

## NOMINATIONS

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TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:38 p.m., in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Romney, Portman, Young, and Hagerty.

Also Present: Senator Peters.

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

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. We are here today to consider nominations for three important positions: Ambassador Bridget Brink to be the Ambassador to Ukraine, Ambassador Elizabeth Richard to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, and Ambassador Alexander Laskaris to be the Ambassador to Chad.

I understand that Senator Peters will be introducing Ambassador Brink, and we have a vote going on the floor so we want to accommodate Senator Peters.

We will recognize you at this point.

### **STATEMENT OF HON. GARY C. PETERS, U.S. SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN**

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch. It is, certainly—it is my honor to introduce Ambassador Bridget Brink to the committee.

I also want to recognize Ambassador Brink's family, who are with her here today—her husband Nick, who is also serving our country as a diplomat, and her two sons, Jack and Cole.

Like our service members and their families, our diplomats do not serve alone, as every member of this committee knows. Their families often go unrecognized as our diplomats perform their crucial work in foreign lands thousands of miles from their country. We want to thank all of them for their service.

Ambassador Brink was born and raised in East Grand Rapids and graduated from East Grand Rapids High School in Michigan. Growing up, she remembers driving by a sign that proudly recognized her hometown as the home of President Gerald Ford. Presi-

dent Ford's decency, integrity, and humility served as a marker for the Midwest values that Ambassador Brink lives by.

And Ambassador Brink still keeps Michigan very close to her heart, visiting family in west Michigan every year. Although she has lived all across the globe through her career, she will tell you that her favorite place in the entire world to visit is back along the shoreline of Lake Michigan, and that makes sense. As I have always said, the Great Lakes are more than a national treasure to Michiganders. They are actually—they are ingrained in our DNA, and, clearly, the Great Lakes, are in Ambassador Brink's DNA as well.

Now Ambassador Brink will have the opportunity to uphold those Michigan values at a time of incredible upheaval in Ukraine and I know Ambassador Brink is ready for the challenge.

She is a seasoned diplomat who first joined the State Department in 1996 and has spent her career in places like Georgia, Serbia, Slovakia, Uzbekistan—places where she learned the intricate dynamics that underpin much of the post-Soviet order in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and where she learned early on how Russia chooses to treat its neighbors.

Ambassador Brink will be in charge not just with supporting our Ukrainian partners in the immediate fight against the Russian invasion but also in the recovery and rebuilding phases after.

As someone who was working in the U.S. embassies during the conflict in the Balkans and in Tbilisi after the Rose Revolution, Ambassador Brink knows what it takes. Her leadership is more vital than ever and her service across five administrations is fitting tribute to the apolitical service to country that we expect from our civil servants.

I am proud to recognize Ambassador Brink for her extraordinary professional achievements and to congratulate her on this opportunity to serve her country. Her success will be our country's success, and I cannot think of anyone more equipped for this position, and that is why I would encourage her swift confirmation.

And thank you for this opportunity to introduce an absolutely extraordinary woman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Peters, for that glowing introduction. We appreciate your insights, and I know that there is a vote on the floor so feel free to leave when you choose to do so.

More than two months into Russia's horrific war against Ukraine it seems clear that the battle for the future of Ukraine is far from over. While Ukraine has impressed the world with its bravery, a bloody fight continues as we sit here today.

Just yesterday missiles hit as a top European diplomat met with the Ukrainian prime minister. Missiles have struck in Lviv where U.S. diplomats commute from Poland. The Russian military has destroyed towns and cities, and people are suffering. But the Ukrainian people continue to fight and defend their country.

At the same time, American and European diplomats are working diligently to reopen diplomatic posts while ensuring the safety and security of our personnel.

And so, Ambassador Brink, thank you for accepting this critical posting. You will be more than a wartime ambassador. Your appointment and, I hope, expedient confirmation, along with the re-

turn of American diplomats, sends a powerful message to the world—we stand with Ukraine and the free world will not abandon those fighting to protect it.

Once confirmed, you will face multiple complex diplomatic challenges: navigating relations with NATO and our partners in Europe, helping refugees find food and shelter, maintaining Russian sanctions while meeting Europe's energy needs, documenting Russian war crimes, and supporting policies and institutions to be ready for reconstruction efforts.

With all this in mind, I am pleased that the administration has identified the right person for such a difficult job, and I am pleased that we are considering a diplomat with extensive experience, who, as ambassador to Slovakia, has worked with a large Ukrainian refugee community and ensured the transfer of critical air defense systems to Ukraine, someone with experience tackling the security challenges of eastern and central Europe, who served in Belgrade during the Balkan Wars, and was a student in Europe when the Berlin Wall fell.

Having said all of that, Ambassador Brink, we are going to look forward to hearing your thoughts on how you plan to tackle the challenges that await and about your priorities for the first few months. It is a difficult challenge and I think you will be up to it, and we wish you well and your mission.

We are also hearing today from the nominee for the Coordinator for the State Department Counterterrorism Bureau, Ambassador Elizabeth Richard. The Coordinator is responsible for harmonizing the actions of U.S. Government counterterrorism agencies to support partnering arrangements with state, nonstate, and multilateral entities.

Ambassador Richard has a long and impressive record of service as our Ambassador to Lebanon, Deputy Chief of Mission in Yemen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East Asia Affairs, just to name a few, in her 36 years of dedicated service to United States foreign policy.

I look forward to hearing from you about what new initiatives and directions you will take the Counterterrorism Bureau upon your confirmation.

Finally, we are considering Ambassador Alex Laskaris for Chad, a country which for decades was run by strongman Idriss Deby. It is one of three countries in the Sahel that has recently experienced a coup, further undermining stability in an already fragile region. But there is now a chance, however slight, for Chad to undergo a transformation.

Ambassador Laskaris, I will be interested in hearing now from you what you will do to support efforts for Chad's transition to democracy.

In addition, I look forward to hearing from you your plans for improving U.S. policy balance between defense, diplomacy, and development, something called for in legislation that I led in the Senate with Ranking Member Risch, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2021.

And with that—and welcome to your respective families, because as Senator Peters said in his introduction of Ambassador Brink this is a commitment by families and sacrifice by them as well, and

we appreciate their willingness to sacrifice as well on behalf of the nation.

Let me turn to Senator Risch for his opening statement.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all three of you and your families for your willingness to serve. It is a sacrifice—we know that—and the American people appreciate it.

In this time of war and turmoil, the U.S. has not had a confirmed ambassador on the ground in Ukraine for nearly three years. I wish it could have been sooner and we would be further along, but it is what it is and I am glad we were able to quickly bring Ambassador Brink before us for a hearing today.

Ambassador Brink, if you are confirmed, this job will not be an easy one. I think that comes as no surprise to you. You will be responsible for moving the embassy back into our facilities in Kyiv, helping to shepherd U.S. military, financial, and humanitarian aid in the right places, and the war—and when the war is over, and it will be, assisting Ukraine in rebuilding its country.

There will be a lot of scrutiny from Washington on all of this. Assuming you are confirmed, and I assume you will be, I would urge you to take a proactive role in pressing Ukraine to remain true to its reform path and not allow the fog of war that has happened to derail that.

I expect you to be a strong advocate for whatever military assistance Ukraine needs in order to win, and we all have an expectation that you will remain in close contact with this committee. We need it. The advice of people on the ground is vital to shaping decisions in Washington and we need to hear from you as we continue to support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion.

Turning to Ambassador Richard and your nomination for Counterterrorism Coordinator, while we shattered the Islamic State's grip on Iraq and Syria, problems remain.

Just this morning, the Chairman and I were briefed in depth on the thousands of foreign terrorists that are languishing, sometimes in makeshift prisons, in Syria. This is a really serious problem. It is an unreported problem but it is an enormous problem.

While a handful of our partners have repatriated their foreign fighters to face justice, others have not. I welcome your thoughts on the resolution of this very significant problem, that ensuring that these fighters do not pose a threat to U.S. interests.

Finally, I am happy to see—regarding Chad, I am happy to see an ambassador with a range of experiences working in Africa as the nominee for ambassador has.

Your record is outstanding, really. You have got a difficult road ahead of you, of course. U.S. relations with Chad are complicated by our security partnership, notably, to counter the terrorist threats in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, and Chad's notoriously undemocratic domestic politics.

This is made more challenging by the coup that occurred following the battlefield death of the authoritarian president, Idriss Deby, in April of 2021.

The dissolution of parliament and other institutions and the installation of his son as head of the Transitional Military Council all cause serious issues.

It is a critical time for the U.S. relationship with Chad and it is equally critical we have a confirmed U.S. ambassador on the ground. I look forward to hearing what you have to say in regards to the challenges you face.

With that, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will start off with you, Ambassador Brink. We would ask you each to summarize your statements in about five minutes or so so we could have an opportunity to have a conversation with you.

Your full statements will all be included in the record, without objection.

And, Ambassador Brink, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRIDGET A. BRINK, 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 UKRAINE**

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee for this opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored to be President Biden's nominee for the position of Ambassador to Ukraine. I am grateful for the trust and confidence the President and the Secretary have placed in me. If confirmed, I commit to work with you to advance U.S. interests in Ukraine.

I am a career Foreign Service Officer with 25 years of experience. My career focus has been supporting the freedom and independence of the countries of Europe and greater Europe. I view this work to which I have dedicated my professional life as fundamental to our own security.

Our collective effort has created more stable and capable allies and partners, opened markets to U.S. goods, and advanced strategic priorities which protect and defend the people of the United States.

I am deeply proud to have advanced the long-standing strategic goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace over five U.S. administrations. I appreciate the leadership of this committee and our work to resolve conflicts in the Balkans, push back against Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and support reforms in young democracies on the edge of Europe.

I know America is its most powerful overseas when we have bipartisan support at home with regard to our core national interests. I appreciate this bipartisan support as we face the biggest threat to peace and security in Europe in decades.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to continue our commitment to a sovereign, democratic, and independent Ukraine, free to choose its own future.

To paraphrase the President, in this battle between democracy and autocracy, between freedom and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force, freedom must prevail. Ukraine must prevail.

If confirmed, my number-one priority would be to advance the United States' strategic interests which includes a democratic, sovereign, independent, and prosperous Ukraine. The courage and heroism of President Zelensky and the people of Ukraine has inspired us all.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with Congress to help Ukraine succeed on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. We will ensure that Russia's effort to dominate Ukraine is a strategic failure.

I also commit to working with you to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, economic assistance, and to pursue accountability for war crimes in Ukraine. In supporting Ukraine, we are defending the principles of sovereignty and independence and the international rules-based order.

My second priority would be to help Ukraine rebuild. We support the decision of the people of Ukraine to integrate more closely with Europe and to undertake the serious and difficult internal reforms needed to achieve that goal.

It will require Ukraine to seize this historic opportunity with the eyes of the world upon it. A democratic, sovereign, and independent Ukraine is also in the interests of the United States.

Finally, I take as my most solemn responsibility the safety and security of the people of our embassy. While we will not be able to conduct diplomacy in a war zone without risk, I pledge to work with my leadership and our team to balance risk against our goals in a way that advances U.S. national interests in Ukraine.

Coming from Grand Rapids, Michigan, I entered public service with the values I learned from my family and community. I want to relay how proud I am to be a part of our career Foreign Service, underscore the vital role it plays in promoting U.S. interests and values, and pay tribute to the people and their families who sacrifice so much to serve our great country.

I want to salute the current charge d'affaires, Kristina Kvien, for her exceptional service, and the team of dedicated Americans and Ukrainians who make up the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. If confirmed, it will be an honor of a lifetime to join this team and lead our collective effort there.

I want to conclude by recognizing those who have made it possible for me to be here today. First, I want to thank my husband and fellow Foreign Service Officer, Nicholas Higgins, who is here today, for his love and support for over 29 years.

We are so proud of our children, also here, Jack and Cole. As part of a diplomatic family that has moved every few years for their entire lives, I want to thank them for their own service to our country.

I would also like to thank my mother, Gwen Brink, father and stepmother John and Judy Brink; sister Joanna Brink; nephews Andrew and Andre Brink; Aunt and Uncle Mary and Patrick Sayne; my in-laws, Adrienne and Kingsley Foster, and all of my brothers- and sisters-in-law for being bedrocks of support every step of the way.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of this committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Brink follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BRIDGET A. BRINK

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Biden's nominee for the position of Ambassador to Ukraine. I am grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. If confirmed, I commit to work with you to advance U.S. interests in Ukraine.

I am a career Foreign Service officer with 25 years of experience. My career focus has been supporting the freedom and independence of the countries of Europe and greater Europe. I view this work to which I have dedicated my professional life as fundamental to our own security. Our collective effort has created more stable and capable allies and partners, opened markets for U.S. goods, and advanced strategic priorities which protect and defend the people of the United States.

I am deeply proud to have advanced the longstanding strategic goal of a Europe "whole, free, and at peace" over five U.S. administrations. I appreciate the leadership of the members of this committee and our work to resolve conflicts in the Balkans, push back against Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and support reforms in young democracies on the edge of Europe. I know America is its most influential overseas when we have bipartisan support at home with regard to our core national interests.

I appreciate this bipartisan support as we face the biggest threat to peace and security to Europe in decades. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to continue our commitment to a sovereign, democratic, and independent Ukraine, free to choose its own future. To paraphrase the President: in this battle between democracy and autocracy, between freedom and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force, freedom must prevail. Ukraine must prevail.

If confirmed, my number one priority would be to advance the United States' strategic interests, which includes a democratic, sovereign, independent, and prosperous Ukraine. The courage and heroism of President Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine has inspired us all. If confirmed, I pledge to work with Congress to help Ukraine succeed on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. We will ensure that Russia's effort to dominate Ukraine is a strategic failure. I also commit to working with you to continue to provide humanitarian assistance and to pursue accountability for war crimes. In supporting Ukraine, we are defending the principles of sovereignty and independence and the international rules-based order.

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I want to conclude by recognizing those who have made it possible for me to be here today. First, I want to thank my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Nicholas Higgins, for his love and support for over 29 years. We are so proud of our children, Jack and Cole. As part of a diplomatic family that has moved every few years for their entire lives, I want to thank them for their own service to our country. I would also like to thank my mother, Gwen Brink; father and stepmother, John and Judy Brink; sister, Joanna Brink; nephews, Andrew and Andre Brink; aunt and uncle, Mary and Patrick Sayne; my in-laws; Adrienne and Kingsley Foster and my brothers and sisters-in-law for being bedrocks of support every step of the way.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Richard?

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, NOMINATED TO BE COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR AT LARGE**

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the State Department. I am deeply grateful to the President and the Secretary for their support and confidence.

Over the course of my 36 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have had the privilege of serving in some of our most challenging posts, including Lebanon, Yemen, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

During that time, I have taken part in robust efforts by the U.S. and our partners and allies to confront the challenges to our security from terrorist groups in these regions and beyond.

We have prevented another terrorist attack on the homeland and greatly weakened ISIS and al-Qaeda, though both groups continue to try to expand their geographic reach, creating new challenges.

Terrorist groups threatening the United States and our partners today are more geographically diverse, more ideologically diverse, and more technologically adept than ever before. We must remain vigilant in addressing this complex and dynamic terrorist landscape.

Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism, and its proxies continue their destabilizing behavior in the Middle East and beyond. I have seen firsthand the results of Iran's malign influence and I fully understand the need to keep the pressure on.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners to do just that.

Terrorist groups in Africa, exploiting poor governance and economic despair, are growing more destructive by the day.

Groups like Boko Haram, Al Shabaab, and, increasingly, ISIS thrive in this environment and they threaten our interests in the region. If confirmed, I will work to increase international attention to these areas.

There is also a rising danger from racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, which FBI Director Wray elevated in 2020 to a threat on par with ISIS and al-Qaeda.

In addition to the increasing organizational decentralization of these groups, challenges to detecting and disrupting terrorist attacks include the exploitation of social media to radicalize and recruit, the use of commercially available encrypted communications, the deployment of commercially available drones, and the employment of sophisticated financial schemes.

The State Department plays an integral role in the overall U.S. Government counterterrorism effort by fostering international consensus as well as by helping build the capacity of partners and allies.

U.S. counterterrorism efforts are shifting from a U.S.-led partner enabled approach that relies heavily on military power to one in



which our partners have to have the will and capability to lead in addressing threats on their own soil.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to reduce the continuing threat that ISIS poses around the world. Under U.S. leadership, the 84-member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS has made major strides against the group in Iraq and Syria. It is now also focused on addressing ISIS threats in Africa and emanating from Afghanistan.

As part of that effort, I would prioritize the following: repatriating foreign terrorist fighters and their families from Syria to their countries of origin; strengthening the detention facilities in which they are now housed; and improving conditions in displaced persons camps in Syria to prevent them from becoming incubators for the next generation of ISIS fighters.

While countering terrorism is vital to U.S. national security, there are many other priorities and finite resources. While it is critical that the United States maintains its leadership role in international counterterrorism efforts, our partners should also shoulder a greater share of the burden.

Finally, I commit to working with you to ensure that the Congress is regularly informed and consulted on all our counterterrorism efforts.

With that, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, I really appreciate your consideration today and I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Richard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Department of State. I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their support and confidence in me.

Over the course of my 36 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have had the privilege of serving in some of our most challenging posts, including Lebanon, Yemen, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. During that time, I have taken part in robust efforts by the U.S. and our partners and allies to confront the challenges to our stability and security from terrorist groups in these regions and beyond. We have prevented another terrorist attack on the homeland and greatly weakened ISIS and al-Qa'ida, though both groups continue to work to expand their geographic footprint, creating new challenges.

Terrorist groups threatening the United States and our partners today are more geographically dispersed, more ideologically diverse, and more technologically adept than ever before. We must remain vigilant in addressing this dynamic and complex terrorist landscape.

Iran—the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism—and its proxies continue their destabilizing behavior in the Middle East and beyond. I have seen, first-hand, the results of Iran's malign influence and use of proxies and fully understand the need to keep the pressure on and, if confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners, to do the same.

Terrorist groups in Africa exploiting poor governance and economic despair are growing more destructive by the day. Groups like Boko Haram, al-Shabaab and Jama'at Nusratul Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), and increasingly ISIS, thrive in this environment and threaten our interests in the region. If confirmed, I will work to increase international attention to this region. There is also a rising danger from racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, which FBI Director Wray elevated in 2020 to a threat on par with ISIS and al-Qa'ida.

In addition to the increasing organizational decentralization of these groups, challenges to detecting and disrupting terrorist attacks include the exploitation of social media to radicalize and recruit, use of commercially available encrypted communica-

tions, deployment of commercially available drones, and employment of sophisticated financial schemes.

The State Department plays an integral role in the U.S. Government's counterterrorism efforts by fostering international agreement on the need to confront these terrorist groups as well as by helping build the counterterrorism capacity of our partners.

U.S. counterterrorism efforts are shifting from a U.S.-led, partner-enabled approach that relies heavily on military power to one in which our partners have the will and capability to lead in addressing terrorist threats on their soil. As U.S. efforts become more focused on building partner capacity, the Counterterrorism Bureau's work will be vital.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to reduce the continuing threat that ISIS poses around the world. Under U.S. leadership, the 84-member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS has made major strides against the terrorist group in Iraq and Syria and is now also focused on addressing ISIS threats in Africa and emanating from Afghanistan.

As part of that effort, I will prioritize repatriating foreign terrorist fighters and their family members from Syria to their countries of origin, strengthening the detention facilities in which they are now housed and improving conditions in displaced persons camps in Syria to prevent them from becoming incubators for the next generation of ISIS fighters.

While countering terrorism is vital to U.S. national security interests, there are many other priorities and finite resources. While it is critical that the United States maintains its leadership role in international counterterrorism efforts, our partners should shoulder a greater share of the burden.

If confirmed, I will work both bilaterally and multilaterally to spur all those threatened by terrorism to do more to address these threats. I will also work to ensure that our foreign assistance resources are spent wisely on programs that help partners develop the capability to secure their borders, investigate and disrupt terrorist plots, track terrorist financing, bring terrorists to justice, prevent and counter violent extremism, and rehabilitate and reintegrate former terrorists.

