable, and affordable electricity for health care facilities across Sub-Saharan Africa; and Care Infrastructure, a new multi-partner contribution to the World Bank's Childcare Incentive Fund to scale high-quality child care and early learning and empower women to participate in the global economy.

If confirmed, I will closely examine alignment between PGII and existing programs such as the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network (ITAN), which is a whole-of-government initiative to advance sustainable, transparent, high-quality infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific region, and the Transaction Advisory

Fund, which I understand the Asia Bureau manages as an interagency tool to provide transaction advisory services on strategic infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will ensure that all infrastructure tools and programs are complementary, non-duplicative, and deliver the best value for the US taxpayer.

Question. With respect to Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, what would be your top priorities if confirmed?

Answer. I understand that USAID considers its Pacific neighbors essential partners in fostering a free and open Indo-Pacific region and that USAID works to address the region's most pressing challenges: climate change, access to transparent and high-standard infrastructure financing, digital connectivity, good governance and sustainable development.

Working with Pacific Island countries to bolster their nature-based solutions, including conservation of critical ecosystems and sustainable management of fisheries, will strengthen livelihoods, support sustainable and healthy communities and ecosystems, and reduce the impacts of climate-related disasters.

I understand USAID plans to continue to deepen its work with countries in Southeast Asia, and that USAID will also leverage its strong partnerships with development partners and regional institutions, including ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the longstanding Pacific Community also known as SPC. Building and maintaining these partnerships will be essential to advancing Administration priorities such as addressing the climate crisis, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, countering malign actors, and addressing Burma's humanitarian challenges while seeking to restore democratic governance.

Question. With respect to Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands] What do you see as major barriers to providing the right and most effective assistance and programming in these regions?

Answer. Pacific Islands countries face a range of barriers, including small geographic size, isolation, and small populations. These factors contribute to the region's extreme vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters as well as constrain the growth of their economies. I understand that USAID's approach to the Pacific Islands supports addressing the most pressing priorities of the region. These priorities include combating climate change, sustainable fisheries management, promoting energy security, expanding digital connectivity, supporting economic development, and fostering inclusivity and equality. Effective programming in this region requires working at both the regional level, where there are opportunities to drive collective action and ensure strong unity within key regional organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Community, as well as at the bilateral level, using programming tailored to fit the unique context of each country.

Countries across Southeast Asia are facing the immediate risks of climate change; rapid urbanization; and the overexploitation and contamination of life-sustaining resources of the land, air, and sea. Barriers remain to stronger regional connectivity, sustainable infrastructure development, and commitment to democratic principles and freedoms. Through sustainable, inclusive development partnerships such as the quadrilateral cooperation between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States (the Quad) and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), I understand that USAID supports developing countries in Asia to realize their development goals and contribute to a more prosperous and peaceful world.

Question. If confirmed, how will you prioritize USAID programming under the Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF)? What will be your guideposts?

Answer. Consistent with the FY 2022 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (SFOAA), if confirmed, my work on the Countering People's Republic of China Influence Fund (CPIF) will be done in close consultation with the designated Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator for the FY 2022 CPIF allocation process.

My understanding is that USAID's priorities will align with both the wider U.S. Government strategy on China as well as the Agency's newly formed strategic approach to the People's Republic of China (PRC), with a focus on select economic, political, security, and technological sectors where PRC actions, influence, or messaging is most acute, is most detrimental to U.S. national security interests or those of our allies and partners, and where limited CPIF resources can have the greatest impact. While the PRC's efforts to displace the United States as the lead global power are a global, multi-sector threat, the Indo-Pacific remains the primary theater of competition and will receive strong consideration for CPIF resources.

Question. In the last several years, the executive branch has notified Congress projects using CCIF money that is clearly an attempt to use China as a justification to fund programs they already wanted to do anyway and that have no discernible nexus to countering China. Do you commit that you will not contribute to this dynamic?

Answer. I commit that, if confirmed as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Asia, I will work to ensure that proposals are closely aligned with one of four focus areas (sectors) for strategic competition: economic, political, security, and/or technology, and must articulate how the intended program will address a specific, negative PRC influence, action, or message resulting in a measurable impact

Question. How will you use your leadership role, if confirmed, to ensure CCIF funds are used appropriately?

Answer. If confirmed as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Asia, I commit to engaging with Congress as appropriate and necessary to ensure that the process is rigorous and that funds are used appropriately.

Question. Should bureaus and offices in the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development consider CCIF to be a \$300 million pot of money that they can use for whatever they want, regardless of whether it is connected to China?

Answer. I understand that USAID received clear feedback from Congress on how to improve its process of the Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF) for FY2022 and beyond. Per their recent Report to Congress on The Framework and Processes for Administering the Countering PRC Influence Fund, the Department of State and USAID's FY2022 guidance requires successful proposals to articulate how the intended program will address a specific, negative PRC influence, action, or message resulting in a measurable impact.

If confirmed, I will work, together with my counterpart at the Department of State, to ensure our teams apply rigorous standards to determine how CPIF funds will be used. If confirmed, I commit to further consulting with you on this issue.

Question. In the context of CCIF, to what extent will you distinguish between projects that might strengthen our partners and those that counter explicit activity or influence by the People's Republic of China?

Answer. I understand that CPIF is intended to provide the Department of State and USAID with resources to fund activities that strategically invest, align, and compete with the PRC's negative and inappropriate influence, actions, and messaging globally and provide our partners with diplomatic and development alternatives to the PRC's authoritarian model. In some instances, this can be accomplished by directly countering an explicit activity, influence effort, or messaging campaign by the PRC. In other instances, strengthening the systems, capacity and resilience of USAID partner countries to resist the PRC on their own can be equally as effective. Transparent, accountable systems based on a rules-based order inhibit the PRC development model, so strengthening those systems limits opportunity for the negative impact of the PRC. For example, both transparent public procurement systems and active civil society that hold politicians accountable for public asset declarations effectively decrease the opportunity for corruption, undermining inappropriate PRC influence.

While both approaches are valid ways to achieve the same objective, I understand that all proposals will be expected to cite a specific PRC influence or behavior that harms U.S. interests or those of USAID partner countries; describe the specific, measurable outcome to be achieved using CPIF funds; and articulate how the proposal would achieve this outcome and the duration of the project's lifespan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ROLFE MICHAEL SCHIFFER BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In May, Secretary Blinken said that the People's Republic of China is the "only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it." The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) clearly holds all the reins of power in the People's Republic of China and has used this power to commit genocide in Xinjiang, flood our communities with fentanyl, and emit by far the largest quantity of greenhouse gases. With their absolute control of Chinese society and industry, the CCP could stop all of these destructive actions tomorrow if they so choose.

- Is the Chinese Communist Party a threat to the United States?

Answer. Yes. The Chinese Communist Party aims to challenge the U.S.-led model characterized by democratic governance and open markets, which has succeeded at delivering vital public services equitably and preserving sovereignty. This model is the best system to build just, inclusive, and prosperous societies.

Many of the actions that Beijing is pursuing are detrimental to U.S. national security and development interests. Across regions and in multilateral fora, the PRC is attempting to undermine U.S. investments in key development sectors ranging from natural resources management to human rights protection. This poses significant risks to U.S. partner countries' autonomy, stability, and prosperity, and requires us to confront the PRC from a position of strength-to be competitive when we should be, countering when we must be, and collaborate only when it is in our national interest.

If confirmed, I would use all tools available to counter this challenge, such as working with USAID's Anti-Corruption Task Force and Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance to combat the CCP's corruptive practices and use of corrosive capital—which in part is how the PRC convinces countries to sign up to its Belt and Road Initiative. In contrast to the PRC's state-led backroom deals, if confirmed, I would further USAID's engagements with the private sector and civil society to counter the PRC's state-led development model that undermines the financial and resource independence of our partner countries.

Question. Does the Chinese Communist Party undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests?

Answer. As outlined in my response above, we are currently witnessing a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) unwilling to work for the greater good of populations around the world and take actions that are detrimental to U.S. interests.

If confirmed, I would further USAID's activities in building resilient supply chains, combating forced labor, lessening trade distortions, and furthering democratic values.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the People's Republic of China as part of your work?

