

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin presiding.

Present: Senators Cardin [presiding], Shaheen, Murphy, Booker, Van Hollen, and Risch.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

With apologies to our nominees, there is a lot going on today. You may have read about some of that in the paper.

The Republicans are holding a conference as we speak, so I am going to recognize Senator Risch first because he is going to have to go to his Republican Conference discussions that are taking place in an effort to try to get a strategy on how we are going to be moving forward in the next couple days.

Senator Risch?

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

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. And this we do—this happens around here occasionally. We get—things get into a bottleneck and that is where we are. So thank you very much for accommodating me.

Let me begin with the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This is a critically important post.

The DRL bureau manages millions of dollars in assistance around the world. This assistance and this platform must be used to further U.S. national interests and not the agenda of the left and particularly as to social issues.

In particular I am concerned by recent efforts to expand the definitions of human rights and human rights defender.

It is critical we continue to support internationally recognized human rights around the world and not get distracted by niche causes. If everything else is defined as a right we lose focus and success will escape us.

Ms. Rand, should you be confirmed I expect you will help ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are directed to those most vulnerable and to the most trusted partners who value working with the American people.

On the nomination of the Ambassador for Timor-Leste it is important that we further develop our partnership there alongside allies like Australia.

In particular we should focus on infrastructure development and energy security including liquid natural gas, given the country's resources.

China has made big inroads on infrastructure development. We must counteract that.

Finally, on the nomination of U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, Mr. Lang has years of experience working on cyberspace at the State Department.

Unfortunately, the department has been behind on these issues. I look forward to hearing about how the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy can advance U.S. leadership on digital issues and limit reliance on Chinese-made equipment in 5G networks worldwide.

With that, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. And before Senator Risch leaves let me thank him for his cooperation in arranging for this hearing.

We recognize that our schedules have been very, very challenging over the—this year and our effort is to try to move as many of President Biden's nominees as possible and I thank Senator Risch for his cooperation in allowing us to schedule this hearing.

We added two additional nominees with the—with Senator Risch's cooperation. So thank you very much in that regard.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. And let me just assure our nominees, first, thank you for your willingness to serve. It is a challenge.

Public service is not easy and you have in many cases devoted your entire careers to public service. So we thank you very much for your willingness and we thank your families.

I think we see some of your families in the front row. If not, we have some very young people who are here. But we thank you and your families because we know it is a family sacrifice to serve in the public domain.

And let me also just point out the obvious. This hearing is very important and we will be asking you some questions at this hearing. There will be some questions for the record that we will ask you to respond to.

Our staffs have already done a lot of vetting in regards to your nomination. So it is a whole process. I just want to explain that for particularly the young people that are here there is a whole process that we go through in regards to vetting nominees and to the Senate confirmation of nominees.

So this is one part of it. The hearing is a very important part of it. But I want to just acknowledge why there may not be as many senators here today as we normally have. That speaks to two things.

First, it speaks to the quality of the people who are nominated—they are outstanding and that we recognize that—and to the conflicts on our schedule today as a result of the supplemental appropriation bills that are being considered as this hearing is taking place.

We do have a scheduled vote for a little later this afternoon and there are negotiations going on as to how that vote will take place, et cetera.

So that is the reasons why you might not see the type of normal participation at this hearing. It is a reflection, I think, of the quality—the positive quality of our nominees as well as the conflicts that are on the schedule today. But we wanted to be able to move these nominees forward.

So, again, thank you for your cooperation. I am going to start with the department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor—DRL. Whether you are generals from Myanmar or the Kremlin in Moscow, repression is on the rise.

Attacks against human rights defenders are up across the globe. Coups and democratic backsliding threatens progress on every continent in Africa. Instability now stretches from the Red Sea to the Atlantic.

Behind all this is the cancer of corruption that undermines the rule of law, good governance, threatening democratic institutions and human rights. That is why we need an assistant secretary who will be there, a powerful voice for democratic values and human rights.

The DRL Bureau has not had a Senate-confirmed leader for more than three years. That is unacceptable. We need to have a confirmed person at DRL.

Why? Because it is our voice in regards to our values and there is a lot of areas that the State Department needs to concentrate on as it deals with diplomacy globally.

We recognize that. Our missions have a lot of important tasks that they have to take on. But we need someone to advocate for our values at the highest levels of the department and that requires us to have a confirmed person in that position.

Dr. Rand, if confirmed I hope you will commit to be a strong voice to protect and advance American values. That means being a champion on DRL's global democracy programs. That means raising staff morale and strengthening the reach of the bureau and policy discussions in the department across the interagency deliberations.

That means harnessing the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act to advance a human rights agenda. I wrote the Magnitsky Act to honor a young lawyer in Russia who discovered corruption. He reported it to the authorities. So they arrested him, they tortured him, and he died in a Russian prison.

I hope you will commit to strengthening the use of Global Magnitsky provisions if you are confirmed. More recently in December a new law was enacted as part of the State Department's Authorization Act.

It mandates that the administration submit to Congress reports on how the governments of the world are fulfilling their obligations to battle against corruption in all forms—the Combating Global Corruption Act.

To ensure this is done well I expect DRL will have to play a very, very important role because it is not going to be embraced by every mission around—that we have around the world. It is going to be your responsibility, if confirmed, to make sure that that law is implemented as Congress has intended it to be.

Now let me turn to Ms. Welton and Timor-Leste. It earned its independence after centuries of colonial rule under Portuguese and

then Indonesian Governments. Even today we see senior figures rising to power in Indonesia that threatens to drag up the nation's painful past.

So, whether it is being a partner to their energy transition or supporting our Peace Corps volunteers on the ground the United States has the obligation to support the youngest country in Asia's democratic ambitions.

Finally, I want to welcome Mr. Lang who is the nominee to lead the coordination for international communications and information policy at the State Department. Not many people truly understand the intricacies of this position but it is incredibly important.

That is because part of your job will be to continue to build and strengthen our cybersecurity policies, an area where the world's autocratic regimes have shown increasing interest.

So I hope you will commit to making human rights and the protection of democratic institutions one of your priorities. I look forward to hearing from all of you about that.

And without objection I am going to ask consent to include in the record a statement from Senator Klobuchar in support of Mr. Lang.

She had hoped to be here but she is engaged in some other activities. But she wanted me to make sure that I express her strong support for your nomination and include her comments in our record.

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

The CHAIRMAN. With that, we are going to now turn to our witnesses.

First, Dr. Rand, who currently serves as a distinguished resident fellow in strategic affairs at Georgetown University's Institute for Study of Diplomacy and is a lecturer at Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.

Dr. Rand has spent the past two decades in public service including most recently as the director of the Office of Foreign Assistance at the Department of State.

Dr. Rand, you will be followed by Ms. Welton, who serves as the acting deputy assistant secretary for programs and operations in the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs.

She previously served as the lead negotiator for bilateral defense agreements that involve access, status protection, and burden sharing with more than 25 years of experience in foreign service including as Chargé in Helsinki.

And I understand you are fluent in several languages including Korean, Indonesian, German, and some Dari and Finnish.

So, you far exceed my capacity as I struggle to be able to speak in English. So, thank you very much for your capacities that are desperately needed at the State Department.

And Mr. Lang has been the deputy assistant secretary for international information and communication policies since November 2022.

Previously served as the minister counselor for economic affairs at the U.S. Embassy Tokyo and the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs Office of the International Communications and Infor-

mation Policy as director of both the Office of Multilateral Affairs and the Office of Bilateral and Regional Affairs.

He served in Mexico City, has been a senior analyst to the U.S. Trade Representative in the office of Japan, Korea, and APEC affairs.

So he served in China and Taipei, which is an interesting combination that you have, which I think will serve us well in those capacities.

So let us start first with Dr. Rand. Your full statements will be made part of our record. We ask that you try to summarize your comments in about five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND, OF MARYLAND,
NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

Dr. RAND. Sure. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thanks also to Senator Risch for his words in the very beginning.

Members of the committee, thanks for considering my nomination today for the position of assistant secretary for DRL and I want to first and foremost thank my family for their love and support.

You see behind me Doug Rand, my tremendous husband, and my children Maya, Jonah, and Elijah Rand, and I also want to thank my parents who are not here but are watching from Boston, Esther and Richard.

Twenty years ago as a Senate staffer in this very building I was inspired to pursue a career in U.S. foreign policy in order to advance U.S. interests and values.

In the ensuing decades, whether serving within the U.S. Government or in nonprofits, I have strived to advance American power, especially our unique ability to improve lives at home and abroad.

I am committed to transformative ethical leadership, leaving institutions where I serve better than when I found them, focusing on mission impact and integrity.

If confirmed as the assistant secretary for DRL I plan to pursue a number of priorities but for the sake of time let me focus on three of particular significance.

First, how we respond to the PRC is a fundamental urgent importance to those of us who care about the norms shaping the world that we leave for our children.

Yes, the U.S. is not only competing with the PRC in the military and economic domains. These are critical to U.S. national security and prosperity. But this is also a contest about the fate of the rules-based international order. The PRC's vision suppresses freedom of expression and persecutes ethnic and religious minorities.

Second, in the wake of Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine mitigating the threat that Russia poses to European and global security must remain a top priority for the United States and those who care about democratic values.

Russia promotes its venal mode of governance, delights in mobilizing the world's authoritarians who are threatened by democratic freedoms.

And, third, if confirmed I will prioritize working with this committee and all of Congress on the critical body of international human rights laws that you all have worked on for decades.

In particular, Mr. Senator—Mr. Chair—Senator Cardin, I want to just emphasize how much I want to work with you and your staff on implementing the countering corruption bill that you just mentioned that has just passed and congratulate you on that—on the years of work.

In my view, the assistant secretary of state for DRL has a special responsibility to work with Congress on its many human rights-related efforts. There are many other regions where I am concerned about democratic backsliding, closing civic space, unjust labor standards and religious freedom.

I note in particular the democratic backsliding in Africa and continued repression in Iran. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to promoting the rule of law and advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Without the United States having afforded these rights to generations of my own family I would not have this professional opportunity to take on this responsibility today.

I look forward very much to our conversation and to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Rand follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, thank you for considering my nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, or DRL. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their trust and to the entire State Department for their dedicated service to the American people.

I thank my family for their love and support: my husband, Doug Rand, as well as my children, Maya, Jonah, and Elijah Rand. I stand on the shoulders of giants, and today I recall the legacy of my paternal grandfather, Aaron Hochman, who served for over 50 years as a civilian engineer at the Department of Defense, dedicating his life to solving national security challenges including the design of the Pentagon's first mega-computer. My maternal grandfather, Yehuda Rosenman, escaped persecution and near-certain death by booking a ticket on one of the last boats to leave Poland in August 1939. He could have spent his life burying the past but instead he retrained as a social worker and dedicated himself to Jewish communal leadership and the rights of those in need, including refugees left behind in Europe.

Twenty years ago, I was a junior Senate staffer in this building, inspired to pursue a career in U.S. foreign policy in order to advance American interests and values. In the ensuing decades, whether serving within the U.S. Government or in non-profit organizations, I have strived to embody three core principles: (1) advancing American power, especially our unique ability to improve lives at home and abroad; (2) the universal pursuit of human dignity, something we all share and that is valued across cultures and geographies; and (3) a commitment to transformative, ethical leadership, leaving the institutions where I serve better than I found them, focusing on mission, impact, and integrity.

If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, I plan to pursue a number of priorities. Allow me to speak to three of particular significance:

- First, the United States response to the People's Republic of China (PRC) is of fundamental, urgent importance to those of us who care about the norms shaping the world that we leave for our children. The United States is not only competing with the PRC in the military and economic domains, although those are critical to U.S. national security and prosperity. There is also a contest over the fate of a rules-based global order. This contest is playing out in every region of the world, with the PRC attempting to present a vision for the international

order that deemphasizes the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, including ethnic and religious minorities. The PRC is propagating dangerous, repressive technologies, encouraging elite capture and corruption, and engaging in transnational repression.

- Second, in the wake of Russia’s unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, mitigating the threat that Russia poses to European and global security must remain a top priority for the United States and our democratic allies. Russia is actively working to undermine Europe’s democratic order; we must help our allies respond by shoring up their democratic institutions. Russia promotes its venal model of authoritarianism—where corruption enriches the coffers of elites, the people are denied basic freedoms, and domestic repression facilitates its aggression abroad. Russia delights in mobilizing the world’s autocrats against democratic freedoms, and Russia’s security proxies are degrading democratic possibilities in Africa and elsewhere.
- Third, if confirmed I will prioritize working with this committee and all of Congress to advance implementation of critical international human rights legislation. Key laws have been passed to end the unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers, protect religious freedom, uphold global labor standards, and hold human rights violators and corrupt officials accountable for grave abuses. In my view, the Assistant Secretary of State for DRL has an important responsibility to work with Congress on its international human-rights-related legislation. These laws reflect Americans’ continuing solidarity with those beyond our shores who seek freedom and dignity.

There are many other countries where I am concerned about democratic backsliding, closing civic space, unjust labor standards, and human rights violations and abuses. In Africa and the Middle East, de-democratizing trends are pervasive, and armed conflict and human rights abuses are exacting a terrible toll on civilians. I note in particular my concern about Iran and the groups it supports—both the threat they pose to U.S. interests and those of our allies and the scale and scope of repression Iran has wrought on its own people.

If confirmed, I commit to elevate and expand on DRL’s work to protect human rights defenders, civic activists, and journalists while promoting the rule of law and advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms. Without the United States having afforded these rights to generations of my family, I would not have had the opportunity to take on this responsibility today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. I know the clock says two minutes but if you want to take more time that is perfectly okay.

Ms. Welton?

STATEMENT OF DONNA ANN WELTON, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

Ms. WELTON. Chairman Cardin, thanks to Ranking Member Risch in absentia and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to be here today as President Biden’s nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Timor-Leste.

I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for placing their confidence in me to represent the United States in Dili.

If confirmed I look forward to working closely with the committee to advance U.S. interests in Timor-Leste. I am only here today because of the support of friends and family, especially my three children who are at work today who have kept me grounded and made me laugh and always proud.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues who began this journey with me in 1984 with the United States Information Agency, one of whom, Carlos Aranaga, is here today.

We were charged with telling America's story to the world. We did and we still do. That mission has never been more important than it is today.

I grew up in a small town in upstate New York. I was the first person in my family to have a passport, getting on a plane when I was 16 to spend a year in Japan as an exchange student.

That experience gave me the courage and the language skills to pursue public service as a diplomat and an appreciation for powerful change that can come through international education.

I am pleased to report that the United States and Timor-Leste enjoy strong bilateral relations. Timor-Leste is a democracy that shares our commitment to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is also a developing country with still nascent institutions, limited human capital, and significant economic and health challenges.

Through engagement that strengthens Timor-Leste's governance institutions, security, and economic stability, the United States has become one of Timor-Leste's most essential partners.

If confirmed as ambassador to Timor-Leste I will focus on deepening our partnership as we work together toward a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Further, if confirmed my highest priority will be the safety and security of all U.S. citizens in Timor-Leste including our amazing Peace Corps volunteers.

I will also prioritize the well-being of our mission personnel and their families and ensure a productive, safe, and respectful workplace.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Welton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DONNA A. WELTON

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to be here today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Timor-Leste. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for placing their confidence in me to represent the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this Committee to advance U.S. interests in Timor-Leste.

I am here today because of the support of friends and family, especially my three children—Hannah, Ian, and Esther—who have always kept me grounded and made me laugh and always proud. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues who began this journey with me in 1984 with the United States Information Agency, one of whom, Carlos Aranaga, is here today. We were charged with telling America's story to the world. We did, and still do. That mission has never been more important.

I grew up in a small town in upstate New York. I was the first person in my family to have a passport, getting on a plane when I was 16 to spend a year living in Japan as an exchange student. That experience gave me the courage and the language skills to pursue public service as a diplomat, and an appreciation for powerful change that can come through international education.

As a career Foreign Service Officer, I have dedicated over 30 years of my life to serving our country. It has been a privilege to do so.

The United States and Timor-Leste enjoy strong bilateral relations. Timor-Leste is a democracy that shares our commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is also a developing country with nascent institutions, limited human capital, and significant economic and health challenges. Through engagement that strengthens Timor-Leste's governance institutions, security, and economic stability, the United States has become one of Timor-Leste's most essential partners. If confirmed, I will focus on deepening our partnership as we work together towards a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

While direct trade between the United States and Timor-Leste is small, we are supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to diversify its economy and further integrate into global commerce. We support Timor-Leste's bids to join ASEAN and the WTO and are fostering its commercial law and regulatory regime. We are also providing development assistance that is focused on helping Timor-Leste build a diverse and inclusive economy. USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Peace Corps are all delivering programs that improve economic opportunity and diversification as well as the health and education of Timor-Leste's people. If confirmed, I will ensure U.S. development assistance continues to advance U.S. national security and economic prosperity and promotes a path to Timorese self-reliance and resilience.

Our growing security cooperation with Timor-Leste is focused on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime and border security, and professionalizing Timorese defense forces. A rotating U.S. Navy Seabees detachment provides critical humanitarian assistance and infrastructure support to the Timorese people. Timor-Leste joined the National Guard State Partnership program with Rhode Island in 2020, and the United States trains Timorese law enforcement personnel at our International Law Enforcement Academy in Thailand. The United States is supporting the rehabilitation of Baucau Airfield and in June 2023 the United States provided the Government of Timor-Leste a Cessna aircraft, enabling Timor-Leste to better monitor its territory, respond to natural disasters, and promote economic development. If confirmed, I will work to build on these initiatives that benefit thousands of Timorese citizens, bolster the influence of the United States, and advance our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

With a young, growing population, and a youth unemployment rate of 33 percent, Timor-Leste's leaders are focused on accessing economic and educational opportunities. The United States has responded to that call over the last 21 years by providing more than 700 Timorese young leaders with opportunities to develop essential skills through U.S. education and exchange programs. This includes the Fulbright program, the U.S.-Timor-Leste scholarship program, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, media development, and English language scholarships. These people-to-people connections promote mutual understanding between our nations and strengthen our bilateral relationship. In a country with limited exposure to the United States, engaging the next generation of Timorese leaders and change-makers is vital. If confirmed, I will work to build upon and expand these exchange programs that build bridges between our two peoples.

Finally, if confirmed, my highest priority will be the safety and security of all U.S. citizens in Timor-Leste. I will also prioritize the well-being of our Mission personnel and their families and ensure a productive, safe, and respectful workplace.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Lang?

STATEMENT OF STEPHAN A. LANG, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. COORDINATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION POLICY, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. LANG. Thank you, Chairman Cardin and members of the committee, and I would also like to express my appreciation to Ranking Member Risch for his comments earlier.

I am deeply honored to be before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy.

I am happy to have my wife Karin Lang, my mother Stephanie Lang, and my daughter Nathalie here with me today. My other daughter Veronica is watching from Michigan. Without their support I would not be here.