I will also promote a counterterrorism approach that upholds the rule of law and respect for human rights. Finally, I commit to working with you to ensure that Congress is regularly informed and consulted on counterterrorism efforts.

With that, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, I appreciate your consideration and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. A career foreign service officer who does not use all five minutes, that is extraordinary.

Ambassador Laskaris?

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. ALEXANDER MARK LASKARIS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 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 REPUBLIC OF CHAD**

Ambassador LASKARIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. It is a deep honor to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the second time in my career.

I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their support and, if confirmed, for the opportunity to continue my 31-year career in the Foreign Service in the Republic of Chad.

To an Africanist, the word Chad conjures up memories of great kingdoms rooted in storied civilizations going back more than a thousand years in recorded history. Today's Chad is a rich mosaic of peoples, cultures, languages, and religions encompassing the worlds of the desert, the savanna, and the forest in an area three times the size of California.

A rich past notwithstanding, however, today's Chad is also one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 187th out of 189 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index.

It has some of the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality in the world and some of the lowest incomes, life expectancies, and literacy rates. It is within both our interests as a nation and our values as a people that we work to address these conditions.

There are security issues that require our attention, but they should never divert us from the fundamental development challenges that call for greater action and which, I believe, define our work in Chad and will define my work in Chad, if confirmed.

We have been partners with Chad since its earliest days as an independent republic and we helped defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity against armed Libyan irredentism in the 1980s.

Perhaps this memory of an attempt by Colonel Qaddafi to forcibly seize the northern third of its territory contributed to Chad's strong and welcome denunciation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Two battalions of Chadian peacekeepers have long served in the U.N. Mission in Mali, and Chadian soldiers have joined the regional and international coalitions against violent extremist organizations in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin.

U.S. military personnel have always been welcome in Chad, and today some 75 American service members deploy to N'Djamena where they support the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin and support our French and African partners in the Greater Sahel.

Chad and its people have also been superb hosts to refugees from Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Cameroon. The people have welcomed their brothers and sisters fleeing violence, and the Government has ensured that humanitarian assistance from the international community, led by the United States, has reached its intended beneficiaries.

Mr. Chairman, Chad gained its independence in 1960 and has had six presidents in the last 62 years. None of the incumbents left power voluntarily and none of the successors assumed power via constitutional processes.

In its modern history, Chad has been governed by and for narrow regional and ethno linguistic interests. It has also been governed more by the force of arms than by the force of law.

Following the death of President Idriss Deby in April of 2021 and under Chad's constitution, the president of the National Assembly should have assumed the powers of the presidency on an interim basis and led the country quickly to new elections.

But he refused and that did not happen. Instead of the process laid out in the constitution, Chad has a Transitional Military Council led by one of the late president's sons that has pledged a national dialogue leading to new elections.

After the death of President Deby, the United States called for a peaceful, timely, and civilian-led transition of power to a democratically-elected government. The predialogue negotiations underway in Qatar are a critical step.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the African Union and our international partners and Chadians of goodwill to support an inclusive, peaceful, and timely transition to a democratic and civilian-led government.

The goal and the hope that we share with the people of Chad is the first democratic transfer of power in the country's history, one that empowers a new government to tackle the profound development challenges it will face on inauguration day.

Unique in Chad's history, Transitional Military Council President Mahamat Deby has said publicly that he has no intention of running in the ensuing elections, the timing of which depends on a successful national dialogue.

Effective elections alone will not guarantee the success of the transition but is an important signal to the people of Chad and to Chad's international partners that political power must be contested at the ballot box and not on the battlefield.

As I begin to formulate my own thinking on how I will advance U.S. interests in Chad, if confirmed, I go back to my two wonderful years on the faculty of the National War College, where we teach our students to formulate strategy by defining their ends, ways, and means.

Our end state in Chad must be a stable country at peace with itself and able to contribute to peace building in the region. Our ways consist of our portfolio of assistance and engagement programs and those of our interagency and international partners.

Our means are the hard work under challenging conditions of our small embassy and the generosity of the American people acting through their elected, executive, and legislative branches.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and I am happy to answer any questions either now or for the record.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Laskaris follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALEXANDER MARK LASKARIS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. It is an honor to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for a second time.

I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their support, and—if confirmed—for the opportunity to continue my 31 year-career as a foreign service officer.

To an Africanist, the word "Chad" conjures up memories of great kingdoms rooted in storied civilizations dating back to some 1,000 years of recorded history. Today's Chad is a rich mosaic of peoples, cultures, languages, and religions encompassing the worlds of the desert, the savannah, and the forest in an area three times the size of California.

A rich past notwithstanding, today's Chad is also one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 187th out of 189 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index. It has some of the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality in the world, and some of the lowest incomes, life expectancies, and literacy rates.

It is within both our interests as a nation and our values as a people that we work to address these conditions. There are security issues that require our attention, but they should never divert us from the fundamental development challenges that call for greater action and must define our work in Chad.

We have been partners with Chad since its earliest days as an independent republic, and we helped defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity against armed Libyan irredentism in the 1980s. Perhaps this memory of an attempt by Colonel Qadhafi to forcibly seize the northern third of its territory contributed to Chad's strong and welcome denunciation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Two battalions of Chadian peacekeepers have long served in the U.N. Mission in Mali and Chadian soldiers have joined the regional and international coalitions against violent extremist organizations in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin. U.S.

military personnel have always been welcomed in Chad, and today there some 75 American service members deployed to N'Djamena, where they support the Multi-national Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin, as well as our African and French partners in the Sahel.

Chad and its people have also been superb hosts to refugees fleeing violence in Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Cameroon. The people have welcomed their brothers and sisters fleeing violence, and the Government has ensured that humanitarian assistance from the international community, led by the United States, has reached its intended beneficiaries.

Mr. Chairman, Chad gained its independence in 1960 and has had six presidents in the last 62 years. None of the incumbents left power voluntarily, and none of their successors assumed power via constitutional processes. In its modern history, Chad has been governed by and for narrow regional and ethno-linguistic interests. It has also been governed more by the force of arms than by the force of law.

Following the death of President Idriss Deby in April 2021 and under Chad's 2020 constitution, the President of the National Assembly ultimately should have assumed the powers of the presidency on an interim basis and led the country quickly through to new elections.

But he refused and that did not happen.

Instead of the process laid out in the constitution, Chad has had a Transitional Military Council led by one of the late President's sons. It has pledged a national dialogue leading to new elections.

After President Deby's death, the United States called for a peaceful, timely, and civilian-led transition of power to a democratically elected government. The pre-dialogue negotiations underway in Doha are a critical step.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the African Union and our international partners to support an inclusive, peaceful, and timely transition to a democratic and civilian-led government. The goal - and the hope- that we share with the people of Chad is the first democratic transfer of power in the country's history, one that empowers a new government to tackle the profound development challenges it will face on inauguration day.

Unique in Chad's history, Transitional Military Council President Mahamat Deby has said publicly that he has no intention of running in the ensuing elections, the timing of which depends on a successful national dialogue. Effective elections alone will not guarantee the success of the transition, but it is an important signal to the people of Chad and to Chad's international partners that political power must be contested at the ballot box, and not on the battlefield.

As I begin to formulate my own thinking on how I will advance U.S. interests in Chad—if confirmed—I go back to my two wonderful years on the faculty of the National War College, where we teach our students to formulate strategy by defining their ends, ways and means.

Our end state in Chad must be a stable country at peace with itself and able to contribute to peacebuilding in the region. Our ways consist of a small embassy; our portfolio of assistance and engagement programs; and our interagency and international partners. Our means are the hard work under challenging conditions of some 600 American and Chadian staff, including just 36 U.S. direct hires, and the generosity of the American people acting through their elected executive and legislative branches.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and I am happy to answer any questions, either now or for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you as well.

We will start a round of questions. Let me start with questions on behalf of the committee as a whole, and these really go to the nature of what we expect on responsiveness by officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from you. A simple yes or no would be responsive to the question.

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

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

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

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

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

[All witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

The CHAIRMAN. And, lastly, 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. Okay. The record will know that all of the nominees responded yes to all of the questions posed. The chair will recognize himself to start off with.

Over the weekend, Charge d'Affaires Kristina Kvien took a small team to our embassy in Kyiv. Can you give us a sense, Ambassador, of how you envision, upon confirmation, bringing back our diplomatic presence in Ukraine?

Ambassador BRINK. Yes, Senator. Thank you for the question. I think it is a really important one. I was delighted myself to see Charge Kvien in Kyiv on Sunday.

I think it is really important for us to be there in person and present. She is there now, and I know she is laying the groundwork to return our embassy operations in coordination also with Congress and the steps that need to be taken.

We will have to look at the security situation. But I have great confidence in our security experts, including those on the ground, to give us advice that allows us to continue to advance our strategic interests, which means being present to work with the Ukrainians, work with other embassies, and also coordinate back with Washington from Kyiv.

I do not know exactly how fast we will be able to do this process. But I know we are trying to do it as fast as possible and it is, certainly, my hope and plan, if confirmed, to be able to start my mission in Kyiv.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. And would it be fair to say that however physical form it might take that your goal is to have robust engagement with the Ukrainian Government?

Ambassador BRINK. Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Along with the overwhelming majority of my colleagues who are working hard to support the administration's latest requests for more assistance to Ukraine, it is absolutely critical that we work with our partners to provide Ukraine the military assistance it needs to defend against brazen Russian aggression while also ensuring delivery of critical humanitarian relief for Ukrainians, their neighbors, who have welcomed refugees with open arms, and address the global implications for food security and energy security.

Let me ask you, will you commit to the committee that upon your confirmation you will work with the Ukrainian Government to, ultimately, ensure that we have the information and accelerate the delivery of lethal assistance for Ukraine?

Ambassador BRINK. Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And can you also work with us? We are very much expeditiously doing everything we can to promote this assistance to Ukraine but we are talking about billions of dollars, how

they are going—making sure they are truly needed where they are going, how they are being used.

In this regard, can I get your commitment to frequently consult with me and our committee staff on our oversight efforts with respect to security assistance, with respect to humanitarian assistance, as we move forward?

Ambassador BRINK. Yes, Senator. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And then I know that we are in the midst of the war but I also think—thinking about the future, hopefully, the not too distant future about reconstruction in Ukraine helps light the way so that there is light at the end of a very long, harrowing period of time.

Do you see part of your role as thinking about working with the Ukrainians about what reconstruction and rebuilding looks like?

Ambassador BRINK. Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. We look forward to working with you on all of those elements.

Let me turn to Ambassador Richard. Senator Risch alluded to it. We heard from the king of Jordan today in a meeting we had with him about these ISIS fighter camps in Syria 70,000, 75,000 strong.

Sounds like it is a great breeding ground for the next generation of ISIS fighters. What is your thinking about how we deal with that challenge?

Ambassador RICHARD. Yes, sir. I agree. It is a serious, serious problem and it is fundamentally unsustainable, and we saw this with the attack in Hasakah just a couple of months ago.

We have worked up till now, as far as I understand, with partners and allies, trying to get countries to take some of these people back. I think it is, clearly, not enough and we need to redouble our efforts and really insist because keeping them here in this limbo is a total incubator for more terrorism.

Also, on the issue of the humanitarian camps where families are, the conditions are horrific and also potentially a breeding ground for more terrorism.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you, the 21st century challenges of where the battles are, including in the context of terrorism, are, in one dimension, cybersecurity. What do you see as the current and prospective role of the bureau with respect to addressing international cybersecurity terrorism?

Ambassador RICHARD. I think you are absolutely right that one of the big challenges for us on—especially on terrorism in the future is this information domain. It is cyber, it is encrypted communications, and it is social media.

I am very, very happy to see that the State Department has created, finally, a bureau to deal with cyber issues and information, and I hope that CT, if I were to be confirmed, would be part of a very robust interagency coordination on these issues because every agency in the Government, really, is focusing on this now.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Brink, have you spoken with the Chargé since they have been back in Kyiv?

Ambassador BRINK. I have not spoken but I have communicated with her.

Senator RISCH. What did she tell you about the status of our infrastructure there?

Ambassador BRINK. I only saw one message that she had sent back, which just said it was jarring how close the Russians came to Kyiv.

Senator RISCH. The suggestion was that our infrastructure is sufficient to reopen. Is that what you are gathering over this?

Ambassador BRINK. I did not see details on that and I would not necessarily at this point be involved in that. But I did see a couple pictures which showed there was some damage to the outside of our embassy building.

Senator RISCH. Significant damage or superficial or what?

Ambassador BRINK. I could not tell. It looked superficial. But I do not have information on more than that.

Senator RISCH. Do you—we tried to bring the Secretary of State down the other day when he was here. Do you have any expectation of a time frame when you think you might be able to get back?

Ambassador BRINK. Sir, I can say, if confirmed, as soon as possible.

Senator RISCH. That is what we got out of the Secretary of State. Not very helpful. I get that, though. The security issue has got to be resolved and at least deeply assessed before that happens. I get that.

How would you compare the challenges that you are going to face there to the other postings that you have had? You have had considerable experience in this regard. How would you compare this, if you are able to?

Ambassador BRINK. Sir, if I just might say on your last question, I know that the team that is there on the ground right now is actively doing everything possible to return embassy operations as soon as possible. I expect that they will be able to do that very soon.

Senator RISCH. And I am told—there is other countries that are up and operating there already, I am told. Is that correct? Is that your understanding?

Ambassador BRINK. I understand that, too.

Senator RISCH. We sure do not want to be last to the party so we need to move along as best we can. But back to the question that I asked, how would you assess the challenges you are going to face here to some of the other postings that you have had? You have, certainly, had a lot of experience in this area.

Ambassador BRINK. Sir, I would assess the challenge to be enormous. But I would also assess that, from what I have seen, one of the most remarkable things about this effort is the President's, the Secretary's, and others bringing together this remarkable coalition to push back against Russia's war of choice in a way I do not think I have ever seen in my 25 years in the service.

I feel that we have the commitment and the motivation and the drive, and with your support and with your funding and congressional support and the support of almost all of the world, I think we can face this very enormous challenge.



But I do not underestimate how much challenge the ambassador on the ground will have. But I also believe I have an excellent team of people working across the entire administration who are fully committed to succeeding in our goal, which is to help Ukraine defend itself.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Ambassador Richard, I share the same concerns that the chairman has regarding what we heard today about these thousands of people that are in prison camps. I do not know how you are going to address that.

One of the suggestions was, of course, getting them repatriated. I am not sure that that resolves the problem. I mean, simply being repatriated to where they came from does not seem to me—it sounds like you are just letting them out of prison. And what are your thoughts on that?

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you, sir. Repatriation, for me, is a shorthand for repatriation, reintegration, if possible, or incarceration. What I think some of the countries of origin do not want to deal with is that exact problem.

The best outcome, if we have evidence that people are fighters, is for a legal process that keeps them in jail and that is going to be difficult to do. But it is what we have to press for because the current situation is unsustainable and just sending them somewhere and letting them go is also not a solution.

Senator RISCH. There is no question about that and it is, certainly, an unreported problem. There are not people talking about this. I have no doubt you will resolve it once you get confirmed.

Thank you.

Ambassador RICHARD. Yes, sir.

Senator RISCH. Ambassador Laskaris, the Military Council promised an 18-month election after they took power, and 12 of those 18 months are already gone. What is your assessment as to whether they make the 18-month deadline to hold an election?

Ambassador LASKARIS. Thank you. Thank you, sir. As I mentioned in my statement, there have been predialogue negotiations going on in Qatar. It looks like that is going to slip to the right.

I think one of the key determinations I will have to make, if confirmed, when I arrive at post is the quality of process such that a delay is understandable if not acceptable.

If it is not, then I think we have to work with our partners to push the process back into the right direction. But to answer your question, I think 18 months probably will slip.

Senator RISCH. Yeah. I cannot see how—where the 12 months have gone by with little progress it seems to me that there is no question that it is going to slip.

I would hope, and I know you will, urge them to move this along as rapidly as possible because, as we know, the people in power are just going to drag their feet, hoping to be able to stay in power.

Good luck at that, and I thank all of you again for your service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me reiterate the chairman's thanks to you and your families for your

willingness to serve some of the most important posts that currently exist in the Foreign Service.

Ambassador Brink, I wanted to draw upon your experience working in Slovakia. Slovakia is presently one of the countries that is raising some of the most vocal objections to the EU's plans to wean itself off of Russian oil and the reason is pretty evident. This is a country that is almost wholly dependent on Russian energy.

I want to make sure that as a committee we see the full picture of how you defend Ukraine. Certainly at the top of the list is sending the weapons they need to fight this fight and win it.

But in order to keep Europe united, in order to press against the revenue sources that Russia uses to perpetuate this war, we have to be in the business of helping countries like Slovakia become energy independent.

And so I wondered if you just might share with us a few of your thoughts, given your broad experience in a country that has remained dependent, as to the focus we should have not just on the war in Ukraine but also in this project to try to dry up Russia's revenue source in Europe.

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you so much, Senator Murphy.

I am so proud to be the President's representative in Slovakia at this time, a country of 5 million people on the frontlines right now of Russia's war of choice in Ukraine, and you are correct that there is debate—an active debate—within the Government of Slovakia about how to become less dependent on Russia.

But I would say and what I know is that the political leadership has decided across the board in government that Slovakia must become less dependent on Russia and it is a question of how to do it in a way that causes the least pain to the population.

Slovakia is nearly 100 percent dependent on Russia for all of its energy—for nuclear, for oil, and for gas. It is a big challenge. There are U.S. companies trying to help Slovakia reduce this burden and we ourselves have been raising this for quite a long time.

You, Senator Shaheen, and others, I know, have long expressed interest in trying to do this, I, myself, as a policy priority, and it is now that we have this opportunity.

Supporting countries like Slovakia, I think, is critical. I would just say a couple other things. Slovakia has received over 400,000 refugees from Ukraine, which is about 7 percent of the population, and as the First Lady saw just on Sunday when she was there, the Slovaks have opened their arms, their hearts, and their homes to these refugees in a way that is really remarkable.

Refugees can come to Slovakia for a year and they get full benefits from the Government—educational benefits. They are able to work. They are able to live in Slovakia.

And also I just want to highlight that Slovakia has been an enormous outsized donor of security assistance and I am really proud to have been part of this effort on the U.S. side with the Secretary of Defense and others and, ultimately, our President to provide Slovakia the backfill so that Slovakia could provide S-300 anti-air systems.

In a nutshell, Senator, it is really important to keep supporting the frontline states and they need help in various ways. But states like Slovakia have really stepped up, in my opinion.

Senator MURPHY. Ambassador Richard, good to see you again. Thank you for your tremendous service in Lebanon. Thanks for welcoming me and a delegation there recently.

I wanted to ask you a question about a January directive from Secretary Austin to strengthen efforts to prevent civilian deaths and improve the way the DOD investigates claims of civilian harm in U.S. combat operations, and this is specifically relevant to drone strikes.

You have served in Yemen. You know the reports of pretty significant civilian casualties of our drone operations. You have also probably seen research suggesting that in areas where we have had the highest level of drone activity often terrorist groups have the highest level of recruitment success.

Just want your commitment that you are going to work with the Department of Defense to ensure that we minimize civilian harm and also in a very short amount of time get your takeaways as to the upside and downside of our drone activities as a mechanism to combat terrorism.

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you for that question and it is, as you know, an obviously very complex and fraught issue.

I have worked with my DOD colleagues very closely in every assignment I have been in since—in the last 15 years and I have seen firsthand how hard this is because there is the need to deal with an imminent threat, often against our own troops or our own American citizens, and the need to balance the civilian casualties, and I really welcome DOD's ability to look at this, accept that there is a problem, and really going after trying to figure out how to do it better.

And so if I am confirmed I would really welcome working with them from the civilian side of the house on how to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Portman is next.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate your having this hearing today on some really critical nominations, particularly the nominee for Ukraine.