Answer. Such a pivotal cooperation decision would require extensive high level discussion in the Executive Branch and deep consultation with Congress. The law must be our guide: I am well aware of legal restrictions regarding assistance to the PRC and in the provision of U.S. assistance, including in appropriations legislation.

Question. By virtue of its geography and a decades-long program of dam building, the Chinese Communist Party retains significant control over the Mekong River basin, a source of water, food, and energy for more than 65 million people. At the press of a button, the CCP could stop the flow of water to downstream countries, which would cause an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that would destabilize the region and send even more migrants to our unprotected southern border.

- Are you concerned with the prospect of a humanitarian crisis in the Mekong River Basin caused by the Chinese Communist Party? Please explain.

Answer. I am always concerned about actions that the Chinese Communist Party could take that might negatively impact Indo-Pacific countries, especially those in Southeast Asia, and the United States.

The cascade of dams built by the Chinese Communist Party exacerbate the impacts that climate change is already having on the health of the river and on the countries in the Mekong Basin.

USAID has been instrumental in understanding the impacts of these dams, supporting the Stimson Center to develop and launch the Mekong Infrastructure tracker to better understand the spatial extent and impacts of dams and other infrastructure in the river basin. I understand that programs like SERVIR Mekong out of the Regional Development Mission for Asia, based in Bangkok, Thailand, have developed tools like digital rain gauges and vegetation assessments to track and document the ongoing changes within the basin. USAID programs provide the data and evidence to document the risks of further dam construction while supporting non-hydro renewable energy for downstream Mekong countries.

I also understand that the impacts of dams on fisheries is the reason for the creation of the USAID "Wonders of the Mekong" program. I understand that this program works to understand fish movements throughout the Mekong systems, the impacts of the variety of dams on fish populations and advocates for environmental and social safeguards to protect a healthy Mekong ecosystem providing for the food security of the region.

Finally, it is my understanding that USAID has long partnered with the ASEAN Secretariat's regional humanitarian response unit to strengthen ASEAN's ability to support disaster response in the region, both regionally and bilaterally. I further understand that USAID has teams on standby 24/7 all around the world, including in Southeast Asia, ready to deploy to a range of humanitarian crises.

Question. How is the United States working with downstream Mekong countries to ensure these countries are resilient to the effects of a CCP-sparked humanitarian crisis?

Answer. As I understand, one of USAID's most pressing priorities is to help partner countries, including those in the Mekong region, develop their capacity to be resilient to a range of crises.

USAID, bilaterally and regionally, works towards resilience through agriculture and environment programs. I understand that USAID's efforts for resilience to the changes in river flows caused by the CCP and climate change include monitoring environmental conditions, early warning systems, and conservation. For example, on monitoring, the USAID-funded Mekong Infrastructure Tracker platform is the premier resource for researchers to track, monitor, and quantify the development of energy, transportation, and water infrastructure assets and the social, economic, and ecological changes they bring to Southeast Asia. On conservation, the Wonders of the Mekong Program in Cambodia is rearing endangered fish and releasing them in efforts to increase fish stocks and ecosystem health which contributes to Cambodians' food security.

I further understand that USAID has long partnered with the ASEAN Secretariat's regional humanitarian response unit to strengthen ASEAN's ability to support disaster response in the region, both regionally and bilaterally. I also understand that the Vietnam Mission is specifically focusing on more bilateral work in the Mekong, including the Mekong Delta Coastal Habitat Conservation activity which was announced by Vice President Harris during her visit to Vietnam in 2021.

Question. If confirmed, what types of programming do you recommend USAID support in Mekong River countries to further ensure these countries are resistant to water shocks?

Answer. As I understand, USAID has been tracking the impacts of large-scale hydropower dams and climate change on the Mekong River Basin through a variety of activities.

I understand that USAID works with countries in the Lower Mekong region, as well as the Mekong River Commission (MRC), to build capacity to address water shocks and other adverse environmental impacts. For example, the USAID SERVIR-Mekong initiative, a partnership with NASA, harnesses remote sensing technology and open data to help address development challenges related to a changing climate. I also understand that the MRC recently endorsed USAID SERVIR-Mekong's flood forecasting and reservoir assessment tools, improving climate resilience across the Lower Mekong. I understand that USAID SERVIR-Mekong partnered with the MRC to develop decision support tools that assist member countries to better prepare for and respond to floods and droughts.

I further understand that the USAID-supported Wonders of the Mekong Program has generated new insights on the drought-flood cycle in Cambodia. This new research, which has been featured in National Geographic and other major outlets, has resulted in the Government of Cambodia calling for a moratorium on dams. The Cambodian Government has also prohibited the cutting of flooded forests which will contribute to improving the health of the Mekong River system and the communities dependent upon them.

I further understand that through the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) activity, USAID supports a network of Lower Mekong scientists to better understand the impacts of hydropower and climate change on Mekong fisheries. This network of scientists is positioned to improve fisheries management by characterizing genetic diversity and spatial structure as well as establishing long-term monitoring of important fish species in Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam. The scientists are working to understand the impact of rapid hydroelectric development in the Lower Mekong Basin on fisheries.

Question. In contrast to the Chinese Communist Party, which continues to have strained relations with many of its neighbors, foreign assistance provided by the United States has enabled its allies and partners to become foreign assistance providers themselves. The Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have provided assistance and support to countries in Southeast and Central Asia. Even Mongolia, which only 30 years ago was a satellite of the Soviet Union, has established its own international

development agency to promote democracy in other Central Asian states. A vision of a truly free and open Indo-Pacific is only possible when U.S. allies and partners cooperate with us in achieving this goal.

- To what extent can USAID cooperation with Asian development agencies the impact of U.S. foreign assistance? What programs have and have not worked previously?

Answer. I understand that USAID's development assistance to the Republic of Korea decades ago not only helped the country develop into the global leader that it is today, but it also helped the country develop its own very capable international development agency.

Cooperation with Japan advances U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. I understand that USAID works to align development policy and resources with Japan to enhance development impacts with like-minded allies through diplomatic efforts in Washington, DC and through the USAID Senior Development Counselor to Japan and Korea.

Finally, my understanding is that USAID has made a strategic decision to work with key emerging leaders in the Indo-Pacific to help them strengthen their own development agencies, including India, Thailand, Kazakhstan, and others. Strengthening our Indo-Pacific partners' ability to improve their neighbors' development is good strategy, good diplomacy, and good for the U.S. taxpayer.

Question. USAID currently manages co-funded programs with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in countries like Sri Lanka and the Maldives. To what extent can this model inform joint projects with Korea and Japan's foreign aid agencies?

Answer. I understand that collaborating with like-minded donors, including Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, is one of USAID's highest imperatives. These partnerships allow USAID to maximize its development investments and programming by avoiding duplicative efforts and promoting policy alignment. It is good strategy, good diplomacy, and good for the U.S. taxpayer.

My understanding is that USAID has strong existing relationships with Japan and the Republic of Korea, and works closely with both Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and other government and private sector stakeholders.

I understand that USAID is engaged in a number of co-funded programs with the Republic of Korea and Japan, including the USAID-KOICA Climate Resilient Cities as well as the Marine Litter activities and the Japan-Power Africa collaboration. I understand that USAID plans to build on the successes of such collaborations with the Republic of Korea and Japan by incorporating the lessons learned that the Agency has gleaned from our bilateral engagements with DFAT and other like-minded partners. I look forward to contributing to these efforts, if confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to encourage greater USAID cooperation and coordination with Korea and Japan's foreign aid agencies?

Answer. My understanding is that USAID has strong existing relationships with Japan and Korea, and works closely with both Ministries for Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), among other key Japanese and Korean stakeholders. I understand that USAID's Senior Development Counselor for Japan and Korea, based in Embassy Tokyo, is working to strengthen the Agency's strategic engagement with the Japanese Government, and is similarly focused on growing USAID's relationship with the Korean Government.