The digital economy has become the foundation of the global economy, improving lives around the world. But with these great benefits have also come challenges, and we must work diligently and relentlessly to overcome them.

I am proud to be part of the U.S. team in the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy championing an affirmative vision for technology and supporting America's unmatched leadership in innovation and entrepreneurship.

We urgently need solidarity with like-minded partners around the world to better face the existential challenge from countries that do not share our democratic values, particularly China.

The PRC's stated ambitions for leadership in the digital economy are clear. We must work together with those who share our rights-respecting approach to ensure that we lead the development and deployment of advanced technologies.

We and our partners must lead in setting standards, defending norms, and building interoperable regulatory frameworks not only because it is critical to our national security and economic prosperity but also to make sure that technology enables free expression and other basic rights.

We cannot allow these technologies to become tools to monitor citizens, censor dissent, and measure loyalty. If confirmed I will accelerate our work to promote trusted supply in digital infrastructure in markets around the world.

We will encourage telecom operators to choose trusted vendors when building out 5G networks and will further expand that work to include other technologies like cloud services, data centers, subsea cables, and satellite networks.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been a strong supporter of the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy. Confirming a U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy with the rank of ambassador will further elevate this important work and if confirmed I commit to consulting with you as we advance our leadership in this increasingly critical domain of global competition.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I look forward to any questions you have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lang follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHAN A. LANG

Thank you, Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the committee.

I'm deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy. I'm grateful to Secretary Blinken and Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy Nathaniel Fick for their support for my nomination and the opportunity to advance critical U.S. interests on digital and tech policy. And I'd like to give special thanks to Senator Klobuchar for giving me the honor of introducing me.

I'm so happy that my mother, Stephanie Lang, is here today. The example she and my late father, Bill, set for me of hard work and perseverance, no matter what, was the inspiration for my career. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for my wife and career partner, Karin Lang. Raising our family while pursuing two Foreign Service

careers in tandem has been the adventure of a lifetime and my greatest joy. And I'd like to sincerely thank my daughters Nathalie, who's here today, and Veronica, who's watching from Michigan, for putting up with so much as their mother and I have dragged them around the world a few times over in service to our country.

When I was a kid growing up in the suburbs of Kansas City, I never imagined that I would be here as a nominee to lead U.S. diplomacy on information and communications technology. I had never left the United States, and I could count the people I had met from foreign countries on one hand. But I unexpectedly had the opportunity to study in the UK, and a whole new set of experiences opened up for me. Back then, I wrote my friends letters on paper. I couldn't access U.S. newspapers, even in the school library. And I talked to my parents on the phone only once every other week.

So much has changed. We have constant and instantaneous access to information from anywhere in the world. I can video call friends on the other side of the globe basically for free. And the digital economy has become the foundation of the global economy, improving lives around the world.

But with these great benefits have also come challenges, and we must work diligently and relentlessly to overcome them. I am proud to be part of the U.S. team championing an affirmative vision for technology and supporting America's unmatched leadership in innovation and entrepreneurship.

It has been an honor to work with U.S. stakeholders—in the private sector and civil society—to advance the cause of an open, secure, interoperable, reliable, and innovative global digital economy.

We urgently need solidarity with like-minded partners around world to better face the existential challenge from countries that don't share our democratic values, particularly China. The PRC's stated ambitions for leadership in the digital economy, including through emerging technologies such as AI, telecommunications infrastructure, and other elements of their Digital Silk Road, are clear. We must work together with those who share our democratic values to ensure that we lead the development and deployment of advanced technologies because it is foundational for both our national security and our economic strength.

This work is also critical to preserving and advancing our democratic values. We and our partners must lead in setting standards, defending norms, and building interoperable regulatory frameworks in order to make sure that technology enables free expression, allows people to assemble virtually, and lets different perspectives and ideas coexist. We cannot allow these technologies to become tools to monitor citizens, censor dissent, and measure loyalty.

If confirmed, I will accelerate our work to promote trusted supply in digital infrastructure in markets around the world. We will encourage telecom operators to choose trusted vendors, including when building out 5G networks and to reject the misleading below-market pricing of untrusted vendors such as Huawei. We'll further strengthen our support for providers that won't be under an obligation to share data at the whim of the Chinese Communist Party. And we'll further expand that work to include other technologies like cloud services, data centers, subsea cables, and low-earth orbit satellite constellations providing broadband Internet services.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been a strong supporter of the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy, and as a recent GAO report confirmed, the bureau has been successful in elevating U.S. diplomacy across the range of tech issues. Confirming a U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy with the rank of Ambassador will further elevate this important work. And if confirmed, I commit to consulting with you as we advance our leadership in this increasingly critical domain of global competition.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I look forward to any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Again, thank you all for your testimonies.

I have obligatory questions that we ask all of our nominees to the executive branch. I would ask that you would answer them individually yes or no and it deals with cooperation with our committee.

The first question is do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

If you just go down the line it will be fine.

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

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

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. If confirmed do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultations while policies are being deployed, not just providing notification after the fact?

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

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

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, you all passed those tests. That was—you did a good job. Congratulations.

Dr. Rand, I want to start in regards to DRL and the challenges that you will have if confirmed in implementing policies that sometimes present challenges to different missions or different other agencies within the Department of State.

So we have passed several bills dealing with PRC and accountability. We passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, the Uyghurs Forced Labor Protection Act, the Hong Kong Autonomy Act.

If confirmed how can you help us make sure that those laws are implemented not just by the United States—that we work on a multilateral dimension in order to carry out the intent of those bills passed by Congress?

Dr. RAND. Thanks, Senator Cardin.

I just want to step back for a second and note that the worrisome trends with the PRC and its—in Hong Kong in particular in the past couple of months, and I would just note that Freedom on the Net report noted for the sort of ninth year and consecutively that the PRC is jailing the most journalists in the world, a shocking number, and half of those are actually Uyghur journalists.

So that was just a statistic that underscores the importance of this body of legislation that you all have worked on. And I also want to note my concern for the record of what is going on in Hong Kong, especially this—the jailing of Jimmy Lai, of course, but also the announcements of these bounties for individuals who are outside of the country.

In terms of our collaboration together I see that as fundamental to my role as assistant secretary in DRL. These laws come from great ideas that were hatched here in this body that I respect where I have worked and more can be done in the State Department, frankly, to implement them.

I understand that there has been some discussion about how we can work together to increase implementation of some of the Uyghur Policy Act, UFPLA in particular, and I have some ideas that if confirmed I would like to come back here and share with you all about what we can do.

You noted on the multilateral aspect of our human rights policy and this is critical. This is where U.S. leadership at the U.N. Human Rights Council and other international organizations but also bilaterally with key like-minded partners in Europe, in Aus-

tralia, Canada, elsewhere can help force multiply our efforts, especially when it comes to the PRC.

So if confirmed I will work with critical allies to make sure that some of our measures of accountability on the PRC are duplicated around the world because it is the pinch multilaterally that will really be felt there.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank you for that, and I appreciate you mentioning the global—Fighting Global Corruption Act in your opening comments. I will not ask further questions on that.

But it is going to take tremendous effort on your part to get that implemented the way Congress has intended and I think in regards to Global Magnitsky there is a well understood the—within the executive branch of the importance of that program and the fact it can be even of greater use and you will have a key role to play in that regard.

I want to cover the issue of Russia and in Gaza the lack of having an international community voice in those countries through their civil societies.

In Russia we see activists imprisoned every day who try to engage their country to promote democracy and we know civil societies are struggling within Russia to have any role whatsoever.

I would state that if we are going to have peace in Gaza we need to have civil societies that are active, that can help the people with their own authorities as well as speaking out in regards to the needs.

So what can you see you do in order to strengthen the presence of civil societies in those areas where civil societies are struggling?

Dr. RAND. Thanks, Senator.

So in Russia right now it seems as if the revisionism and the aggression that was so clearly on display in February of 2022 when Russia invaded Ukraine has been expressed also through an increased repression domestically.

So there is this connection between the revisionism, the aggression abroad, and greater repression at home, and you are right that there is critical networks of civil society some of whom have fled, frankly, and DRL has been very active in supporting some of these networks of human rights defenders.

So I just underscore and congratulate the bureau on its work thus far and commit, if confirmed, to continuing this work to help human rights defenders from that area of the world including in Belarus, frankly.

Civil society is critical. It is critical to the future of Ukraine. It is critical to the future of democratic order and institutions across Europe and Eastern Europe and I am watching these other states that are

—where Russia is trying to infiltrate, frankly, and trying to push away and diminish democratic institutions in countries like Moldova, et cetera.

So if confirmed this will be a high priority. It is not just in Russia itself where the situation is terrible and getting worse but also in its—in the region where Russia is having an outside hand and is using its aggression in Ukraine to stir up—to really diminish democratic freedoms.

The CHAIRMAN. You are absolutely right in Ukraine. President Zelensky is really trying hard to develop democratic institutions.

He is really fighting a system that had significant corruption in it and he is now trying to prevent the growth of oligarchs that could compromise the democratic institutions in a free Ukraine.

We need to be laser focused on helping him deal with the challenges he is confronting. We have a president who really wants to make progress but it is a challenge and he needs the help of the United States. So I am glad to see that you are focused on that issue.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

One of the things that would help a lot is passing the supplemental funding bill so that Ukraine could keep their government operations open and continue to fight the war against Russia. So let us not forget that.

I think this is a question for Dr. Rand but also maybe for Mr. Lang because last month the World Economic Forum released a report that cited misinformation and disinformation as the most concerning global risk of the next two years and I would argue that it is one of the greatest threats to democracy both at home and abroad.

So, obviously, the State Department has a Global Engagement Center that is intended to lead our response to address disinformation campaigns, but I think there has been some challenges in getting the Global Engagement Center to do the kind of coordination and cooperation that needs to happen in order to be effective.

So can you talk about how you would implement countering disinformation and democracy programming in coordination with the Global Engagement Center? And then I will ask you, Mr. Lang, also if you would respond to that.

Dr. RAND. Sure. First of all, thank you very much, Senator, and I would just want to say off the bat that as assistant secretary, if confirmed, I will work with these colleagues but also across the State Department.

This is a cross-State Department effort, including with the new bureau of CDP and the regional bureaus and the Global Engagement Center and GPA, et cetera.

You have identified a critical issue and DRL's foreign assistance programs are trying to make a dent in this problem including by working on internet freedom. DRL has a very advanced and specific set of programs that are trying to promote independent voices when there is censorship afoot.

We are finding around the world that blocking internet is a tool of the autocrats and then flooding the zone with mis- and disinformation, as you rightly put, as a way to shore up authoritarians and those who want to threaten the freedom.

So it is that combination of censorship and then misinformation which is very dangerous and we are seeing it. Even this month, frankly, there have been instances where we have seen new instances of it. So if confirmed I am going to take a look at all the foreign assistance programs we have.

I suspect we can do more with CDP and with others to update them and to integrate them. There is also the interagency that has good ideas and I also want to talk to experts.

The White House just issued its EO on AI and that artificial intelligence and new technologies are making this much more complicated.

So I would like to work with all of those technical experts to see what we can do on our foreign assistance programs.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Lang?

Mr. LANG. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

And I agree that this is a critical issue and one that the United States Government and the State Department needs to fully engage on.

The Cyberspace and Digital Policy Bureau has a coordinator for digital freedom who leads our efforts on misinformation and disinformation.

I am not a part of that team but I know that they have prioritized this, especially working through the OECD's misinformation and disinformation hub of which the United States is a co-chair of the steering group.

That has been one of the key channels through which we have tried to advance our interests on this critical issue.

Senator SHAHEEN. I appreciate that and I know there is a lot of good work going on. I would argue that one of the challenges we have is that nobody is in charge.

There is a lot of effort but no one person who is responsible and that that hinders our ability to move forward in a coordinated way.

Let me stay with you, Mr. Lang, for a very parochial issue that deals with some of the technical aspects of your position.

One of the challenges that we have had in northern New Hampshire that I think is shared by some of our neighbors along the Canadian border is that we have challenges between our small rural communities and communicating, particularly for law enforcement and safety issues, because of the licensing process that requires approval by both the FCC and Canada's ISED to change where towers go and where radio communications can happen.

Let me give a lot of credit to Ambassador Cohen who has been very helpful with our office in trying to address these issues.

But if confirmed would you be willing to help assist us in working on this problem because it is a very real challenge for some of those very small communities?

Mr. LANG. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

The FCC has the lead in managing those issues but, of course, my team works hand in hand with the FCC all the time in their engagements with international partners, and we would be more than happy to help facilitate those efforts to resolve those issues.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

And Dr. Rand, you mentioned Belarus in your opening statement or maybe it was in your response to Senator Cardin.

But how specifically would you work with USAID and with Voice of America to support independent media and human rights defenders in Belarus who have really done an amazing job under very difficult circumstances with Lukashenko in charge?

Dr. RAND. Right, Senator, and Lukashenko is deepening sort of techniques and tactics which are, again, utilizing new technology. So you have to keep up with the innovation of some of these autocrats.

Yes, this is a whole-of-government effort in Belarus and USAID is doing tremendous work as well. DRL has one piece of this puzzle, which is to help some of the human rights defenders, especially when they are out of the country and trying to continue to build civil society networks outside the country.

Of course, there is also important work that other agencies are doing. There is also DRL has a role in the diplomacy here, right, raising these issues in Belarus at the multilateral forum, making sure other governments in Europe that have a lot on their plate, frankly, when it comes to democratic aversions and backsliding in their region also raise issues in Belarus.

So I see DRL as both a programmatic office but really, frankly, a diplomatic office that needs to continue pressuring the diplomats around me to ensure that these issues are raised everywhere they go.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, and congratulations to all of you and Ms. Welton, I am out of time but I very much appreciate the importance of your role in the Indo-Pacific as we are looking at countering China.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and it is great to see all of you. Congratulations on your nominations.

Dr. Rand, it was good to talk to you a little bit just yesterday and I just wanted to follow up on a couple of the things we talked about starting with the Leahy laws named after our former colleague Senator Patrick Leahy, which as you know bars military assistance to units of foreign security forces if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

Now, this law has been on the books for a very long time now but it has been, I think, challenging for the State Department to implement—well, let me put it differently. The State Department, in my view, has never had sort of the political will to really implement this.

Can you speak a little bit to what you would do to make sure that countries comply and the United States implements the Leahy laws?

Dr. RAND. Thank you, Senator, and I enjoyed our conversation as well in your office.

The Leahy law is a critical law that has been on the books and if confirmed, first and foremost, I will apply it consistently and fairly around the world.

All U.S. security assistance recipients are subject to the Leahy law and I will make sure first operationally that DRL has the resources, the bandwidth, the capital, that it needs to continue working on this law including the vetting that goes on to take in the allegations of credible information and then to deem in a fair and consistent manner which units are ineligible per the first part of the law.

So that is DRL's job and if confirmed that is going to require my management and my leadership to make sure. I have a fairly good sense they are doing a great job now but if confirmed I will go in and see what else I can do to make sure that it is implemented.

That is the first part of the law, and I also want to underscore that there is a second part of the law that Senator Leahy really used to emphasize publicly when he talked about the law and how proud he was of the law and that was the duty to inform the host government that a unit has been deemed ineligible.

If we just ding at them and take away the security assistance without informing and conveying this accountability measure then we are only doing half of our work.

So if confirmed I want to work on the diplomatic part, the duty to inform, making sure that our embassies and our posts understand that this is part of their legal obligations and that they need to work with host governments, ministries of defense, and others to convey that there are individuals and units and leaders that have committed these GVHR—gross violations of human rights—and that they must be held accountable. That is in the law itself, that there is a requirement for military accountability or when it is police judicial—require civilian accountability.

So that second part I will commit to you that I will work with my colleagues and the diplomatic corps, and if necessary go embassy to embassy where there is a great deal of security assistance being given to make sure that that is being implemented.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So on that—on the first point, actually, the first phase of that which is identifying countries where there is credible evidence of violations of the Leahy law I believe that triggers in itself a responsibility to notify the Congress, even at that stage. Is that correct?

Dr. RAND. That has been the custom. So yes, and if confirmed, I will continue that because I see no reason not to.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Right. Well, if that is the case then at least to my knowledge the Leahy law is not even be triggered in many circumstances, at least based on notification I have seen, which does raise certain questions.

I mean, you do not even get to the second part if you do not have the original determinations of credibility, credibility violations.

Let me just ask you a broader question because, as you know, President Biden has said we have a values-based foreign policy.

I mean, no country is, obviously, perfect but that we want to make sure that we fight to uphold democracy and human rights around the world and our adversaries often point to some of our inconsistencies in applying that standard both to friends as well as to foes.

Would you agree that failure to apply that measure consistently undermines the credibility of our foreign policy when that happens?

Dr. RAND. Yes, thank you. And to step back, this is one of the reasons I am excited to return to this bureau where I was the deputy assistant secretary.

I believe that DRL is a fundamental and critical part of our foreign policy. Yes, it is just a bureau in the State Department but it really speaks to the values of human dignity, of freedom, of universal rights that are core to our country, that are in our Constitu-

tion, and that have been expressed for decades if not centuries in our foreign policy.

We need to be consistent. We need to be clear. There are times when we are going to have to prioritize other issues over human rights.

I will try to make sure those times are few and far between, and I fundamentally believe in terms of my vision for this bureau that we can integrate human rights and values into our geopolitical and strategic interests.

They will need balance these. They are not always at odds. There is a careful and creative diplomatic way to integrate them that overall improves our power, our standing, our influence, and our leverage that befits a global superpower.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I appreciate that. Because if we do not do that, again, our adversaries will claim we are only using this as a political cudgel when it is convenient against our adversaries and not applying the standard to our friends as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to all three of our witnesses. Thank you very much for your continued willingness to serve the United States of America.

Dr. Rand, I am very glad that you are taking up this post. It is one of the most important in the department.

I, frankly, just want to build on Senator Van Hollen's questions because I really do worry about the impression that is created around the world about our sincerity when it comes to human rights when we continue to let some of our most important strategic and security allies get away with some just absolutely miserable human rights records and I want to draw your attention to Egypt because this committee has been in a pretty regular fight, dispute, argument, with the administration over the question of aid released to a country that does not lock up dozens of political prisoners, does not lock up hundreds of political prisoners.

Egypt literally has tens of thousands of people in prison today for political crimes and, yet, it was Chairman Cardin, not the administration, who had to hold \$235 million in fiscal year '22 military aid just so that the law was followed.

The law says Egypt cannot get this money unless they make progress on certain human rights issues including significantly improving pretrial detention practices, accelerating the pardon and release of those political prisoners, and more generally providing space for human rights defenders.

The reason we always get from the administration on why we have to waive these human rights conditions with Egypt is that they will not cooperate or help us without the human rights conditions being waived.