I have been pushing for us to get an ambassador nominated for a long time now at the end of the last administration and into this administration, and I think it is absolutely crucial that we get someone there.

I am glad the administration has nominated someone and I am glad they chose a career ambassador who has experience in the area both in Eastern Europe generally and specifically in Ukraine.

This nomination of Ambassador Brink is really critical. We have got to move her quickly. I know the chairman and ranking member agree with that. I appreciate your moving her so quickly to a hearing.

Over the weekend, the President announced that we have withdrawn another \$150 million from the presidential drawdown authority, which means there is probably less than \$100 million left, and here we are in Congress not yet acting on this supplemental request.

Literally, munitions, in addition, of course, to new weapons are potentially going to be stalled. It is critical that we act and act quickly so we do not have a gap in these munitions and deliveries

right now, which is a crucial time, obviously, in what is going on in the eastern and southern part of Ukraine.

I just wonder, Ambassador Brink, if you could talk a little about that. Why is it so important that we get this legislation passed quickly? What would it mean if we did not?

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you, Senator Portman.

I just wanted to start by thanking you and also Senator Murphy for your support of the Global Engagement Center in Disinformation. I know that has been a big effort of yours and it is really important for Ukraine but also for Slovakia and all these other countries that face this huge challenge.

Senator PORTMAN. You answered my second question already.

[Laughter.]

Senator PORTMAN. I am going to get back to that a little bit. Thank you.

Ambassador BRINK. Okay. It is incredibly important that the supplemental move fast. I do not know the latest, perhaps, but I understand it is moving.

But what we are trying to do as an administration is move security items as fast as possible to Ukraine. While we have already provided some \$3.8 billion worth of security assistance, the needs are large. We are working closely with allies and partners on those needs and with the Ukrainians, obviously, and also with you and your staffs.

But it is really important that we are able to continue that. I think most people assess that these next few weeks and maybe longer are critical to the ultimate result of this war of choice.

Senator PORTMAN. Yeah. Let me ask a little about how you intend to conduct yourself as ambassador. I have gotten the pleasure of working with a few ambassadors when we had a nominated and confirmed ambassador, and different styles a little bit—Geoffrey Pyatt and Marie Yovanovitch.

Do you know Lieutenant General Terry Wolff, who is the Ukraine security coordinator?

Ambassador BRINK. I do not, but I will look forward to meeting him.

Senator PORTMAN. Would you intend to work closely with him?

Ambassador BRINK. Of course. Yes.

Senator PORTMAN. I think that is important that you view this role not just as a diplomatic role but, really, as a way to deal with the pressing issue of their defense of their country and with things being on the line currently. I think General Wolff is going to need your help, and vice versa.

Do you know General Dayton?

Ambassador BRINK. No, I do not know General Dayton.

Senator PORTMAN. He was the coordinator previously for the training efforts and also someone who I hope you will get to know and work with because I think that is an important part of your function, should you be confirmed, which I believe you will be, hopefully quickly.

What do you think they currently need militarily that they are not getting?

Ambassador BRINK. I think the needs are evolving. I would need to come back to on what the precise needs are at this moment. But I know they are changing.

What they needed to defend Kyiv is different than what they need now to try to defend the east and the south. I think it is an evolving situation and we need to work closely with the Ukrainians on this.

I can say, having served in the Balkans in many of the places where these protracted conflicts are around the region, that it is my great pleasure to work with our military and I feel I have long worked well and closely with them and would see us as absolute partners in this effort.

Senator PORTMAN. Excellent. There is also, obviously, a humanitarian crisis and an economic crisis for the country right now so all these issues are important. But I do think that you will be the voice of our country over there and critically you have engaged in all those issues.

On the Global Engagement Center we did talk about that last week. I appreciate your saying that you have seen the GEC work in Slovakia. We are outgunned here, just as Ukrainians are outgunned by a much larger Russian force and more weapons. With regard to disinformation, Russia, China, other countries are engaged deeply in this and spend billions of dollars on it.

Can you tell us what the Global Engagement Center can do better to counter Russia's efforts to justify its invasion and trying to delegitimize the Ukrainian Government?

Ambassador BRINK. Sir, thank you. Again, I think we can just do more—more, more, more is what I would want because you are absolutely right. I agree with you. We are outgunned. We are outresourced. We are outmaneuvered. We have to do as much as we can.

It is a challenge. Disinformation is something that is pervasive in Europe and elsewhere and so we have to do as much as we can. We have to be creative and innovative and something—sometimes bureaucracies are not. But that is what we need to do to deal with this. It is a very big threat to us and our way of life.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen, I had told Senator Coons—I did not see you sitting there—that he could go next because he has an engagement. Would you yield to him?

Senator Van Hollen: Absolutely.

Thank you. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. And I will let Senator Murphy preside as I go vote.

Senator COONS. And thank you to my colleague from Maryland.

Ambassadors, wonderful to see you. Thank you for your service to our nation. I am looking forward to seeing you confirmed in the various places where you will serve that are all important areas of engagement.

If I might, Ambassador Brink, we are finalizing what I hope will be a \$40 billion emergency supplemental package for Ukraine that will include military, economic, and humanitarian assistance.

I am particularly focused on the humanitarian assistance because I am the chair of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee. Ukraine is, was, and should be, again, the breadbasket of Eastern Europe rather than a country now known to have thousands in bread lines.

What do you think will be the biggest challenges, moving forward, in terms of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine?

And I am particularly concerned about the ongoing blockade of the port of Odessa. My sense of the future for Ukraine is that we will genuinely struggle to have a vibrant Ukraine without a vibrant economy, and a vibrant economy will not happen until the 98 percent of Ukrainian grain exports that went out of the port of Odessa before the conflict are able to, once again, transit freely and then be that great source of revenue that they have been in the past.

I would be interested in your thoughts about how we get assistance into Ukraine during this war and how we get Ukrainian food and oil and other critical products out of the port of Odessa.

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you, Senator. This is an excellent question. In addition to the some 5 million refugees in surrounding states of Ukraine, there are approximately 7.7 million IDPs within Ukraine. A huge humanitarian crisis is happening right now.

We have had some luck, as I understand, in—and some success and a lot of success, I think, in working with our international organizations that we fund, and they are implementing partners that are also working in Ukraine to move humanitarian assistance into Ukraine.

I think the last tranche is something like \$565 million in humanitarian assistance. It is not easy. This is wartime environment. I would guess it can happen in the same as it would in any other environment. But these are also professionals and experts in such situations and we are relying very heavily on them to get humanitarian assistance where it is intended to go.

On the question of moving things out of the ports, this is a big challenge right now because Russia is blocking the ports that—in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

We are trying to work with international partners and others to help find alternative routes for grain and corn out of Ukraine as well as to work with the other relief organizations to supplement those countries that had depended upon these exports.

It is an enormous challenge. I think the benefit we have, as I mentioned before, is President Biden's and this administration's success in galvanizing a coalition of like-minded people who together condemned this war of choice and are ready to work together and that is exactly what I will, if confirmed, be glad to jump in and help do.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I look forward to your swift confirmation as well as your colleagues'.

If I might, Ambassador Richard, briefly, I am very concerned about the Sahel, about the instability in Mali and in other countries in the region and the ongoing actions of the Wagner Group

and the ways in which they have really destabilized several nations—a recent coup d’etat in both Mali and Burkina.

Senator Graham and I worked on getting the Global Fragility Act signed into law and it had overwhelming bipartisan support. Mozambique and coastal West Africa have been targeted as areas for this strategy to try and strengthen them as bulwarks against terrorism and instability.

If confirmed, would you work with me and others in this committee on the Global Fragility Act and ensure that it is actually used as a tool?

Ambassador RICHARD. Yes, Senator, I absolutely would and I really think the Global Fragility Act is a very creative and interesting new approach to some of the problems we have been struggling with, especially in Africa.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

And if I might, Ambassador Laskaris, I have visited Chad once and am watching some of the developments there with grave concern.

How has this unconstitutional transfer of power following Idriss Deby’s death affected our security cooperation and how do you think we might be able to more successfully influence movement towards genuinely free and fair elections in October of this year?

Ambassador LASKARIS. Thank you, Senator, and you were in the chair 10 years ago when I appeared before this committee as the nominee for Guinea so I deeply appreciate your presence and your enduring interest in Africa.

I think we need to work with our African Union partners, our international partners, to continue to apply pressure on all the Chadian parties to advance this transitional process towards the free and fair elections, and I think one of the critical tasks will be to break the monopoly of the armed groups on seats at the table.

The more seats we have at the table for unarmed political parties, for civil society, for women’s groups, the better the outcome will be. I think it is time, after 62 years of having Chad ruled by the gun, to have it ruled by unarmed democratically-elected political actors.

Our security assistance right now is, largely, suspended because of the aftermath of the death of President Deby. Our assistance—our security assistance focuses on a couple things.

One is the Chadian deployments to the multinational stabilization mission in Mali where the two battalions have performed reasonably well. It also helps the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin in the foreign nation fight against Boko Haram in the Islamic State of West Africa.

I think our challenge is to get the political transition back on track to improve governance, and the Global Fragility Act, as well as the Trans-Sahelian Partnership Act, focus on governance and the lack thereof as the driver of conflict in the region.

Once we—if and when we can take care of the governance challenges, I think the security assistance should follow.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Thank you all very much, and I would like to thank my colleague, again, from Maryland for his graciousness.

Senator Van Hollen: Thank you. Thank you to the senator from Delaware. I am not sure I would have had you jump the line if I knew you are going to take my last question.

But anyway, with all seriousness, Ambassador Laskaris, I thank you for that answer with respect to the situation in Chad. Congratulations to all of you on your nominations.

And with respect to the situation in Ukraine, Ambassador Brink, first of all, thank you for your service in Slovakia and let me just say I look forward to working with you, when confirmed, and I expect that will happen, on all the issues that unite us in our fight to defeat Putin and make sure that we stand with the people of Ukraine.

Ambassador Richard, I thought I would continue the conversation with respect to ISIS and I wanted to start with the situation in northeast Syria because while we have, of course, made great progress over the years in the fight against ISIS, we continue to see active cells and my question is what do we need to be doing right now in working with our Syrian Kurdish allies, in particular, to prevent the resurgence of ISIS in the region?

Ambassador RICHARD. I think—and I am going to caveat this that I have been out of the active duty part of the State Department for two years now, but as I look at it, certainly, reading open source, it is clear that they are holding that area pretty well.

They are preventing ISIS from starting a new caliphate and then going out from there. But, again, it is not a stable situation and so I, honestly, do not know what the answer is and I look forward to consulting, if I am confirmed, with our Middle East colleagues to say what manner of Syria issues, counterterrorism issues, military issues, Iraq, and that whole area, can we better work on to break out of the kind of stasis that we are in now.

Senator Van Hollen: I appreciate that. I know in your opening statement you mentioned the issue of these camps—some camps with ISIS fighters, some camps with family members—and this is a problem we have all identified.

But as you probably know, nobody has come up with a good solution. A number of us were just meeting with King Abdullah from Jordan and, again, thanking Jordan for taking in many Syrian refugees. He raised this issue, as many of us did.

But and I do not expect you to come in right now with a clear answer. But this is something that we have been talking about for a long time. I do not know if you have any thoughts to share now as to the best way to tackle it. But I would be interested if you have some preliminary ideas.

Ambassador RICHARD. I join you in saying this is a huge problem, and I have a little bit of experience from Lebanon where we had Palestinian refugee camps that had been there for 30 years. The longer it goes unresolved, the harder it is to resolve.

And so I would really—I think one thing I might bring, if I were to be confirmed, is maybe a little fresh energy to the problem because the counterterrorism bureau at State, as other offices, has been without a permanent leadership for a while now, and that might be the first thing I would be able to bring to the party.

Senator Van Hollen: I think, and I am hoping—and I understand there is some consideration of providing some additional U.S. re-



sources within our umbrella of Syrian assistance, assistance to the Syrian people in the northeastern part of Syria. I hope that is the case and look forward to working with you on that.

Turning to Afghanistan, as you indicated, you also have an ISIS presence. We now have the situation where the Taliban has control—in control—but they are fighting ISIS. What is your assessment of where ISIS stands and its strength in Afghanistan today?

Ambassador RICHARD. Again, I do not have visibility on much of the hard intelligence and information, but it is very distressing to see them—this Khorasan group having been able to establish a presence and then execute attacks recently both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

Clearly, the Taliban assurances that they were going to take care of this problem of safe havens in Afghanistan have not been met.

That is one part of it, and I know our special representative is working on that issue. But, clearly, I think we have an opportunity to pay a little more attention to that now before it metastasizes any further and gets out of hand.

Senator Van Hollen: And what is your assessment—just to pick up a little on Senator Coons' questions in the Sahel, what is your assessment right now of ISIS' growth in Africa?

Ambassador RICHARD. I think and I—again, I defer to my Africa colleagues and I am looking forward to learning a little more about that region—what I see is ISIS affiliates, people inspired by ISIS, associating themselves with ISIS rather than a hard command and control—you go here and you go there—and that is a lot harder to fight and it is a lot harder to see sometimes, and poor governance and economic despair in the region is a big cause of this.

I would look forward, if I am confirmed, to working with Africa Bureau to understand the underlying dynamics so, again, we might get ahead of this.

Senator Van Hollen: I appreciate it. As you well know, the conversation in the foreign policy community has swung from counter-terrorism to so-called great power competition, and I understand that, appreciate it, and agree that we did not focus enough on that.

But I do not want to swing back entirely in the other direction and see ISIS and other terrorist organizations use this opportunity while everybody is focused on other parts of the world to regain their strength.

I look forward to working with you and all of you when confirmed.

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen: I guess I am—oh, Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY [presiding]. I am going to fill the gap before Senator Menendez gets back and maybe ask one additional question awaiting Senator Menendez's return from the floor and that is to you, Ambassador Richard, again, drawing back on your experience in Lebanon.

No two terrorist organizations are the same, right. Al-Qaeda is a very different animal than Hezbollah. Al-Qaeda, generally, operates in the shadows whereas in Lebanon Hezbollah operates out in the open. They are a political force.

They run human services operations and it means that, whether we like it or not, when it comes to a more socially embedded group

like Hezbollah, you have to meet them where they are, right. You have to have an answer for the services that they are providing.

I think since you have left there has been a debate about energy security in Lebanon. Hezbollah is showing up with shipments of oil from Iran and we are busy at work trying to find an alternative.

But this is sort of the corollary to the question about the drone strikes, right. There is an element of combating terrorist organizations that involves killing terrorists.

There is also an element of fighting terrorist organizations that acknowledges that they often provide human services that you have to create, that you have to be able to supply as a government—as an ally of a government—in order to make people less reliant on those terrorist organizations.

Just asking you to draw upon your experience dealing with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you for the question. Thank you for your interest, by the way, in Lebanon and all your support for the time I was there until now.

I think the hardest—what you just put your finger on is the hardest thing, and what happens with terrorist groups, in my experience, is they fill vacuums, and if—the quickest and easiest vacuum to fill is security. People turn up and they have weapons and they calm the people down and say, do not worry—we will take care of security.

When these groups move into that next level of services and jobs and benefits, it is much, much harder to combat them and what needs to happen in Lebanon is a functioning government that can execute those same services in a noncorrupt and fair way is the solution to Hezbollah having filled that gap already.

Senator MURPHY. I was just—I was asking an extra question just to fill the gap before you got back. But I think Senator Hagerty is next.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Okay. Very good. Well, I did not know where the flow was going at this point. But I am glad that you did that.

Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to turn my remarks to Ambassador Brink.

Ambassador, I am pleased to see you before the committee today. I am looking forward to meeting with you tomorrow and I am pleased that you have finally been nominated.

You are going into a very critical zone. You are going into a position I wish you had been nominated for some time ago, well before Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

I want to let you know that I am very supportive of seeing our diplomatic presence back in Ukraine. My colleague, Senator Cardin, and I both signed a letter to Secretary Blinken underscoring our support for that just in the past several days and I am pleased to see things moving as they are at this point.

But I would just like to take this opportunity to say the following. Having a Senate-confirmed chief of mission in place is absolutely critical to our ability to execute our foreign policy.

This is a matter of priorities. I, myself, have gone through the same process that you are going through. I was actually put

through 30 hours of cloture to get through this process. Yet, I was able to get confirmed and into my position within a couple of months of getting through the OGE process. I was at my post the summer of 2017.

It is taking far too long to get our diplomats at post, and I just want to underscore the priority that I see here and underscore for the department and for this administration that I hope that they will begin to accelerate the process very soon of getting our nominees in front of us.

Thank you very much again. I look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand that Senator Booker is with us virtually. Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. Senator Menendez, thank you very much. I just want to ask two quick questions, if I may. The first is to Ms. Brink.

I am really grateful that you are before us, and I know that the port of Odessa was already brought up and some of the issues going on there. I am very, very concerned about global food insecurity and the crisis that we see globally with one of the points in American—in the U.S.—in, excuse me, world history where we have the most food insecure people, and this has been aggravated by COVID-19 and been aggravated by other global shocks to our supply chain, and I know that from Yemen to Afghanistan to the Horn of Africa we have a lot of challenges.

I am hopeful, with the current negotiations, it looks like we might be able to get about \$5 billion from the United States into the World Food Programme or other efforts to meet some of this crisis.

But I just want to ask you, from your own opinion, given what is going on in Ukraine and the shocks to their ability to provide food as they do for many places around the world, especially those that are facing food insecurity, I just think that it is really important more than ever for the United States to be stepping up to this crisis.

And I am wondering if you are concerned that this global food crisis, similar to food crises in the past, could—if we do not address it could lead to social unrest, lots of conflict, potentially stressing governments, creating more mass migration, only to make the overall security crisis in Europe even greater.

Ambassador BRINK. Senator, first of all, thank you so much for your question. It is an excellent question.

I have to say I am married to a Foreign Service officer with USAID so I am by interest but by marriage and long discussion very interested in all of the humanitarian aspects of this particular conflict.

I think what you say is exactly right. I think it shows why this is a global conflict, why this is one that is in the interests of the United States to do everything we can to help Ukraine defend itself and then to rebuild, and I can tell you with regard to the food insecurity issue it is one of the big issues that I will be looking at and doing everything I can to assist with.

I know we have a new envoy in the State Department who is also seized with this and we will be working and are working to-

gether with the U.N., with USAID, with other organizations to do everything we can to alleviate some of the second order consequences of Russia's war of choice.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. And then my last question to Laskaris, going back to Africa and some of the challenges there, one of which has just been the remarkable level of coups that we are seeing in Africa.

Since 2020 in Mali, there have been six attempted military coups, as I am sure you are aware of, five of which have been successful with the latest in—we have seen a coup in Burkina Faso this past January, and it is frustrating.

I was in Burkina Faso myself with—a few years back. But seeing these military coups spreading around the region is really challenging, and so the—we know that the folks are calling this an epidemic of coups. But on top of this, we have a lot of military—excuse me, democratic backsliding in general in Africa beyond the even coups itself. We have seen this backsliding in Uganda and in Ethiopia.

And so I appreciate the important security role that Chad plays in the region and the moves by the TMC to open the political space. But at the same time, it is important to ensure the full transition to a civilian-led democratic system.

This is not just essential in terms of sending a message to any other regimes about our continued support for democracy and our concerns about democratic backsliding but it is also critical, I think, for sustainable long-term stability in that region.

What is the State Department doing and could be doing more so to encourage and assist Chad with such a transition?

Ambassador LASKARIS. Thank you, Senator. I agree with you wholeheartedly. I would also point out that military rule has, generally, been catastrophic for Africa.

When people support coups, the body of evidence suggest that these are governance catastrophes that impoverish countries further and also bring human rights and humanitarian catastrophes on them. For that reason alone, we should be pushing back as hard as possible.

In the case of Chad, there is a democratic backsliding because, frankly, there really has not been any democratic front sliding since Chad's independence. Chad has been ruled by the gun since independence. It has been ruled by people who took power generally by force so I think it is time to break that paradigm.