I also understand that USAID has frequent engagement with Japan's and Korea's embassies, JICA, and KOICA in the field, and will continue to build and capitalize on this partnership.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO ROLFE MICHAEL SCHIFFER BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. What actions has USAID taken since Administrator Power's confirmation to streamline USAID's hiring processes to develop the next generation of American development and assistance professionals?

Answer. USAID is committed to strengthening its global workforce to advance the Agency's mission and national security priorities. However, my understanding is that USAID's staffing has not increased at the same rate as its programmatic needs and requirements. USAID has complex requirements and needs to increase both the

size and agility of its career workforce while also streamlining non-career employment mechanisms.

I understand that the Global Development Partnership Initiative (GDPI) is the starting point for a strategic workforce effort to finally align USAID's workforce needs with its workforce supply, particularly around direct-hire staffing. I understand that at the end of FY2021, USAID completed a successful hiring surge to reach the previous staffing appropriations levels of 1,850 FS and 1,600 CS positions. However, given the significant expansion of USAID's work around the world, I understand that the Agency estimates its real staffing requirements are significantly higher in both Foreign Service and Civil Service categories.

I further understand that USAID's Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) is focusing on hiring efforts to streamline and diversify the Agency's hiring processes. For example, as part of USAID's General Schedule (GS) process, I understand that HCTM is developing a hiring manager guide and conducting webinars to educate hiring managers across USAID on their role, non-competitive hiring authorities, and timelines in the hiring process.

I understand that USAID is working to attract and retain the brightest minds that will help the Agency achieve its mission by engaging and recruiting diverse quality talent through targeted outreach and recruitment events, including via efforts to expand and maintain partnerships with organizations serving underrepresented groups to source eligible candidates for employment opportunities. I further understand that USAID has expanded its talent sourcing efforts by partnering with organizations that serve persons with disabilities and veterans to source candidates eligible for non-competitive employment consideration. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting these efforts.

Question. Noting food supply disruptions as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, what tools can Congress provide to ensure USAID can fulfill its mission?

Answer. I understand that the generous resources provided by Congress through the Ukraine supplemental appropriations bills have been critical to USAID's ability to scale up humanitarian and development assistance to respond to the food security crisis resulting from Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine. However, given the scale of global food insecurity and the dynamic nature of its causes, it is imperative that USAID fully optimize its programs and be able to employ the best food assistance modalities to respond to each context. I understand that the reauthorization of the Farm Bill may provide an unparalleled opportunity for Congress and USAID to work together to ensure the U.S. Government has the best tools at its disposal to meet the humanitarian challenges of the day. If confirmed, I look forward to working with colleagues across the Agency on these issues and to consulting with Congress on these issues.

Question. Given the confluence of so many crises, where should USAID look to first prioritize its efforts?

Answer. I understand that the Agency's priorities for Asia are guided by President Biden's 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy, the Central Asia Strategy and the U.S. Interim National Security Strategy. From briefings with USAID career staff, I also understand that the Asia Bureau has released a pro-active and affirmative Indo-Pacific framework that will operationalize the President's Indo-Pacific Strategy with ongoing and planned USAID programs. If confirmed, I look forward to delving into the details of USAID's approach to the Indo-Pacific and to consulting with you on these issues.

Question. Regarding U.S. strategy on Burma, if the military junta disrupts USAID's ability to interact with its implementing partners on the ground, how do you propose we work around this to guarantee a continuous supply of U.S. aid?

Answer. USAID's robust work in Burma continues and is more critical than ever. USAID has historical and recent experience managing aid globally in unstable and conflict-affected environments. I understand that USAID continuously adjusts approaches and strategies on the ground to avoid aid bottlenecks. For example, I understand that the Agency has diversified and expanded its use of local partners who may have better access and fewer restrictions to deliver food aid and other assistance to vulnerable communities. Additionally, as publicly announced on February 11, 2021, just 10 days after the coup, I understand that the USAID Mission pivoted \$42.4 million of FY2020 bilateral assistance funds away from development work that could have benefited the military government. This shift, primarily within existing awards, increased aid to civil society and non-governmental actors across all sectors. I understand that since then, the Mission has continued this model to design and implement work across all sectors in ways that do not work through or benefit Burma's military government.

On humanitarian assistance, I understand that the bulk of humanitarian assistance is delivered from within Burma despite increasing restrictions. I also understand that USAID's humanitarian assistance includes mobile health clinics, rehabilitation of water supply infrastructure, construction of sanitation facilities, protection services, shelter, nutrition support, humanitarian coordination, emergency cash, and relief items. I also understand that USAID continues to provide emergency and non-emergency food assistance to displaced populations and newly emerging areas of violence.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NATHANIEL FICK BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

CHIPS+ Funding

Question. Last week, Congress passed the CHIPS Act, which includes a provision that allocates \$500 million over 5 years to the Department of State, which in coordination with USAID, the Ex-Im Bank, and the DFC, will be used for a CHIPS for America International Technology Security and Innovation Fund. The purpose of this funding would be to coordinate with partner countries "to support international information and communications technology security." and "the development and adoption of secure and trusted telecommunications technologies, secure semiconductors, secure semiconductors supply chains, and other emerging technologies."

- Will you commit to keeping this committee fully and currently informed about the use of this funding?

Answer. Yes. The CHIPS for America International Technology Security and Innovation Fund provides critical funding for international information communications technology security and semiconductor supply chain activities. If confirmed, I will commit to keep the Congressional stakeholders fully briefed on how the Department plans to use the CHIPS funding as well as provide regular program status updates.

Question. What would be the CDP Bureau's top priorities when using this funding?

Answer. The Department will support the use of CHIPS funding to promote semiconductor supply chain security and international information and communications technology (ICT) security aligned with the Administration's priorities. If confirmed, I would recommend prioritizing activities that promote cooperation on semiconductor supply chain activities with our allies and partners and encourage and incentivize countries around the world to choose trustworthy suppliers for their next-generation telecommunications network build outs, including for 5G. I would also work with allies and partners to promote a more diverse and resilient ICT supply chain, including through the promotion of new architectures such as Open Radio Access Networks.

National Security Presidential Memorandum 13

Question. In 2018, the Trump administration issued National Security Presidential Memorandum 13, laying out U.S. Cyber Operations Policy, including the approval process for conducting offensive and defense cyber operations outside the United States.

- If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the appropriate Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff gains access to this document?

Answer. I respect the committee's important oversight role in U.S. offensive and defensive cyber operations. If confirmed, I will convey the committee's interest in this document to the White House and will advocate for maximum transparency.

Sharing Cyber Capabilities with Partners

Question. The FY2023 NDAA contains a provision stating that "the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, shall conduct an assessment on sharing military cyber capabilities of the Armed Forces with foreign partners of the United States for immediate operational use to cause effects on targets or enable collection of information of targets."

- How do you view the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Diplomacy's role in coordinating cyber capabilities sharing with foreign partners?

Answer. The Department has long supported collaboration and cooperation with key partners and allies, where appropriate, on cyber operations where we share national interests. This collaboration occurs on a case-by-case basis; the Bureau of

Cyberspace and Digital Policy supports increasing this collaboration. That said, the Department has neither an operational role, nor cyber capabilities itself to share with foreign partners. If confirmed, in close coordination with the Department of Defense and the other interagency partners, I will ensure foreign policy considerations are taken into account when evaluating the sharing of cyber capabilities with foreign partners, and that approved transfers take place as swiftly as possible.

CISA Global Strategy

Question. Just two weeks ago, CISA opened its first attaché office in London to “serve as a focal point for international collaboration between CISA, UK Government officials, and other federal agency officials,” and the agency continues to enter into memoranda of cooperation with foreign governments such as Ukraine in July 2022.

- Given these developments, how do you envision the CDP Bureau’s relationship the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) evolving in the near and long-term? Where do you view your areas of responsibility beginning and ending?

Answer. The Department of State facilitates engagements between foreign governments and U.S. agencies with specific technical expertise, including through Embassies overseas. Many countries want to work with and learn from CISA, particularly because it houses the best-in-class computer security incident response team with national responsibility. If confirmed, I would look to continue the Department’s strong collaborative relationship with CISA, leveraging their expertise to help partners gain the capabilities for better incident response and critical infrastructure protection, including by working with the Department’s cyber officers at our diplomatic missions, as I believe is intended by CISA’s Global Strategy.