I think that fundamentally misunderstands the fact that many of the things that Egypt used to do 30 years ago just to please us they now do today because they have independent strategic reasons, for instance, to be in a security cooperative relationship with Israel.

So I want to ask you if you would commit to this committee that you will not advocate for releasing that \$235 million until those

conditions are met—progress on pretrial detention, the acceleration of pardon and release of political prisoners which include thousands of people imprisoned for speech and association, and the expansion of space for human rights defenders, civil society advocates, and political opposition.

Dr. RAND. Senator, first of all, thank you for your service and your record on these issues and human rights in the Senate. We have worked together on other countries and it is—you have been an incredible champion as has the chair.

On Egypt you have my word that if confirmed as assistant secretary for DRL I will be the voice at the table that takes U.S. law and in this case the very clear language in the report on the foreign operations bill about conditionality to Egypt that has been very clear now for the past three or four years and make sure and advocates within the State Department and within the interagency to ensure that we do not—that we adhere to the law, essentially, and we comply with these requirements regarding human rights.

I cannot promise that I always will win these interagency debates but I can promise you that if confirmed I will be the voice at the table making a clear, analytical, thoughtful, well informed argument and trying to figure out how diplomatically we can change the situation on the ground because that ultimately is what is so worrisome is that with all these years since we have had these levers of accountability the situation has gotten a little bit better here, a little bit worse this year, but fundamentally has not improved at all.

And as you say this is a country where we have a very complex, important strategic relationship. We have many issues that we are working on with Egypt. It is a very big country, a huge population, a young population. It is critical that we remain present and there and the human rights situation is unacceptable.

Senator MURPHY. Yeah, I do not disagree. I just think by and large in the Middle East our policy sometimes gets stuck in 1989 and we say the same things over and over and over again and we assume that actors behave the same way they did 30 years ago.

We give the same amount of money to Egypt that we did when we started our direct military financing relationship with them despite how things have so fundamentally changed.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to submit a question for the record on Tunisia. I would just note that last year's budget request cited Tunisia as a possible recipient of additional military aid, quote, "if Tunisia shows signs of a return to democratic governance."

This is another country where we have an opportunity to use our aid as a clear signal about our frustration, displeasure, and worry about the quick slide away from democracy.

We also have a opportunity to support civil society at a real moment of peril in Tunisia. We can withhold aid as a sign that we are serious about pushing human rights and democracy but we can also flow aid to nongovernment actors in places like Tunisia who are still carrying on the fight.

So this is another country that I know the chairman cares about as well and I will submit a question or two for the record on Tunisia as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy, let me just underscore the point that you raised in regards to Egypt and in regards to the role that we expect DRL to play in advocating for the enforcement of our laws and the value-based foreign policy that we believe is the strength of America and underscore the point that Senator Van Hollen also made.

If we are not informed we cannot assist in carrying out our policies. So we recognize that the battle within the State Department has many different objectives and historically our values have not always been at the highest priorities in the conversations that take place with our strategic partners.

We recognize that, but we expect you to advocate for our values and to win those battles in the State Department.

But we also expect you to keep us informed. We have a responsibility. The first questions I asked you, and you already have said yes to all the questions we asked, is to keep us informed so that we can also engage those battles.

But if we do not know what is going on it is tough for us to do that. So Senator Murphy is absolutely right. We will take unilateral action at times but it is better if we are informed before we do that.

So I am just going to encourage you to respond to our requests as it relates to how well you are succeeding in your battles at the State Department.

Dr. RAND. I will be up here frequently. I will engage with your staff. You will be hearing from me.

I am a former Senate staffer so I really understand how useful, frankly, the senators can be, the staff can be, in this part of our foreign policy.

The CHAIRMAN. So let me go to Timor-Leste for a moment, Ms. Welton.

There are a lot of good things happening there. Their path to ASEAN looks positive. Looks like that is moving forward. They have a free society, which is also unusual in that part of the world.

But as you pointed out there are some concerns, concerns on their relationship with PRC. We want countries to have good relationships with all countries but if it is against our foreign policy and what we are trying to achieve—for example, the South China Sea being open and free to commerce—then it is a concern to us that the PRC has relationships with other countries it can make it challenging for us to implement the policies that we think are best in that region.

So I do want you to tell us a little bit more how you are going to deal with that trend of relationship to the PRC.

And also it is a young country as far as the development of their civil societies. How do you encourage the strengthening of civil societies and the protection and growth of human rights respect for all of its citizens?

Ms. WELTON. I definitely appreciate your question and I share your concern, Senator—Mr. Chairman—about the negative influence and the attempts at coercion that we are seeing more and more from the People's Republic of China around the world, not just, of course, in Timor-Leste.

I think if confirmed I am going—I would focus on the general areas that are outlined in the Indo-Pacific strategy but on a retail level in Timor-Leste and that is to support and continue the programs that USAID, DRL, and others in the interagency do to support governance institutions, fight the tendency towards corruption, and make the operations of the Government as clear and transparent and as supportive of the aspirations of the Timor-Leste people as possible. I will, if confirmed, be that engager.

The other aspect that we are focused on there, as I understand, is to strengthen the economy—to diversify the economy so that they have many opportunities to grow and support livelihood and living status in Timor-Leste and that includes improving education, which we are doing through the Millennium Challenge Compact and through USAID programs, focus on civil society through programs that are focused on women as well as the media and a whole host of things.

I will spend a lot of time encouraging Dr. Rand if she is confirmed—her folks—to help us do that. It is increasingly important as I have heard today and I definitely agree that our values be front and center of everything that we do, even in a small place like Timor-Leste.

Their voice when added to ASEAN will also add tremendously to regional stability and economic growth for them and for the Indo-Pacific. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for that answer. As I said earlier, the confirmation process we take very seriously here. We listen to what you are saying and we expect that you will keep us informed on progress.

We will send you some friendly reminders at times as to what things are going on. Our staff is pretty good at following up with letters to you all.

But you can beat them to the punch by just informing us as to what you are doing. We appreciate that. It is lonely at times. We like letters and communication.

Ms. WELTON. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So do not hesitate to keep us informed.

Ms. WELTON. I have to say that over the many years of my career as a Foreign Service officer I have always enjoyed having your staff visit our posts and our missions overseas. They bring a lot of energy, a lot of knowledge, and they really do help us in our work. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for saying that. We appreciate those thoughts. We also know that you look forward when their plane takes off and leaves the country as well.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So we know how this all goes.

Anyway, Mr. Lang, last year was the first full fiscal year for the International Technology, Security, and Innovation Fund and it was used to help deal with some of the cabling.

This will be the second year. Can you just give us an indication of where you think the priority should be on the utilization of these funds?

Mr. LANG. Yes, Senator Cardin.

First of all, I would like to express appreciation for the Congress' support for ITSI funding. It is a very valuable tool for us in our efforts to promote trusted supply in ICT infrastructure.

I think undersea cables is an important area where we will endeavor to use those funds. We recently—the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy recently announced that we would be able to use \$15 million over the next three years to support connections in the Pacific, working together with industry and Australia as well to help facilitate connections that would not otherwise be made—by private companies and I think that is a good example of the kind of work that we would like to expand to help build out trusted infrastructure for countries that are looking to make the difficult choice between trusted and untrusted suppliers.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Rand, I am glad that Senator Murphy raised Egypt. I would have raised it if he did not but I want to raise India as well. We know about the plot to assassinate a sheikh on U.S. soil and Canadian soil.

I would like to hear your commitment to how you would get engaged in those types of efforts to make sure that type of conduct does not take place.

Dr. RAND. Yes, it is very concerning what happened on U.S. soil and on Canadian soil and, first and foremost, it is clear that India is a critical ally, partner. We are the oldest democracy. They are the biggest democracy.

But it is those shared values, our democratic values, that we need that bind this alliance and as—if confirmed as DRL Assistant Secretary I will be a voice in the administration making sure that we are not abashed—we are not afraid—to talk about our concerns about human rights, democracy, and, of course, these troubling trends towards what we are seeing.

Again, I am not in administration so I do not know all the details of what happened and I understand DOJ and FBI are working on it.

But I think it is really critical that even as we strengthen our relationship with India as part of our Indo-Pacific strategy we make human rights and democracy the center of that relationship and we talk truth in this relationship and we speak frankly about our concerns.

And so I am not shy and I will be a voice at the State Department and in the administration making that clear.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that, and I could mention many other countries that we have that are allies or strategic partners. We like to have a strategic relationship with just about every country in the world if we can. Some it is impossible.

But we do need to work with the global community. But as President Biden said it needs to be embraced in our values and you are the principal enforcer to make sure that message is understood by those that are engaged in U.S. foreign policy. So we will—we will hold you to that.

The record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow. I would encourage you, as Senator Murphy already indicated—gave you a preview on one of the questions—that if you could get those questions answered as promptly as possible and as completely as

possible so that we can clear the formal process and be able to act on your nominations in a timely way.

And with that, again, with your thanks for your public service and to your family, the hearing will stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

It is clear that transnational repression is quickly becoming a tool of choice for autocratic and illiberal regimes around the world. The exporting of repression not only violates the human rights of targeted individuals, but I believe is contributing to global democratic decline. Addressing transnational repression will require a sustained, whole-of-government effort.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that combatting transnational repression, in both its digital and physical forms, is prioritized within the Department as well as the interagency? What existing U.S. policy tools could be pursued more robustly to respond to this problem?

Answer. If confirmed, I would commit to continuing DRL's vital work defending human rights defenders around the world. I would expand ongoing efforts across the Department of State to counter transnational repression (TNR), coordinating where appropriate with other agencies including the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice. I would utilize all available tools to promote accountability, including financial sanctions and visa restrictions, such as the "Khashoggi Ban" visa restriction policy, for those engaging in acts of TNR, as appropriate.

As TNR is a global concern, I would seek to expand ongoing work with our allies and partners to raise awareness and share our efforts and best practices in terms of what has worked in deterring TNR. And, to seek new multilateral opportunities to amplify the message that TNR undermines global stability and impedes on our democratic values. This would include our work with the EU in the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council to combat the targeting of human rights defenders online and our work to strengthen international cooperation countering the proliferation and misuse of commercial spyware, which is used as a tool for digital repression. I would ensure we continue to raise our concerns about TNR directly with perpetrating governments and in multilateral engagements at every appropriate opportunity. I would also work to advance policy and programs to increase support and protections for victims of TNR.

Question. As Assistant Secretary, how would you ensure that the rights of marginalized populations, including LGBTQI+ rights, are an integral component of our U.S. foreign policy and democracy promotion around the world?

Answer. Democracies are stronger when the human rights of all persons are promoted and protected, and effective U.S. diplomacy requires engagement with people across societies, including with marginalized groups. The State Department is committed to providing swift responses to human rights abuses and violations targeting persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ persons, women and girls, members of religious minorities, and marginalized racial, ethnic, and indigenous communities. If confirmed, I will work with State Department colleagues to continue developing effective policies and programs to promote and protect the human rights of all persons, including by providing emergency assistance to at-risk communities, empowering civil society, combatting discriminatory foreign laws and policies, and protecting vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to help make the Global Magnitsky Sanctions Program more active and responsive in the coming year? Are there additional tools and resources you would need to do so?

Answer. In 2023, the U.S. Government announced a total of 24 primary designations under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, marking the same number of total primary designations as in 2022. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Office of the Sanctions Coordinator and the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs to continue to refine and improve the implementation of the Global Magnitsky

Sanctions Program to continue to enhance its efficacy, efficiency, and responsiveness and address any resource needs. If confirmed, I will review the impact of the Global Magnitsky Sanctions Program and discuss my findings with Congress, including whether any new tools or resources are needed to shore up implementation and efficacy.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to providing Congress a fulsome justification for any national interest waiver under 7031(c) designations?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that the mandatory quarterly report to Congress on Section 7031(c) continues to include the required relevant information on national interest justifications for waivers.

The PRC has waged an aggressive campaign to export its authoritarian model, including through its AI-driven surveillance technology, to countries across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. This campaign directly undermines U.S. national security interests and weakens human rights protections and institutions in the affected countries.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with our partners and allies to counter and mitigate PRC attempts to export its authoritarianism?

Answer. The Administration's 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS) makes clear the pressing strategic challenge posed by powers that layer authoritarian governance with a revisionist foreign policy. The NSS underscores that specific authoritarian behaviors, such as the misuse of technologies for repression, pose a challenge to U.S. national security interests and undermine international peace and stability. If confirmed, I will first review how the Administration is countering these actions by the PRC and other governments, particularly in reining in these repressive technologies. I will engage with Congress as we deepen our efforts, including by working with allies and partners to ensure that dangerous technologies are not undermining a free, open, prosperous, and secure international order and working with interagency partners such as the Departments of Commerce and Treasury to leverage sanctions and other accountability tools, export controls, and other mechanisms to make progress.

Rwanda is the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa to appear in Freedom House's list of "Top 10 Origin States" for acts of direct, physical transnational repression. According to Freedom House, Rwandan dissidents who criticize the Government or President Kagame are subjected to "digital threats, to assault, detention, rendition, and even assassination." One such Rwandan dissident was Maryland resident Leopold Munyakazi [moon-yuh-KAZI] who criticized the Rwandan Government during a speech in the U.S. in 2006 and is now serving a 14-year prison sentence in Rwanda for "genocide denial." I am not aware of any serious diplomatic intervention on his behalf by officials at the embassy or by officials here in Washington.

Question. Are you aware of this case? If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the State Department looks into allegations that the Rwandan Government may have interfered in Mr. Munyakazi's deportation and subsequent imprisonment? How will you ensure the Department increases pressure on Rwandan President Kagame to end his ongoing campaign of transnational repression?

Answer. I am aware of the case of Mr. Munyakazi and, if confirmed, I look forward to engaging with interagency colleagues, including domestic law enforcement agencies, on this case.

As the National Security Strategy makes clear, addressing transnational repression is an important priority for this Administration. I am aware of the Freedom House research as well as the October 2023 Human Rights Watch report on Rwanda describing these serious allegations. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and the interagency to use our full suite of tools to promote accountability.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take strengthen DRL and its voice within the Administration? What will you do to boost the morale of DRL staff?

Answer. As a Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary, I will bring vision, new ideas, and energy to DRL. I will elevate the bureau's work, primarily by ensuring that each DRL office has a chance to participate in policy-making efforts at the highest level. I will promote the good work that is being done inside DRL—with the State Department Seventh Floor, White House, interagency, and with outside stakeholders. I will ensure that our programmatic and policy officers have the training, guidance, and resources they need to be successful. The State Department should always be a learning organization and to that end, I will invite outside speakers and

organize professional development activities. Finally, DRL's internal teamwork, mission-oriented spirit, and the inclusivity of its staff are sources of its excellence. I will continue to cultivate these strengths.

The United States has long played a leading role in supporting democracy, human rights, and justice in Sri Lanka. However, despite large-scale public protests in 2022 leading to the ouster of the president and calls for serious reforms, Sri Lanka continues to suffer from serious human rights abuses and impunity. Moreover, the current government continues to violate Sri Lanka's own constitution by indefinitely delaying mandated elections.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address promote human rights, justice and democracy in Sri Lanka?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of State continues to raise its concerns about reconciliation and human rights publicly and privately with the Government of Sri Lanka, including the rights of members of ethnic and religious minorities, land expropriation, freedoms of expression and association, arbitrary detention, and corruption. If confirmed, I will also ensure that the Department continues to promote justice for victims and accountability for those responsible for abuses during Sri Lanka's civil war. As a member of the Core Group on Sri Lanka at the Human Rights Council, I will ensure the United States remains committed to advocating for these issues.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing US leadership at the UN Human Rights Council on Sri Lanka including supporting a Human Rights Council Resolution seeking to address these critical issues?

Answer. I understand the United States has served in the Core Group of countries that have drafted Human Rights Council Resolutions on "Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka" since 2013. If confirmed, I will continue to support coordination with our Core Group partners on international efforts to promote human rights for all communities in Sri Lanka and ensure the protection and preservation of evidence of past human rights abuses to be used in future accountability processes.

The unconstitutional re-election of President Nayib Bukele in El Salvador presents a unique challenge for DRL in the coming years. President Bukele has publicly embraced his efforts to dismantle democratic institutions, suspend due process, demonize human rights defenders, and consolidate power in a few short years. We understand that the United States' relationship with El Salvador is complex, with bilateral partnerships on counter-narcotics, migration, and economic cooperation, and El Salvador's improved security conditions cannot be ignored. However, the mass incarceration, undermining of rule of law, and State-sponsored intimidation of civil society actors and independent journalists who dare to challenge Bukele's positive image should be of significant concern to the United States.

Question. What would you hope to achieve as Assistant Secretary for DRL to improve constitutional governance and human rights in El Salvador?

Answer. While security has improved in El Salvador the country continues to experience human rights and democracy challenges. If confirmed, I will continue DRL's efforts to address mass incarceration, rule of law, and intimidation of civil society actors and independent journalists. I will continue to support our civil society partners as well as human rights and environmental defenders through policy and programmatic efforts.

Question. As Azerbaijan prepares to host COP 29, an event that will convene the international community in Baku, how can we push the Aliyev Government to release jailed journalists and political prisoners?

Answer. I share your concern about the arrests of journalists and others widely considered to be political prisoners in Azerbaijan. Although I am not currently in the Administration, I understand U.S. officials in Baku and Washington continue to call on the Government of Azerbaijan to respect the human rights of all, to cease harassment, and to release all those held for exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms. I understand the Administration has also expressed concern about the arrest and detention of Gubad Ibadoghlu and has urged the Azerbaijani Government to immediately release him.

If confirmed, I will work with allies to ensure that we leverage the international attention and prestige offered to Azerbaijan as it hosts COP29, in order to release

the unjustly detained. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with members of Congress on this issue.

Question. President Saied's rule in Tunisia has only become more autocratic while implementing none of the economic reforms desperately called for by Tunisian citizens. How do we bolster civil society in Tunisia while sending a strong message that further regression on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law will not be tolerated?

Answer. I am alarmed at Tunisia's democratic backsliding and erosion of constitutional governance. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize Tunisia, including by strengthening democratic institutions, protecting and investing in Tunisia's vibrant civil society, and ensuring that U.S. assistance is directly benefiting the Tunisian people.

If confirmed, I will also reiterate the importance of Tunisia respecting human rights, including the fundamental freedoms of expression and association. I look forward to engaging with Congress on this top priority.

Mexico is one of the United States' most important partners, not only in the hemisphere, but in the world. On a range of issues, from managing migration to combating fentanyl trafficking to strengthening nearshoring, it is imperative that the United States have a productive relationship with our closest southern neighbor. Having said that, I think there are legitimate concerns about the current status of democratic governance, human rights, and rule of law in Mexico. These include concerns about increasing militarization, protecting the independence of Mexico's judiciary and other autonomous institutions, and rampant attacks against journalists and human rights defenders, which I think the United States must be vocal on.

Question. What is your assessment of the status of human rights and democracy in Mexico, and how would you advance DRL's agenda in Mexico as Assistant Secretary?