I think it is time to put seats around the table for the unarmed political actors and to prioritize them. I do not think we can do this from the outside. I do not think we can impose this on Chad but we can listen to the overwhelming majority of Chadians of goodwill, particularly, the young people who do not have the memories of the older generations, who are calling for it.

I think we need to empower to the best extent possible the unarmed political class including civil society in modern Chad, which I think is a bright spot in the political prospects of this country.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Thank you, Ms. Brink, for your long career, and I think you are much needed and are going to do a great job in Ukraine.

Could I just talk a little bit, if I could, about the ban on oil imports for the EU from Russia and the role that Hungary is playing? You are an expert on Slovakia, other countries.

Could you talk a little bit in general about the consensus that exists right now except for Hungary and what, from your perspective, the incentives could be to have Hungary join into this?

They have already been offered a two-year extension in terms of their ability to comply with the oil ban. Do you have any insights in terms of what could be done in order to ensure that Hungary join so that this new regime goes into place as quickly as possible?

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you very much, Senator, and thank you for our conversation earlier.

As I am not the accredited diplomat to Hungary, I do not have direct knowledge. What I understand with regard to the EU and all of the EU member states is that there is a strong willingness or an interest to move this issue very quickly, and what I have seen from my position in Slovakia and, I believe, probably also applies to Hungary is that if there are ways to provide substitution with regard to any of the energy sources for European countries, ways where the U.S. can be helpful, that is extremely—an extremely helpful situation for them to be in.

Obviously, they have a challenge of their publics and rising prices on the energy side, and so any ways where we can help such as we have been—we are doing, which is increasing our LNG, and with regard to oil I would assume it is a similar situation, and we are also helping on nuclear fuel as well in Ukraine and also in other places.

Senator MARKEY. Yeah, and I appreciate that. But just, in general, I appreciate your expertise in this region, in general.

Prior to Russia's assault on Ukraine, at the top of the list of things that were holding Ukraine back was its endemic corruption from top to bottom. Ukraine was 122nd out of 180 countries on Transparency International's rankings in 2021. Russia was 136th.

And so what do you think the United States can do in this situation where we are going to be the principal assistance that is provided to Ukraine for the duration of this conflict in terms of encouraging transparency, encouraging a change in the culture in their country?

Ambassador BRINK. Yeah. Thank you, Senator, for this question. It is crucial.

For Ukraine to actually prevail in this situation, it is not only necessary for Ukraine to prevail in defending itself against the Russian attack but also to prevail in creating the kind of Ukraine that Ukrainians have been fighting for for years after the Orange Revolution, after the Revolution of Dignity, and that is for Ukraine that is free of corruption, that follows the rule of law, that allows for democratic rights.

That is one that is a—something that will be the biggest challenge, I think, next-step challenge for the Ukrainian Government, and I think what I really am grateful for—the congressional support and the appropriations to help us support Ukraine—I think

we must be mindful of that being such a challenge and we must offer assistance in ways that is going to help the Ukrainians meet that challenge.

Senator MARKEY. Yeah. My fear is that Ukraine is going to win the war and lose the peace.

Ambassador BRINK. Exactly.

Senator MARKEY. Their principal obstacle to accession to the EU has been their corruption top to bottom in their government, in their society. We want them to be admitted to the EU. We want them to be able to meet the transparency standards which the rest of the EU, in fact, does comply with.

I just think it is imperative for us to figure out how to square that circle, that there is two discussions going on at the same time, because as soon as this war is concluded we want them to be able to join the EU.

But we will not if they then revert to the very same pattern of behavior which they have had throughout modern times including, by the way, their total addiction to natural gas from Russia, which had them be one of the bottom five in terms of energy efficiency. They just got addicted to this old way, this—I will ultimately say, this corrupt way of operating.

Again, we are glad to have you there and I think that message—that is, we are going to assist them during the war, but they have to be prepared for the peace as well and their culture, their political system, has to change. And so we are just so glad to have you there. Thank you.

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses. Congratulations for your nominations. Good to be with you today.

Ambassador Brink, I know you have been asked a number of questions about, should you be confirmed, assuming the role—a very important role—in a nation at war. I want to ask you—kind of drill down into that and ask you about a pretty specific one and that is morale issues.

You have been an ambassador. You know how important morale of both our own FSOs but also local staff is to the strong functioning of an embassy.

Should you be confirmed, how will you address sort of morale and stress issues for the U.S. and local staff in Lviv and Kyiv?

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you, Senator.

I think it is very important that we reestablish our embassy mission and that will be a very important first step, not only because it sends the right signal to Ukrainians and to our own staff, because it is necessary for us to be there on the ground, and I think that will help.

I can tell you that paying attention and understanding that our mission is made up of Americans and local staff and local staff being the backbone of every single embassy around the world—we cannot function without them—is really important for any chief of mission.

And I think also rallying people around our goal and our goal is going to be to—and is to help Ukraine defend itself and to use every bit of experience and effort and support we can garner to do that on the ground in Ukraine.

And then, of course, we need to take care of our staff and do everything we can to do so. I think it is an unprecedented situation that our embassy found itself. I have been a part of an embassy that had to close very early in my career and it is heartbreaking, and also to be a part of a wartime situation where people are—stay behind or are unable to accompany is also an unimaginably hard thing for those of us who do this work to go through.

I do not underestimate the challenge that our mission has faced. I salute our leadership there, Kristina Kvien, and also all of the embassy staff, and I can just say I will look forward very much to joining this team and helping every way I can in leading our effort there in the best way possible so that we can affirm and use all of the great resource we have to achieve our goals.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ambassador Richard, the Department of State's Office of the Inspector General documented several key findings in its 2020 inspection of the CT Bureau, including nearly 20 of its 92 authorized civil service positions. About 22 percent were vacant at the time of the inspection.

The report also indicated the CT Bureau allowed nearly \$52 million dollars in appropriated funds to expire and then cancel from fiscal year 2016 to 2019 an average of about \$13 million a year, meaning that these funds went unused and they were returned to the Treasury Department due to bureau, quote, "weakness in funds control."

OIG also found that the CT Bureau regularly submitted congressionally mandated country reports on terrorism well beyond the required deadline of April 30 for the previous eight years. The most recent report, 2020, was submitted on December 2021.

What would you do, should you be confirmed, to fill positions, control use of funds and invest them wisely, and get the bureau in a place where they are submitting the required terrorism reports on a timely basis?

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you for that question because it is oftentimes we do not pay enough attention to those very issues, which, as my colleague just said, sometimes are the backbone of your operation.

If I were to be confirmed—look, I spent three years in the Middle East Bureau creating and then directing the Office of Assistance to the Middle East and I really learned some valuable skills there in program management, in money management, in personnel management, especially in a bureau with a large civil service population.

And so I think I can bring some lessons learned from that experience to the CT Bureau and, hopefully, get them functioning at the high rate that I know that they can do.

I keep in mind that they have been without leadership for quite some time now and so many people are acting and filling two and three jobs at the same time, and I really hope to have the opportunity to get after that problem, too, because it is a great staff.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Richards. You are right to draw a line between vacancies and acting and then internal disorganization.

I mean, you just cannot operate at the efficiency and the—not just efficiency but the quality that you need to if there is too many vacancies or people are in positions and they are not sure that they are going to be able to continue in those positions.

Thank you for making the connection between some of the IG's assessments and the importance of getting people confirmed and in the positions.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you and congratulations to each of our nominees this afternoon.

I want to begin with you, Ambassador Brink, because as everyone has said, Ukraine is, of course, uppermost in our minds, and very much appreciate your willingness to be considered for this critical post at this time.

I also want to echo your opening thanks to Chargé d'Affaires Kristina Kvien for her continued service there. I know it has been a difficult time for everyone who has been part of our embassy.

As we look at the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Ukraine, obviously, the majority of them have been women and children, and I am particularly concerned about how we support the women and address potential trafficking issues.

And can you speak to that and to how we can ensure that the women and girls and the children who have fled the war in Ukraine do not become victims again because of sex trafficking?

Ambassador BRINK. Thanks a lot, Senator Shaheen.

At the beginning of the war I had the chance to go to the border between Ukraine and Slovakia and it struck me—the thing that struck me the very most was that everyone coming across the border was a woman or a child or even children on their own.

I can say that throughout my career the issue of trafficking in persons has been one of my personal priorities and I am very happy it is your priority and also one of the Congress', and every time I have served in a country I have focused in on helping to—helping each country become better able to stop trafficking and recognize trafficking.

And so I have worked very closely with our office of anti-trafficking coordinator—we call them J/TIP—and I will look forward to working with them in particular because Ukraine has long been a source country.

I know that the problem there—it is a big country and I know the problem there is also, potentially, quite large. It would be an area that I have a personal interest in and would want to work very closely with our authorities but then, of course, with the Ukrainians because the challenge with trafficking it is a whole-of-government effort. No one agency is able to do it on its own, and I completely agree it is an incredibly important issue and especially right now for people who are refugees already and other compounded things that they have to face.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you for that.



I had the opportunity to meet with some of the women parliamentarians from Ukraine who were here a month or so ago, and one of the things we talked about was women, peace, and security legislation that we have passed here in the United States, and they were very interested in that from Ukraine's perspective and then possibly doing something to partner around that legislation.

I would just ask you to put that on your list as we are thinking about what we might do together to address what is happening in the country.

Ambassador Richard, it is nice to see you again in a different capacity and I should thank you publicly for your help with us when we had a New Hampshire resident who was detained illegally in Lebanon, and very much appreciated your efforts.

And while, sadly, he is no longer with us, it was very important to get him out of the country and get him home. Thank you for that.

I wanted to ask you about the ISIS detainee coordinator because that is a role that was signed into law as part of the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage Taking Accountability Act.

The creation of this role was originally recommended by the Syria Study Group in response to what is happening in Syria, and I am sad to say that the situation in Syria has not gotten better with respect to ISIS detainees. It has gotten worse, and as I understand in your new role you would have that coordinator as part of your responsibility.

Can you talk a little bit about what you think the priority is there and what we can do to address what is becoming—has the potential to be a huge nightmare in the region as we look at what is happening in the detainee camps?

Ambassador RICHARD. Thank you very much for the kind words about Lebanon and it is a pleasure to see you, too, and may I also say here on the record that I have so valued the collaboration between yourself and us and the country team for many, many months and I have used that so many times with younger officers to say this is how it can work and how beautiful it is when we work together. Thank you for that.

On the foreign fighters issue, the foreign terrorist fighters issue is in my office and I have mentioned earlier in this hearing that it is really one of the top one or two issues on the plate because it is an inherently unstable situation that does get worse by the day, and it is a problem with fighters and it is also problem with the families who are—tens of thousands of them, many, many children as well, who are detained in situations that just cries out for recruitment by radicals. It is very unsustainable.

I think we have to bring new energy to that problem. If I understood you correctly, you are also talking about Syria and the issue of hostages. Am I right? Or you were talking about the foreign fighters?

Senator SHAHEEN. No, I was really talking about foreign fighters, the—

Ambassador RICHARD. Yeah. This is a key issue and I think we—all of us, including our partners in the international community, have gotten a little bit complacent because if it is not on fire we

are not paying attention to it. But we cannot be complacent anymore.

And so if I am confirmed this definitely will be one of my top agenda items.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I look forward to working with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin is with us virtually.

Senator CARDIN. And let me thank all three of our nominees for their continued service to our country. I appreciate it very much.

Ambassador Brink, we had a chance to talk and I just really want to underscore a couple points. First, thank you for taking on this assignment. Obviously, it is so critically important at this moment for our presence in Ukraine, and has been mentioned, we look forward to you personally being in Kyiv and the reestablishment of our mission in embassy in Kyiv.

I want to go over two things that we talked about sort of to underscore the point. First, we need to have the capacity in country to help in regards to the information necessary to pursue war crimes or crimes against humanity or genocide against those responsible, and Mr. Putin and Russia, for what has happened in Ukraine.

Your work in the Balkans gives me great confidence that you understand the magnitude of the task in order to get evidence that can be used for accountability and you recognize also that the world is looking at what happens in regards to accountability for the atrocities in Ukraine.

Can you just talk a moment about how you see the U.S. role in assisting those that will be responsible for preserving the evidence and moving forward with accountability?

Ambassador BRINK. Thank you, Senator.

Justice and accountability for war crimes and atrocities is incredibly important to Ukraine and to us and to me personally, and as you mentioned, I had the chance when I served very early on in the Balkans to witness atrocities first hand and also was able to contribute to, ultimately, the justice to Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. It took 17 years and 26 years, but they are facing justice and I think that is really important.

The world has to know and those who commit these atrocities has to know that we will not stop. We will be relentless in our pursuit. We are using every tool at our disposal to support the documentation of atrocities and to enable their use in prosecutions.

So we are doing this in many different ways but including through support of the Prosecutor General's office, through support of the U.N. Council for Human Rights, and also through the OSCE Moscow mechanism.

We are also supporting the ICC in its efforts. We are going to use every tool at our disposal. I can tell you it will be a personal priority of mine as well.

Senator CARDIN. And I will be underscoring that tomorrow. There is a meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly dealing with—

[Technical issue.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin, I do not know if you are still with us. We had a freeze for a moment. Modern marvels of technology have their limitations.

All right. We will try to contact his office and see if he still had some time and he may have one or two final questions.

In the interim, let me just go over a couple of final things.

Ambassador Richard—

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. The role of the country.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you back with us, Ben?

Senator CARDIN. I am sorry.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Senator CARDIN. I was just urging the Ambassador to have capacity to deal with the democratic institutions within Ukraine as they rebuild, particularly in fighting the corruption that has been so prevalent in their country over such a period of time, just so we have the capacity to deal with that as we move forward.

Ambassador BRINK. Yes, Senator. I completely agree. Ensuring that Ukraine is able to seize this opportunity to rebuild and reform and take an opportunity that has been passed by previously is incredibly important if we are going to devote these resources and energy and U.S. taxpayer money, and thank you to the Congress for providing it.

We need to make sure that it is done in a way that helps to realize the aspirations of the Ukrainian people and also the values we share of an independent, democratic, prosperous, sovereign Ukraine.

Senator CARDIN. And let me just point out to Mr. Laskaris, we know that Chad has significant challenges in regards to institutions that protect the rights of its citizens. Yet, it has mineral wealth.

I will be asking you for the record your commitment as to how you are going to deal with those types of challenges in Chad.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin. Let me close up here.

Ambassador Richard, at the end of the last year we passed legislation that I and Senator Risch sponsored, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act, which calls for the administration to develop a counterterrorism strategy for the region.

Can we get your commitment to submit this strategy in a timely fashion if you are confirmed—upon your confirmation?

Ambassador RICHARD. Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I have a series of letters in support of Ambassador Richard from colleagues and I ask unanimous consent to include them in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

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

The CHAIRMAN. And then, finally, Ambassador Laskaris, over the last 10 years U.S. security assistance to Chad significantly outpaced U.S. support for democracy and good governance and contributed, in my view, to the militarization of the former Deby regime.

Even after the 2021 coup the administration continued to pursue a security assistance relationship with Chad. As I noted in a March

18th letter to Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Molly Phee, I have serious concerns about this approach.

I believe there needs to be a comprehensive plan that includes robust support for good governance and strengthening institutions. Military juntas responsible for seizing power through unconstitutional means should not, in my view, benefit from U.S. security assistance.

This committee has jurisdiction over security assistance. I want to ask you do you believe that we should be advocating for a pause on security assistance until a new civilian-led elected government is in place?

Ambassador LASKARIS. Senator, I think that when it comes to the deployments of Chadian troops into Mali and to the peacekeeping operation there, which we fund through our peacekeeping support activities, I think that is a high enough priority that we should continue that, obviously, with great oversight to their conduct in the field.

I do think, however, that the security assistance that could be used to repress internal political dissent, I think, it is prudent to pause that pending the outcome of the dialogue and, hopefully, the transition to a democratically-elected government.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you, do not we need to, going forward, ensure that our relationship with Chad better balances defense, diplomacy, and development? I think it is heavy on the security side and incredibly light on the other.

Are we willing to look away from the core? I mean, these are about continental messages and global messages as well, right? At what point are we willing to pursue such a road without thinking about the consequences of a government that is there by force and by coup, not by the electorate of—the will of the electorate?

Ambassador LASKARIS. Senator, thank you for the question.

By far, our largest line item assistance to Chad is humanitarian assistance, mainly, food assistance. That is running about \$90 million a year. Our second largest form of assistance in the last year has been COVID, about \$17 million dollars a year including half a million vaccine doses.

Our military assistance is actually a distant third in terms of the dollar value. But I agree with you that the narrative is out there that we have securitized the relationship and, if confirmed, one of things I have to do is make sure that the actual data of our assistance is out there.

At the same time, I do—with all respect, do think that our democracy and governance activities have been underfunded in Chad, particularly as this committee has made it clear that it values very much the movement towards democratic elections and the building of an unarmed political system.

If I think there is progress in the national dialogue, I expect my colleagues and I will come back and ask for an increase in our democracy and governance assistance programs in Chad.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. Security assistance may be third in those categories but one of the reasons we have as much humanitarian assistance is because of the instability that exists in the country and its governance in the country.

If the junta led by Deby fails to adhere to core transitional benchmarks articulated last year by the African Union, it will be my hope that you, as a sitting ambassador speaking to the department, will be looking at visa bans and Global Magnitsky sanctions where applicable because, at some point, we just cannot live on the aspiration that this is going to get better and we are going to continue to fuel these entities.

Ambassador LASKARIS. Yes, sir. I agree with you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. This record will remain open to the close of business tomorrow for members' questions. I would urge the nominees to answer the questions as expeditiously as possible so we can consider your nomination at the next business meeting.

With the thanks of the committee for your willingness to serve, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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### Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BRIDGET A. BRINK BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that any individual who reports a suspected Anomalous Health Incident will be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

*Question.* I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals will receive prompt access to medical care.

*Question.* I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately.

- Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

*Answer.* Yes, I commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BRIDGET A. BRINK BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question.* What are U.S. policy goals in Ukraine right now?

*Answer.* The United States aims to help Ukraine defend itself and then help Ukraine rebuild. If confirmed, I would uphold our commitment to a sovereign, independent, democratic, and prosperous Ukraine. I would continue the United States' goal of rallying the world to stand with Ukraine and ensuring that our NATO Alliance and global partners emerge stronger and more unified than before. The United States aims to end this war as swiftly as possible by imposing severe costs on Russia, strengthening Eastern Flank Allies, and providing security and other assistance to Ukraine.

*Question.* The majority of internally displaced people (IDPs) within Ukraine and refugees fleeing Ukraine are women and children. What steps will the U.S. Government take to ensure the protection of these vulnerable populations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will aim to accelerate the already strong support the United States is providing for internally displaced people and vulnerable groups. This includes over \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to refugees, the displaced, vulnerable populations, and communities in the region since Russia first invaded Ukraine eight years ago, including more than \$688 million this year. Our assistance covers critical needs, such as safe drinking water, shelter, emergency health supplies, human trafficking prevention, support for victims of gender-based violence, and protection services to meet the needs of millions of people including vulnerable groups, as well as emergency food assistance. The United States plans to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainian citizens and others fleeing Russia's aggression as part of these efforts, and if confirmed I pledge to support this program and others like it.

*Question.* As almost 6 million Ukrainians have become refugees, the U.N. and international community has had to set-up a response quickly to address the growing needs. How will you work with the U.N. and other donors on coordination for the humanitarian crisis?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue work to coordinate our humanitarian response to Ukraine's refugee crisis. This could include but would not be limited to increasing our operational footprint in neighboring countries to better coordinate aid delivery and dissemination; working in partnership with host governments on cash programs providing refugees with temporary assistance for food, accommodations, and medical care, including support services for victims for gender-based violence; and deploying refugee coordinators to the region to work with governments, the U.N., and other humanitarian organizations.

*Question.* How will you work to ensure that the U.N. and host countries are properly counting and tracking refugees to ensure the proper delivery of humanitarian assistance?