Digital Freedom and Human Rights

Question. There is some concern that two subunits of the CDP Bureau—International Cyberspace Security and International Information and Communications Policy—will be headed by a Deputy Assistant Secretary, whereas the Digital Freedom Unit—the unit tasked to “defend against efforts to legitimize and adopt repressive and authoritarian practices in cyberspace”—is led by a coordinator with little support.

Question. Given this organizational structure, how do you plan to elevate the issue of human rights in the new Bureau? Given that the Digital Freedom Unit is still located within DRL, how will do you plan to work with DRL on these issues?

Answer. CDP and DRL are collaborative partners with complementary missions. DRL continues to lead the Department’s work on Internet freedom to ensure that individuals can enjoy their human rights online as well as offline. CDP has an integrated mandate to lead on digital freedom, which provides a broader paradigm to address the intersection between technology and human rights at a time when technology continues to expand into new areas of our lives. If confirmed, I will empower CDP’s Digital Freedom Team to promote meaningful access to digital technologies in order to preserve cyber stability and guard against digital authoritarianism by coordinating on these issues across all Department equities and engaging the interagency, international partners, and the multistakeholder community. I will ensure that the Digital Freedom Team receives the resources it needs to lead on this issue, including recognition of the Senior Coordinator as a Deputy Assistant Secretary equivalent.

Question. While the Department of State has sought to centralize responsibility for its cyber diplomacy related activities in the new CDP Bureau, the Bureaus of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs will continue to have policy and programmatic responsibility for issues related to internet freedom and cybercrime.

- How will you ensure coherent State Department engagement on these and other issues where there is a division of responsibilities across bureaus?

Answer. Before the establishment of the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy, its component offices successfully navigated the division of responsibilities regarding the leadership of the Internet freedom and cybercrime portfolios. If confirmed, I will continue to maintain the close, collaborative, and functional partnership between the CDP Bureau, DRL, and INL while ensuring that I bring the economic, national security, and digital freedom perspectives together to advance a future where everyone, everywhere, can harness the benefits of an open Internet and digital technologies to reach their full potential.

U.S. Leadership at Standards-Setting Bodies (ITU)

Question. Part of the mission of the Bureau for Cyberspace and Digital Diplomacy is “to advance policies that protect the integrity and security of the infrastructure of the internet.” I included a provision in my Economic Statecraft for the 21st Century bill that would establish an interagency working group dedicated to enhancing U.S. leadership and representation at international standards-setting bodies such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which establishes international standards that are fundamental to the operation for today’s information and communications technology networks. In the upcoming fall 2022 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, two candidates, one from the United States and one from Russia, are running for the position of ITU Secretary General, and represent fundamental differences in their views on digital governance.

- What is the Administration doing to ensure that the United States is represented not only in top-level positions at the ITU such as Secretary General, but also at the ITU’s lower-level workshops, seminars, and study groups, which is where recommendations and resolutions are sent up to the larger ITU body for votes?

Answer. Responsible, forward-looking, and transparent leadership of the ITU is vital to the U.S. telecommunications industry. The U.S. nomination of Doreen Bogdan-Martin as ITU Secretary-General is a critical piece of ensuring this strong leadership. Ms. Bogdan-Martin has spent the last 28 years in the ITU, working her way up the ranks, demonstrating how support for candidates at all levels is a winning strategy. If confirmed, I will work to ensure continued coordination with likeminded partners in promoting leadership candidates, including those of lower-level working groups and study groups to promote fair, transparent, and consensus-based approach to ITU’s work on spectrum, standards, and telecommunications development. The Department, recognizing that vote splitting contributes to undesirable results, coordinates with allies and partners to maximize our chance of electoral victory. I thank Senator Risch for his report entitled “A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China” that reaffirms the importance of coordination.

Digital Authoritarianism and Cyber Sovereignty

Question. Governments such as China and Russia have promoted the concept of “cyber sovereignty” in international fora in order to justify more restrictive measures on the Internet, including surveillance and censorship of political activists.

- Please describe your views on “cyber sovereignty” and its implications for global internet governance.

Answer. The concept of “cyber sovereignty” being advanced by countries like Russia and China has the potential to erode the current multistakeholder model of global Internet governance and the benefits of a global, distributed Internet for all. Proponents of “cyber sovereignty” are engaging in restrictive measures—such as surveilling and censoring their citizens and activists—or seeking to bring the Internet under greater inter-governmental control, such as through the UN. For decades, the multistakeholder model has underpinned the Internet’s global growth and its success as a platform for free communication, ensuring that no single entity—governmental or otherwise—controls the Internet. If confirmed, I will uphold the U.S. vision of the open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet under the global, multistakeholder model and will oppose efforts to undermine it.

Transparency for “Hunt Forward” Operations

Question. According to National Security Agency Director Paul Nakasone, “50 different hunt forward operations were conducted in 16 countries over the past three years,” all being “instances where countries invite CYBERCOM to test their systems against theoretical attacks.” One of the recommendations made in a report you co-chaired for the Council on Foreign Relations titled “Confronting Reality in Cyberspace: Foreign Policy for a Fragmented Internet” was “to adopt great transparency about defend forward actions.”

- If confirmed, as the principal cyberspace policy official within the Department of State, how do you intend to work towards greater transparency for “hunt forward” operations?

Answer. As the report recommends, proactive transparency and information sharing could give the United States first-mover advantages in the information space. U.S. statements on self-restraint and defensive initiatives should be part of our strategy to disrupt and mitigate adversarial cyber operations below the level of armed conflict. In recent years, the Department of Defense has been more proactive and public about discussing its “hunt forward” operations, which is a positive devel-

opment. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Department of Defense and promote “hunt forward” operations as defensive measures that enhance partnership with foreign governments, counter cyber threats, and promote stability in cyberspace.

Question. Will you commit to consulting with this committee on significant developments and decisions with respect to the planned Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technologies?

Answer. If confirmed, I anticipate that I will work in close collaboration with the planned Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technology. The State Department team will continue to keep the committee informed about the planned Office of the Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technology.

IT Workforce and Tech Talent Pipeline

Question. Given that approximately 700,000 cybersecurity roles remain vacant in the United States, it is clear that our country faces a growing national security challenge when it comes to cybersecurity. The Biden administration underscored the urgency of this issue in July 2022 by convening the National Cyber Workforce and Education Summit. Similarly, the Department of State faces its own IT workforce challenges. In a GAO report published in April 2022, GAO states that “State has not recruited continuously year-round for most of its IT positions or regularly assessed its staffing needs.” Additional challenges include “shortage of talent in pipeline and higher attrition rates compared to new hires” and limited training and career development opportunities.” While the Under Secretary of Management normally addresses some of these issues, the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy for evident reasons has a vested interest in a strong, viable IT workforce comprised of top tech talent. You touched on this in your confirmation hearing when you said that you “can imagine a future where any candidate to be a chief of mission is expected to have an understanding of these issues.”

- If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that the Department is recruiting and retaining IT talent as effectively as possible? How do you envision the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy’s involvement in this process?

Answer. The CDP Bureau provides opportunities for all Department employees to learn about cyber and digital policy issues. For example, CDP provides training courses on International Digital Economy Policy and Cyber Diplomacy at the Foreign Service Institute, which are open to all direct-hire employees posted in Washington and overseas. If confirmed, I will work to expand those opportunities. Equally, I will encourage CDP staff to leverage opportunities inside and outside the Department to improve their own expertise on information and communications technology. I also pledge to work closely with the Bureau of Global Talent Management to recruit, retain, train, and sustain a diverse, talented, and inclusive workforce. Likewise, I will advocate in the U.S. business and technology communities to encourage Americans with technology expertise to spend time in public service and am eager to support government-wide efforts to make it easier for mid-career Americans to serve.

Question. How do you plan to ensure that the Department of State has a diverse regional/demographic reach for tech talent?