Answer. Mexico is an important partner to the United States on a number of crucial, complex issues of vital national interest. Yet the country faces continual challenges to human rights and democracy. With over 100,000 missing and disappeared, frequent violence against journalists and politicians, and sustained violence against women and other marginalized groups, there remains important work to be done to improve the state of human rights and democracy in Mexico. If confirmed, I will continue DRL's crucial work tackling these issues. I will ensure that we raise human rights and the rule of law in our diplomatic interactions with the Mexican Government. I will continue DRL's work of supporting and engaging with Mexican civil society on critical issues such as violence against journalists, gender-based violence, and protections for marginalized communities. Lastly, if confirmed, I will work with the interagency to ensure that human rights, the rule of law, and anti-corruption goals are integrated into the range of other areas and issues where we cooperate intensively with the Government of Mexico.

Israel/Palestinians

Question. Even though the fighting in Gaza continues, the planning for a future free of Hamas must happen now. Like most Gazans, civil society actors there have suffered terribly during the violence. However, strong civil society and a responsive civil administration that respects the rights of its citizens will be crucial for Gazans to effectively govern themselves after this war and ultimately reach a negotiated two-state solution. What is your assessment of civil society groups in Gaza, as well as the West Bank? What would be your strategy, if confirmed, to both build that capacity in a technical sense while helping civil society actors rebuild their lives? How would you coordinate this effort with other bureaus within the State Department and with USAID?

Answer. Around the world, we have seen how respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with a strong civil society, are critical to peace and security and responsive governance. Gaza's robust civil society has faced unprecedented challenges over the past number of years under Hamas' rule and during the current hostilities. If confirmed, I will be committed to building and enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations in Gaza and the West Bank, especially those that protect civilians, advocate for fundamental freedoms, and promote independent journalism. Doing so will be critical to advancing stability, freedom of expression, and eventual democratic governance in the Gaza Strip after the current hostilities end.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) also has a responsibility to reform and improve its governance in order to support the Palestinian people's aspirations for freedom

and dignity. Civil society in the West Bank is currently operating under significant restrictions by the PA, making it difficult to continue its vital work. If confirmed, I will support ongoing Department efforts to urge governance reforms in the PA, so that human rights defenders, journalists, and civil society organizations can register and operate without undue restrictions and speak freely without retribution. Likewise, if confirmed, I will work closely with my counterparts across the Department and with USAID to ensure effective implementation of programming.

Abuse of LGBTQI+ Persons

Question. In December 2023, the Biden Administration sanctioned Uganda’s Commissioner General of Prisons for serious human rights abuses, including the use of forced anal examinations on LGBTQI+ prisoners. Used by authorities in criminal prosecutions for same-sex sexual conduct, these exams are not only medically discredited, but have also been deemed a form of torture. Yet, these are not the only harmful practices impacting LGBTQI+ people around the globe. LBQT women experience high levels of corrective rape, while LGBTQI+ human rights defenders are routinely held in arbitrary detention. If confirmed, what actions would you take to encourage an end to these forms of violence against LGBTQI+ persons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue DRL’s critical work to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons, and to prevent and deter violations of their rights. This includes working the Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, DRL’s Office of Security and Human Rights, posts, and regional bureaus to identify perpetrators of human rights abuses against LGBTQI+ persons and use the full range of policy tools to promote accountability. I will support the ongoing work of the Special Envoy, who leads the interagency effort to end conversion therapy practices, as mandated by Executive Order 14075, to work with host and partner governments, civil society, religious groups, health organizations, and other interlocutors to end so-called “conversion therapy” practices targeting LGBTQI+ persons, including “corrective” rape, forced pregnancy, psychiatric institutionalization, and other abuses.

Question. Without speaking to any specific request for assistance the administration may have received, can you confirm whether the administration is in fact using its new legal flexibility to provide support to the ICC’s Ukraine investigation? Will you support the active use of that new flexibility if confirmed?

Answer. While I am not privy to the details of the Administration’s current engagement with the ICC, I understand the United States has been supportive of a variety of pathways to justice for atrocities that have taken place as part of Russia’s war against Ukraine—and Congressional support for this has been critical. If confirmed, I would strongly support initiatives to promote justice for Russia’s atrocities and abuses, including through the ICC, in close coordination with the Office of Global Criminal Justice and other U.S. Government counterparts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What is the definition of “human rights?”

Answer. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, or religion. I look to the definitions of human rights articulated in the U.S. constitution as a starting point. In addition, definitions of universally-recognized human rights are found in various international instruments adopted or ratified by the United States, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture, among others. Human rights include, but are not limited to, the right of the individual to life and liberty and security of person, to not be held in slavery or subject to torture, and to exercise freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and religion or belief.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Question. What is the definition of “universally-recognized human rights?”

Answer. There is no definition of the term “universally-recognized human rights” in international law.

Question. What is the definition of “internationally-recognized human rights?”

Answer. There is no definition of the term “internationally-recognized human rights” in international law.

Question. Is there a difference in the definition of “universally-recognized human rights” and “internationally-recognized human rights?”

Answer. There is no definition of “universally-recognized human rights” and “internationally-recognized human rights” in international law.

Question. What are the U.S. legal obligations under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Answer. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a non-binding resolution of the United Nations General Assembly and creates no legally binding obligations for the United States.

Question. Is the United States Government bound by definitions of “human rights” contained in international treaties, agreements, accords, or resolutions to which the United States is not a party?

Answer. No, the United States is not bound by definitions of “human rights” contained in international treaties, agreements, accords, or resolutions to which the United States is not a party.

Question. What is the definition of “human rights defender?”

Answer. In my view, human rights defenders are those individuals, working alone or in groups, who non-violently advocate for the promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Is access to abortion a human right protected under international law?

Answer. No, access to abortion is not a human right protected under international law. Moreover, the United States is not a party to any international human rights law treaties that enshrine access to abortion as a human right.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring full and complete compliance with current U.S. 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, I commit to ensuring full and complete compliance with current U.S. law. If confirmed, I will ensure that all of DRL’s work continues to be in compliance with all applicable U.S. law, including restrictions related to abortion.

Question. If confirmed, will you also commit to ensuring that all of the Bureau’s grantees—including sub-grantees—fully adhere to U.S. law?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to ensuring that all of DRL’s grants are in compliance with all applicable U.S. law for foreign assistance. To accomplish this goal, I will maintain strict, ongoing monitoring and oversight of all of DRL’s foreign assistance awards.

Question. Is it your view that using the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to encourage countries who signed to Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women’s Health and Strengthening the Family to “un-sign” such declaration constitutes lobbying under the Siljander amendment? If not, why not?

Answer. I am not currently in the Administration, so I am unfamiliar with how the Biden-Harris Administration is currently approaching the Geneva Consensus Declaration (GCD). However, I do understand that President Biden removed the United States from the GCD in January 2021 because aspects of the document are inconsistent with current U.S. priorities to advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The GCD is not a U.N. document and does not reflect negotiated consensus in Geneva or any U.N. forum.

If confirmed, I am committed to comply with all applicable statutory restrictions related to abortion, including the Siljander Amendment.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to sharing with the committee information on the grantees and sub-grantees implementing all of your bureau’s programming, regardless of whether that information needs to be shared in and open or confidential manner?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to sharing appropriate information with the committee on the grantees and sub-grantees implementing DRL’s foreign assistance programming, consistent with the need to protect sensitive or otherwise controlled or restricted information. I will also ensure that I work with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and others in Congress to share sensitive information in line with State Department rules and regulations.

Question. What is the utility of the Summit for Democracy beyond just dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review how we can best utilize the networks and activities of the Summit for Democracy process to advance U.S. foreign policy. I believe that the first two Summits for Democracy built momentum and galvanized political will for global democratic renewal across governments and authorities, civil society, private sector actors, and citizens in countries around the world.

There were additional effects of the last two Summits. First, I understand that over 100 governments made over 750 commitments to strengthen democratic institutions, protect human rights, and accelerate the fight against corruption, both at home and abroad. Some of these commitments have already been translated into impactful actions—from enacting national strategies on anti-corruption and taking meaningful steps towards creating an independent judiciary to joining international efforts to support media sustainability initiatives and protect journalists. Second, the Summit process itself has woven together a diverse array of democracies in new ways that have helped to contain authoritarianism in the multilateral space. For example, 90 percent of Summit partners displayed resounding support for an UNGA resolution last year calling for the immediate end to the war in Ukraine. Summit partners also took an unprecedented step within the U.N. Economic and Social Council to remove Iran from the Commission on the Status of Women with 90 percent of affirmative votes for the resolution coming from Summit participants. Third, the Summit deepened civil society networks—tying together these organizations globally and strengthening them as they engage and confront their governments. More than 1,400 non-governmental organizations actively took part in consultations associated with the Summit for Democracy process.

Question. What is the utility of inviting countries that do not share U.S. democratic values to the Summit?

Answer. I am not currently in the Administration but if confirmed I will review the rationale for how we or other leading governments invite countries to this Summit and other similar fora. I look forward to discussing this issue with you in greater detail and soliciting your feedback and good ideas.

Question. Who leads on matters of democracy and human rights policy abroad—the Secretary of State or the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development?

Answer. The Department is the lead U.S. foreign affairs agency, with the Secretary of State serving as the President's principal foreign policy advisor and most senior U.S. diplomat. USAID is the U.S. Government's lead international development, health, and humanitarian assistance agency. Coordination and collaboration between the two agencies are critical to advance U.S. interests. If confirmed, I would prioritize robust collaboration between DRL and USAID's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, guided by the Department-USAID Joint Strategic Plan for FY 2022–2026.

Question. If confirmed, how will you de-conflict democracy and human rights programming undertaken by the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congressional authorizers and appropriators to consider the comparative advantage and Congressional intent regarding the Department of State and USAID's democracy and human rights programmatic work. The work of the State and USAID to bolster democracy and protect human rights globally is complementary and mutually reinforcing. I will forge a close, strong working relationship with USAID leadership and ensure that DRL, other bureaus at State, and USAID each understand their roles in contributing to a whole-of-government strategy in this area. There is plenty of work to be done, and the more we work together across State-USAID—sharing information about our programs, continuously integrating our evidence of impact, adapting shared innovations—the more likely we are to advance U.S. goals.

Through continued close coordination and collaboration across State and USAID, and by working with partners in Congress, I will position DRL to creatively integrate diplomatic and programmatic levers in order to advance U.S. policy bolstering democratic institutions, promoting accountability, and safeguarding human rights.

Question. Do you believe that the strike against Qasem Soleimani was legal?

Answer. Yes. I understand the United States articulated the legal basis for the strike at the time it occurred in January 2020. These types of determinations are heavily fact-based. However, as I was not serving in government at that time, I have no additional insights into the information that served as the basis for that determination.

Question. The Department, in particular DRL, has attempted to “modernize” the various country reports for annual reporting for Human Rights. What do you think could be improved?

Answer. As part of the Secretary’s Modernization agenda, I understand that DRL has prioritized streamlining the annual Human Rights Report (HRR) so that it is more concise and efficiently produced, to enable DRL and the Department to more effectively engage in the diplomacy and policy advocacy the HRR is designed to support. If confirmed, I will look at efforts to date to modernize these reports and push further substantive and process reforms. In particular, I would like to consider how to use technology-based tools to reduce the labor required in producing the report. This may require more centralized and comprehensive research tools and the integration of digital instructional materials into draft reports. I look forward to re-engaging with Congress and hearing your good ideas regarding HRR reform.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to briefing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when asked and to be responsive to Congressional inquiries in a timely manner?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to briefing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when requested and responding to Congressional inquiries in a timely manner.

Question. In your opinion, what bureau should have the interagency and programing lead on Internet Freedom and why?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue DRL’s leadership on this issue, while working closely with the other bureaus, namely CDP, and agencies engaged in work to promote Internet Freedom. Many stakeholders in the interagency have expertise and therefore close collaboration is critical. Based on my prior experience with DRL programs and policy work, DRL policy leads are keenly familiar with complex human rights concerns that provide context for Internet governance. In terms of programs, DRL brings to bear the institutional knowledge and technical expertise to support human rights-centered program design, including by leveraging its long-standing history of partnerships with organizations and networks of local activists. DRL’s rich programming in this area complements and reinforces DRL programming on other regional and thematic priorities, in line with all congressional directives. My goal, if confirmed, is to ensure an impactful, evidence-based approach to the programs funded through the annual Global Internet Freedom appropriations directive.

Question. The U.S. Government’s efforts to stymie atrocities via the Atrocity Prevention Task Force have been dismal. If confirmed, how do you view DRL’s role on the Task Force and what can be done to ensure the task force is meeting its mandate?

Answer. I strongly support prioritizing atrocity prevention and, if confirmed, I will review current Department efforts. I will engage experts, Congress, and NGOs to determine how DRL can best contribute to the work of the Atrocity Prevention Task Force.

Our strategy within DRL must synthesize our diplomatic efforts with DRL’s atrocity prevention and transitional justice programming, which addresses atrocity risk through early warning, strengthening civil society, empowering marginalized populations, and documenting abuses for eventual accountability.

In addition, if confirmed, I will ensure that DRL’s efforts implementing an array of accountability mechanisms (e.g., Leahy law, Child Soldier Prevention Act, Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, human rights-based U.S. visa restrictions and financial sanctions) limit impunity for perpetrators of atrocities. I will ensure that these tools are integrated into a larger atrocity prevention vision.

Question. Do you commit to ensure that tools such as the 7031(c) visa restriction tool is not politicized?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to apply section 7031(c) visa restrictions to individuals on the basis of their involvement in significant corruption or gross violations of human rights. I also will ensure the Department continues to consider other available tools to promote accountability for corrupt and anti-democratic actors as well as individuals involved in human rights violations and abuses.

Question. Do you commit to sharing relevant documents with the committee regarding the new Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance (CHIRG)?

Answer. If confirmed, I will regularly consult with the committee on implementation of the Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance, including by responding to requests for documents.

Question. What role does DRL play in the new CHIRG?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review how DRL and other bureaus are managing CHIRG implementation. It is my current understanding that the CHIRG is a joint initiative led by DRL and the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM). It establishes a bottom up, institutional process by which DRL and PM work together, in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser, regional and functional bureaus, embassies, DoD, and other USG entities as appropriate, to gather and corroborate information on incidents of civilian harm potentially involving U.S.-furnished or -authorized end-items. It is my understanding that the objective of the CHIRG is also to develop appropriate policy recommendations to respond to such incidents and reduce the risk of such incidents in the future.

Question. The PAIRS mechanism (Political Accountability, Inclusivity and Resiliency Support Mechanism) is an important tool for advancing democratic governance in places that matter for U.S. interests. We were pleased to see DRL emphasize political parties in its new PAIRS objectives framework, because the U.S.G. needs to be focused on strengthening core political institutions of democracy. This is critical as DRL has shifted too far toward supporting civil society at the expense of strengthening the core political institutional components of democracy. What will you do to make sure DRL continues a focus on supporting parties and other such entities?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to bolstering DRL's support to political parties and strengthening core political institutional components of democracy through the PAIRS mechanism. If confirmed, I will ensure that DRL programming under PAIRS strengthens its focus on how parties can better understand citizens' priorities, develop policy agendas that reflect and respond to them, and provide an alternative vision responsive to public concerns.

Question. As Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), if confirmed, what will your approach to human rights dialogues on the African continent be?

Answer. Based on my previous experience in DRL, I have seen that human rights dialogues can be effective if held under the right circumstances and with the right agendas and interlocutors. If confirmed, I will review our schedule and cadence of human rights dialogues and possibly make some changes, after consulting with the Secretary and others. Hard conversations about human rights should occur in other fora, in addition to these dialogues.

Moreover, sometimes human rights dialogues provide a strategic opportunity to strengthen partnerships with civil society, the private sector, and/or the media in certain countries. At other times, human rights dialogues can be used strategically to convey important messages. The bottom line is that human rights dialogues need to be held carefully, and strategically to be effective.

Question. As Assistant Secretary for DRL, if confirmed, do you commit to conducting a review of DRL programming in Africa to ensure DRL is funding projects that meets current needs and is filling gaps not addressed by larger USAID or other State Department assistance programs?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to conducting a review to ensure DRL programming in Africa proactively advances DRL goals on the sub-continent to meet current needs. I also commit to ensuring DRL programming is well coordinated and not duplicative of other programming efforts in other parts of State and USAID to ensure a strategic impact in Africa. DRL programs should be selective, creative, distinct, and most importantly impactful.

Question. As Assistant Secretary for DRL, if confirmed, how will you ensure that the voice of DRL is elevated within the State Department and interagency as it relates to ongoing crises in Africa, including in Sudan, Ethiopia, DR Congo, and the Sahel?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to ensure that the DRL perspective on Africa is elevated within the State Department and interagency, especially as it relates to ongoing crises, such as those in Sudan, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Sahel.

If confirmed, I will be personally engaged, drawing on my existing good relationships within the Department and interagency and fostering new relationships, as well as my professional experiences working on conflict, democracy, and human

rights in Africa both in the non-profit sector and within the U.S. Government over the past several years. I will ensure that DRL's voice and interests informs the policy-making process with respect to ongoing crises in Africa and signal to the DRL team that Sub-Saharan Africa is a priority. If confirmed, I will be reviewing the array of policy tools to address the human rights situations across the region, making sure that we are using everything in our toolbox, creatively integrating levers of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, and matching the right diplomatic and programmatic initiatives.

Question. What is your understanding of the bipartisan, bicameral Congressional concerns regarding U.S. policy on Sudan?

Answer. I understand that Congress, like the Department of State, wants to see an immediate end to the conflict, accountability for past atrocities and prevention of future ones, unhindered humanitarian assistance to affected communities, and the formation of a democratic government led by civilians in Sudan. I share these important goals and want to end this devastating conflict. If confirmed, I will review how I can personally, with the DRL team, contribute—including by bringing fresh eyes, energy, and perspectives to the diplomatic efforts and efforts to bring the right leverage to bear on the belligerent parties.

Question. In your opinion, are issues of democracy, return to civilian leadership, and human rights adequately prioritized by the State Department in its approach to Sudan?

Answer. I am not currently in the administration, but it is my sense that the Department, as part of a whole-of-government, interagency approach, is working tirelessly and with urgency to end the bloodshed in Sudan, bring about a return to civilian leadership, and support a democratic transition process in Sudan. On December 6, 2023, the Secretary determined that members of the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces have committed war crimes in Sudan, and also determined that members of the Rapid Support Forces and allied militia have committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

It is incumbent upon us to prioritize this policy effort. If confirmed, I would be a strong, tireless voice within the interagency, advocating for human rights, justice, and freedom in Sudan. I would relentlessly continue pressing for diplomatic solutions.