*Answer.* The State Department regularly meets with UNHCR to discuss refugee operations, including data gathering. Given the ease of travel for Ukrainians in Europe, some figures represent an estimate. If confirmed, I will work with our Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) teams, who rigorously monitor and evaluate humanitarian partners' delivery of assistance to refugees from Ukraine and engage host government counterparts to track their delivery of assistance and benefits. I understand host countries have a responsibility to accurately register refugees who have fled from Ukraine to prepare for their provision of services, as allowed under the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive, and that UNHCR makes every effort to ensure statistical information is verified and triangulated.

*Question.* What mechanisms have been established to limit fraud and diversion of assistance?

*Answer.* I believe maintaining the uninterrupted flow of security, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine is essential to make this war a strategic failure for Moscow and reduce the suffering of Ukrainian citizens. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring this assistance meets these goals by working with our trusted network of partners and by utilizing existing procedures for both humanitarian and security sector assistance, to include vetting mechanisms. For economic support, I would continue working with partners and allies to ensure that assistance is deployed in a rapid, targeted, and secure manner. I would also support leveraging reputable international financial institutions to ensure oversight through their established audit procedures and mechanisms.

*Question.* Prior to the latest Russian invasion, in the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report, the Government of Ukraine had been placed on Tier 2 for not fully meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but was attempting to make significant efforts to do so. How will you encourage the Government of Ukraine to continue its efforts to promote awareness of the potential for human trafficking?

*Answer.* Ukraine was ranked Tier 2 in the 2021 TIP Report. The Government of Ukraine is aware of the necessity of progress on trafficking, especially in a wartime context, and if confirmed I will continue to work with them to raise awareness, vigorously prosecute and sentence traffickers to significant prison terms, and increase protection efforts for trafficking victims. I would also work to ensure that anti-trafficking mechanisms are embedded in our humanitarian assistance programs.

*Question.* How will you assist in increasing the identification of trafficking victims?

*Answer.* I understand the refugees leaving Ukraine more recently have been doing so in much more difficult circumstances with greater needs. Human trafficking is an increasing threat and has been noted by many international organizations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the United States continues to urge host governments to integrate anti-trafficking measures into their emergency and humanitarian response mechanisms to prevent trafficking and protect any victims. Over 90% of the refugees are women and children, and our U.N. partners are pressing host governments to work together to address their protection needs. The U.S. Government also is funding international organizations and NGOs to identify trafficking victims.

*Question.* Anti-Trafficking work was integrated into the first batch of Ukrainian humanitarian assistance. Will you continue this effort to ensure that those fleeing to safety do not become victims of trafficking?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would continue to ensure that anti-trafficking mechanisms are integrated into our humanitarian assistance. I would also encourage the Government of Ukraine and other donor countries and U.N. partners to implement similar safeguards to prevent human trafficking.

*Question.* If confirmed, what will be your top foreign assistance priorities over the next 6 months?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue our robust support for Ukraine's defense, economy, government, and people. Over the next six months, I would continue prioritizing the continuity and functionality of the Ukrainian Government; food security and health services; essential needs of civilian security forces, including clearing landmines and ordnance; and support for human rights, including holding Russia accountable for its actions, including reports of conflict-related sexual violence. We will work with international partners to ensure Ukraine can meet essential budgetary expenses. Assistance related to the European Democratic Resilience Initiative (EDRI) will support pro-democracy activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and anti-corruption crusaders.

*Question.* If confirmed, what will be your top foreign assistance priorities over the next twelve months?

*Answer.* If confirmed, my priority will be helping Ukraine defend itself and then helping Ukraine rebuild. Assistance to Ukraine must continue to flow across all sectors-including security, economic, governance, and humanitarian assistance- even as needs may shift once Ukraine prevails. I would support independent media and counter-disinformation efforts, civil society, accountability, and peace and reconciliation efforts as well as continue help reestablish reliable essential services, including in the field of healthcare, education, and agricultural production. I would also help advance the initiatives of the European Democratic Resilience Initiative. Together, with the help of our Allies and partners, we will work with Ukraine to rebuild in a way that supports its aspirations for greater Euro-Atlantic and European integration.

*Question.* If confirmed, what will be your top foreign assistance priorities over the next two years?

*Answer.* U.S. assistance for Ukraine will continue to develop its economy, strengthen democratic governance and rule of law, counter corruption, promote stability and transparency, and fortify resilience to counter Russia's aggression. Funding will support energy and cyber security investments and technical assistance; efforts to counter disinformation; initiatives to hold perpetrators accountable for human rights abuses and potential war crimes and build a basis for peace and rec-

conciliation efforts; and contributions to reconstruction. Assistance will ensure the food security of Ukraine by rebuilding the agricultural sector following the conflict. The administration will work to ensure assistance is creating an inclusive economy built on a level playing field.

*Question.* If confirmed, what will be your top foreign assistance priorities over the next two years?

- Where does combatting corruption fit into those priorities?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work to make sure combatting corruption remains a critical component of our foreign assistance to Ukraine, which is also in line with the administration's prioritization in countering corruption globally. Anti-democratic forces have weaponized corruption, misinformation, and disinformation to exploit perceived weaknesses and sow division within and among free nations, erode existing international rules, and promote alternative models of authoritarian governance. I believe we cannot afford to watch Ukraine prevail in this war, only to see it fail in its fight against corruption.

*Question.* If confirmed, will you commit to fostering an environment conducive to expeditionary diplomacy and development, whereby members of the U.S. country team are able to get out from behind Embassy walls and engage directly with interlocutors in the government, private sector, and civil society?

*Answer.* Yes. Getting beyond the Embassy walls and engaging directly with the government, private sector, and civil society is one of the principal reasons we need our country team diplomats in Kyiv.

*Question.* In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Ukraine has strong support for religious freedom. However, there are concerns about targeting of specific minority religions including Jews and Jehovah's witnesses. What is your assessment of religious freedom and societal/governmental respect for religious freedom in Ukraine?

*Answer.* I believe Ukraine has made great progress on religious freedom issues. A 2019 survey found Ukrainians had the lowest negative attitudes toward Jews of all the Eastern European countries polled, with 83% having favorable view toward Jews- an increase of 15 percentage points since 2009. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism exists in Ukraine, as it does in many countries, and if confirmed I pledge to continue Embassy engagement with Jewish leaders and other stakeholders on ways we can combat this scourge. I would also continue U.S. efforts to address ongoing abuses by Russia's proxies in the Donbas and by occupation authorities in Crimea, including the persecution of Crimean Tatars and Jehovah's Witnesses.

*Question.* In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Ukraine has strong support for religious freedom. However, there are concerns about targeting of specific minority religions including Jews and Jehovah's witnesses.

- If confirmed, how will you work with the Ukrainian Government on these issues?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work to reinforce the Government's work protecting religious freedom and religious minorities.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to personally meeting with members of civil society to discuss the importance of religious freedom?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I would be pleased to meet regularly with members of Ukraine's robust civil society to discuss the importance of religious freedom.

*Question.* In the State Department's 2021 Human Rights Report, the Ukrainian Government was identified as not taking adequate steps to prosecute or punish most officials who committed abuses resulting in a climate of impunity. As the war in Ukraine continues, how will you work to ensure that those in the Ukrainian Government who commit human rights abuses will be identified, punished, and prosecuted?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will commit to promoting accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses, through all mechanisms made available and in partnership with Ukraine's criminal justice institutions. The Government of Ukraine has focused closely on law enforcement reform since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, and despite incidents of abuses, has made considerable progress, including holding accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses.

*Question.* Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, international adoption from Ukraine has been paused. Numerous American families were in process or begin-



ning the process of adoption of Ukrainian orphans. What steps will you take to work with the Ukrainian Government to re-start international adoption processing in a safe manner?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work with the Ukrainian Government to safely re-start the intercountry adoption process, in a manner consistent with Ukrainian and U.S. law. The Ukrainian Government is justifiably concerned about the trafficking of children, and concerned that children who are not eligible for intercountry adoption could be separated from their families. The Ukrainian Government recently confirmed that courts in some parts of Ukraine have resumed judicial adoption hearings. As adoption decrees are issued, I will ensure we continue to complete visa processing as quickly as possible, so that children can go home with their parents.

*Question.* How will you work with Ukrainian officials to address the Ukrainian orphans who have been evacuated to Poland to continue their delayed adoptions?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work with the Ukrainian and Polish Governments to find solutions to any impediments for processing the adoptions for these children. There are multiple steps in the intercountry adoption process, and each provides critical safeguards for the children and families involved. While these steps must be completed in every case, I look forward to working with the Ukrainian and Polish Governments to identify ways to complete these pending adoption cases.

*Question.* Before the war, China was extremely interested in cultivating Ukraine as a partner. It was looking to bring Ukraine into the new Silk Road by investing in Ukraine's Black Sea ports, buying up key pieces of Ukraine's military industry like MotorSich, and installing Chinese-made technology and surveillance equipment in Ukraine's cities. If confirmed, how do you propose to work to keep China from making potentially harmful inroads into a country that will be desperate for any and all investors to help it rebuild?

*Answer.* The courage of the people of Ukraine and the stalwart support of the United States and our allies and partners has inspired people around the world striving for peace, democracy, human rights, and freedom. Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China has been absent in time of Ukraine's greatest need, providing diplomatic cover for Russia's brutal, unprovoked war and amplifying Russian disinformation related to Ukraine, the United States, and NATO. We will work with Ukraine to encourage a sustainable and transparent approach to reconstruction, built upon mutually beneficial relationships, trusted vendors, and national security.

*Question.* During the course of the Russia-Ukraine war, many Ukrainian officials have taken on a heroic air. And indeed, they have undertaken actions that are heroic. But before the war, many of these same officials were engaged in activities that were sometimes corrupt, sometimes unethical.

- If confirmed, what steps do you believe should be taken to prevent these officials from capitalizing on their newly-laundered reputations and returning quietly to their old ways?

*Answer.* We cannot afford to watch Ukraine prevail in this war only to see its democratic aspirations fall victim to corruption. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen independent anti-corruption authorities and institutions, and strongly push for needed judicial reforms to ensure that Ukraine continues the democratic and European trajectory its people are fighting to preserve.

*Question.* Much of the U.S. and allied assistance packages to Ukraine include financial assistance to fund governments and infrastructure operations. As Ambassador, how will you conduct oversight to ensure that both U.S. and allied assistance is used appropriately and not lost to corruption or misuse?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work to ensure that delivery of assistance meets strict oversight and accountability and anti-corruption measures by working with our trusted network of partners. In providing financial support, we are leveraging reputable international financial institutions to ensure oversight through established audit procedures, due diligence, and other mechanisms. I would continue work with our partners to ensure similar oversight mechanisms are in place to implement transparent infrastructure projects.

*Question.* What anti-corruption mechanisms remain intact and could be used to conduct oversight?

*Answer.* The anti-corruption mechanisms Ukraine formed with support from the United States and other partners, such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, and the High Anti-Corruption Court, continue to function, as does Ukraine's vibrant civil society, which has played an instrumental role in publicizing corrupt acts. If confirmed, I will work

with Ukrainian institutions and civil society, and international partners (e.g., IMF, EU), to support the continuation and strengthening of anti-corruption reforms. As it has in the past, the United States can continue to use tools like Global Magnitsky sanctions and 7031(c) visa restrictions to help Ukraine hold corruption actors accountable.

*Question.* How can the U.S. help create new anti-corruption mechanisms to handle this challenge if needed?

*Answer.* Since Ukraine's 2014 Revolution of Dignity, the United States has worked closely with the Ukrainian Government and international partners to develop and strengthen anti-corruption laws and institutions, such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU). If confirmed, I pledge to continue this work and identify new opportunities for reform, as needed, as part of our overall commitment to combatting corruption, preventing fragility, and promoting democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine.

*Question.* Many of the anti-corruption tools that the U.S. has worked with Ukraine to build have been taken offline because of the war. For example, the system through which Ukrainian public servants are required to annually report their holdings has been taken offline so Russia cannot use it to target certain people in occupied areas. How will you work with Ukraine to ensure that these tools are returned to service, while also safeguarding the personal information of Ukraine's Government employees from potential Russian actions?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I pledge to work with Ukraine to continue progress on anti-corruption reforms, including corporate governance and supervisory board autonomy, which have been critical goals of U.S. policy and assistance since 2014. These reforms are key to helping Ukraine achieve the Euro-Atlantic aspirations expressed during the Revolution of Dignity with regard to asset disclosure by public servants. I will endeavor to support anti-corruption actions which also safeguard personal information from misuse by Russia.

*Question.* Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, political parties and media outlets supporting Russia and pro-Russian narratives have been banned in Ukraine. The transatlantic communities' tolerance of these actions contrasts the international disapproval of Ukraine's ban on ZIK, NewsOne, and 112 Ukraine in February 2021. Once Russia's war on Ukraine comes to an end, how should the U.S. approach these matters of free speech and expression as Ukraine transitions back into peacetime?

*Answer.* The United States remains a steadfast champion of media freedom. Ensuring freedom of expression will be critical for Ukraine as it pursues its democratic and Euro-Atlantic trajectory. It is important for the people of Ukraine to continue to have access to reliable information from multiple independent sources. As Ukraine continues to combat Russia's aggression, if confirmed I also pledge to continue our work in differentiating between defending media freedom and allowing revenues to flow to Russia-controlled disinformation outlets.

*Question.* Do you believe that the United States should resume training Ukrainian servicemen on equipment, tactics, and techniques inside of the borders of Ukraine? Why or why not?

*Answer.* The United States currently provides training outside Ukraine, as needed, depending on security conditions on the ground. Provided we can adequately train Ukrainians outside of Ukraine, I think it is preferable to inside, as the security situation in the country makes such training difficult.

*Question.* As Ambassador, what role would you play in the transfer of military assistance to Ukraine?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would ensure U.S. security assistance to Ukraine continues to support the President's policy of assisting Ukraine in its defense of its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence against Russia's ongoing aggression. I would ensure my team works expeditiously to help fulfill Ukraine's priority security assistance requests and continues to assist in the coordination of military aid deliveries, which are continuing daily and at an unprecedented speed. I would also ensure my team continues to mitigate the risk of misuse of U.S. security assistance, for example, through the adherence to laws governing vetting security forces receiving U.S. assistance and end-use monitoring.

*Question.* Due to logistical issues, much of the humanitarian assistance being sent to Ukraine has not reached the eastern and southern parts of the country where it is most needed. As Ambassador, what role would you play to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue our calls to allow immediate, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access for humanitarian agencies and actors to continue their vital work across Ukraine. Since February 24, the United States has already provided more than \$565 million in humanitarian assistance to support people inside Ukraine. I would continue our work with the Government of Ukraine and coordination with neighboring states, the United Nations, and other international organizations and NGOs assessing the evolving humanitarian needs of the people of Ukraine and liaising with partners to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches the most vulnerable individuals.

*Question.* Mission Kyiv has been under enormous stress leading up to and following the Russian invasion. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Kyiv?

Answer. I want to salute the team of dedicated Americans and Ukrainians who make up the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv for their exceptional service in the buildup to and throughout Russia's brutal war. In my experience as a diplomat, closing an Embassy under the stress of war is heartbreaking—and has a negative impact on morale. If confirmed, I would try to build on the work of my predecessors to ensure that our people have all possible resources and focus on looking forward to our goals of helping Ukraine defend itself and helping Ukraine rebuild.

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

Answer. If confirmed, my first step would be to get on the ground to listen to the advice of the team in place and assess where I can be helpful. Early on, I would try to bring us all together in the vision and the goals we need to pursue to get there. I would then focus on rewarding effort and results and helping those who may need more resources or information. I have found that with clear consistent and fair leadership, morale rises. If confirmed, I would approach our goals with an understanding and empathy for the context of working in a war environment, both for our American and for our Ukrainian staff.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will bring together our sections and agencies on our overall mission—to help Ukraine defend itself—and agree on the goals we need to pursue to achieve the mission. I will work with my Deputy and Washington to ensure we have the resources and personnel necessary to advance our goal. Periodically, I will ask the DCM to assess progress and adjust our goals as needed. My approach is to tie these goals to awards and ensure they are embedded in performance appraisals to keep us unified in achieving them as a country team.

*Question.* On April 28, 2022, U.S. Embassy Kyiv announced the passing of one of its locally-employed staff, Volodymyr, who took leave from his role as a bodyguard to join the army. Are you aware of staffing issues that may hinder reopening Embassy Kyiv?

Answer. If confirmed, my top priority will be the safety and security of everyone in my Embassy. Safety concerns and the overall security environment in Ukraine continue to impact Mission Ukraine and will be our primary consideration for staffing the Embassy for the foreseeable future. I look forward to working with the exceptional American and Ukrainian staff members of Embassy Kyiv. I am humbled by the patriotism and sacrifice of Volodymyr Kapelka and join the Secretary in extending the United States' condolences to his family.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to address staffing issues while remaining conscious of the desire for Ukrainians to defend their country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will offer maximum flexibility, as allowed by Department policy and local regulations, including for the many Ukrainian citizens who have taken up arms to defend their country. If we have gaps to fill, I will request additional support from the Department and fill those gaps.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you support staff following the death of a staff member?

Answer. Sadly, Embassy Kyiv is already mourning the death of a local staff member killed defending his country from Russia's brutal war. I appreciate the outpouring of support for his family from the mission community and from the entire State Department, including Secretary Blinken. Offering compassion, support, and resources during such difficult times is a key function of the chief of mission and one I take extremely seriously.

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

*Answer.* We work under the direction of the President and on behalf of the American people to advance the administration's foreign policy goals. My leadership style is to bring the country team together on a vision—a Ukraine that is democratic, independent, sovereign, and prosperous—and come up with the goals we need to achieve to realize that vision. My management style is to delegate the strategy to achieve each goal to sections and agencies as overseen by the DCM and then come in with top level support and advocacy to help us advance them. This approach has helped us achieve a number of top foreign policy goals in Slovakia during my tenure and if confirmed, I would adapt it as needed to the context of Ukraine.

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

*Answer.* No.

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

*Answer.* There is no more important relationship in the Embassy than that between the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that there is a strong and close leadership team that speaks with one voice to the country team and to DC while also encouraging the Deputy Chief of Mission to be frank and open with me, especially if he disagrees or thinks we are going in the wrong direction. I believe this relationship, especially in a conflict environment, must be one of trust and total confidence to ensure the effective operation of the Embassy.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would lead my Embassy as the policy vision and execution and ask my Deputy Chief of Mission to be my alter ego. I expect the Deputy Chief of Mission will be more focused on the internal management of the mission but, because of the magnitude of the job in Ukraine, I believe he will also need to be someone who can do the external work. I would see the Deputy Chief of Mission as my top advisor on all issues and ask him to take on some of the most sensitive and important tasks that cut across the mission such as ensuring appropriate oversight over the funds allocated by Congress to Ukraine.

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

*Answer.* Yes. I believe it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performance to encourage improvement and reward success.

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

*Answer.* Yes. I commit to supporting and encouraging clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees to improve performance and reward high achievers.

*Question.* You mentioned during your hearing that you have seen photos of damage to the U.S. embassy in Kyiv that seems superficial. Have you received more detailed information regarding the state of the infrastructure in Kyiv since the hearing?

*Answer.* No, I have not received more detailed information regarding the state of the infrastructure in Kyiv since the hearing.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to address infrastructure issues at Mission Kyiv?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will do everything possible to ensure infrastructure issues receive immediate and appropriate attention and are addressed in a timely manner through appropriate channels.

*Question.* Several other countries already re-opened their embassies in Kyiv. What qualifications have prohibited the U.S. from re-opening our embassy?

*Answer.* The Department and the administration are undertaking security assessments and working through the required congressional notifications process to safely reopen our Embassy in Kyiv as soon as possible.

*Question.* Does reopening our Embassy in Kyiv send a signal to the Ukrainian people? If so, what signal?

*Answer.* Yes, our physical presence in Kyiv sends a strong signal of solidarity with the Ukrainian Government and people and underscores the enduring U.S. commitment to Ukraine's success.

*Question.* Do you believe the Embassy should be reopened full-time, with a permanent presence?