Answer. I support the Department of State’s commitment to building a workforce that reflects our nation’s diversity and leverages the creativity of diverse, talented groups to advance the United States’ foreign policy priorities. As I stated in my confirmation hearing, my first priority is building the team and culture at the Bureau to enable its long-term success. My hope is that the Bureau’s workforce will increasingly become the hub for international cyberspace and digital policy, integrating national security, economic prosperity, and human rights. Achieving this aspiration will demand that we recruit and retain talent from the entire national talent pool—across geography and across demography. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with the Bureau of Information Resource Management and the Bureau of Global Talent Management’s Diplomats in Residence—career Foreign Service Officers and Specialists located throughout the United States who provide guidance and advice on careers, internships, and fellowships to students and professionals in the communities they serve—to ensure the Department has a diverse workforce.

Question. Would you commit to coming to universities in New Jersey to seek out tech talent for the Department?

Answer. It is critical the United States has the workforce to address the challenges and opportunities in cyberspace and the digital economy. Universities around

the country, including in New Jersey, play an important role. If confirmed, I will work with academic stakeholders to encourage relevant coursework that integrates cyber and digital policy issues into all facets of our education system, and I would look forward to visiting universities in New Jersey and around the country, if invited.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NATHANIEL FICK BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. How can the U.S. re-establish credible deterrence in cyberspace?

Answer. Effectively shaping adversary decision-making requires the thoughtful application of all the tools of national power, including diplomacy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and my executive branch colleagues to redouble U.S. efforts to achieve a significant, long-lasting reduction in destructive, disruptive, or otherwise destabilizing malicious cyber activities directed against U.S. interests. If confirmed, I will lead U.S. diplomatic efforts to build a broad-based, voluntary coalition of likeminded states that can organize cooperative responses to significant cyber incidents, together ensuring that there are consequences for unacceptable cyber activity and in this way, shaping adversaries' decision-making. Within the U.S. interagency, if confirmed, I will work to strengthen collaboration between the Departments of State and Defense, to include increasing cooperation around cyber operations. These efforts will complement and be strengthened by CDP's positive agenda, grounded in U.S. values to promote the use of digital technologies for the benefit of all people, everywhere.

Answer. What role should the cyber bureau play in these efforts?

Answer. Effectively shaping adversary decision-making requires the thoughtful application of all the tools of national power, including diplomacy as well as other capabilities our interagency partners can bring to bear. If confirmed, I will collaborate with the interagency and lead U.S. diplomatic efforts to build a broad-based, voluntary coalition of likeminded states that can organize cooperative responses to significant cyber incidents, together ensuring that there are appropriate consequences for unacceptable cyber activity and in this way, shaping adversaries' decision-making. Such cooperative responses build on, and create accountability for adhering to, the international consensus around the framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's work to promote this framework and support its implementation across the globe.

Question. Will you commit to working with the committee on this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the committee to explore development of a streamlined authority to allow sharing of critical cyber capabilities and information with key operational partners.

Question. What efforts will you take to help ensure the CDP bureau is capable of attract and retain the nation's foremost digital and cyberspace talent?

Answer. The CDP Bureau must operate like a 21st-century talent organization. This means that its success depends not upon a patent or process innovation or a market monopoly, but upon a continuous ability to recruit and retain a broad team of talented people who have many other options for where to spend their professional time and energy. The Bureau's great advantage in doing so is the power and importance of its mission. We will need to make the case—inside the Department, across the interagency, and outside the Government—that technology is the next frontier of diplomacy, that these issues are fundamental to the future of American power and competitiveness, and that public service is a noble and rewarding pursuit. If confirmed, I will encourage Department employees to come spend time in the Bureau, will commit to supporting members of the CDP Bureau team in gaining as much professional training as possible, and will do my utmost to build and sustain a culture that empowers them and enables them to succeed. I pledge to work closely with the Bureau of Global Talent Management to recruit, retain, train, and sustain a diverse, talented, and inclusive workforce. Likewise, I will advocate in the U.S. business and technology communities to encourage Americans with technology expertise to spend time in public service, and I am eager to support government-wide efforts to make it easier for mid-career Americans to serve.

Question. What role does multilateral cooperation have in countering malign cyber influence (e.g., from the PRC, Russian Federation, and DPRK)?

Answer. The United States' work in international and multilateral organizations has led to international consensus on a framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace. All UN member states have committed to act in accordance with this framework. While such a framework is not self-reinforcing, it sets the foundation upon which we can rally likeminded partners to hold irresponsible state actors accountable, including through public attributions, diplomatic actions, and other responses. Likeminded partners have grown increasingly willing to take such action in response to malign cyber influence. If confirmed, I will continue to press for progress with our partners in countering malign cyber influence and promoting a rights-respecting cyber and digital policy agenda.

Question. How will the Department of State integrate the Bureau for Cyberspace and Digital Policy with other functional and regional bureaus?

Answer. The Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy brings together into a single entity the economic, national security, and human rights considerations regarding cyberspace and digital technologies. In doing so, the Bureau not only integrates its approach to these issues internally and thereby advances Secretary Blinken's modernization agenda, but also is well placed to play a coordinating role within the Department and across the interagency. If confirmed, I will build an organization that elevates cyber and digital issues in U.S. foreign policy and maximizes our engagement with regional and functional bureaus to strengthen diplomacy as a tool to achieve our national objectives on cyber and digital issues.

Question. Do you anticipate working closely with other U.S. Government agencies? If so, which?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to build an organization that can elevate cyber and digital issues within U.S. foreign policy and maximize our engagement with interagency partners, including the Department of Defense, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Homeland Security, National Security Council, Office of the National Cyber Director, Department of Justice, Federal Communications Commission, and Department of Commerce. In leveraging the expertise of these departments and agencies, the Bureau can strengthen diplomacy as a tool to achieve our national objectives on cyber and digital issues.

Question. Do you work with cyber/digital trafficking?

Answer. Trafficking is a particularly heinous misuse of the Internet. If confirmed, I pledge to redouble our efforts, working with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, as well as our partners at the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to ensure U.S. diplomacy maintains clear focus on the prevention of digital trafficking.

Question. In what capacity will you engage with the "deep web?"

Answer. Recognizing the gravity of cybercrime and the importance the United States places on combatting it, if confirmed, I will coordinate within the Department and with our partners in law enforcement to ensure U.S. diplomacy complements other U.S. Government efforts to reduce the threat of international cybercrime wherever it occurs, including the "deep web."

Question. How is the department working towards bolstering public/private partnerships such that innovation in cyberspace is encouraged?

Answer. The Department of State advances U.S. foreign policy priorities through private sector engagement, including by cultivating cross-sector partnerships. Successful partnerships of this nature will be a necessary element of the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy's overall success, given the concentration of talent and technical capacity in the U.S. innovation economy. If confirmed, I look forward to working to leverage the Department's various mechanisms, tools, and networks to strengthen partnerships with the private sector on cyber and digital issues. We need to continue to foster an open, enabling environment to encourage future innovation aligned with U.S. values.

Question. "Upholding democratic values" is one of CDP's stated goals; which specific regions or nations does it have in mind?

Answer. The U.S. Government works closely with allies and partners around the world, including members of the Freedom Online Coalition and partners who affirm the Declaration of the Future of the Internet, to uphold democratic values globally. The United States works to deter and respond to transnational repression and digital authoritarianism by promoting digital freedom in accordance with the U.S. values of openness and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If con-

firmed, I will sustain these existing partnerships and seek new opportunities to ensure that U.S. cyber and digital diplomacy advances democracy and human rights.

Question. What role do you envision the CDP bureau playing in ensuring the United States maintains global leadership in developing artificial intelligence, machine learning, and other emergent technologies?

Answer. If confirmed, I envision the CDP Bureau working alongside the Office of the Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technology to continue to lead the Department's engagement in many international venues where artificial intelligence policy issues are discussed, such as through bilateral dialogues, at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Global Partnership on AI, Group of Seven (G7), Group of Twenty (G20), U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, and International Telecommunication Union. The United States can both further our technological capabilities and promote democratic values and human rights by working with our partners and allies to promote the responsible stewardship of trustworthy artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Question. How will CDP collaborate with other agencies and departments in their existing research?