If confirmed, I would review DRL's existing policies and lines of effort and determine how best the DRL team can further address the devastating conflict in Sudan, including with respect to accountability tools such as sanctions and visa restrictions, human rights monitoring and reporting, and programming.

Question. In your opinion, what role should DRL be playing in supporting Sudanese civilians in their aspirations for a transition to democracy?

Answer. I think it is important to support civilian efforts to chart Sudan's future. Diplomatically, DRL can be a voice advocating for civilian rule as part of any negotiated settlement. Programmatically, DRL should do as much as it can to bolster the role of civil society, labor unions and workers' rights associations, political parties, resistance committees, emergency response rooms, women, youth, and other marginalized groups.

As Secretary Blinken said in a May 22 video message to the Sudanese people—"Sudan's civilians must be the ones to define Sudan's path going forward and lead a political process to restore Sudan's democratic transition and form a civilian government."

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Question. How would you, if confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for DRL, contribute to the work of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan in resetting U.S. policy on Sudan, including efforts to end the conflict and establish a lasting peace and democracy in the war torn country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Special Envoy Perriello on a strategy to elevate Sudanese civilians in ending the bloodshed and supporting the democratic transition in Sudan. We need fresh thinking and new ideas. I will work with him and other interagency colleagues to develop a shared plan of work to promote justice and accountability, prevent atrocities, and support Sudanese civilians as they coalesce around a vision for Sudan's transition to democracy.

If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I would marshal all available resources of DRL—both our programs and our policy influence—to support an end to the crisis in Sudan and the establishment of lasting peace and de-

mocracy. I do not believe that DRL's perspective has been at the table sufficiently and I will change that if confirmed.

Question. How would you, if confirmed, ensure your bureau influences policy discussions and solutions significantly more than it does now regarding civilian-led transition strategies?

Answer. Sudan's civilians must be the ones to define Sudan's path going forward and lead a political process to restore Sudan's democratic transition and form a civilian government. And a diverse set of civil society actors must be part of the peaceful solution. If confirmed, I will elevate DRL's voice and role in the policymaking process, diplomatic efforts, and programmatic investments. The leadership of a confirmed Assistant Secretary allows for a stronger role for the bureau and I plan on drawing on expertise from civil society, Sudan analysts, and contacts within Sudan itself. I will also work with this Committee and other experts in Congress to ensure that DRL speaks for and on behalf of new, creative policy ideas.

DRL, working with the Special Envoy, has a critical role to play to support marginalized voices, including civil society, women and youth, to engage in peace processes. If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary, I will also draw on DRL's decades of experience bringing civil society voices and perspectives to elite negotiations around peace and democratic transitions.

There may be lessons and approaches from other cases that could be appropriate to Sudan.

Unfortunately, until the military withdraws from governance and focuses on defending the nation from external threats, no civilian transition strategy will be fully reflective of Sudan's diverse communities.

While the security forces continue their destructive conflict, humanitarian agencies, national NGOs, civil society organizations, professional unions and neighborhood-based resistance committees will continue to need U.S. support.

Question. In your opinion, what role should DRL be playing in supporting documentation of atrocities in Sudan?

Answer. I understand that the Department of State and USAID are documenting and preserving evidence of atrocities and other crimes being committed by both warring sides to the conflict in Sudan.

If confirmed, I would continue to support the necessary funding and coordination of these efforts, to promote accountability for victims and the success of any future transitional justice initiatives. I would also support Sudanese citizen-led efforts to negotiate for peace and reestablish a civilian-led transitional government, which will be necessary to build the governance institutions required for true accountability and sustainable peace.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION

Question. Please provide information on the ongoing programs documenting and preserving evidence of atrocities and other crimes being funded by State and USAID in Sudan and provide additional areas of programming where you believe DRL can and should do more.

Answer. If confirmed, I am eager to work with Congress and a range of Sudan experts to build DRL's programming portfolio in Sudan, given that it will be one of my top priorities as Assistant Secretary. I understand that current DRL programming in Sudan supports local civil society organizations, lawyers, and other local actors to document and securely preserve information, field research, and witness statements about atrocities and other crimes. This work can take many forms and includes documentation of mass killings or murder, attacks on civilian objects/infrastructure/areas, sexual or gender-based violence, looting, destruction of property and forced disappearances. These efforts seek to preserve evidence that meets standards for criminal justice processes and to aid in advocacy around justice and accountability. I understand that DRL also directly supports local networks to operate an early warning system that documents past and ongoing atrocities in Sudan. My understanding is that all DRL programming in Sudan also integrates psychosocial support as well as community truth telling in order to counter false narratives that drive conflict.

I believe DRL can and should be doing more, using an analytical, evidence-based approach of what could work in this current context and focusing on Sudanese voices and expertise. For instance, we could increase support to local documenters collecting evidence for specific investigations.

Local experts know the operating environment the best. We should be considering what type of documentation will be necessary for future accountability efforts. Additionally, DRL can and should do more to provide for psychosocial support for documenters and survivors and invest in forensic efforts that can assist in investigations and provide closure for families of missing persons. Finally, DRL should be building the capacity of diverse civil society to contribute to a democratic transition.

Question. Do you commit, if confirmed, to engaging with the Bureau for Global Criminal Justice and the Bureau of African Affairs on the consistent review and updating of the atrocities determination for Sudan, including as to whether genocide is occurring in Darfur?

Answer. If confirmed, I fully commit to engaging with the Office of Global Criminal Justice and the Bureau of African Affairs on the issue of atrocity determinations for Sudan.

In December 2023, the Secretary announced his determination that members of the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) committed war crimes, and that members of the RSF and allied militia committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The Secretary made this determination to bear witness to, and to shine a light on, the abuses suffered by the Sudanese people at the hands of the very people who are meant to protect them. As Secretary Blinken's statement conveyed, that determination did not "preclude the possibility of future determinations as additional information about the parties' actions becomes available."

It is imperative that we continue to track and document the scope and breadth of the belligerents' myriad crimes. If confirmed, I would work with the interagency to rally the international community to help us end the violence, address the humanitarian crisis, and promote justice for survivors and victims, including by shining a light on the full extent of atrocity crimes in Sudan.

Question. In your opinion, has the Biden Administration adequately used accountability mechanisms, including sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights and Accountability Act and Executive Order 14098, for those responsible?

Answer. I understand that since the start of the conflict in Sudan, the Department of the Treasury has sanctioned fourteen individuals and entities under E.O. 14098 for their role in fueling the Sudan conflict, committing atrocities, and undermining Sudan's democratic transition. I have been briefed that the Department of State has taken steps to impose visa restrictions on more than a dozen individuals who are responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic transition in Sudan. Further, on September 6, 2023, the Department of State announced the designation of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces General and West Darfur Sector Commander, Abdul Rahman Juma, under Section 7031(c), for his involvement in a gross violation of human rights, namely the extrajudicial killing of the Governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abbakar, and his brother.

However, if confirmed, I will immediately review all measures available to hold those responsible for the bloodshed in Sudan accountable to see what more can be done. I will work with the committee and others in Congress to ensure the Department continues to promote accountability for those who undermine peace and the democratic transition in Sudan.

Question. What is your analysis of how democratic the election held on December 20, 2023 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was?

Answer. I appreciate the committee's interest in recent elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and welcome committee views. If confirmed, I will be glad to consult with the committee on policy issues regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Constitutional Court certified the National Independent Electoral Commission's (CENI) results in the 2023 presidential race and declared Felix Tshisekedi president-elect of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am watching for final reports released by domestic and international observation missions close to the situation, but am well aware that preliminary reports noted insecurity, logistical issues, and preparatory shortcomings that created significant delays and barriers to voting on election day. For many, incidents of fraud and corruption raised doubts about the integrity of the results. If confirmed, I would strongly urge Congolese authorities to launch a comprehensive review of the electoral process, investigate those who attempted to undermine the will of the people, and, in consultation with international and Congolese stakeholders, act on recommendations to improve future elections. I appreciate CENI's January announcement that 82 legislative and provincial candidates—including 12 from President Tshisekedi's party—were disqualified for illicit activities, including fraud, corruption, and vote

buying. If confirmed, I will urge authorities to maximize transparency by ensuring that findings are published, and appeals are considered in accordance with Congolese law.

Question. In your opinion, what should DRL priorities to support democracy and human rights in DR Congo be?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that DRL continues to prioritize respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms—particularly the crucial role of human rights defenders and independent journalists—urging prosecutions, sanctioning, and sentencing of violators, and promoting the development of accountable institutions, to send a strong signal that impunity has no place in the DRC any longer. I will also work closely with our Congolese counterparts to follow through on critical governance reforms to ensure that domestic revenues are devoted to the benefit of the Congolese people. Finally, I will underscore the importance of civic space and media freedom, anti-corruption, and respect for labor rights, which will also bolster the DRC's business competitiveness globally and secure supply chains for critical minerals.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Question. What is your understanding of the key constraints to “securing supply chains for critical minerals” in DRC for American investment?

Answer. First, I should note that I am not in the Administration currently and therefore have not been part of developing policies on critical minerals supply chains. I recognize that there are economic security and national security reasons for securing supply chains for critical minerals. However, if confirmed, I intend to shape these policies to take into account critical U.S. goals including: ensuring that armed non-state actors do not exploit ungoverned spaces; considering how human rights violators may or may not be benefitting from these projects; and ensuring that U.S. investments do not compound or exacerbate business climates that could be rife with, corruption. Human rights violations, corruption, and armed actors (political violence) will therefore be the chief constraints that I focus on if confirmed.

Question. In your assessment, is the State Department adequately focused on these constraints in its engagement on critical mineral supply chains, including as it relates to the development of the Lobito Corridor?

Answer. As I am not currently in the administration, I do not have full visibility in how the State Department is considering very real concerns about human rights, armed actors, governance and corruption in its work on critical mineral supply chains. I am very concerned about each of these elements, however. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department considers these human rights considerations even as we invest in critical mineral supply chains. I will rely on DRL's expertise on anti-corruption, governance, and business and human rights initiatives to ensure that all critical mineral supply chain policies, including in the Lobito Corridor, are focused on human rights and conflict prevention considerations. There are also labor concerns with the critical mineral policies and if confirmed I will build on the Administration's global labor directive to work with interagency colleagues to raise the labor standards, including in the Lobito Corridor.

Question. How would you ensure that, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary for DRL, the bureau's equities in promoting democracy and human rights are effectively integrated into interagency decisions about the Lobito Corridor, specifically regarding efforts to ensure long-term democratic stability and accountability for government commitments on democratic and rights reforms in partner countries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead the Department's collaboration with the U.S. interagency in the Lobito Corridor to ensure that democracy and human rights are integrated into interagency decisions. I will direct human rights officers at the bureau, office, and embassy level to continue promoting democracy and human rights alongside their colleagues in regional bureaus and the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.

For example, I understand that human rights officers at the embassy level made substantial contributions to the original development financing projects in the Lobito Corridor. This holistic approach integrating human rights and labor rights was a model, and it must be perpetuated once the

ideas come to the Washington interagency process. I will ensure that these field voices representing real human rights who were involved in the original design are represented in the interagency. In addition, DRL's many contacts across the business and human rights fields are an asset to the bureau; if confirmed, I will ensure that I can use these contacts and networks, to protect local labor and human rights while pursuing policies that promote American businesses and clean supply chains for the benefit of American workers and consumers.

Question. What is your assessment of the human rights situation in Uganda?

Answer. Human rights are under attack in Uganda, and journalists, human rights defenders, and anyone else who opposes the status quo are at risk of arrest, torture, and enforced disappearances. Following the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act—only the latest attack on the human rights of Ugandans in recent years—I have seen multiple credible reports of increasing threats, violence, and abuse perpetrated against the Ugandan people, including LGBTQI+ persons and those who provide services to them. If confirmed, I would consult with the committee on policies designed to ensure that the Government of Uganda takes affirmative steps to protect the human rights of all Ugandans.

Question. What is your assessment of Nigeria's 2023 electoral process?

Answer. The February and March 2023 elections failed to meet the expectations of many Nigerians despite positive developments in the pre-election period such as revisions to the electoral law that increased the transparency of the collation process, increased training on voting equipment, and high turnout during voter registration. While independent election observers generally found that the results of the presidential race reflected the will of voters in most states, I understand there were significant problems surrounding the electoral process, including serious technical and logistical challenges, as well as instances of voter suppression, voter intimidation, and electoral violence, that left many voters very frustrated. I was pleased to learn that following the elections, the State Department took steps to impose visa restrictions on specific individuals in Nigeria for undermining the democratic process during Nigeria's 2023 elections cycle. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the committee on U.S. policy issues relating to Nigeria.

Question. Do you agree with the assessment by the State Department that, as of June 2023, the Government of Ethiopia was no longer engaged in a pattern of gross violations of internationally-recognized human rights? Why or why not?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by reports of continued human rights violations and abuses committed after the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front in November 2022. I am also closely watching the ongoing violence against civilians in Amhara and Oromia. If confirmed, I will review all available arguments and evidence within the Department to determine whether the Government of Ethiopia is perpetrating gross violations of human rights. I currently do not have the same information on hand as the Department does. It is imperative that the Government of Ethiopia respect human rights and improve access to conflict areas by credible international human rights monitors.

If confirmed, Ethiopia would be a priority of mine. I will closely monitor the human rights situation in Ethiopia to inform our policy and ensure compliance with all applicable laws.

Question. Under your leadership, if confirmed, how will DRL engage with the Africa Bureau on post-coup transitions and preventing future coups on the African continent?

Answer. If confirmed, I will enhance active collaboration between DRL and the Bureau of African Affairs on post-coup transitions and preventing future coups. DRL works with the Africa Bureau to ensure that post-coup governments understand that quick and credible transitions to democratically elected, civilian-led governments are a priority of the United States. I would seek to continue and expand U.S. Government efforts, through foreign assistance programming and diplomatic engagement, that focus on enabling and supporting free and fair elections and electoral processes that are peaceful and inclusive, post-coup and in other settings.

If confirmed, I will work with others at State and in the interagency to focus on how to prevent coups. I would like my team and others to evaluate evidence, learning, and expert analyses as part of a broader strategy that considers the right tools to coup proof societies and polities. These may include capacity building for key actors and civil society, diplomatic pressure, or other forces pushing for political compromise.

Question. What lessons should be learned from the recent coups in Africa? How should the Biden Administration adjust its approach to countries at risk for coups, like Burundi, Cameroon, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria?

Answer. Recent coups in Africa have highlighted the critical importance of U.S. efforts to stem democratic backsliding, build sustainable democratic institutions and norms that are more resilient to coups, and confront human rights violations and abuses using both punitive measures and positive inducements. If confirmed, I would work with the Africa Bureau to ensure that post-coup governments understand that quick and credible transitions to democratically elected, civilian governments are a priority of the United States, especially those looking for security assistance. I would also continue DRL's work to support civil society, ensure members of marginalized groups, including youth, have a voice in political processes, promote human-centered security, and prioritize resources to encourage democratic governance, effective service delivery, accountability, anti-corruption measures, and dialogue between capitals and communities, which are key to long-term stability and prosperity.

Adherence to constitutionally mandated term limits and strong democratic institutions are fundamental to a country's peace and prosperity, and African voters overwhelmingly support having a say in how they are governed and by whom. If confirmed, I would work to expand U.S. Government efforts, through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programming, that focus on enabling and supporting free and fair elections and electoral processes that are peaceful and inclusive. I would also support capacity building for key actors and civil society, training for national elections commissions, representation of marginalized groups in government, law enforcement accountability training, and voter education and election observation.

Question. How should lessons learned from situations in Mali and Sudan inform the State Department's sense of urgency in addressing protracted conflicts and failed peace processes in places like Cameroon and South Sudan?

Answer. While all have unique causes, at the core of undemocratic transfers of power and violent conflicts on the continent is violence against civilians, a lack of accountable democratic governance, and closed political space, and each requires a democratic governance solution and sustained U.S. leadership.

If confirmed, I will work closely with other bureaus, other agencies, and civil society, including local civil society organizations, to continue investments in institutional reforms, support for civil society and empowering people on the continent to build a more sustainable peace and democracy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In May 2022, Secretary Blinken said that the People's Republic of China (PRC) 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 the reins of power in the PRC 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 in the world today. 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 CCP a threat to the United States?

Answer. Yes. In March 2023, the Director of National Intelligence testified that "the CCP represents both the leading and most consequential threat to U.S. national security and leadership globally." Under President Xi, the CCP has become more repressive at home and more aggressive abroad, seeking to undercut U.S. influence and alliances.

If confirmed, I will defend democratic principles and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms even in the face of our strategic competition with China. I will press the PRC for an end to human rights abuses and violations while pressing for sorely needed human rights reforms, including by raising these concerns in multilateral fora at every possible opportunity.

On Xinjiang specifically, if confirmed, I will work closely with other relevant bureaus in the State Department, in addition to other agencies including the Department of the Treasury, to promote accountability for PRC officials connected to the ongoing atrocities and human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Tibet, and throughout the PRC. I will work to utilize the range of accountability tools at the Department's dis-

posal, including the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, to take additional actions in this regard. Additionally, I will work to advance our efforts to address Uyghur forced labor. Since enactment of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), the Department has worked with the interagency to add several dozen entities to the Entity List. I will work diligently to continue the process of adding more entities to the list.

Question. Does the CCP undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests? If so, please explain.

Answer. The CCP's actions have become more repressive at home and more aggressive abroad, as Secretary Blinken has stated.

According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's 2023 Annual Threat Assessment, the CCP is seeking to "undercut U.S. influence, drive wedges between Washington and its partners, and foster some norms that favor its authoritarian system."

I am under no illusions about the CCP, and I promise to press the PRC to end its atrocities and its transnational repression. I will also stay closely coordinated with others in the Department working on counter-narcotics issues.

I promise to press CCP officials for sorely needed human rights reforms and urge them to adhere to international human rights law. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in this regard.

Question. Do you believe that there are any areas within which the CCP that would constructively work with the United States in good faith, knowing that at any moment Chinese interlocutors with U.S. representatives could be disappeared at a moment's notice? If so, please explain.

Answer. As the United States competes vigorously with the PRC, the United States manages this competition responsibly so that competition does not veer into conflict. The United States will continue to work with the PRC to address transnational challenges when it is in our interest to do so—as Secretary Blinken has said, not as a favor to us or anyone else, and never in exchange for walking away from our principles, but because it is what the world expects. If confirmed, I will advance U.S. objectives and counter harmful behavior by the PRC, including the PRC's human rights abuses and transnational repression.

If confirmed, I will meet with activists and diaspora communities while remaining clear-eyed about the risks individuals take when they meet with U.S. officials or stand up for human rights and democracy. For example, on February 5, I understand that Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink and Senior Bureau Official for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Robert S. Gilchrist discussed the ongoing human rights situation in Hong Kong with U.S.-based democracy activists who have been unjustly targeted by Hong Kong authorities. If confirmed, I will continue such discussions with these and other activists. I will raise concerns about Hong Kong's extra-territorial use of the National Security Law and evaluate all options to promote accountability for those involved in human rights abuses, transnational repression, and the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy.