*Answer.* Yes. I believe that if the security situation permits, we should continue to increase and make permanent our presence so we can effectively carry out the wide array of work needed to protect U.S. interests and help Ukraine prevail in this war.

*Question.* How would reopening the Embassy in Kyiv assist the State Department's activities in Ukraine?

*Answer.* Resuming Embassy Kyiv operations would help us work directly with the Government on requests, improve security, economic, and humanitarian assistance oversight, and provide a platform to conduct a number of services that advance our strategic goals.

*Question.* "Anomalous health incidents," commonly referred to as "Havana Syndrome," have been debilitating and sidelining U.S. diplomats around the world for years. They have caused serious, negative consequences for U.S. diplomacy, yet many believe that the Department is not doing enough to care for, protect, and communicate to its personnel. The past occurrences and ongoing threat of anomalous health incidents among embassy personnel and their families poses a serious challenge to morale. When personnel at post fear for their safety or doubt that their case will be taken seriously if they were affected, the performance of embassy operations can suffer.

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

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I will take nothing more seriously than the health and safety of the people who work with me. I commit to making sure our staff is aware of the potential danger and the signs to recognize it, and to working with health and security officials as well as other parties as recommended.

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

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Have you received a briefing on the anomalous health incidents that have occurred to U.S. Government personnel around the world, including at U.S. embassies and other diplomatic posts?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* If you have not, and if you are confirmed, do you commit to receiving a briefing on the incidents before you depart for your post?

*Answer.* I have received the briefing although will ask for an update as it relates to Ukraine, if confirmed.

*Question.* In the event of an anomalous health incident among your Embassy personnel or eligible family members, do you commit to maintain detailed records of the incident, and share the information with the State Department and other embassies to contribute to the investigation of how these attacks are affecting U.S. missions and personnel around the world?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I commit to maintain detailed records an incident, and share the information with the State Department and other embassies to contribute to the investigation of how these reported incidents are affecting U.S. missions and personnel around the world.

*Question.* Whether or not anomalous health incidents occur at your Embassy, how will you work to restore and preserve morale that may be lost due to the knowledge these attacks have been occurring at posts around the world?

Answer. If confirmed, I will do everything possible to ensure employees who report a possible anomalous health incident receive immediate and appropriate attention and care and the incident is reported through appropriate channels.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BRIDGET A. BRINK BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* We all want to see Ukraine win this war against Vladimir Putin's Russia. Ukrainians do not need funding for international COVID-19 relief or radical immigration provisions to win the war and funding for these issues should not be tied to assistance to Ukraine.

- Included in the administration's request for supplemental appropriations for Ukraine is legislation to provide a path to citizenship for the Afghans evacuated out of Kabul last year—can you explain how that will help Ukraine win the war?

Answer. It is an administration priority in both Afghanistan and Ukraine to provide individuals who are more at risk because of the interests and values they share with us with paths to safety. In both these countries, locally employed staff of our embassies and other U.S. affiliated groups are at risk of becoming targets of violence because of their relationships with us. A path to citizenship for Afghans, and access to refugee programming for Ukrainians, send critical signals of support to those still fighting for security, stability, prosperity, and democracy in both countries.

*Question.* Given your deep experience working in the former Soviet states, including in Tbilisi immediately before Putin's 2008 invasion of Georgia, what in the administration's request is critical to support Ukraine's defense and what is not?

Answer. The administration's request to Congress for additional assistance to Ukraine includes additional resources for security and military assistance, economic assistance, humanitarian assistance; and assistance to uphold human rights and support efforts to hold Russian officials accountable for atrocities. Based on my experience and knowledge of the situation on the ground, I regard all of this assistance as critical. Continuing the flow of security, economic, and humanitarian assistance is essential to ensuring that a sovereign, independent, and secure Ukraine prevails, and that Russia's invasion results in strategic failure.

*Question.* During his visit to Kyiv last month, Secretary of State Blinken announced the United States' intention to follow other countries' lead and return the U.S. Embassy to Kyiv. This is an important show of support for the Ukrainian people's fight against Putin's forces, but we must prioritize the security of American diplomats and service members in what is likely to remain a warzone for the foreseeable future. In your assessment, is it currently safe enough to reopen the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv?

Answer. I have no higher priority than the safety and security of everyone under Chief of Mission authority. The Department continues to assess the security situation in Ukraine on a daily basis, with the goal of resuming operations at Embassy Kyiv as soon as possible following completion of congressional notification procedures and as security conditions permit.

*Question.* What is the status of the return of diplomatic operations in the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv?

Answer. During the Secretary's April trip to Kyiv, he announced that we will soon resume embassy operations. The Department and interagency have been coordinating on risk assessments and our Chargé d'Affaires has visited Kyiv with a security detail. Our goal is to resume limited Embassy Kyiv operations as soon as possible following completion of congressional notification procedures and as security conditions permit.

*Question.* If confirmed, what security measures will you put in place to ensure that Americans assigned to the Embassy are not put in harm's way?

Answer. I have no higher priority than the safety and security of everyone under Chief of Mission authority. Diplomatic Security, the Defense Department, and the intelligence community have been coordinating risk assessments to ensure we have the security measures needed to return our diplomats to Kyiv. While conducting diplomacy in a war zone entails risks, if confirmed, I pledge to work with my leader-

ship and our team to balance these risks against our goals in a way that advances our national interests in Ukraine.

*Question.* If confirmed, what factors would lead you to decide to evacuate the Embassy again?

Answer. Any suspension of operations would be done in close consultation with Department leaders and the White House, and would depend on a number of factors. If confirmed, my highest responsibility will be the safety and security of everyone serving under Chief of Mission authority. I believe we need to be in Kyiv to effectively advance U.S. interests.

*Question.* Vladimir Putin's airstrikes and artillery attacks on Ukrainian cities have landed dangerously close to Poland and other NATO states, while in recent weeks, Russian state-owned media have started to talk about how this conflict is becoming a full-fledged war between Russia and NATO. If confirmed, what would your recommendation to the President be in order to deter a Russian attack on NATO personnel delivery assistance to Ukraine?

Answer. The United States remains concerned about Russia's threats and have planned for contingencies, but as the Pentagon has said, we have no indications that any weapons or equipment shipments have been hit or blocked by Russia. U.S. forces are not in Ukraine, but remain in neighboring, NATO countries, and President Biden has been clear that we will defend every inch of NATO territory. If confirmed, my recommendation would be to continue this policy.

*Question.* If confirmed, and if Putin does try to push a NATO member country to invoke Article 5, what would your response be?

Answer. The President has been clear: we will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of U.S. and Allied power. NATO is united and determined to defend our collective security. Together, allies have reinforced NATO's Eastern Flank to reassure frontline allies and deter Russia's aggression. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to continue this ironclad commitment to Article 5.

*Question.* Since February, we have seen an unprecedented show of support for Ukraine among our European allies. Countries that previously were reluctant to meet NATO's 2 percent of GDP military spending requirement have now pledged to do so. Finland, Sweden, Germany, and others have broken longstanding policy against providing lethal assistance by providing rifles, rocket launchers, and other equipment to the Ukrainian people. However, fractures are already appearing in this pro-Ukraine coalition. German Chancellor Scholz has spent weeks delaying delivery of anti-aircraft weapons and other heavy weapons to Ukraine, despite announcing a reversal of Germany's old pro-Russia policies. Do you believe the pro-Ukrainian coalition that has emerged in Europe can remain united through the end of the war in Ukraine?

Answer. Yes. U.S. leadership and a commitment to working with our allies and partners has led to an unprecedented level of international cooperation in response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war in Ukraine. If confirmed, I pledge to continue close consultation with all allies and partners to maintain this momentum.

*Question.* Can this coalition last beyond the war and assist the United States in confronting the long-term security threats in the region?

Answer. We have never been more united with allies and partners, as demonstrated by the unified and immediate response to Putin's war. Collectively, we are committed to Ukraine's long-term success as a sovereign, independent, and secure state. NATO Allies are taking lessons learned from this experience into the Madrid Summit in June, where we will shape a common understanding of Transatlantic security that will further unify us for the next decade. If confirmed, I am ready to work with allies, partners, and Congress to rebuild Ukraine and continue to strengthen our alliances and partnerships.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps will you take to work with your counterparts in the other Embassies in Kyiv to ensure the European countries continue to take the threat of Russia seriously?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to regular, close consultation with all our allies and partners based in Ukraine on this and other areas of mutual interest. As long as Russia threatens global stability and security through its violations of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of other states, I commit to working with other countries who share our goals to repel this aggression.

*Question.* For the last few weeks, the Chinese Communist Party has duplicitously tried to present itself as a supporter of Ukraine's sovereignty, while also providing

material aid to Putin’s invasion—through financial assistance and even cyber-attacks on Ukraine’s Government. We should not be mistaken—the CCP under Xi Jinping is fully complicit in Putin’s war against Ukraine and we should hold it accountable. If confirmed, how will you direct U.S. efforts to counter CCP narratives that China is a friend of Ukraine?

*Answer.* The courage of the people of Ukraine and the stalwart support of the United States and our allies and partners have inspired people around the world striving for peace, democracy, human rights, and freedom. Meanwhile, the People’s Republic of China has been absent in the time of Ukraine’s greatest need, providing diplomatic cover for Russia’s brutal, unprovoked war and amplifying Russian disinformation about Ukraine, the United States, and NATO. The people of Ukraine will not forget which countries stood up for them.

*Question.* Before the war, Ukraine’s Government had once looked to China as a source of much needed funding for port and infrastructure development. Do you support China having a role in Ukraine’s reconstruction? Why or why not? If you do not support China having a role, what can you do to ensure they are not a part of this effort?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with Ukraine to encourage a sustainable and transparent approach to reconstruction, built around mutually beneficial relationships, trusted vendors, and national security. This will help develop a level playing field capable of accelerating inclusive economic growth throughout the reconstruction process. The United States is always ready to share best practices with our closest partners, but the democratically elected government of Ukraine will choose its own path.

*Question.* As you well know, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has created an urgent humanitarian crisis, particularly for vulnerable orphaned children. There are roughly 300 Ukrainian orphans with unique ties to the United States that makes travel to the United States an immediately viable tool for their protection. These children deserve to be cared for in the safest environment available while the situation in Ukraine remains dangerous and unstable.

- If confirmed, would you work to provide these children with authorization for temporary travel to the United States so they may stay with their prospective host families away from harm?

*Answer.* The Government of Ukraine is deeply concerned about the risk of separation of children from their families and of child trafficking in wartime, especially for vulnerable groups like orphans. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Ukraine to make sure vulnerable groups are afforded the best legal and diplomatic options for getting to a safe environment. I believe these options should include safe pathways to the United States for those with legitimate ties, including Humanitarian Parole or the Uniting for Ukraine program as applicable, and be consistent with Ukraine’s protections of these children.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BRIDGET A. BRINK BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* What can be done to assist Ukraine in exporting its grains and agricultural goods so critical to addressing global food needs? Are there alternative routes to help transport the food?

*Answer.* Ukraine’s ports, which were used to export 95 percent of its grains and agricultural goods prior to Russia’s full-scale invasion, are not operational due to Moscow’s effective naval blockade. Ukraine is attempting to export grains via its EU neighbors but is limited by numerous factors—including different rail gauges between the countries, lack of railcars and port capacity on the EU side, and bottlenecks at borders. If confirmed, I will work closely with our partners to improve the situation, and with the Government of Ukraine to ensure they are putting into place the necessary processes to quickly comply with EU customs and regulations.

*Question.* How can we and the international community support Ukraine’s agricultural sector now to ensure that crops can be planted, grown, and harvested even in the midst of this war?

*Answer.* Ensuring Ukraine’s agricultural sector has access to export markets and to inputs such as fuel and fertilizer will be crucial. Ongoing assistance programs as well as funds from the Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act are addressing the acute needs of the agricultural sector. This goes beyond merely providing foreign as-



sistance, however. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to work with our partners and allies to overcome the challenges presented by Russia's hostile naval presence in the Black Sea. I will continue to work to ensure that fuel and fertilizer arrive where they are needed, when they are needed.

*Question.* I understand the Ukrainian Government has understandably put in place export restrictions to prioritize its war efforts. If confirmed, how would you coordinate with the Government of Ukraine to ensure that restrictions are tailored to support the Ukrainian people while ensuring surplus foods are able to be exported?

*Answer.* Ukraine's economy depends on exporting food around the world. While Ukraine has introduced strict new export quotas on some of its most critical domestic agricultural and food needs (meat, oats, buckwheat, and sugar), it did not do so for most globally—significant exports—these include wheat, corn, poultry, and sunflower oil. Instead, it introduced a new system that will allow its Ministry of Economy to manage more directly Ukraine's agricultural commodities and food supplies. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Ukraine as it seeks to balance domestic consumption and agricultural sector exports.

*Question.* As we support Ukraine's Government in the war, we also need to think carefully about long-term sustainability. What tools do we have to ensure accountability and continued democratic reforms in Ukraine?

*Answer.* The people of Ukraine have twice taken to the streets to get rid of corrupt leaders—in the 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2013-2014 Revolution of Dignity—and are now bravely defending against Russia's full-scale invasion in order to have a democratic, European future. If confirmed, I will support the Ukrainian aspiration for this future through the re-establishment and strengthening of institutions with integrity and procedures that help eliminate corruption, build resilience, and meet international best practices. I will also continue support efforts that aim to hold Russian officials accountable for war crimes and atrocities.

*Question.* How concerned should we be about the relationship between President Zelensky and the sanctioned Ukrainian oligarch Ihor Kolomoyskyy? Does the war change the risks to Ukrainian democracy and rule of law from its own oligarchs?

*Answer.* Given the tremendous sacrifices made by the people of Ukraine as they defend their country and the commitment by the international community to help Ukraine defend itself, I believe there is an historic opportunity to be seized to break a legacy of endemic corruption in Ukraine. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that our policies are fully geared toward helping Ukraine achieve this goal.

More specifically on Ihor Kolomoyskyy, I would note that last year the Department of State announced a visa restriction on him, along with his immediate family members, for involvement in significant corruption. This was a clear message from the United States that no one is above the law as Ukraine works to counter corruption and hold corrupt actors accountable. If confirmed, I will reaffirm this position.

*Question.* Prior to the war, Ukraine had started to backslide on reforms in its judiciary, energy sector, and central banking. If confirmed, how would you approach having tough conversations with the Government of Ukraine about continued progress on democratic reforms?

*Answer.* If confirmed, combating corruption, and advancing much-needed institutional reforms will remain one of my top priorities. Anti-democratic forces have weaponized corruption, misinformation, and disinformation to exploit perceived weaknesses and sow division within and among free nations, erode existing international rules, and promote alternative models of authoritarian governance. We cannot afford to help Ukraine win this war, only to lose its democratic future by failing to reform. I will regularly communicate this to the Ukrainian Government and underscore the importance of reform to Ukraine's European future.

*Question.* There were over 300 Ukrainian children in process of being adopted by American families when the invasion began in February. Now these children face a deeply uncertain future. If confirmed, how would you work with the Government of Ukraine to identify and support Ukrainian children in limbo in the adoption process?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Ukrainian Government to ensure these children are united with their adoptive families as soon as it is safe and legally feasible. The United States also recognizes and respects Ukraine's jurisdiction over decisions about the safety and welfare of children in its care. This includes their jurisdiction over requests to move the children to a different country. If confirmed, I pledge to continue our close cooperation with the Ukrainian Govern-

ment in order to complete these adoptions, in accordance with U.S. and Ukrainian law.

*Question.* As the Embassy reopens operations, how would you prioritize consular services in the country, if confirmed?

*Answer.* Initially, we will prioritize emergency services for U.S. citizens. The Department of State continues to advise U.S. citizens not to travel to Ukraine. Routine passport and visa services will continue to be provided at U.S. Embassies in neighboring countries.

*Question.* What would be your message to our European allies on the importance of coordinated actions to counter Russia's aggression in Ukraine?

*Answer.* If confirmed, my message would be that Putin's war is a threat to all countries that believe in the sovereign right of states to choose their own futures. The United States and our European allies and partners have never been more united in imposing severe costs on Russia for its aggression in Ukraine.

*Question.* What could the United States do to help allies reduce their dependence on Russian energy supplies?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure Embassy Kyiv supports this administration's commitments to help our allies and partners diversify away from Russian energy. The joint U.S.-EU Task Force on Energy Security seeks to address this challenge by helping Europe reduce its dependence on Russian fossil fuels by diversifying liquified natural gas supplies for the EU market and reducing overall demand for natural gas. It also commits to working with our European allies to accelerate the deployment of clean energy, support energy efficiency measures, and increase our cooperation on renewable energy projects and technologies. If confirmed, I will make sure Embassy Kyiv supports these efforts to break our allies' dependence on Russian energy.

*Question.* How would you characterize the current solidarity and cooperation among Eastern European countries in the face of Russia's war?

*Answer.* The United States, our allies, and our partners have never been more united in our support of Ukraine, and in our determination to impose severe costs on Russia for its aggression. We continue to fortify the NATO Alliance by enhancing our force posture on the Eastern Flank and working to build resiliency against Russia's aggression. There is broad support among our allies and partners in eastern and central Europe for cutting off Putin's economy and countering the weaponization of Russian energy exports. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States and partners remain united in our effort to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia's war of choice.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* How will the Counterterrorism Bureau deal with a more decentralized and localized terrorist threats against our friends and allies in a post-Al Qaeda, post-ISIS environment?

*Answer.* Terrorist groups threatening the United States and our partners today are more geographically dispersed, more ideologically diverse, and more technologically adept than ever before.

If confirmed, I commit to sustaining our efforts to disrupt terrorist plots, eliminate terrorist safe havens, sever terrorist groups' access to financing, materiel, and recruits, and prevent and counter violent extremism in communities so that these groups cannot further mobilize or inspire others to commit acts of violence. This includes encouraging allies and partners to assume a greater share of the burden, which is particularly critical in a decentralized threat environment. If confirmed, I will work closely with Congress on engaging allies and partners to use their resources and comparative advantages in terms of relationships and geographic proximity to help us combat global and regional terrorist organizations.

*Question.* Do you believe that the resources and funding dedicated to U.S. counterterrorism programs at the State Department are adequate? If not, how much more is needed and for what programs?

*Answer.* Counterterrorism remains a priority for the State Department and the Administration. If confirmed, one of my first jobs will be to assess resources planned

in previous years and ensure they are meeting the needs of the counterterrorism mission.

I will fully engage in the budget planning process with Department leadership, OMB, and Congress to ensure the resources are aligned with our priorities and able to address the growing threats of ISIS and other terrorist actors that seek to destabilize security.

*Question.* What should be done to win the “hearts and minds” of individuals and groups that may be susceptible to the influences and teachings of violent Islamist extremism fundamentalists?

Answer. Outreach to individuals and groups that may be susceptible to terrorist and violent extremist influences and teachings is a priority for the Biden-Harris administration and the State Department.

The comprehensive “whole-of-society” U.S. approach focuses on building long-term resilience to these messages in order to prevent—as well as counter—terrorism and violent extremism online and offline, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression.

I understand that the CT Bureau partners with community leaders, religious leaders, and NGOs to increase their capacity to intervene effectively in the lifecycle of a potential terrorist, and supports community-level, social-service-based intervention initiatives and law enforcement programs to create “off-ramps” for those individuals on their way to becoming radicalized to violence and/or recruited by terrorist organizations.

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with these partners on this issue.

*Question.* What is your view of current U.S. approaches to threats posed by transnationally active violent right-wing extremists?

What changes, if any, to existing efforts do you believe are appropriate?

Answer. Countering racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism (REMVE), including violent white supremacist ideologies and actors, has been a top priority for the Biden-Harris administration and the State Department.

I understand that the Biden-Harris administration released the first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism in June 2021.

I also understand that the State Department uses a broad range of tools to counter the transnational dimensions of the REMVE threat, including diplomatic engagement, information sharing, and capacity building.