Answer. Research related to artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, as technologies with cross-cutting implications across policy areas, is discussed in many bilateral and multilateral settings. If confirmed, my vision is that CDP will continue close collaboration with other agencies and departments in their existing research by coordinating U.S. participation in those dialogues. In addition, CDP works alongside the Office of the Science and Technology Advisor and Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs to co-lead the Department of State's participation in the National Science and Technology Council's subcommittee on Machine Learning and AI.

Question. How will CDP maintain an understanding of emergent technology, given its rapid pace of development?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure CDP maintains an understanding of emergent technology by doing many of the same things I did while leading a cutting-edge technology company: leveraging internal expertise within our organization, close collaboration with other relevant agencies and departments, and regular consultations with industry, academia, and civil society experts. I will work to increase our internal expertise through new hires and access to increased training opportunities. CDP also has the benefit of the Department's network of embassies and consulates to maintain an understanding of international developments and other countries' approaches to emergent technology.

Question. Are there any emergent technologies that the CDP sees utility or potential in?

Answer. Yes, CDP sees utility and potential in many emerging technologies and their applications, including artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, Internet of Things, blockchain, Web 3.0, 6G, and Open RAN architecture. Advances in emergent technologies present great opportunities in addition to great challenges. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners, companies, universities, and civil society organizations that promote democratic values and share a commitment to design and deploy technology for the benefit of all people.

Question. If confirmed, how would you engage with allies and partners to promote Cyber policies consistent with U.S. values?

Answer. The Department is on the frontlines of the U.S. Government's efforts to promote meaningful access to digital technologies, maintain an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet, and preserve a stable cyberspace by defending against challenges such as digital authoritarianism. These efforts are central to the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy's mission. Digitally repressive regimes and foreign adversaries often seek to harness digital technologies to control domestic populations through a sprawling system of censorship, surveillance, and Internet restrictions. These efforts also extend outward through transnational repression of diaspora communities and other critics abroad, and the export of authoritarian goals through trade relationships, the UN and other multilateral fora, and standard-setting bodies. If confirmed, I will lead CDP in sustaining and building partnerships to defend against these efforts and ensure U.S. diplomacy advances digital technologies that support democracy and human rights.

Question. If confirmed, how would you directly address actions of U.S. private or public entities in conflict with U.S. national cyber security strategy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners to increase alignment between U.S. public and private entities and the U.S. national cyber security strategy and policy priorities. U.S. companies have a major role in advancing an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet and should not be complicit in enabling the use of technology in ways that violate human rights and democratic values.

Question. Would you directly address foreign countries restricting internet freedoms in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights?

Answer. Yes. The Department of State monitors and responds to laws, policies, and activities that restrict human rights online and works to address all concerns through appropriate bilateral and multilateral channels and public diplomacy. The Department consistently seeks to advance Internet freedom through UN bodies, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Group of Seven (G7), and other international organizations. The U.S. Government also plays a global leadership role in multi-stakeholder initiatives focused on Internet freedom and human rights online, such as the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC). The FOC has been instrumental in building cross-regional coalitions to support Internet freedom. The United States will take over the chairmanship of the FOC in 2023 as part of our commitment to bolstering its work in the Summit for Democracy's Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal. If confirmed, I will continue to carry forward and expand upon this vital work in coordination with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Question. Please describe your assessment of global internet freedom and the U.S. Government's response to a rising authoritarian threat off and online.

Answer. I am concerned by the decline in Internet freedom globally, including through the misuse of digital technologies. Preventing the misuse of digital technologies, including by authoritarian governments, is a core priority for the United States. This topic is being addressed bilaterally and in coordination with partners and allies via the Summit for Democracy, U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council, Freedom Online Coalition, and elsewhere. For example, the U.S. Government continues to work through the Summit for Democracy to take action, including establishing a code of conduct on how export controls can be used to address the proliferation of technologies conducive to human rights abuses. Additionally, the Department intends to bolster U.S. global leadership on Internet freedom issues through our chairmanship of the Freedom Online Coalition in 2023. If confirmed, I will continue to carry this work forward.

Question. How can you, if confirmed, best streamline current U.S. Government efforts to promote global internet freedom?

Answer. Promoting Internet freedom is an essential part of the U.S. Government's approach to protecting and promoting human rights. The Department of State leads the U.S. Government's efforts to promote respect for human rights globally, including online, by raising these concerns bilaterally, building and participating in multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder coalitions focused on advancing human rights online globally, and funding civil society-led policy and advocacy projects that promote Internet freedom. If confirmed, I will strengthen coordination within the Department and across the interagency to ensure the U.S. Government has an integrated, cohesive policy on initiatives to promote Internet freedom that guard against the rise of digital authoritarianism.

Question. Will you also plan to push back against proposals from allies or tech companies that promote censorship or other restrictions on the freedom of speech?

Answer. Some countries attempt to regulate social media to stifle freedom of expression, target activists, or limit access to independent journalism. The United States responds to these actions with diplomatic engagement that advocates for respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, both online and offline, including in response to content issues. The Department encourages Internet service providers, including social media platforms, to consider their commitments under the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and their own terms of service. If confirmed, I will work diligently to address and advance digital freedom as a core element of U.S. cyber and digital policy by continuing engagement across the full range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Question. What is your assessment of the proposed treaty?

Answer. The process to consider a new binding international instrument on cybercrime poses a number of challenges that could, if not squarely addressed, adversely impact the United States and its citizens. However, the delegation leading the negotiations has done a remarkable job in minimizing Russian and PRC influ-

ence, establishing an expert-driven process on the basis of consensus where both nations and civil society experts can have their views heard. The U.S. Government continues to lead efforts to be inclusive and argue for a convention that is a narrowly focused on criminal justice, respects human rights, and supports multistakeholder engagement. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure the United States works towards these objectives.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to working with relevant bureaus and agencies to promoting text that promotes American values and national security interests in the treaty?

Answer. Yes. While the current process was initiated by Russia, they are not leading this process. Instead, the United States is leading a broad and diverse group of experts in debates on the technical merits of an international instrument focused on cybercrime. The United States and its like-minded allies continue to lead efforts to advance a narrowly focused criminal justice instrument that respects human rights, supporting multistakeholder engagement. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the U.S. Government is successful in this regard.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NATHANIEL FICK BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. How will your private sector experience enhance your effectiveness in strengthening opportunities for public-private partnerships to advance U.S. foreign policy goals in the areas of cyberspace and digital policy?

Answer. The United States has long championed the importance of a multistakeholder approach to address cyber and digital policy. This is essential given the concentration of talent and technical capacity in the U.S. innovation economy. Accordingly, successful public-private partnerships are a necessary element of CDP's overall success. If confirmed, I look forward to identifying opportunities to support both new and continued partnerships with the private sector. If confirmed, I will explore a range of options including using blended finance programs to attract private investment in critical technologies, incorporating additional expertise from industry in CDP-funded trainings and workshops, and meeting with global technology business leaders to explain CDP's priorities.

Question. Under your leadership, what principles will govern the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy's engagement with civil society organizations and participants in other countries who are pushing back against digital authoritarianism and advocating for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms?

Answer. Digital transformation presents great promise for collaboration, communication, and innovation for billions of people. As millions more come online each day to maximize the opportunities for their livelihoods, their societal engagements, and their prosperity, they also face potential risks of exclusion, harm, and the extension of offline inequalities to online disparities. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy's engagement on digital freedom is coordinated with key stakeholders within the Department, interagency, and international community, including the private sector and civil society. I will make sure the bureau's work in this space is guided by and consistent with the United States' obligations under domestic and international law and U.S. policy and commitments, including the principles outlined in the founding documents of the Freedom Online Coalition, as well as the Biden-Harris administration's trademark initiatives on technology and democracy such as the Declaration for the Future of the Internet.