I will make sure that we continue to condemn PRC violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Congress plays a critical role in this effort, and I look forward to working with you and your staff if confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the PRC in the countries or areas in which you will work?

Answer. If confirmed, my priority will be advancing U.S. national security interests and countering efforts by our strategic and regional competitors, including the PRC, to undermine those interests. Again, I am clear-eyed about the threats posed by CCP activities. I will support working together with organizations or representatives from the PRC only where our interests align, such as promoting the rights of persons with disabilities through the U.S.-China Coordination Meeting on Disability.

If confirmed, I will support Secretary Blinken's implementation of the "invest, align, compete" strategy, which highlights the ways in which the PRC's global vision threatens the rules based international order. As part of this strategy, if confirmed, I will work with the interagency to counter PRC efforts undermining human rights and democracy.

Question. As you may be aware, a group of federal employees penned an open letter to President Biden criticizing U.S. support for Israel in the aftermath of Hamas' brutal terrorist attack on October 7, 2023. In addition, on January 16, 2024, employees from nearly two dozen agencies staged a walkout in protest of the administra-

tion's Israel policy. Efforts like these directly undermine the duty of our diplomats to advance the policies of the President of the United States. Yes or no, did you sign the letter to the President expressing opposition to the President's Israel policy?

Answer. No, I did not sign this letter to the President.

Question. Yes or no, did you participate in the January 16, 2024 walkout?

Answer. No, I did not participate in any walkout that may have taken place on the January 16, 2024.

Question. If confirmed, would you define one of the employees or contractors operating under your supervision signing an open letter criticizing you, or policies you undertake at the instruction of the President, as insubordination as defined by the Government Accountability Office?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has made clear that he welcomes active use of the Department of State's dissent channel, takes it seriously, and uses it to reflect on his own thinking in terms of policy making and what he proposes to the President. If confirmed, I will reflect this approach in my leadership style by encouraging DRL employees to come directly to me if they have alternative points of view and would like to influence U.S. policy. I believe that is the most direct, appropriate way to influence supervisors' views. I will also consult with the State Department's Office of the Legal Advisor and others if I have concerns about employee conduct.

Question. In your view, are the actions these federal employees took, by anonymously signing a letter to the President of the United States, covered as "whistleblowing?"

Answer. As I am not currently serving in the Administration, I am not familiar with the details of this letter. More generally, recognize and support Department employees' right to freedom of expression under the First Amendment, including to express disagreement with a dissenting view. If confirmed, I will uphold relevant laws and policies pertaining to the protection of whistleblowers, including the provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8). If I have any questions about whistleblowing or employees' conduct, I will consult with colleagues from the Office of the Legal Advisor at State and other relevant personnel offices.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address discipline issues, such as insubordination, that do not take established dissent channels?

Answer. I understand that the Department maintains established procedures, including in the Foreign Affairs Manual, for addressing incidents or allegations that may serve as grounds for disciplinary action. If confirmed, I will scrupulously follow established procedures for handling such issues, consistent with the rights and responsibilities of Department employees, consulting with appropriate personnel officers at State. If confirmed, I will also ensure that DRL bureau employees understand that there are several avenues available to express policy disagreements and would encourage employees to use established channels to express their views.

Question. Have you ever expressed support for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza?

Answer. No, I have not expressed support for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza. I supported the U.S. brokered humanitarian pause in November 2023 and continue to support U.S. government efforts to negotiate similar humanitarian pauses in Gaza.

Question. Do you agree that Hamas is an antisemitic entity?

Answer. Yes, Hamas is an antisemitic entity and a designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO) whose founding charter calls for the killing of Jews.

Question. Would a ceasefire allow these groups to reconstitute and attack Israel, and Americans, in the future?

Answer. Yes, a ceasefire could give Hamas time to regroup. I do not support calling for a ceasefire and instead support the Administration's policy of advancing humanitarian pauses, which have previously resulted in hostage releases, enabled an increase in the flow of aid, and allowed the voluntary movement of civilians who sought to move to safer locations.

Question. Do you agree that calling for a ceasefire in Gaza means calling for Israel to stop its pursuit of Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, that orchestrated the October 7 attacks and still refuses to release all Israeli and American hostages?

Answer. I support the Administration's policy to advance temporary humanitarian pauses to enable a sustained flow of aid and to allow the voluntary movement of civilians who are seeking to move to safer locations. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to secure the release of all hostages that Hamas is holding. I

support Israel's right to defend itself and ensure a terrorist attack like October 7 never happens again. As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have made clear publicly, it matters how Israel does so. If confirmed, I will commit to promoting compliance with international humanitarian law, including that feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm are taken. If confirmed, I will also advocate for Israel to investigate any credible allegations of international humanitarian law violations and human rights abuses when they arise and ensure that proper Israeli accountability mechanisms are utilized. Doing so is a moral and strategic imperative.

Question. Do you believe that Israel, in its operation against Hamas, which is known to use civilians as human shields, is taking all necessary steps to minimize civilian casualties?

Answer. I agree with President Biden's policy of supporting Israel, which has a right to defend itself to ensure a terrorist attack like October 7 never happens again. If confirmed, I will support the Department's ongoing efforts to urge Israel to comply with international humanitarian law, including the requirement to distinguish between civilians and Hamas terrorists and to take all feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm. Hamas's use of civilians as human shields, a blatant violation of international law, does not lessen Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law. If confirmed, I will commit to urging Israel to investigate any credible allegations of international humanitarian law violations and human rights abuses when they arise and to make full use of Israeli mechanisms for accountability. Doing so is a moral and strategic imperative.

Question. In 2021, the Biden Administration de-listed the Houthis as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) and as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) so that humanitarian aid could be delivered to Yemen. Would you describe the treatment of the Yemeni people by the Houthis as "humanitarian?"

Answer. Absolutely not. The Houthis have engaged in extensive human rights abuses against the Yemeni people, as has been well-documented in the Department's annual human rights reports. The prior decision, in 2021, to lift the Houthis' terrorist designations was taken because of concerns over the unintended, adverse humanitarian impacts of these designations on the flow of aid into the country by implementers managing humanitarian assistance programs.

If confirmed, I will focus on the significant problem of Houthi human rights abuses. As illustrated in the 2022 Human Rights Report on Yemen, Houthi abuses included impunity for acts involving unlawful or arbitrary killings; forced disappearances; torture or other physical abuses; harsh and life-threatening conditions of detention; unlawful recruitment or use of child soldiers; interference in the delivery of humanitarian assistance; restrictions on freedom of expression; and arbitrary or unlawful arrests and detention. Ongoing Houthi violence against women and girls, including rape, sexual violence, and other abuses, is also gravely concerning.

The Secretary announced on January 17, 2024, that the Department is designating Ansarallah (commonly referred to as the Houthis) as an SDGT, effective February 16, 2024, to promote accountability for its unprecedented attacks against international shipping. At the same time, we are taking significant steps to mitigate any adverse impacts this designation may have on the humanitarian aid access to the people of Yemen, including robust outreach to aid implementers, providers and other partners who are crucial to facilitating humanitarian assistance.

If confirmed, I will promote efforts to hold the Houthis accountable for their human rights abuses at home and reckless, illegal attacks on international shipping abroad, while also continuing to address the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people.

Question. Given the Houthis' numerous recent attacks in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, do you believe the administration was right to de-list the Houthis from these designations?

Answer. Although I am not currently in the Administration, I strongly support the January 17, 2024 decision to re-list Ansarallah (commonly referred to as the Houthis) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) in response to the Iranian-enabled Houthi attacks on commercial shipping and naval vessels and crews transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. I understand that the SDGT designation is carefully calibrated to maximize its impact on the Houthis by isolating them and restricting their access to resources while mitigating the impact on vulnerable Yemeni civilians to the greatest extent possible. If confirmed, I will promote efforts to hold the Houthis accountable for their human rights abuses and reckless, illegal attacks on international shipping, while also continuing to address the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people.

Question. Now that the Houthis have been declared an SDGT, do you believe they should also be listed as an FTO?

Answer. I believe the Department's response must be calibrated and targeted to preserve U.S. interests in a peace settlement in Yemen, while maximizing the deterrent effect on the Houthis. The United States must hold the group accountable for its actions while mitigating adverse humanitarian impacts on the people of Yemen.

I understand that humanitarian considerations continue to be an important factor in decisions regarding the option of a Foreign Terrorist Organization designation of the Houthis. If confirmed, I will promote efforts to hold the Houthis accountable for their human rights abuses and reckless attacks on international shipping, while also continuing to address the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people. I look forward to re-engaging with you on this issue if confirmed.

Question. Do you agree that the Houthis are being supported by, and a proxy of, another declared FTO Iran?

Answer. Yes, I agree. The United States government has been clear that the Houthis attacks on commercial shipping are enabled by Iran, which provides them with financing, weaponry, intelligence and logistics assistance, and other support necessary to carry out these attacks. The supply of arms and related materiel to the Houthis directly violates UN Security Council resolution 2216. Iran's support is unacceptable and must end.

Question. If confirmed, would you advocate for re-listing the Houthis as an FTO?

Answer. I understand that the SDGT designation announced by the Secretary on January 17, 2024, is carefully calibrated to maximize its impact on the Houthis by isolating them and restricting their access to resources, while mitigating the impact on vulnerable Yemeni civilians to the greatest extent possible. If confirmed, I will review additional mechanisms, including designations, that would promote efforts to hold the Houthis accountable for their human rights abuses and reckless attacks on international shipping, while also continuing to address the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people.

Question. Much of your experience is related to counterterrorism and you've made statements about addressing the root causes of terrorism through infrastructure and education. If confirmed, what programs would you implement at DRL to counter terrorist recruitment, especially in the Middle East?

Answer. There is a significant body of public research suggesting that individuals who feel disenfranchised are often susceptible to joining terrorist organizations. This is most prevalent in places that lack sufficient basic education and infrastructure, and often pronounced where governance is lacking, corrupt, or repressive. In that sense, promoting more credible, just governance and advocating for human rights and the rule of law can, in some cases, reduce the attractiveness of terrorist organizations to certain individuals. If confirmed, I am committed to working with State and interagency colleagues to address current sources of terrorist recruitment and mobilization, including by promoting human rights and democratization as a way to address the root causes of terrorism globally. Congress has an important role on this national security issue, and I look forward to working with you if confirmed.

Question. What about global violence in general? What solutions would you employ to reduce it?

Answer. Around the globe, repressive regimes are using violence and intimidation to stymie civil society actors, journalists, and other individuals who seek to exercise human rights such as freedom of speech or assembly. The PRC and Russia are exporting models of authoritarianism that often lead to violence and repression. If confirmed, I will review all policy tools across State and the interagency to ensure that our diplomatic, programmatic, and multilateral mechanisms are countering these global trends. This includes reviewing how DRL foreign assistance programming can be most effective and where other tools can protect basic freedoms and reduce civilian harm.

Question. DRL implements programming in countries that may not share all of the democratic norms we associate with liberal democracies, but are nonetheless strategic partners of the United States. Warranted or not, DRL programming is often perceived as threatening to the governments in power in these countries. Do you support DRL programming in countries that are strategic partners at the potential cost of damaging our relationship with those countries?

Answer. DRL programming focuses on supporting democracy and human rights. One of democracy's unique strengths is the ability to acknowledge its imperfections and confront them openly and transparently. If confirmed, I will review DRL's for-

eign assistance programs to ensure that all of our programs are strategic, impactful and advancing top U.S. foreign policy priorities. I will seek input from colleagues around the world, including U.S. embassy officials, local leaders, partner governments and civil society. I will also seek input from Congressional champions of democracy and human rights, and look forward to re-engaging on this issue if confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, how would DRL programs in these countries coordinate with other State Department and U.S. government efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that DRL continues to closely coordinate with other Department of State functional and regional bureaus, including Embassies, USAID, and other U.S. government agencies. I recognize that there are many departments and agencies that play a critical role in bolstering democratic institutions, promoting accountability, and safeguarding human rights. Through continued, close coordination and collaboration, I believe DRL will be best positioned to leverage different expertise, harness diverse insights, share successes and learn from setbacks, and ensure the most effective use of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Question. Should DRL prioritize defending democracy where it already exists or fostering where it doesn't?

Answer. The strengthening of democracy is imperative if we are to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous, free, and just world. A democracy-centered approach to our foreign policy reflects core American values, and is in the United States' national security interest. In every region of the world, people want to be free, expect their rights to be protected, and are driven by the hope of a democratic future. DRL aims to support this desire by safeguarding democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all, everywhere.

If confirmed, I would guide DRL to continue its work tailored to a number of different types of countries. These include a) partner countries with strong social movements, civil society and other democratic actors; b) countries undergoing democratic transitions; c) those under threat of democratic backsliding; and d) those where democracy has not yet taken root. DRL should have separate strategies and sets of programs for each of these different types of countries. While all these lines of efforts are essential to revitalize, defend, and support democracy worldwide, if confirmed, I would lead the bureau in efforts to determine how it will strategically prioritize engagement within each of these categories and where other bureaus and agencies might have a comparative advantage. I would seek Congressional, academic, NGO, and other inputs as I consider DRL's future trajectory and vision.

Question. This Congress, Senator Shaheen and I introduced the Taxpayers and Savers Protection (TSP) Act to force the Thrift Savings Plan to divest from securities with exposure to the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong. As the world's pre-eminent supporter of authoritarianism that is pursuing a strategy to reduce America's power, it makes no sense for any of our public officials' retirement dependent on the success of the Chinese economy. Do you currently have investments in securities, including in passive index funds, with exposure to the People's Republic of China or Hong Kong?

Answer. Per my conversation with Senator Rubio's staff on February 6, 2024, I am reviewing my spouse's and my investments. At present, our investments are only in broad-based passive index funds and U.S. municipal bonds.

Question. Do you think it is appropriate for a State Department official that oversees programs that assist activists standing up to the oppression of the Chinese Communist Party to hold a financial stake in the Chinese economy?

Answer. I take seriously the ethical obligation to avoid conflicts of interest and will conduct myself accordingly. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to assist activists standing up to oppressive actions by the Chinese Communist Party, both through our programming and public and private advocacy. I will not stand for the PRC's targeting of those brave enough to stand up for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the country, including in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Tibet. This includes its attempts to silence activists and human rights defenders outside of China's borders, who the PRC continues to target through its global campaign of transnational repression.

Question. If confirmed, will you divest all of your financial stakes in Chinese securities or index funds that include Chinese assets?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to divesting from any securities or index funds that would present unacceptable exposure to the PRC or Hong Kong in accordance with guidance received from State Department's Legal Adviser's Office.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

The FY24 budget request cited Tunisia as a possible recipient for additional military aid from the FMF Emerging Global Priorities Fund "if Tunisia shows signs of a return to democratic governance." It's been nearly a year since we received that budget request. Since that time, more than 20 opposition, media and business figures have been imprisoned, accused of "plotting against state security." Local elections in December saw just 11 percent of voters turn out, the same figure who participated in parliamentary elections earlier in the year. Apathetic voters see these bodies as essentially powerless, as President Saied has centralized more and more power in the presidency.

Question. Now that we have another year of examples, is it your assessment that a return to democracy in Tunisia this year is a realistic possibility? What support, if any, would you propose to the 2024 presidential election process in Tunisia? What changes would you advocate to the scope and emphasis of U.S. aid programs in Tunisia, if any?

Answer. I share the Administration's serious alarm at the continued erosion of democratic governance in Tunisia. Independent Tunisian civil society remains essential in promoting democratic governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will advocate for continued Department prioritization of policies and programs to strengthen democratic institutions, defend against further human rights abuses, and protect Tunisia's vibrant civil society, including by ensuring that U.S. assistance is directly benefitting the Tunisian people and making critical investments in civil society.

Since he seized power more than three years ago, President Saied has followed a dictator's handbook almost to the letter: disbanding parliament, writing a new constitution that consolidates his power, disbanding judicial independence and employing military tribunals, and arresting members of the opposition including treason charges for the leader of the largest opposition party. In April 2023, when Administrator Power testified on the administration's FY24 budget request, I raised my concerns with the administration's desire to zero out aid to civil society while maintaining the same amount of military aid.

Question. The Senate fixed this in our FY24 State and Foreign Operations bill, by including \$15 million for civil society. With the political opposition essentially eliminated in Tunisia, how important is it that we maintain the oxygen to civil society as one of the only independent voices still left in Tunisia's dictatorship? Will you commit to fighting for the inclusion of robust funding for civil society in the FY25 request when it is sent to Congress in the coming weeks?

Answer. Supporting Tunisian civil society means continuing to support democratic governance and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will reiterate, as the Administration has done, the essential role of Tunisian civil society organizations, which remain on the forefront of protecting human rights and advocating for democratic governance, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression and association.

If confirmed, I also will ensure that DRL continues to consult with and seek opportunities to amplify the voices of Tunisian civil society groups. I commit to advocating for continued robust funding for the protection and support of Tunisia's independent and vibrant civil society.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. Do you believe China's actions amount to genocide?

Answer. Yes. In January 2021, then Secretary of State Pompeo determined that since at least March 2017, the PRC, under the direction and control of the CCP, has committed genocide and crimes against humanity against the predominantly

Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. Secretary Blinken has reaffirmed that these atrocities are ongoing and a wide variety of publicly available reporting and documentation from other governments, U.N. bodies, and civil society organizations provides further evidence. I agree with this determination.

Question. What will you do to address what the Administration describes as a “genocide” committed by the Chinese Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to promote accountability for the PRC’s ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang. I will work multilaterally, including at the U.N. Human Rights Council, with other international organizations, and in coordination with allies, encouraging the use of targeted sanctions, visa restrictions, export controls, and import restrictions. I will also publicly and privately condemn the PRC’s actions, calling for an end to these crimes and atrocities.

Question. How many People’s Republic of China (PRC) Government officials have been sanctioned under the UHRPA?

Answer. On December 8, 2023, the Department of State submitted the “Report to Congress on the Imposition of Sanctions Pursuant to Section 6(a) of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, P.L. 116–145,” which identified two PRC Government officials connected to ongoing serious human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The Department of the Treasury concurrently sanctioned the two PRC Government officials identified in the report. Gao Qi was designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 and UHRPA, for his involvement in serious human rights abuses. Hu Lianhe was designated pursuant to E.O. 13818, in support of UHRPA objectives, for being a foreign person who is or has been a leader or official of an entity, including any government entity, that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, serious human rights abuses.

If confirmed, I will work with the interagency to hold others accountable under a range of tools including UHRPA.

Question. How effectively is the Administration using the UHRPA?

Answer. I am not currently in the Administration, but if confirmed, I will review how UHRPA is being implemented to ensure maximal effectiveness and impact. I will make sure that the Department uses a range of policy tools, including UHRPA, to promote accountability for PRC officials implicated in atrocities and other human rights abuses in Xinjiang and throughout the country.