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with interagency partners, foreign partners, and multilateral organizations on this issue.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question.* Ambassador Richard, our Chiefs of Mission provide concurrence for Department of Defense counterterrorism activities in their respective areas of responsibility—what we call 127 echo programs. However, I’m concerned that once our Chiefs of Mission provide concurrence, we have no opportunity to revisit based on changing conditions. Worse, the Foreign Relations Committee has little visibility on where our Chiefs of Mission are providing concurrence. Do I have your commitment to work with this committee to ensure we have adequate visibility?

Answer. I commit to work with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on this matter, if confirmed. I will coordinate closely with the Secretary of State and critical State Department stakeholders to review the current State Department practices and procedures related to Section 10 USC 127e. I will also work closely with the Department of Defense to address the changing global threat environment.

*Question.* While we shattered the Islamic State’s grip on Iraq and Syria, problems remain. Thousands of foreign terrorist fighters languish in sometimes makeshift prisons in Syria. While a handful of our partners have repatriated their foreign fighters to face justice, others have refused. How do we accelerate repatriations and ensure these fighters don’t pose a threat to United States’ interests?

Answer. The United States encourages countries of origin to repatriate, rehabilitate, reintegrate, and, where appropriate, also prosecute foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and associated family members. If confirmed, I will intensify diplomatic engagement in bilateral and multilateral channels, including through the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, to press governments around the world to return their nationals and fulfill their responsibilities.

*Question.* Recent press reporting argues that you refused a EUCOM QRF and subsequently left the Embassy “exposed.” Please respond to those criticisms.

*Answer.* The Embassy did not refuse the EUCOM QRF. It did deploy to Beirut. In addition, the Embassy maintained an extremely robust security presence of U.S. and host nation security elements at all times. All of the Embassy’s security-related decisions were made in close consultation with security professionals and other relevant officials in the Embassies and in Washington.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*Question.* The Biden administration has assigned the role of ISIS Detainee Coordinator to the Counterterrorism Coordinator for the purposes of fulfilling the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act. If confirmed, how will you work across the interagency to ensure that the complex challenges of both ISIS detention and the displacement of families with perceived and possible ISIS affiliation will be adequately addressed?

*Answer.* The U.S. Government encourages countries of origin to repatriate, rehabilitate, reintegrate, and, where appropriate, prosecute foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and associated family members. The United States also provides, on a case-by-case basis, logistical support for countries of origin willing to repatriate their nationals. These efforts involve not just the CT Bureau but other State Department bureaus and offices, U.S. embassies abroad, and elements of the Department of Defense, among others. If confirmed, I will expand our existing repatriation efforts, reinvigorate our dialogue with other countries, and redouble our efforts to ensure the welfare of FTF-associated family members.

*Question.* The Government of Iraq has indicated a greater willingness to take back its 30,000 residents in the Al Hol camp. How should the U.S. Government utilize this important window of opportunity to assist with the repatriation of the Al Hol camps Iraqi citizens who comprise a large number of the camp’s residents?

*Answer.* If confirmed, the repatriation of displaced persons out of northeast Syria would be one of my top priorities. In addition to diplomatic efforts, I understand that the United States is currently working with international humanitarian organizations to enable Iraqi returns and reintegration into areas of origin. If confirmed, I will inject new energy to these efforts to ensure that we are adequately engaging with partners to repatriate all citizens out of northeast Syria.

*Question.* ISIS sleeper cells in northeast Syria appear to have increased the tempo of attacks—possibly exploiting a pivot in global attention towards Europe. ISIS elements have also stated publicly their intention to continue attacks on prisons (such as in Al Hasakeh this past January) and camps as part of their overall strategy to replenish their ranks. How will you work with others in the U.S. Government to ensure that ISIS detention sites and displacement camps are secure and not vulnerable to external attack?

*Answer.* This is a complex issue. As I understand it, overcrowding in predominantly makeshift detention facilities and displaced persons camps in northeast Syria exacerbates the security challenges and diverts resources from the counter-ISIS mission. I believe we must work quickly to reduce the number of people in detention and ensure ISIS detainees are held humanely and securely.

We must also work quickly to reduce the number of displaced persons in IDP camps in al-Hol and elsewhere in northeast Syria. I also understand that getting countries to repatriate their foreign fighter citizens and families is only one part of the solution. If confirmed, I will work within the Department of State and with interagency partners, including DOD, to identify and fill gaps in local partner capacity to support improved security at these locations.

*Question.* How should the United States address the repatriation of foreign women and children living in the displacement camps, particularly with our European allies who remain opposed to repatriating their citizens?

*Answer.* As Secretary Blinken has stated, the current situation with regard to detained ISIS fighters and their family members in Syria is not sustainable. The best way to counter this challenge is to increase support for and availability of education and psychosocial services, and for countries to repatriate their nationals, which the CT Bureau helps facilitate.

If confirmed, I will press governments around the world to repatriate their nationals through intensive diplomatic engagement in bilateral and multilateral channels, including through the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. I will continue to make the case to countries around the world that repatriation, rehabilitation, reintegration, and, where appropriate, also prosecution provide the only durable solution to the humanitarian and security challenges posed by FTFs and associated family members in displaced persons camps in northeast Syria.

*Question.* Many liken the displacement camps to a “ticking time bomb” that potentially holds the next generation of ISIS fighters if the situation in the camps is not addressed. If confirmed as the CT Coordinator also serving as the ISIS Detainee Coordinator, how will you utilize both roles to address the need to prevent the radicalization of the camp’s children?

*Answer.* As I understand it, there are thousands of family members in displaced persons camps in northeast Syria, many of whom are under the age of 18. I understand the United States, through its partnerships with U.N. humanitarian agencies and NGOs, provides life-saving humanitarian assistance to displaced persons camps such as al-Hol and Roj, including funding for camp management, food assistance, health care, education, psychosocial support services, and clean water and sanitation.

Ultimately, the best solution for residents and the only durable solution is the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of Syrians to their areas of origin or another location of their choosing, and the repatriation of non-Syrians to their countries of origin. If confirmed, I will prioritize international cooperation on repatriation to ensure that ISIS does not exploit these vulnerable populations or reconstitute itself in the region.

*Question.* If confirmed, how will you work with other stakeholders at State and USAID to address the need to prepare communities in Iraq and northeast Syria for the return of their residents in the camp? What type of programming, resources and coordination do you envision to address this piece of the challenge?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work closely with other stakeholders at State and USAID to identify and, where practical, develop capacity-building programs for the Government of Iraq to support the return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqis from Syria. In the case of CT Bureau, assistance may focus on training Iraqi officials to independently complete risk and needs assessments to effectively connect returnees with the psychosocial and economic support they need to rehabilitate and reintegrate successfully into society. If confirmed, I will also leverage my role as the Special Envoy to encourage Coalition members to fund and implement programming toward such efforts in a coordinated manner.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* At a time when Shi’ite militias are stepping up attacks on U.S. facilities and personnel in Iraq, when the Houthis are massacring innocent civilians in Yemen, and where Hamas and Hezbollah are launching attacks on Israel, the Biden administration is contemplating lifting sanctions on these terrorists’ prime sponsor: the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is certainly the biggest obstacle to negotiating a flawed deal on Iran’s nuclear program and will certainly impact the national security of our partners across the Middle East.

- Do you agree that Iran is the region’s largest supporter of terrorist movements in Lebanon, Israel, Iraq and Yemen? Why or why not?

*Answer.* Iran continues to be the foremost state sponsor of terrorism and facilitates a wide range of terrorist activity, both in the region and around the world. It continues to support Hezbollah, Palestinian terrorist groups, and various groups in Iraq, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen with funding, training, weapons, and equipment. It also harbors senior, veteran al-Qa’ida leaders in Iran. Iran’s support for terrorism destabilizes the region and threatens U.S. forces, diplomatic personnel, and our partners in the region and elsewhere. If confirmed, I would strengthen cooperation with our allies and partners to address the threats posed by Iran.

*Question.* If Iran is provided \$100 billion in sanctions relief, this would be a boon to terrorists who seek to destabilize these countries and threaten American national security. If confirmed, and if the Biden administration secures a nuclear deal with

Iran, how would you ensure the U.S. counters the inevitable increase in terrorist operations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to hold the Iranian Government accountable for its actions, including its longstanding support for terrorism. I commit to using the appropriate CT tools at our disposal, including sanctions, and working in close coordination with our allies and partners, to counter the terrorist threat posed by Iran.

*Question.* Last year, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, both groups designated as terrorist organizations by the United States, launched more than 4,000 rockets into Israel and this year instigated anti-Israeli attacks in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. To protect our ally Israel and reduce the threat to Americans traveling to the Holy Land, it makes sense that we should sanction any organization or entity that provide money to these terrorists.

- Do you agree that the United States should impose sanctions on all entities that provide financial and material support to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including Iran?

Answer. The United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with Israel and other allies and partners to counter the flow of financial and material support to Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups like Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We will continue to use all tools at our disposal to counter these groups, including imposing financial sanctions, bolstering law enforcement cooperation with allies, and engaging in diplomatic engagement with partners to encourage action against the groups and those who support them.

*Question.* Do you support my Palestinian International Terrorism Support Prevention Act, which would impose these sanctions?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with partners across the administration, including the Department of the Treasury, to use all tools at our disposal, including targeted financial sanctions, to counter Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the individuals, entities, and groups who provide them with financial and material support.

*Question.* On May 9, reports indicated that your former colleagues in the Trump administration accused you of insubordination. They claim you went against State Department orders and sent back a U.S. military quick response force sent to Beirut in 2020 to defend against a potential terrorist attack the month after the death of Iranian leader Qassem Soleimani. Given Embassy Beirut's tragic history of terrorist attacks, this decision potentially endangered American diplomatic personnel in Lebanon. Do you believe your decision in 2020 to not extend deployment of the quick response force could have endangered the lives of American diplomats in the Embassy?

Answer. While serving as Ambassador to Lebanon, ensuring the safety and security of the Embassy team was my first concern, which is why my team and I coordinated with the relevant stakeholders, including all involved security personnel, and reached this decision. We reached this decision based on the best interests and security of all U.S. personnel at Embassy Beirut.

*Question.* When making this decision, did you consult with your superiors in Foggy Bottom, as required by normal State Department protocol?

Answer. I believe the safety and security of my personnel is paramount, and my team and I coordinated with all the relevant officials, including in Washington.

*Question.* At a time when Shi'ite militias are stepping up attacks on U.S. facilities and personnel in Iraq, when the Houthis are massacring innocent civilians in Yemen, and where Hamas and Hezbollah are launching attacks on Israel, the Biden administration is contemplating lifting sanctions on these terrorists' prime sponsor: the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is certainly the biggest obstacle to negotiating a flawed deal on Iran's nuclear program and will certainly impact the national security of our partners across the Middle East.

- Do you agree that Iran is the region's largest supporter of terrorist movements in Lebanon, Israel, Iraq and Yemen? Why or why not?

Answer. Iran continues to be the foremost state sponsor of terrorism and facilitates a wide range of terrorist activity, both in the region and around the world. It continues to support Hezbollah, Palestinian terrorist groups, and various groups in Iraq, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen with funding, training, weapons, and equipment. It also harbors senior, veteran al-Qa'ida leaders in Iran. Iran's support for ter-

rorism destabilizes the region and threatens U.S. forces, diplomatic personnel, and our partners in the region and elsewhere. If confirmed, I would strengthen cooperation with our allies and partners to address the threats posed by Iran.

*Question.* If Iran is provided \$100 billion in sanctions relief, this would be a boon to terrorists who seek to destabilize these countries and threaten American national security.

- If confirmed, and if the Biden administration secures a nuclear deal with Iran, how would you ensure the U.S. counters the inevitable increase in terrorist operations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue to hold the Iranian Government accountable for its actions, including its longstanding support for terrorism. I commit to using the appropriate CT tools at our disposal, including sanctions, and working in close coordination with our allies and partners, to counter the terrorist threat posed by Iran.

*Question.* Last year, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, both groups designated as terrorist organizations by the United States, launched more than 4,000 rockets into Israel and this year instigated anti-Israeli attacks in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. To protect our ally Israel and reduce the threat to Americans traveling to the Holy Land, it makes sense that we should sanction any organization or entity that provide money to these terrorists.

- Do you agree that the United States should impose sanctions on all entities that provide financial and material support to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including Iran?

*Answer.* The United States remains unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with Israel and other allies and partners to counter the flow of financial and material support to Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups like Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We will continue to use all tools at our disposal to counter these groups, including imposing financial sanctions, bolstering law enforcement cooperation with allies, and engaging in diplomatic engagement with partners to encourage action against the groups and those who support them.

*Question.* Do you support my Palestinian International Terrorism Support Prevention Act, which would impose these sanctions?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to working with partners across the administration, including the Department of the Treasury, to use all tools at our disposal, including targeted financial sanctions, to counter Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the individuals, entities, and groups who provide them with financial and material support.

*Question.* On May 9, reports indicated that your former colleagues in the Trump administration accused you of insubordination. They claim you went against State Department orders and sent back a U.S. military quick response force sent to Beirut in 2020 to defend against a potential terrorist attack the month after the death of Iranian leader Qassem Soleimani. Given Embassy Beirut's tragic history of terrorist attacks, this decision potentially endangered American diplomatic personnel in Lebanon. Do you believe your decision in 2020 to not extend deployment of the quick response force could have endangered the lives of American diplomats in the Embassy?

*Answer.* While serving as Ambassador to Lebanon, ensuring the safety and security of the Embassy team was my first concern, which is why my team and I coordinated with the relevant stakeholders, including all involved security personnel, and reached this decision. We reached this decision based on the best interests and security of all U.S. personnel at Embassy Beirut.

*Question.* When making this decision, did you consult with your superiors in Foggy Bottom, as required by normal State Department protocol?

*Answer.* I believe the safety and security of my personnel is paramount, and my team and I coordinated with all the relevant officials, including in Washington.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* What is the administration's current counter-terrorism strategy in Yemen?

Answer. I understand the administration's counterterrorism strategy in Yemen aims to degrade the presence and capabilities of Yemen-based terrorist groups that pose a threat to the interests of the United States and our partners in the Gulf region. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS-Yemen continue to exploit the political and security vacuum in much of Yemen's territory. Counterterrorism operations, battlefield losses to the Houthis, and internal divisions have degraded AQAP capabilities in Yemen. The group, however, remains a significant threat to the region and to the United States. A small ISIS group also operates in Yemen but poses a lesser threat than AQAP at this time. Destabilizing actions by the Houthis have undermined the security of Yemen and our regional partners; terror groups have taken advantage of this instability. If confirmed, I will work across the U.S. Government and with foreign partners to utilize all appropriate tools to counter the activities of terrorist actors in Yemen, including efforts to build the counterterrorism capabilities of our Yemeni partners.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would be your approach to combatting terrorism in and from Yemen?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to actively monitor the full range of threats emanating from Yemen and work with colleagues across the U.S. interagency to ensure that the U.S. Government has the resources and capabilities in the region to address them. If confirmed, I will utilize all the appropriate counterterrorism tools at our disposal to degrade the capabilities of terrorist actors operating in Yemen. This includes using appropriate sanctions tools to apply pressure on the networks that support the financing of terrorist activities in Yemen, supporting coordinated action at the United Nations to demonstrate international resolve against threats to Yemen's stability, and providing training and assistance to strengthen the capabilities of civilian counterterrorism partners in Yemen.

*Question.* How do you view the role of Iran in funding and facilitating terrorism in Yemen? More broadly, what is your view of the role of Iran in funding terrorism throughout the Middle East?

Answer. Iran was designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in 1984 and continues to support a range of designated terrorist groups with funding, training, weapons, and equipment. These include Hezbollah; Hamas; Palestinian Islamic Jihad; Kata'ib Hezbollah and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq in Iraq; and Al-Ashtar Brigades and Saraya al-Mukhtar in Bahrain. In Yemen, Iran continues to exploit the conflict to expand its influence; Iran has provided weapons and advanced equipment such as unmanned aircraft systems, training, and other support to the Houthis, who have engaged in attacks against regional targets. The U.S. Government has taken a broad range of steps to counter Iran-backed terrorist activity, including sanctions, and if confirmed, I will strengthen cooperation with our allies and partners to address the threats posed by Iran.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ELIZABETH H. RICHARD BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

*Question.* What percent of U.S. assistance to Lebanon was used for activities or operations aimed at disarming Hezbollah during your tenure as ambassador? A rough estimate or a range will be sufficient.

Answer. Our assistance to Lebanon is intended to build a sovereign Lebanese state that can govern justly and fairly, and that is the sole defender of the country. As long as Hezbollah maintains its arms and embraces the use of terrorism, Lebanon cannot succeed. U.S. assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF) is focused on developing these organizations' capabilities and professionalism. This assistance—including the support provided during my tenure as Ambassador to Lebanon—increases LAF capacity as the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon's sovereignty, enables the LAF to counter violent extremist organizations, bolsters the LAF as an institutional counterweight to Hezbollah's narrative and desired influence, and protects U.S. regional security interests. For example, during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Gaza-based militants, when rockets were launched from Lebanon toward Israel, and pro-Hamas and pro-Hezbollah demonstrators protested along the Blue Line dividing Lebanon from Israel, the LAF responded rapidly to the rocket launches and deployed along the boundary to support UNIFIL peacekeepers and mitigate Lebanon-based threats against Israel and regional stability. In August 2021, when Hezbollah claimed credit for launching several rockets from Lebanon toward Israel, the LAF arrested several



Hezbollah suspects and took into its possession a rocket launcher. The suspects were later released by state authorities.

*Question.* What percent of U.S. assistance to Lebanon was used for activities or operations aimed at disrupting Hezbollah military activities other than through disarming them during your tenure ambassador, e.g. through roadblocks? A rough estimate or a range will be sufficient.

*Answer.* A government that reflects the will of the Lebanese people, is able to meet their needs, and controls the security institutions that will defend Lebanon's sovereignty and enforce the law will curtail Hezbollah's ability to pursue its malign agenda both in Lebanon and in the region. U.S. assistance to Lebanon is one of the many tools the Department uses to support the Lebanese people, civil society, and institutions critical to building a sovereign state responsive to its people's legitimate needs. U.S. security assistance also supports partners, such as the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF), that are critical to stability and security.

This assistance—including the support provided during my tenure as Ambassador to Lebanon—has helped build up LAF and ISF capabilities. In recent years, the LAF and ISF have imposed increasing costs on criminal syndicates, including groups potentially linked to Hezbollah, by arresting smugglers engaged in the illicit movement of drugs, weapons, and goods in areas of eastern Lebanon where Hezbollah wields influence. In October 2021, Hezbollah and Amal party protests devolved into armed clashes with supporters of the Lebanese Forces party in Beirut. The LAF deployed to calm sectarian tensions, evacuate civilians, restore order, and arrest perpetrators.

*Question.* Please describe the degree to which, in your assessment, Hezbollah continues to influence or exert control over the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport or facilities located within the airport.

*Answer.* The U.S. Government has been and remains concerned about Hezbollah's influence at ports of entry into Lebanon, including the airport. During my tenure as Ambassador to Lebanon, Hezbollah was known to engage in a wide range of illicit business activities in Lebanon, including abuse of the airport. Under Prime Minister Mikati's current cabinet, a Hezbollah minister leads the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

*Question.* Please describe the degree to which, in your assessment, Hezbollah continues to influence or exert control over the Port of Beirut or facilities located within the port?

*Answer.* I do not have access to information on the current situation at the Port. However, I know that the influence Hezbollah exerts over ports of entry remains of considerable concern and denies the Lebanese people the benefit of customs revenue, which is significant given the large budget deficits Lebanon continues to face. The current Minister of Public Works and Transport was appointed by Hezbollah to the Cabinet. I understand that to combat Hezbollah's influence, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated under Executive Order 13224 Hezbollah security official Wafiq Safa for acting for or on behalf of Hezbollah. As head of Hezbollah's security apparatus, Safa exploited Lebanon's ports and border crossings to smuggle contraband, enable Hezbollah travel, and facilitate the passage of illegal drugs and weapons into the seaport of Beirut, routing certain shipments to avoid scrutiny.