Question. The Declaration for the Future of the Internet is an important step in obtaining the commitment of governments to fundamental values including privacy and respect for human rights. What actions will you take to increase the number of signatories and encourage more governments to commit to the Declaration's vision of an open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with likeminded partners to promote the principles of the Declaration for the Future of the Internet (DFI), encourage additional governments to join, and operationalize its commitments in concrete ways. For example, we will use joint demarches with appropriate partner governments to persuade countries that have not yet joined to do so. We will also promote DFI's principles in relevant international forums. I will work to ensure that we ourselves

operate according to DFI's principles so that we are leading by example and reinforcing the norms we are advocating around the world.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NATHANIEL FICK BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Is the Chinese Communist Party a threat to the United States?

Answer. The next ten years may be the decisive decade in the competition between the United States and the PRC. As I stated in my confirmation hearing, "Our strategic competition with China along digital lines is probably the most defining strategic question of my generation. We have a competitor out there with a very different view of what our global technology future should look like." If confirmed, I will help advance the Biden-Harris administration's comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy to compete responsibly with the PRC, while highlighting with allies and partners our vision for an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet as a key enabler of global freedom and prosperity.

Question. Does the Chinese Communist Party undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, we will cooperate with the PRC where our interests align. However, the CCP's authoritarian vision for cyberspace, telecommunications, digital governance, and emerging technology is not one of these areas. If confirmed, I will focus on addressing the risks to the United States, our partners, and our allies—and to an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet—that would come from having the rules of the road set by a country that does not share our core values.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the People's Republic of China as part of your work?

Answer. The United States will continue to engage with the PRC in forums where the PRC and the United States are both members, like APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The United States will also continue bilateral diplomatic engagement to further its interests in multilateral fora. By including all stakeholders in standards-developing organizations (SDOs), the resulting standards reflect a private sector-led, consensus-based, bottom-up approach, that has been the key to our efforts to promote a democratic, rules-based system. Their inclusion also avoids the creation of a parallel SDO structure in which the PRC is able to promote its model to smaller countries unopposed. If confirmed, I will pursue bilateral engagement with the PRC on topics and in organizations in which we have shared interests.

Question. Are you aware of the danger posed to these activists by the Chinese Communist Party? If so, what can be done to limit this activity?

Answer. I am concerned about the threat posed by the People's Republic of China's use of transnational repression. To address this threat, the Biden-Harris administration is pursuing a multi-faceted strategy. The Department of State has worked to increase awareness of resources available to assist targets of transnational repression at home and abroad, to encourage open lines of communication between these individuals and the U.S. Government, and to impose consequences on PRC officials engaged in transnational repression. If confirmed, I will strengthen partnerships with the private sector and our allies to counter PRC transnational repression through digital means and work to reduce the likelihood that U.S. partners facilitate PRC transnational repression.

Question. Many of these activists receive direct support and funding from the State Department, or from international organizations that receive U.S. Government funding. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that communication with these activists is not vulnerable to CCP cyberattacks?

Answer. Safeguarding the activists, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations who receive support and funding from U.S. Foreign Assistance requires that their security practices are guided by experts who understand the local context and can track changes in those threat landscapes. This is true in many sensitive contexts, including those at risk from digital threats stemming from the PRC. If confirmed, I will support ongoing and future U.S. Government efforts to raise awareness of digital risks to individuals at risk of being targeted by the PRC and work with others in the Department to provide digital safety training, tools, and materials to activists, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations at risk of digitally aided repression and online attacks. Furthermore, I will ensure digital

safety-related risk management efforts led by the Department are informed by relevant intelligence information and expertise.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to work with social media companies, and other countries, to ensure that activists at risk of transnational repression are not vulnerable to CCP cyberattacks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to maintain close contact with social media companies and other digital platforms to raise awareness of transnational repression and to combat PRC malicious cyber activities, disinformation, and online harassment while emphasizing U.S. support for freedom of expression, including online. I will also work with other governments to raise awareness of, and address vulnerabilities to, cyberattacks and other digital security risks to individuals who may be targeted for transnational repression. If confirmed, I will work with others in the Department and across the interagency to promote accountability for actors who facilitate transnational repression using the tools the Department has available, including sanctions, export controls, and visa restrictions.

Question. In your opinion, are American citizens' communications with embassies and consulates overseas protected from surveillance by the Chinese Communist Party, the Russian Federation, Iran, North Korea, the Maduro Regime, or Cuba? Please explain.

Answer. The Department of State uses its resources to monitor all its embassies and consulates for unauthorized surveillance, including surveillance of communications between Department officials and American citizens. In the event that surveillance is detected on Department infrastructure from an unauthorized actor, Department officials work with federal law enforcement and intelligence partners to mitigate the effects of the intrusion. The Department uses information from these incidents to improve its monitoring regime and better secure its communications and IT infrastructure. If confirmed, I will work with the Department colleagues charged with the protection of embassy and consulate communications to align, where needed, any resource requests and related foreign policy concerns.

Question. In your opinion, are formal communications (i.e. visa applications, other consular services) between third-country nationals and our embassy and consulates' Consular Affairs sections adequately protected from authoritarian regimes?

Answer. Cybersecurity is one of the Department's top priorities. The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) manages a robust cybersecurity program closely linked to Department and other interagency efforts. CA dedicates substantial resources and highly skilled personnel to continuously monitor, test, and implement upgrades to Department systems to improve the U.S. defense against evolving cybersecurity threats. The Department's network users—both domestic and overseas—undergo annual training to recognize common scenarios and vulnerabilities, such as spear phishing, so they can help defend these critical systems. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues in CA to ensure that our efforts are integrated and well-supported.

Question. What more can be done in this regard?

Answer. The Bureau of Consular Affairs collaborates across its directorates and offices, and with other bureaus within the Department, to strengthen the Department's ability to proactively identify and mitigate potential threats to critical systems and networks before they can be exploited. Additionally, Consular Affairs is actively expanding its partnership with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and other U.S. interagency partners to increase its security posture. At the individual level, Consular Affairs promotes awareness and a shared sense of responsibility through scenario training, debriefs and workshops, and targeted security awareness briefings to government and contract staff such as developers, site administrators, and application administrators in order to protect the privacy and integrity of the information entrusted to us by the traveling public. If confirmed, I will work closely with Consular Affairs colleagues to support those efforts to prioritize the awareness and security of U.S. citizens abroad.

Question. In your opinion, are American travelers adequately informed of the data security risks when they travel to these countries, or places in which these authoritarian regimes have a major presence?

Answer. U.S. citizens are warned of security risks, including threats to their data and the threat of surveillance and monitoring, through the Department's International Travel—Country Information Pages on travel.state.gov. In addition, U.S. Embassies may notify U.S. citizens of these threats through alerts and messages as appropriate. U.S. citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enroll-

ment Program (STEP) before traveling abroad so that they receive direct communication on safety conditions and other important information for their destination. The Department also amplifies these messages on social media in order to reach a wide audience. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues throughout the Department to ensure our policy and technical approaches are well-aligned so American travelers can understand the importance of this issue.

Question. Should Americans have TikTok, or other apps operated by companies with close ties to the Chinese Communist Party, on their phones? Do these apps pose a risk? Please explain.

Answer. I believe that apps from developers with close ties to the CCP do pose a privacy risk to their users. Personally, I do not use them, and I do my best to prevent my children from using them. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to protecting Americans' sensitive personal data in line with advancing our overall national security interests, as well as promoting longstanding foreign policy objectives such as the free flow of data with trust over an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet. The Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy leads the Department of State's coordination on multiple lines of effort to strengthen the protection of American users' data, including data shared through phone applications, particularly through the implementation of E.O. 14034 ("Protecting Americans' Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries") and E.O. 13873 ("Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain"). If confirmed, I will ensure the CDP Bureau works both internally and with the interagency, as well as with like-minded allies and partners, to carry out these efforts fully.

Question. Does the State Department keep a list of apps vulnerable to authoritarian surveillance, and if so, does it make American travelers aware of these apps?

Answer. The State Department is involved in several interagency processes to identify risks to U.S. national security, including authoritarian surveillance of U.S. users through social media applications, through implementation of E.O. 14034 ("Protecting Americans' Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries") and E.O. 13873 ("Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain"), led by the Department of Commerce. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues in the Department and across the interagency to help ensure Americans are aware of the risks posed by the use of certain digital technologies, including apps.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to improve State Department policies to protect American travelers from authoritarian surveillance and cyber-attacks?