Since UHRPA was passed in 2020, the Department has designated 14 persons involved in serious human rights abuses in Xinjiang under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program and has imposed visa restrictions under Section 7031(c) on eight PRC and CCP officials for their involvement in gross violations of human rights in Xinjiang. In March 2021, the United States coordinated with the EU, UK, and Canada to impose multilateral sanctions on several individuals and entities implicated in the atrocities in Xinjiang.

Question. If confirmed, how will you promote the use of the UHRPA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will take a fresh look at how to enhance the use of UHRPA along with other foreign policy tools to promote accountability for PRC officials connected to the ongoing atrocities and human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Tibet and throughout the PRC. I will seek input from civil society, expert analysts and academics, and Congress to implement UHRPA effectively and robustly, and to ensure that we are impactful in holding PRC officials accountable.

Question. The Biden Administration rejoined the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2021. How many members of the Human Rights Council are serious human rights abusers?

Answer. There are several members of the Human Rights Council that are serious human rights abusers. The United States, as a member of the Council, uses its role to place a spotlight on human rights abusers all over the world, including those that are sitting members of the Council.

If confirmed, I will work with colleagues in allied governments, to supporting efforts to prevent human rights abusers from joining the Human Rights Council (HRC). When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the HRC, we have the ability to engage with our allies and partners to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council. For example, U.S. leadership ensured Russia was suspended from the HRC in 2022, and the seat was replaced by a U.S. ally, Czechia. The United States also supported efforts to elect Albania over Russia to the HRC in 2023.

Question. What reforms do you believe are needed at the Human Rights Council?

Answer. Council membership needs to be bolstered by those with strong human rights records. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues at State, supporting efforts to improve the Council's membership and ensuring that the Council remains focused on critical international human rights violators, such as Iran and Syria. I also think the standing agenda item focused on Israel is biased, as no other country has an entire HRC agenda item devoted to it. The United States plays an indispensable role in defending Israel at the U.N., including at the Human Rights Council, and we need to be actively engaged at the Council to play this role.

Question. Do you believe that the Human Rights Council has a bias against Israel?

Answer. Yes, I do. The Council's bias against Israel is evident in the standing agenda item focused on Israel. Our active engagement and membership in the HRC is important, so that our ally is not standing alone. When the U.S. is not present, there is no one in the HRC to fully defend Israel.

Question. Do you believe Russia should provide reparations to Ukraine?

Answer. Yes. I believe Russia is responsible for billions of dollars in damage to Ukraine's critical infrastructure, businesses, schools, hospitals, and cultural sites, as well as its environment, caused by Russia's war of aggression. Russia must be held accountable for the wide-ranging harm it has caused to its sovereign neighbor and to individuals in Ukraine, and paying reparations is crucial. If confirmed, I will work with our allies and partners to explore all legal avenues to induce Russia to cease its aggression and pay for the damage it has caused, including by exploring the potential use of frozen assets.

Question. In your opinion, have Russia and President Putin committed war crimes in Ukraine?

Answer. I concur with the U.S. Government's determination that members of Russia's forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine. The evidence is overwhelmingly clear and consistent.

Question. If confirmed, how will you ensure war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine are documented?

Answer. I firmly support President Biden's commitment to promoting accountability for Russia's crimes in Ukraine and justice for victims. Comprehensive accountability will take years, if not decades, and U.S. support will remain essential. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to pursue multiple pathways to justice for the international crimes committed in the context of Russia's war. I will continue DRL's support to civil society groups contributing to documentation, as well as those who advocate for victims and contribute to investigations in Ukraine and elsewhere. I will also support efforts by international organizations and inquiries, including the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DONNA ANN WELTON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Do you pledge to fully support Congressional Delegations (CODELs) and Staff Delegations (STAFFDELS) that seek to travel to post?

Answer. If confirmed, yes, I pledge to fully support Congressional Delegations (CODELs) and Staff Delegations (STAFFDELS) that seek to travel to post.

Question. Do you agree to fully support any CODEL or STAFFDEL, with the only exceptions for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?

Answer. If confirmed, yes, I commit to supporting to the fullest extent possible any CODEL or STAFFDEL.

Question. What implications do Timor-Leste's upcoming elections have for its relations with Australia and China?

Answer. José Ramos-Horta was elected President in a free and fair presidential election in 2022 and Xanana Gusmão was elected Prime Minister following a free and fair parliamentary election in 2023. I understand that, following those elections, Timor-Leste continues to maintain a "friend to all" foreign policy and seeks to maintain good relations with its neighbors and major powers, including Australia, the

People’s Republic of China (PRC), and the United States. If confirmed as Ambassador to Timor-Leste, I will focus on partnering with Australia and other like-minded countries to counter harmful behavior by the PRC as we work with Timor-Leste to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific region. In particular, I will partner with the Timorese Government and civil society to further strengthen Timor-Leste’s democratic institutions, protect human rights, and counter corruption.

Question. How much assistance, both in terms of aid and investment, is China providing to Timor-Leste? What can the U.S. do to offset Timor-Leste’s growing ties with China?

Answer. Timor-Leste maintains a “friend to all” foreign policy and seeks to maintain good relations with its neighbors and major powers, including the United States and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). While Australia and the United States are Timor-Leste’s largest development partners, I understand that, to meet the country’s economic development goals, the Government of Timor-Leste has partnered with the PRC on certain infrastructure projects, including construction of roads and some government buildings including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also understand that, in 2023, Timor-Leste and the PRC upgraded their bilateral relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and announced a shared intent to further expand bilateral cooperation. If confirmed, I will focus on countering harmful behavior by the PRC as we work with Timor-Leste to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific region. In particular, I will partner with the Timorese Government and civil society to further strengthen Timor-Leste’s democratic institutions, uphold human rights, and counter corruption. I will also focus on supporting Timor-Leste’s efforts to diversify its economy and further integrate into global commerce, including supporting Timor-Leste’s efforts to join ASEAN and the WTO. Finally, I will continue the strong security sector cooperation between the United States and Timor-Leste.

Trafficking in Persons

In the State Department’s 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report, Timor-Leste remained on Tier 2 for its continued and sustained efforts to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. In the reporting period between the two latest reports, Timor-Leste significantly improved its capacity to identify trafficking victims, provide services, and more but failed to prosecute any traffickers.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with the Government of Timor-Leste and the Ambassador-at-Large to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons to improve trafficking on the ground?

Answer. Combating human trafficking is a human rights and security priority. While Timor-Leste has made significant efforts to combat trafficking in persons, the country does not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Government of Timor-Leste, Timorese civil society, and the Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to strengthen Timor-Leste’s anti-trafficking efforts.

Specifically, I will engage with senior members of the Timorese Government to encourage the prioritization and funding of anti-trafficking initiatives. I will also continue and expand law enforcement and judicial training for Timorese officials, including sponsoring Timorese officials to attend courses at the International Law Enforcement Training Center (ILEA) in Bangkok through funding from the Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), to increase Timorese capacity to identify human trafficking and increase trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and convictions. I will also work with civil society to strengthen their capacity to raise awareness of trafficking and provide services to victims, as well as forge strong links between civil society and the Timorese Government. Finally, I will work with the Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to ensure accurate reporting of trafficking in Timor-Leste and to effectively use high-level engagement from Washington to advance this priority issue.

Question. Understanding the prioritized recommendations, if confirmed, what steps are most important in your opinion?

Answer. Many of the prioritized recommendations for Timor-Leste in the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report—including increasing investigations, prosecutions, and convictions in accordance with anti-trafficking laws, and improving victim identification and services—relate to capacity challenges of the Government of Timor-Leste. If confirmed, I will collaborate with USAID, the Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the Office to Monitor

and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and subject matter experts across the U.S. Government to support Timor-Leste's law enforcement and judicial capacity to combat human trafficking. These efforts could include sponsoring Timorese officials to attend courses at the International Law Enforcement Training Center (ILEA) in Bangkok through funding from INL, promoting educational exchanges and study opportunities in the United States for Timor-Leste's current and emerging leaders, and supporting engagement between U.S. subject matter experts and Timorese leaders.

Question. Do you commit to accurately portraying the realities of trafficking on the ground as it is reported through the annual Trafficking in Persons report?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador to Timor-Leste, I commit to accurately portraying the realities of trafficking on the ground as it is reported through the annual Trafficking in Persons Report.

Religious Freedom

In the State Department's 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom, Timor-Leste was noted as having a general lack of societal and governmental respect for religious freedom.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to personally engaging with civil society on this issue?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I commit to engage with Timorese civil society to promote respect for religious freedom. I will also ensure the Embassy continues to support programs that promote freedom of religion or belief, including for members of minority religious groups.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with the host government and the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom to improve religious freedom on the ground?

Answer. Freedom of religion or belief is a right which the United States and Timor-Leste both value. I understand that members of minority religious groups in Timor-Leste, including Muslim and Protestant communities, generally reported experiencing religious tolerance.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I commit to lead the Embassy's continued engagement with the Government of Timor-Leste regarding reports of discrimination in civil service hiring, rejection by public officials of documentation of members of religious minority groups, and other challenges. I will also work with the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom to ensure the annual International Religious Freedom report continues to accurately reflect the religious freedom situation in Timor-Leste.

Human Rights

In the State Department's 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights, Timor-Leste was noted as having several significant human rights issues including corruption, arbitrary killings, violence against disabled persons, as well as the worst forms of child labor.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to personally engaging with civil society on these issues?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to engaging with civil society to promote human rights in Timor-Leste and to address corruption, arbitrary killings, violence against persons with disabilities, and the worst forms of child labor, among other challenges. While Timor-Leste has made significant progress in consolidating democracy and protecting human rights since gaining independence in 2002, there is more work to be done, and civil society must play an important role in promoting and preserving a free and democratic society.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage with the host government to improve human rights on the ground?

Answer. Timor-Leste is a democracy committed to upholding human rights, and respect for democratic principles and human rights are central to the U.S.-Timor-Leste relationship. If confirmed, I will regularly engage with Timorese officials at the highest-level to encourage the Government of Timor-Leste to promote and protect human rights. I will also support exchanges and programs that increase knowledge and awareness of human rights issues and continue and expand law enforcement and judicial training that promotes the rule of law. Finally, I will look to partner with Timor-Leste on international matters of shared concern, such as the crisis in Burma, to promote democracy and human rights.

International Organizations

Question. If confirmed, please describe how you can work with U.S.–U.N. and IO colleagues to find, recruit, and retain qualified Americans in the U.N. system.

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support the ongoing work of the Bureau of International Organizations, Office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel, and their coordination with USUN to find, recruit, and retain qualified U.S. citizens in the U.N. system. I will support IO colleagues as they proactively identify openings and advocate for more U.S. citizens in key leadership positions across the U.N. and across international organizations. I will support efforts to expand existing targeted recruitment efforts by increasing outreach through different talent pipelines, connecting U.S. citizens already employed by the U.N. with prospective applicants, and sharing the IO Careers website as the advocacy portal.

Question. If confirmed, please describe how you can work with USUN and IO colleagues to promote American or likeminded initiatives within the U.N. system, including on technical matters at specialized bodies.

Answer. I would collaborate with the Bureau of International Organization Affairs to identify issues such as education, AI governance, climate change, and upholding freedom of navigation where Timor-Leste and the United States have common interests in potential engagement within the U.N. system. Our efforts would include cooperation in specialized bodies such as the International Maritime Organization and UNESCO, as well as in the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and Summit of the Future.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DONNA ANN WELTON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In May 2022, Secretary Blinken said that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) 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 the reins of power in the PRC 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 in the world today. 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 CCP a threat to the United States?

Answer. The 2023 Annual Threat Assessment by the U.S. Intelligence Community was very clear: “China has the capability to directly attempt to alter the rules-based global order in every realm and across multiple regions, as a near-peer competitor that is increasingly pushing to change global norms and potentially threatening its neighbors.” As Secretary Blinken has said, under President Xi, the CCP has become more repressive at home and more aggressive abroad. However, the United States, through its positive presence in Timor-Leste, is regarded as a trusted, reliable, and close partner. If confirmed, I will continue to advance U.S. national security interests and counter the People’s Republic of China (PRC) efforts to expand its problematic influence and use of coercion, through diplomatic engagements, public diplomacy, commercial advocacy, and innovative development assistance.

Question. Does the CCP undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests? If so, please explain.

Answer. If confirmed, my focus will be on defending and advancing U.S. interests in Timor-Leste and the immediate region, mindful that Beijing is devoted to carrying out Xi’s vision of making the PRC the preeminent power in East Asia. If confirmed, I will counter attempts to undercut U.S. influence and drive wedges between the United States and its partners.

Question. Do you believe that there are any areas within which the CCP that would constructively work with the United States in good faith, knowing that at any moment Chinese interlocutors with U.S. representatives could be disappeared at a moment’s notice? If so, please explain.

Answer. Stabilizing the relationship with the PRC is in the U.S. interest and the United States will work with the PRC to address transnational challenges, such as climate change, when it is in the U.S. interest to do so. We will not sacrifice our capacity to strengthen our positions, economic and security-related, in Southeast Asia. If confirmed, I will work across the U.S. interagency and with Congress to advance U.S. objectives and counter harmful behavior by the PRC.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the PRC in the countries or areas in which you will work?

Answer. If confirmed, my priority will be consistently defending and advancing U.S. interests, and I will work closely with State Department and interagency colleagues, and with Congress to achieve those goals. Other than meetings of multilateral organizations to which both the United States and the PRC are long-standing members, I do not foresee any joint activity in Timor-Leste.

Question. As you may be aware, a group of federal employees penned an open letter to President Biden criticizing U.S. support for Israel in the aftermath of Hamas' brutal terrorist attack on October 7, 2023. In addition, on January 16, 2024, employees from nearly two dozen agencies staged a walkout in protest of the administration's Israel policy. Efforts like these directly undermine the duty of our diplomats to advance the policies of the President of the United States. Yes or no, did you sign the letter to the President expressing opposition to the President's Israel policy?

Answer. No, I did not sign the letter.

Question. Yes or no, did you participate in the January 16, 2024, walkout?

Answer. No, I did not participate in the January 16, 2024, walkout.

Question. If confirmed, would you define one of the employees or contractors operating under your supervision signing an open letter criticizing you, or policies you undertake at the instruction of the President, as insubordination as defined by the Government Accountability Office?

Answer. I believe that open discussion and examination of dissenting views contributes to better policies and a stronger team, and I recognize that we, as U.S. citizens, have the hard-won right to express our views freely. However, I would encourage colleagues and subordinates to participate in constructive ways to debate and provide input.

Question. In your view, are the actions these federal employees took, by anonymously signing a letter to the President of the United States, covered as "whistleblowing?"

Answer. Because "whistleblowing" is a term and activity covered by legislation and regulations, I would consult with our legal office to determine if the referenced actions were protected.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address discipline issues, such as insubordination, that do not take established dissent channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I will handle discipline issues at the embassy in consultation with Department human resource and legal specialists. If confirmed, I will also seek to set a standard of trust and openness that would permit full discussion of contentious issues and elicit constructive criticism in ways that would benefit our policies and uphold our commitment to serving U.S. interests as defined by leadership in the Department and the White House.

Question. Have you ever expressed support for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza?

Answer. I have not expressed support for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza.

Question. Do you agree that Hamas is an antisemitic entity?

Answer. Yes, Hamas is a foreign terrorist organization that is antisemitic. Its founding charter calls for the killing of Jewish people.

Question. Would a ceasefire allow these groups to reconstitute and attack Israel, and Americans, in the future?

Answer. I understand that the Administration supports humanitarian pauses to allow for the transport of aid and safe exit of hostages and other vulnerable people.

Question. Do you agree that calling for a ceasefire in Gaza means calling for Israel to stop its pursuit of Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, that orchestrated the October 7 attacks and still refuses to release all Israeli and American hostages?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Administration's stated policy is to support temporary humanitarian pauses to enable a sustained flow of aid and to allow the voluntary movement of civilians seeking safer locations. Working with partners, the U.S. Government is attempting to secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas. The U.S. Government supports Israel's right to protect itself from Hamas's terrorism, consistent with international law.

Question. Do you believe that Israel, in its operation against Hamas, which is known to use civilians as human shields, is taking all necessary steps to minimize civilian casualties?

Answer. The U.S. Government supports Israel's right to protect itself, consistent with international law. The Administration has urged Israel to differentiate between civilians and Hamas terrorists and to avoid civilian casualties. Hamas's use of civilians as human shields, a blatant violation of international law, does not lessen Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law. If confirmed, I will ensure that our position on the Israel-Hamas conflict is clearly explained and understood by Timor-Leste leadership and the public.

Question. Timor-Leste's political parties are largely led by individuals who were part of the country's independence movement whose rivalries have perpetuated political instability in the country. How should the U.S. strengthen Timor-Leste's political institutions?

Answer. Since independence, Timor-Leste has made significant progress in strengthening its democratic institutions, including overseeing multiple successful elections and peaceful transitions of power, most recently in 2023. The United States is committed to partnering with Timor-Leste to further strengthen its democratic institutions and promote good governance, and we regularly engage the Timorese Government and civil society on these issues. Through U.S. Government exchange programs, including the Fulbright program, the U.S.-Timor-Leste scholarship program, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, as well as media engagement and English-language scholarships, we are also building people-to-people ties between our two countries and helping to develop the next generation of Timorese leaders. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts and ensure that support for democracy and human rights remains central to our engagement with Timor-Leste.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that the Chinese Communist Party does not build further inroads in Timor-Leste?

Answer. Timor-Leste is a democracy that shares our commitment to upholding human rights. Through engagement that strengthens Timor-Leste's governance institutions, security, and economic stability, the United States has become one of Timor-Leste's most essential partners. If confirmed as Ambassador to Timor-Leste, I will focus on countering harmful behavior by the PRC as we work together to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

In particular, I will partner with the Timorese Government and civil society to further strengthen Timor-Leste's democratic institutions and counter corruption. I will also focus on supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to diversify its economy and further integrate into global commerce, including supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to join ASEAN and the WTO. Finally, I will continue the strong security sector cooperation between the United States and Timor-Leste.

Question. Timor-Leste is one of the few remaining countries in Southeast Asia that is not part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Should the U.S. role support Timor-Leste obtain full membership in ASEAN? Please explain.

Answer. The United States supports Timor-Leste's efforts to gain full ASEAN membership and was pleased that Timor-Leste obtained full observer status in 2022. I believe Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN is important for the country's regional economic integration and long-term economic stability. I also believe that Timor-Leste, as a democracy with a commitment to upholding human rights, would be an important voice within ASEAN. The United States recognizes and respects, however, that Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership is, ultimately, a decision between Timor-Leste and the current ASEAN member states.