Answer. The Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy is committed to strengthening the Department of State's policies and programming to address national security challenges in cyberspace to protect U.S. citizens here and abroad. If confirmed, I commit to working with others in the Department, the interagency, and the international community to continue to strengthen the U.S. culture of cybersecurity for the benefit of all users, including by promoting awareness of cyber hygiene.

CORRESPONDENCE I.—SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION OF NATHANIEL FICK TO BE
AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE FOR CYBERSPACE AND DIGITAL POLICY
SUBMITTED BY A BIPARTISAN GROUP OF SECURITY AND INDUSTRY LEADERS

August 2, 2022

The Honorable Bob Menendez
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Nathaniel Fick to be Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy,
Department of State (PN2223)

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

We write today in our respective personal capacities to express our strong support for the nomination of Nate Fick to serve as Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy at the Department of State. We are a bipartisan cross-section of national security experts and industry leaders, including former government officials with significant national security, technology, or cybersecurity responsibilities who have worked with Nate or are familiar with his work.

Nate comes before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with an impressive background in the private sector and a deep commitment to serving our nation. Immediately after graduating from college, Nate served as a Marine Corps infantry and reconnaissance officer, including combat tours in both Afghanistan and Iraq. After leaving the military, Nate continued his graduate education and began working on some of the most challenging public policy issues facing our nation. Among other things, Nate served as the CEO of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), a national security think tank, where he launched the Center's program on technology and national security, and oversaw work related to NATO readiness, diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, and support for veterans and military families.

Having spent over a decade addressing national security matters on both the battlefield and in the policy arena, Nate decided to put his intellectual capital to work in the business world, joining Bessemer Venture Partners, one of the nations' most-storied venture capital firms, as well as serving as CEO of Endgame, a prominent cybersecurity software company. Nate led Endgame from start-up to global growth, culminating in the acquisition of its services business by Accenture in 2017 and of its software business by Elastic in 2019. During Nate's time at Endgame, the company was selected by Forbes as one of the "100 Best Cloud Companies in the World" and Nate was named one of the "100 Most Creative People in Business" by Fast Company magazine. Today, Nate leads Elastic's global information security business as Vice President, Security Strategy.

In our view, Nate's unique and potent combination of policy and analytical skills, his experience on the battlefield protecting our nation, and his leadership of a successful cybersecurity business make him an ideal fit to serve as Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy. Today we face a diverse range of threats in the cyber domain, with major nation-state adversaries such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea getting significantly more capable and aggressive, while large-scale criminal gangs and other non-state actors also seek to exploit our reliance on digital technologies to steal information and resources and threaten our national security. If the United States is to confront these threats effectively, we will need to work across the public and private sectors not just in our own nation, but with allied governments and their respective industries.

The new ambassador will need the ability to build diverse sets of economic, military, and political coalitions to advance our national interests and help protect our nation in the cyber domain. Nate has lived these challenges personally as a warfighter, policy expert, and business executive, and he is an inspiring leader and a galvanizing communicator. As such, we believe he can bring the right combination of skills to bear on the important work of building bridges across borders, and with private industry as well, and can likewise help our government get tough on its adversaries as we seek to establish real deterrence in cyberspace.

We believe that if the Committee sees fit to recommend Nate, and he receives the advice and consent of the full Senate, then he will once again be able to serve our nation with distinction and will help cement this office as a key center of policy, operational, and diplomatic expertise on cyber matters within the United States government. To that end, we would strongly encourage the Committee to act swiftly on Nate's nomination and to recommended him to the full Senate for confirmation.

Thank you for your consideration of our input. We look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Elliot Ackerman
Author and Former Special Operations Team Leader, United States Marine Corps

GEN (Ret) Keith Alexander
Former Director, National Security Agency & Founding Commander, United States Cyber Command

Michael Allen
Former Special Assistant to the President & Senior Director for Counter-Proliferation Strategy, National Security Council, The White House

Dmitri Alperovitch
Chairman, Silverado Policy Accelerator

Nikesh Arora
Chairman & CEO, Palo Alto Networks

Rye Barcott
Co-Founder & CEO, With Honor Action

Jeremy Bash
Former Chief of Staff, Department of Defense

Douglas A. Beck
Member, Board of Directors, Center for a New American Security

Rod Beckstrom
Former President & CEO, ICANN

Lauren Bedula
Executive Board Member, Silicon Valley Defense Group

Rand Beers
Former Acting Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

Nicholas F. Beim
Partner, Venrock

Amb. Daniel Benjamin
Former Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State

Peter Bergen
Vice President for Global Studies & Fellows, New America

Nomi Bergman
Former President, Bright House Networks

Ernest Bio
Former Chief Operating Officer, Defense Innovation Unit, Department of Defense

Peter Bloom
Co-Founder, Connected Warrior Foundation

Joshua Broder
CEO, Tilson

Lyndon Brown
Chief Strategy Officer, Pondurance

Robert J. Butler
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber and Space Policy, Department of Defense

James R. Butler II
Former Chief Technology Officer, Endgame

Chris Castaldo
Chief Information Security Officer, Crossbeam

Senator Saxby Chambliss
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Christopher B. Howard
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Walter F. Parkes
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Dr. DJ Patil
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Nicole Perlroth
Cybersecurity Journalist and Author, *This is How They Tell Me the World Ends*

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Cameron Pratt
Managing Partner & CEO, Foulger-Pratt

Major General Arnold Punaro, USMC (ret)
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Michael Steed
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Owen West
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, Department of Defense

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Dr. Ellison Anne Williams
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Amit Yoran
Chairman & CEO, Tenable

Sounil Yu
Former Chief Security Scientist, Bank of America

Robert B. Zoellick
Former Deputy Secretary of State

CORRESPONDENCE II.—SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION OF NATHANIEL FICK TO BE
AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE FOR CYBERSPACE AND DIGITAL POLICY

SUBMITTED BY CHRISTOPHER PAINTER, FORMER COORDINATOR
FOR CYBER ISSUES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

August 2, 2022

The Honorable Bob Menendez Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Nathaniel Fick to be Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy,
Department of State (PN2223)

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

I write today to express my strong support for the nomination of Nate Fick to serve as Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy at the Department of State. Though I have also signed another letter of support from former national security and business leaders, I wanted to write in my personal capacity given my prior government role as the first U.S. top cyber diplomat. I believe my prior experience in establishing the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues at the State Department and serving in that position for six and half years, gives me a unique perspective on the new position and what qualities are needed to succeed in the role.

First, as many have pointed out, Nate has an impressive background that will serve him well in the new position. His combination of cyber industry experience, leadership of a national security-oriented think tank and relationships with many current government cyber leaders will be a great help in carrying out his new duties if confirmed. In particular, I know from experience that establishing a new structure in a relatively new substantive area within the existing bureaucracy of the State Department requires strong and creative leadership. Similarly, such leadership is necessary for fostering cooperation and representing foreign policy interests within the U.S. interagency, working with and leveraging private sector and civil society stakeholders, and, of course, promoting U.S. positions with international partners and building alliances. Nate has demonstrated creative and strong leadership in his prior roles and those skills are essential here.

I also wanted to impress on the Committee the urgency in acting swiftly on Mr. Fick's nomination. Although the position for which he is nominated was created relatively recently, and I commend the Department for creating the new structure, there has not been an appointed leader for these issues for nearly two years. As the Committee is well aware, policy and technical threats in cyberspace are only getting more severe and more impactful. The malicious use of cyber capabilities by some nation states, and the disruption caused by criminal ransomware groups, demonstrate the critical need for U.S. diplomatic engagement and leadership. Although the existing team at State, including the people from my old office, are doing a great job, there is no substitute for empowered high-level leadership.

Finally, I have been pleased that, in my experience, cyber policy has always been a largely non-partisan issue and I hope that approach continues given the common threats and challenges we all face. Given Nate's strong qualifications and the urgent need for continued U.S leadership in this critical area, I urge the Committee to act swiftly on his nomination and to recommended him to the full Senate for confirmation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Painter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher Painter

Former Coordinator for Cyber Issues, U.S. Department of State