I understand the U.S. Government is partnering with Timor-Leste to achieve the milestones outlined in its Roadmap for full ASEAN membership, including improving human resources capacity and English-language training, fostering a better business environment, and strengthening security sector capacity. If confirmed, I will continue and build upon these efforts.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with other U.S. allies, like Australia, in supporting Timor-Leste's development goals?

Answer. Timor-Leste is a developing country with still-nascent institutions, limited human capital, and significant economic and health challenges. The United States is supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to diversify its economy and further integrate into global commerce, including supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to join ASEAN and the WTO. I understand the U.S. Embassy works to coordinate our development assistance with Australia and other like-minded partners in Timor-Leste. If confirmed, I will work to deepen this collaboration to ensure our development as-

sistance programs are complementary and that, together, we are helping the Timorese people build a more prosperous, healthy, and democratic country.

Question. If confirmed, are there any DFC programs or projects you would pursue with Timor-Leste interlocutors?

Answer. Timor-Leste is a developing country with still-nascent institutions, limited human capital, and significant economic and health challenges. The United States is supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to diversify its economy and further integrate into global commerce, including supporting Timor-Leste's efforts to join ASEAN and the WTO. I understand that, in the past year, USAID facilitated the first DFC loan to be approved for a Timorese microfinance institution, which also promotes access to finance for women and rural microenterprises, to support increased economic opportunities.

If confirmed, I will work with DFC to identify additional opportunities where U.S. financing can advance Timor-Leste's economic development goals and strengthen our bilateral partnership.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO STEPHAN A. LANG BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In May 2022, Secretary Blinken said that the People's Republic of China (PRC) 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 the reins of power in the PRC 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 in the world today. 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 CCP a threat to the United States?

Answer. Last year, the Director of National Intelligence testified that "the CCP represents both the leading and most consequential threat to U.S. national security and leadership globally." As Secretary Blinken has said, under President Xi, the CCP has become more repressive at home and more aggressive abroad. If confirmed, I will counter the People's Republic of China (PRC) efforts to advance its authoritarian approach to technology and its problematic influence and use of coercion. Through diplomatic engagements, public diplomacy, and commercial advocacy to bolster U.S. ties with our allies, partners, and like-minded countries globally, I will work to promote the United States' positive, rights-respecting vision for information and communications technology.

Question. Does the CCP undertake any activities that are beneficial to U.S. interests? If so, please explain.

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, the CCP has become more repressive at home and more aggressive abroad. According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's 2023 Annual Threat Assessment, the CCP is seeking to "undercut U.S. influence, drive wedges between Washington and its partners, and foster some norms that favor its authoritarian system." These actions extend to multilateral fora, where we have seen a concerted effort by the PRC, guided by the CCP, to advance its own international vision for the future. The PRC's actions in these multilateral bodies undermines the values and principles underpinning the rules-based system of international cooperation created by the United States and other countries working together, following World War II. The PRC prefers a system that benefits itself and its authoritarian partners, and that shield undemocratic regimes from international criticism.

Question. Do you believe that there are any areas within which the CCP that would constructively work with the United States in good faith, knowing that at any moment Chinese interlocutors with U.S. representatives could be disappeared at a moment's notice? If so, please explain.

Answer. The United States will work with the PRC to address transnational challenges, such as climate change and stemming the flow of fentanyl, when it is in the U.S. interest to do so. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues across the U.S. interagency and Congress as well as our allies and partners globally to advance U.S. objectives and counter harmful behavior by the PRC, including its efforts to export its authoritarian approach to technology.

Question. If confirmed, will you approve any joint activity with organizations or representatives from the PRC in the countries or areas in which you will work?

Answer. If confirmed, my priority will be advancing U.S. national security and economic interests globally and countering efforts by our strategic and regional competitors to undermine those interests. The Administration has been clear that the PRC is the most consequential geopolitical challenge facing the United States, and that the United States is committed to working to strengthen our partners in the region. If confirmed, I will work closely with Department of State and interagency colleagues and Congress to address the PRC's efforts to achieve technological leadership and promote its authoritarian approach to the use of information and communications technologies.

Question. As you may be aware, a group of federal employees penned an open letter to President Biden criticizing U.S. support for Israel in the aftermath of Hamas' brutal terrorist attack on October 7, 2023. In addition, on January 16, 2024, employees from nearly two dozen agencies staged a walkout in protest of the administration's Israel policy. Efforts like these directly undermine the duty of our diplomats to advance the policies of the President of the United States. Yes or no, did you sign the letter to the President expressing opposition to the President's Israel policy?

Answer. No, I did not sign the letter.

Question. Yes or no, did you participate in the January 16, 2024, walkout?

Answer. No, I did not participate in the January 16, 2024, walkout.

Question. If confirmed, would you define one of the employees or contractors operating under your supervision signing an open letter criticizing you, or policies you undertake at the instruction of the President, as insubordination as defined by the Government Accountability Office?

Answer. I am mindful of and value Department employees' right to free speech under the First Amendment. Moreover, I recognize that the expression of disagreement does not in and of itself constitute insubordination. If confirmed, I would work with the Department's Office of the Legal Adviser to determine the proper course of action in this or any other specific cases.

Question. In your view, are the actions these federal employees took, by anonymously signing a letter to the President of the United States, covered as "whistleblowing?"

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the Department of State's Office of the Legal Adviser to understand whether an action constituted whistleblowing. Moreover, if confirmed, I will ensure that I and other managers in the Department protect whistleblowers' rights, including the right to free speech under the First Amendment.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address discipline issues, such as insubordination, that do not take established dissent channels?

Answer. I am mindful of and valued the Department of State employees' right to free speech under the First Amendment. As Secretary Blinken has said, we should "be sure to sustain and expand the space for debate and dissent that makes our policies and our institution better." Moreover, from what I understand the expression of dissent is unlikely to constitute insubordination. However, in other contexts, in the event a discipline issue came to me, including insubordination, I would consult with the Department's experts and attorneys to ensure the matter is handled appropriately.

Question. Have you ever expressed support for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza?

Answer. No, I have not expressed support for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza.

Question. Do you agree that Hamas is an antisemitic entity?

Answer. Yes, Hamas is a terrorist organization and an antisemitic entity. I condemn antisemitism in all its forms. This foreign terrorist organization seeks to eliminate the State of Israel, and its founding charter calls for the killing of Jewish people. I am deeply concerned about the rise of antisemitism around the world since the October 7 Hamas attack against Israel.

Question. Would a ceasefire allow these groups to reconstitute and attack Israel, and Americans, in the future?

Answer. Yes, while the Biden-Harris Administration supports humanitarian pauses to allow for the flow of aid into Gaza and the safe exit of hostages and other vulnerable people, an indefinite ceasefire right now would give Hamas time to re-

group and would fail to prevent Hamas from continuing terror attacks against Israel, now and in the future.

Question. Do you agree that calling for a ceasefire in Gaza means calling for Israel to stop its pursuit of Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, that orchestrated the October 7 attacks and still refuses to release all Israeli and American hostages?

Answer. It is the policy of the Administration to support temporary humanitarian pauses, which would allow a sustained flow of aid and allow voluntary movement of civilians who are seeking to move to safer locations. The U.S. government is actively working with partners to secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas. We support Israel's right to protect itself from Hamas' terrorism, consistent with international law.

Question. Do you believe that Israel, in its operation against Hamas, which is known to use civilians as human shields, is taking all necessary steps to minimize civilian casualties?

Answer. In his engagements with Israel, including during his February 7 visit to Tel Aviv, the Secretary continues to press Israel on the imperative of maximizing civilian protection. Israel has the right to protect itself. Israel must take all possible precautions to avoid civilian harm during operations. Protecting civilians is both a moral responsibility and a strategic imperative.

Question. Chinese-owned applications, like TikTok, are gathering information on U.S. citizens by tracking their phone usage across applications. TikTok also tailors its content in America to sow misinformation and teach the youth to hate our country. Several countries, such as India, Nepal, Britain, Australia, Canada, France, and New Zealand have implemented restrictions on the use of TikTok in their countries. Do you believe that TikTok is an avenue for Chinese Communist Party influence in other countries?

Answer. Yes, concerns about national security vulnerabilities associated with the use of TikTok led to the passage and signing of the No TikTok on Government Devices Act which prohibits the download or use of TikTok on all federal government devices. Making sure technologies work for, not against, democracies is a key priority for the United States. Our approach is aligned with our international leadership promoting democratic principles and fundamental freedoms as key components of a secure cyberspace, as laid out in the National Cybersecurity Strategy's affirmative vision to build a defensible, resilient, and values-aligned digital ecosystem. My team and I will continue to work with the interagency to leverage our expertise in cyberspace and digital policy to address concerns related to the security of communications technologies, data privacy, and data security.

Question. How should the U.S. counter malign authoritarian influence over applications like TikTok?

Answer. On TikTok specifically, the Department has since July 2021 prohibited the creation of official Department of State TikTok accounts and prohibited the app's use on Department-owned devices. In December 2022, President Biden signed into law legislation requiring the removal of TikTok from all federal government-owned devices, including federal government-owned equipment at our embassies overseas. In February 2023, OMB issued a Memorandum, titled "No TikTok on Government Devices" Implementation Guidance, to guide Federal agencies in implementation of that legislation. The State Department is working to ensure compliance with that Memorandum.

Question. If confirmed, would you support American diplomacy encouraging other countries to implement restrictions on TikTok?

Answer. The Department is addressing hard questions about the importance of data security and the need to ensure technologies work for, not against, democracies. This includes working to ensure tech platforms continue to promote and respect human rights, both online and offline. We are also promoting meaningful connectivity and advancing inclusive and equitable access to digital technologies that support everyone's potential to thrive in a digitally connected world.

Question. Do you support the banning of TikTok in the U.S.?

Answer. In December 2022, President Biden signed into law legislation requiring the removal of TikTok from all federal government-owned devices, including federal government-owned equipment at our embassies overseas. In February 2023, OMB issued a Memorandum, "No TikTok on Government Devices" Implementation Guid-

ance, to guide Federal agencies in implementation of that legislation. I am not able to comment on potential legislation.

Question. President Biden's re-election campaign is reportedly pushing the President to join TikTok in order to appeal to young voters. Do you agree that TikTok is an effective way to reach young voters?

Answer. We defer to the election campaign teams for how best to reach voters.

Question. If confirmed, what would you tell foreign officials that are considering incorporating TikTok into their official communications strategies?

Answer. Making sure technologies work for, not against, democracies is a key priority for the United States. We are coordinating with our partners within and outside of the Department to grapple with hard questions about the importance of data security and human rights within the ICT ecosystem. We have warned foreign partners about the broader risks stemming from companies being subject to the legal requirements of authoritarian regimes.

Question. Should a President of the United States start a TikTok account, what message would that send to U.S. allies that have instituted restrictions on its use?

Answer. In December 2022, President Biden signed into law legislation requiring the removal of TikTok from all federal government-owned devices, including federal government-owned equipment at our embassies overseas. The State Department is working to ensure compliance with the law and with OMB's February 2023 implementing guidance. Since July 2021, the Department has prohibited the creation of official Department of State TikTok accounts and prohibited the app's use on Department-owned devices. We defer to the Administration and campaign teams on their social media posture.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO STEPHAN A. LANG BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. PRC Influence in ITU Working Groups: There are concerns that Chinese companies are overrepresented in International Telecommunication Union (ITU) working groups and leadership positions, thus driving standards that favor Chinese companies. Did you attend the ITU's World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23) in Dubai last year?

Answer. Yes.

Question. How would you describe the actions of the Chinese Government and Chinese companies during that conference?

Answer. The Chinese Government and Chinese companies worked throughout the conference to advance their own commercial and security interests. They faced difficulties in building support within their region—which includes allies and partners such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and India—and so they worked with Russia, Iran, Brazil, and South Africa to push developing countries towards the PRC's goals.

Question. If confirmed, how would you lead the State Department's efforts to counter the PRC's influence at the ITU?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to lead the State Department's efforts to counter the PRC's influence at the ITU through multiple channels to build support for a positive, rights-respecting, U.S. vision for information and communication technologies; coordinate closely with our allies and partners; engage with the developing world; and push back against efforts by the PRC, Iran, and Russia to promote authoritarian approaches to technology that harm U.S. interests.

Question. What preparations are you making now to ensure U.S. interests are advanced at the 2027 World Radiocommunication Conference? More specifically, what steps would you take to increase U.S. participation in working groups and leadership positions?

Answer. Preparations for WRC-27 are already underway. The ITU has held its first working party meeting on spectrum for 5G and 6G of the new cycle, and U.S. preparations for the first meeting of other ITU working parties covering topics such as satellite, science, and aeronautical and maritime are ongoing. My team is already working closely with colleagues in other agencies, the U.S. private sector, and allies and international partners to participate in the working parties and prepare for WRC-27. This includes an open and transparent process to encourage participation

by U.S. stakeholders and identify and foster potential U.S. experts and leaders to join the U.S. delegation and assume leadership roles at WRC-27.

Radio-Frequency Spectrum Management

Question. In November 2023, you attended the World Radiocommunication Conference on behalf of the United States. U.S. policy in this area has been subject to review and criticism, including in January 2021, when the GAO outlined several recommendations in GAO-21-474. The ITU recently announced the “ITU Generation Connect Young Leadership Programme in Partnership with Huawei.” Are you concerned this partnership will be a tool to advance Chinese interests?

Answer. We are tracking Huawei’s (and PRC’s) engagement with the ITU, including this partnership to support 90 STEM students to implement their own digital development initiatives. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure U.S. leadership and oversight of the ITU, including through support to its independent oversight and governing bodies, to make certain that any such partnerships advance the entire ITU’s mission and digital development objectives, without being used as tools to advance any one nation or company’s agenda.

Question. Are you aware of any meaningful safeguards in place to prevent this fellowship program from further entrenching Chinese interests and representation at ITU affiliated entities?

Answer. Any ITU partnership with private sector entities is governed by ITU and UN partnership and ethics guidelines, which provide for member state oversight via reporting from the ITU’s independent advisory body and the ITU Council, where I serve as the U.S. Councilor. Partnerships are implemented with the ITU Secretariat staff, who must adhere to ITU governing documents that provide the ITU its mandate and direction. Additionally, the United States will push back in cases where these activities go beyond the ITU’s mandate. The United States also has its own proactive agenda at the ITU, including programs that reduce digital divides and empower youth with digital skills, to ensure content that advances U.S. values and principles is part of the ITU’s ecosystem.

Question. If confirmed, would you advocate for increasing these safeguards?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate at the ITU for increased mechanisms for transparency and oversight into the ITU’s implementation of programs and partnerships with external entities. I have been leading U.S. engagement with partners to support ITU Secretary General Doreen Bogdan-Martin’s comprehensive transformation agenda aimed at building staff, oversight mechanisms, and financial resources that will increase transparency and accountability for member states.

Question. Are any U.S. taxpayer dollars being used to support this program?

Answer. The U.S. Government has not, and will not, support or participate in the Huawei/ITU Generation Connect Young Leadership Programme. Instead, we will continue to support the ITU’s overall Youth Strategy and other programs to empower youth with digital skills and reduce digital divides in a manner that remains consistent with U.S. principles and objectives. If confirmed, I will also continue to identify ways to leverage CDP’s Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Program initiatives to advance the United States role as a leader in digital development.

Question. In December 2023, NBC reported the Chinese balloon that transited the U.S. in early 2023 actually used an American internet service provider to send and receive communications from China, primarily related to navigation. According to the same report, a senior official at the State Department claimed, “[the balloon] was used by China for surveillance and that it was loaded with equipment able to collect signals intelligence.” Are you concerned that a U.S. internet service provider facilitated navigation of the Chinese spy balloon?

Answer. I share this concern as both the presence of the balloon over U.S. airspace and the reported use of U.S. internet service providers present serious security risks. I would refer you to the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and Office of the Director of National Intelligence for further information on the PRC surveillance balloon incident and their findings.

Question. What steps should be taken to prevent this from happening again?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will support efforts by the U.S. interagency to guard against violations of U.S. territorial sovereignty and misuse of American technology. I would refer you to the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and Office of the Director of National Intelligence for further information on

the PRC surveillance balloon incident and efforts to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.

Question. Please describe the interagency process for making decisions on spectrum management activities that involve other agencies, particularly when consensus could not be reached.

Answer.

For the purpose of developing U.S. positions for WRC-23, the process begins with the FCC gathering input from the private sector through its WRC Advisory Committee (WAC) and NTIA gathering input from the federal agencies through its Radio Conference Subcommittee (RCS). The two agencies then develop their positions based on this input and work to reach agreement on a common position. In those few instances where the FCC and NTIA are not able to reach agreement, the State Department reconciles the two and decides on a final U.S. position for the conference.

Question. Please describe the interagency process for making decisions on whether to support studying a band for global harmonization.

Answer. The process for developing a U.S. position to a WRC on whether to support a frequency band for global harmonization follows the same path outlined above. Given the high profile of these decisions, the Department of State hears directly from many commercial and federal agency stakeholders during this process. And given the often strongly held views on many frequency bands, these tough decisions are often some of the final ones to be made.

Question. Please describe any processes that involved reviewing or updating the General Guidance Document consistent with the recommendations of GAO-21-474.

Answer. The General Guidance Document provides helpful guidance on developing U.S. inputs into ITU working party and study group meetings as ITU technical studies are underway, but it is not directly applicable to developing U.S. proposals for WRC-23 itself.

STATEMENT SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION OF STEPHAN A. LANG TO BE U.S. COORDINATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY SUBMITTED BY SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR

I would like to recognize Stephen A. Lang, who has been nominated to serve as the U.S. Coordinator for Communications and Information Technology with a rank of Ambassador. With increased aggression and cyber attacks around the world, it is more important than ever to have a nominee with decades of experience and a title that reflects that.

My husband John Bessler and I have known Steve and his wife Karin for years. Both Steve and Karin have worked as foreign service officers for nearly thirty years. Their service has taken them around the world, including China, Mexico, Japan, Cuba, Thailand, and here in Washington, D.C., and they have done it all while raising two daughters. Steve served as the point person when then-Senator Heidi Heitkamp and I visited Mexico City in 2014 to push for coordinated efforts to combat human trafficking in Mexico and the U.S.

Throughout his decades of service, Steve has focused on technology issues, especially 5G networks, cloud services, and undersea cables. This makes him a natural fit for the position of Coordinator for Communications and Information Technology, where he will lead the State Department's work on the digital economy. As malicious state and non-state actors continue to weaponize information systems and advance their capacities for cyberwarfare, our government must be prepared to defend U.S. digital interests.

I'm also pleased to note that Steve and Karin have Minnesota ties. Karin's family still has a farm in Atwater that her family has tended for decades, and she attended the University of Minnesota with my husband. Steve's paternal grandparents were born and raised in Austin, Minnesota.

Mr. Lang's decades of experience and devotion to our Nation put him in a position to ensure that the State Department is best equipped to promote U.S. digital interests.