*Question.* Did you or any other officials from U.S. Embassy Beirut convey concerns to the Lebanese Armed Forces or the Lebanese Government that their level of coordination or cooperation with Hezbollah during their 2017 Aarsal operations risked compromising American support, including but not limited to security assistance?

*Answer.* During my time as Ambassador to Lebanon, I regularly met with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) Commander to emphasize U.S. expectations for LAF conduct and operations. In 2017, the LAF demonstrated its counterterrorism capability in Operation "Dawn of the Hills," when it expelled hundreds of ISIS fighters from northeastern Lebanon. The LAF is independent of Hezbollah and retains operational autonomy.

*Question.* Is the *Politico* report accurate that your move not to extend the QRF's deployment was not coordinated with then-Secretary of State Pompeo?

*Answer.* The State Department has a process for making decisions on security. That process was followed. This decision, as with every security-related decision I have been a part of, was made in close consultation with security professionals and

other relevant officials in the Embassy and between Embassy officials and relevant offices in Washington. I cannot speak to the internal coordination in Washington.

*Question.* Is the *Politico* report accurate that your move not to extend the QRF's deployment was not coordinated with then-Under Secretary of State David Hale?

*Answer.* The State Department has a process for making decisions on security. That process was followed. This decision, as with every security-related decision I have been a part of, was made in close consultation with security professionals and other relevant officials in the Embassy and between Embassy officials and relevant offices in Washington. I cannot speak to the internal coordination in Washington.

*Question.* Did you, in official or unofficial capacities, argue that keeping the force in country might increase the threat posed by Hezbollah? If so, please elaborate on why you believed the extending the QRF on Lebanese soil would increase the threat posed by Hezbollah.

*Answer.* This decision was informed by input from knowledgeable officials. We reached this decision based on the best interests and security of all U.S. personnel at Embassy Beirut.

#### *The Amer Fakhoury Case*

*Question.* The Lebanese Government's unjust detention of American citizen Amer Fakhoury marked a particularly troubling recent incident in U.S.-Lebanese relations. According to the Amer Fakhoury Foundation, he "was a U.S. Citizen who was kidnapped by the Hezbollah-backed Lebanese Government on September 12th, 2019, while on a family vacation in Beirut, Lebanon. He was abused, tortured, and forced to sign false documents which were then used to illegally detain him for 7 months. After tremendous pressure from the U.S. Government, the Lebanese Government admitted to the illegal arrest of Amer Fakhoury."

Several dynamics related to this incident are entangled with counterterrorism challenges faced globally, including the complicity of state institutions in terrorist activities and the use of hostage-taking as a tool of coercion.

- To what extent did you assess at the time that the Lebanese Government was acting under the influence of Hezbollah?

*Answer.* Although designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist by the United States, Hezbollah has acted as a political party in Lebanon since 1992. Since then, it has exercised both its formal political influence as well as informal influence, through its well-known maintenance of an active militia and terrorist apparatus. At the time when Mr. Fakhoury was detained in September 2019, Hezbollah controlled 12 out of 128 seats in Parliament and three ministerial positions. The structure of the Lebanese state essentially ensures that no party is able to gain a majority, which means that every party will be able to exert some influence, though no party can exert complete control. Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah said publicly the group did not believe Mr. Fakhoury should have been released. The fact that he was released speaks to the Government's ability to make decisions that Hezbollah does not support.

*Question.* To what extent did U.S. Embassy Beirut assess at the time that the Lebanese Government was acting under the influence of Hezbollah?

*Answer.* The structure of the Lebanese state essentially ensures that no party is able to gain a majority, which means that every party will be able to exert some influence, though no party can exert complete control. Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah said publicly the group did not believe Mr. Fakhoury should have been released. The fact that he was released speaks to the Government's ability to make decisions that Hezbollah does not support.

*Question.* At what point, if any, did you conclude that the Lebanese Government's detention of Fakhoury constituted an unjust detention?

*Answer.* During my tenure as Ambassador to Lebanon, the Levinson Act—which includes a requirement that the Secretary of State review U.S. national detentions for wrongfulness—was not yet in effect. However, as Ambassador, any detained American was always a top concern for me and the entire embassy team, and in this case, I worked closely with Mr. Fakhoury's legal team, my colleagues in Washington, and advocates in Congress to press for his expeditious release. In fact, in my last meeting with President Aoun, I raised only one substantive issue: Mr. Fakhoury's continuing imprisonment. I was pleased to see him released and reunited with his family just weeks later.

*Question.* At what point, if any, did U.S. Embassy Beirut conclude that the Lebanese Government's detention of Fakhoury constituted an unjust detention?

Answer. My assessment of the situation was developed in conjunction with and informed by the full country team at Embassy Beirut. I would refer you to my previous answer.

*Question.* To what extent do you assess that the Lebanese Government was holding Fakhoury with the expectation of releasing him in exchange for a Lebanese person or persons held by the United States, i.e., a ransom?

Answer. During my tenure, the Lebanese Government, of which Hezbollah was a part, never formally sought to exchange Mr. Fakhoury for any person held by the United States.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ALEXANDER MARK LASKARIS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* How much democracy and governance funding have we provided to Chad over the past five fiscal years, and what types of programs and activities has that funding supported? Are there security assistance programs still underway in Chad? What are they?

Answer. I understand that since Fiscal Year 2017, the State Department has allocated a total of \$8.5 million in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance assistance for Chad. Specifically, I understand that the State Department has typically provided approximately \$500,000 annually to support democracy and governance programming in Chad since FY 2016 through the Africa Regional Democracy Fund (ARDF). Some examples of current and previous programming include national and local civic education, training traditional leaders to promote good governance and increase engagement in public policy development and strengthening the National Assembly's institutional and operational capacity. Additionally, USAID supports civil society strengthening through activities that increase engagement of women and youth during the current transition period. This four-year project was approved for \$8.5 million and recently received complementary funding of \$3,025,000 specifically for transition activities.

If confirmed, I would welcome a conversation with you and your appropriations colleagues on expanding this support and agree with you that our democracy and governance activities have been underfunded in Chad. This democracy and governance funding is in addition to the tens of millions of dollars the United States provides in humanitarian assistance, especially food aid, and providing COVID-19-related assistance.

U.S. military assistance to Chad is intended to increase counterterrorism capabilities, improve the general professionalization of the military, and increase Chad's peacekeeping capabilities. I understand that you have placed a hold on various security assistance funds and that only military assistance that was notified and obligated prior to your holds has continued. Of those programs that remain ongoing Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funded support provides sustainment for existing PKO-funded equipment, embedded advisors within various branches of the Chadian armed forces, construction of a medical facility, and counter-IED training. The PKO-funded Security Professionalization Program is also ongoing. In addition, there are previously obligated Foreign Military Financing funded programs that support C-208 and C-130 related training and sustainment, vehicle sustainment, and small boat training and sustainment. There are also several International Military Education Training (IMET) students currently in the United States finishing courses that were funded prior to these holds. Our assistance enables us to support the Chadian military to conduct much needed security and counterterrorism efforts across the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, while also supporting greater professionalization of the Chadian military in areas such as human resources management, logistics and sustainment, and increased respect for human rights. I understand the State Department has routinely engaged your office about the importance of this assistance and, if confirmed, I look forward to discussing further.

*Question.* Has the United States publicly supported the African Union's call for Chad's transitional leaders to (1) abide by the transitional timeline and (2) refrain from running as candidates in the elections they are responsible for organizing? If confirmed, will you commit to calling for these things publicly? What other concrete steps will you take to support a democratic transition in Chad, if confirmed?

Answer. Yes, the United States publicly supported the African Union's call for Chad's transitional leaders to (1) abide by the transitional timeline and (2) refrain from running as candidates in the elections they are responsible for organizing. The

Assistant Secretary for African Affairs issued a public statement on March 22, 2022, during her visit to N'Djamena expressing support for an 18-month transition as well as for the African Union's May 2021 call for CMT members to abstain from taking part in national elections. If confirmed, I would publicly and privately urge the Chadian transitional government to signal genuine commitment to the political transition by reaching a thorough and swift resolution to politico-military negotiations in Doha, leading to an inclusive national dialogue in Chad, followed by a constitutional referendum and free and fair elections. Transitional Military Council President Mahamat Deby has previously publicly stated his intentions not to stand for election. If confirmed, I would continue to encourage the Transitional Military Council to amend the transitional charter to commit that none of its members will be eligible to stand for election, as called for in the May 2021 African Union communique.

*Question.* I am very concerned about directed energy attacks on U.S. Government personnel (so-called Anomalous Health Incidents). Ensuring the safety and security of our personnel abroad falls largely on individual Chiefs of Mission and the response of officers at post. It is imperative that any individual who reports a suspected incident be responded to promptly, equitably, and compassionately

- Do you agree these incidents must be taken seriously, and pose a threat to the health of U.S. personnel?

Answer. Yes, I do.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that any reported incident is treated seriously and reported quickly through the appropriate channels, and that any affected individuals receive prompt access to medical care?

Answer. Yes, I do.

*Question.* Do you commit to meeting with medical staff and the RSO at post to discuss any past reported incidents and ensure that all protocols are being followed?

Answer. Yes, I do.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ALEXANDER MARK LASKARIS BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question.* Do you consider the transition of power that occurred following the death of President Idriss Deby constitutes a coup d'état? If not, why? If yes, why hasn't the United States Government called the 2021 transition in Chad a coup?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department carefully reviewed the events in Chad and concluded that the military coup restriction in section 7008 of the annual appropriations act had not been triggered with respect to Chad. I understand that the Department assessed that then-President Idriss Deby was not duly elected as the head of government of Chad as per section 7008, nor were his designated constitutional successors in the National Assembly. Separately, the African Union carefully examined the events in Chad and determined that the actions that lead to the formation of a Transitional Military Council taking power in the aftermath of the battlefield death of the former president was not a coup d'état. The African Union continues to monitor the situation and support Chad's transition.

*Question.* What are the realistic and essential benchmarks for the Chadian military junta as the country works toward achieving the "inclusive, peaceful, and timely transition to a democratic and civilian-led government" you cite in your testimony?

Answer. If confirmed, I would urge the Chadian transitional government to signal genuine commitment to the political transition by reaching a thorough and swift resolution to politico-military negotiations in Doha, leading to an inclusive national dialogue in Chad, followed by a constitutional referendum and free and fair elections. Transitional Military Council President Mahamat Deby has previously publicly stated his intentions not to stand for election. If confirmed, I would continue to encourage the Transitional Military Council to amend the transitional charter to commit that none of its members will be eligible to stand for election, as called for in the May 2021 African Union communique. While it is critical to maintain momentum in the transition, there needs to be a balance between rigidly adhering to the original timeline and ensuring a credible process with quality results that meet the needs of the Chadian people and will help guarantee a genuinely inclusive transition to a democratically elected civilian-led government.

*Question.* How can the U.S. integrate our security interests regarding Chad, to include our security assistance opportunities and needs, with our interest in Chadians seeing a citizen-led government and developing democracy?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will endeavor to support Chad across defense, development, and diplomacy activities. I understand that the State Department, including during the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs visit to N'Djamena, has communicated to the Chadian transitional government that our security assistance and cooperation rests on seeing a firm commitment to a transparent process for free and fair elections and a transition to a democratically elected government. If confirmed, I would welcome a conversation with you and your appropriations colleagues on expanding our democracy and governance support to Chad. The United States remains a credible and attractive peace and security cooperation partner to Chad, engaging a wide variety of Chadian political, military, and civil society actors to promote peace, democracy, and governance reforms. American military expertise and collaboration constitute a positive incentive to secure democratic and governance reforms. My understanding is the training provided through our security assistance emphasizes the Geneva convention and human rights. This will help the military adjust to civilian rule after a successful transition.

Chadian units serve in the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and U.S. support has been critical to their deployment. If confirmed, I will give weight to the views of my counterparts in Mali and the U.S. Mission to the U.N., if they believe that the presence of the two Chadian battalions is critical to the mission, I will urge support for continued capacity-building programs. Chad's military is a major player in the fight against violent extremism in the Sahel. In 2021, Chad deployed approximately 1,050 soldiers to the Liptako-Gourma region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger as part of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and continues to support G5 Sahel Joint Force operations across the Sahel. Chadians also participate in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) operations against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa in the Lake Chad Basin.

*Question.* France remains an important and dominant factor in U.S. interests in Chad. In your view, where do U.S. interests in Chad converge with France?

*Answer.* In my view, the United States and France share interest in seeing concrete and consistent progress toward long-term stability in Chad and in the region, and civilian-led and democratically elected government and increased economic opportunity is the best path to long-term stability. The United States also shares France's interest in seeing Chad remain an exporter of regional security, as the situation in the Sahel would undoubtedly worsen if Chadian forces withdrew. I understand that U.S. Embassy N'Djamena has coordinated with France and other likeminded partners on joint public messaging to emphasize the importance of a peaceful, inclusive, democratic transition. If confirmed, I hope to continue this coordination.

*Question.* Where do U.S. interests in Chad diverge from France?

*Answer.* Chad is a critical security partner for France, and a longtime center of gravity for the French military in West/Central Africa. France has in the past intervened in Chad's leadership contests and believes that security in the Sahel has a direct impact on the French homeland. If confirmed, I will coordinate with France and other likeminded partners to align messaging and diplomatic engagement in urging the Chadian transitional government to pursue a peaceful transition to civilian rule in Chad, for a stable country that benefits the Chadian people and wider Sahel region.

*Question.* The U.S. mission in Chad is relatively small, and its remoteness at times commands significantly less attention from Washington than many of its close neighbors, including Sudan and Ethiopia.

- As Chief of Mission, if confirmed, how will you operate in such a post to manage the staff and lead U.S. policy on the ground?

*Answer.* Embassy N'Djamena is a strong team in a tough environment. Having led this team and other small missions in the past, I am cognizant of the particular challenges such missions face regarding resources and workload. If confirmed, I will lead regular discussions with all agencies to establish and review goals and develop strategies and tactics to achieve common objectives. If confirmed, I will engage all employees and stakeholders to conceive and articulate clearly what we will do, how we will do it despite our size and resource limitations, and why it matters - to Chadians, Americans, and global citizens alike. As appropriate and necessary, if confirmed, I will work with the Department to identify resource gaps and seek ways

to address those when possible. If confirmed, I will also create a culture of inclusion in which all employees' contributions are valued.

*Question.* How will you work with your colleagues at Main State to increase the attractiveness of Chad as a post for recruitment?

*Answer.* For an Africanist like me, Chad is a fascinating and enticing assignment; the country has a rich history of 1,000 years of recorded history, a mosaic of peoples, cultures, languages, and religions, and a geography encompassing the worlds of the desert, the savannah, and the forest in an area three times the size of California. This is also, in my view, an exciting time to be working on African affairs. The trend lines are clear that the African continent will play a major role in the direction of our highest priorities, and we have a chance now to work with African partners to influence the direction of that role. We are launching important initiatives to benefit the people of Africa and continuing to work toward democracy, transparency, and good governance. If confirmed, I would work with my colleagues at Main State to highlight the significance of a posting to N'Djamena for our relationship with Chad during a pivotal time in its history, the increasing importance of Africa in U.S. foreign policy, and our global strategic goals.

One challenge to staffing our embassy in N'Djamena is the lack of an American-standard, English-medium school. A post without at least a viable elementary school has a hard time attracting bidders. If confirmed, I hope to begin a long-term process of getting a new school up and running; that will take the work of more than one chief of mission, but it is critically important.

*Question.* Can you provide your view on supporting U.S. funded, independent international election observation missions?

*Answer.* I think there is significant value in the United States supporting independent international election observations, especially in nascent democracies or regions experiencing democratic backsliding, like in the Sahel. If confirmed, I would welcome a conversation with you and your appropriations colleagues on expanding our democracy and governance support to Chad.

*Question.* Would you be supportive of a U.S.-funded independent international election observation mission for Chad's next elections, whenever that may be?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will consult with the Chadian transitional government, international partners, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society to understand conditions on the ground in Chad in the lead up to presidential and legislative elections to determine options for the holding of elections that are genuinely free and fair. Domestic and international observation on election day is an important tool, but the critical decisions that impact the quality of the process happen well before voters head to the polls. Indigenous civil society has a critical role to play throughout the process and if confirmed, I hope to be able to support a robust civil society involvement in all aspects of the electoral process.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would be your approach to using the U.S.'s tools to hold Chadian officials accountable for corrupt behavior?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will support U.S. Government programs and consider leveraging visa restrictions and sanctions to promote accountability and strengthen democratic institutions, promote good governance and transparency, and combat corruption in Chad. If confirmed, I will advocate for increased development assistance to help Chad develop a stronger economy and meet the health and education needs of the population, provided that we have partners who share our vision of good governance and service delivery. I understand that we are also working to mitigate civilian harm by Chadian military forces to encourage a greater focus on accountability and protecting civilians during operations.

*Question.* What is your view on political dynasties and long-serving rulers who, like in the case of Chad, manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to give the facade of democratic legitimacy?

*Answer.* Chadians have never experienced a democratic transfer of power. As I outlined in my opening statement, Chad has had six presidents in the last 62 years, none of the incumbents left power voluntarily, and none of their successors assumed power via constitutional processes. In its modern history, Chad has been governed by and for narrow regional and ethno-linguistic interests. It has also been governed more by the force of arms than by the force of law. Chad is also one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 187th out of 189 countries in the U.N.'s Human Development Index. It has some of the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality in the world, and some of the lowest incomes, life expectancies, and literacy rates. Questions of legitimacy of state authority can lead to fragility, insecurity, and devel-

opment challenges. The current transition period offers a unique opportunity for Chad to reform itself, for the Chadian people to reconcile their differences and move to a more democratic system that will open the way for the social, economic, and political development so desperately needed.

*Question.* U.S. diplomats must get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens. While conditions in Chad may be challenging, equally challenging is conducting diplomacy exclusively from within the Embassy compound or the capital city.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish their missions fully?

*Answer.* The most effective U.S. diplomats are those who actively engage broadly with people throughout all parts of society in the country to which they are assigned. I understand U.S. diplomats throughout the mission safely completed multiple trips out of N'Djamena in the last six months, including to the far north and Lake Chad - places U.S. diplomats had not visited in years. These visits have enriched our public diplomacy narratives, bolstered our reporting, and enlightened our efforts to craft a more effective strategy to support Chad's democratic transition. If confirmed, I will continue to promote such important travel. In my previous assignments, I have similarly sought opportunities for the U.S. Embassy team to experience life and outreach outside embassy walls and outside of capital cities.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed and as health and safety conditions permit, I will encourage U.S. diplomats to engage actively, broadly and in-person with local populations in and outside N'Djamena. If confirmed, I will encourage active engagement through social and virtual media to supplement this outreach. If confirmed, I intend to regularly visit people throughout Chad and use those visits to facilitate contacts for the rest of my team.

*Question.* In November 2020, I published a Senate Foreign Relations Committee majority report entitled "The United States and Europe: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China." The report gave several recommendations for increased transatlantic cooperation, including on Africa, to counter malign Chinese influence more effectively.

- In what ways should the United States partner with European countries to build on likeminded interests in Chad and counter the influence of China and other malign actors?

*Answer.* I am concerned about the PRC's influence across the African continent. If confirmed, I would continue to work with European and other likeminded nations and the Chadian transitional government to strengthen Chad's resilience to external influence and highlight the advantages of cooperation with U.S., European, and likeminded countries on areas of common strategic interest including in the economic and security realms. This may at times include speaking up against the PRC's malign actions and attempts to undermine the international rules-based system and/or advocating for Chadian support of U.S. positions in the U.N. system.

*Question.* Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission N'Djamena?

*Answer.* U.S. Embassy N'Djamena is a strong team in a tough environment. Periods of transition in Embassy leadership can be particularly challenging, and this mission has not seen a confirmed ambassador since 2018. N'Djamena is a challenging and historically difficult post to staff. Staff members face security threats, physical and mental health hazards, isolation, and loneliness. Embassy staff, including locally employed staff, have shown great resilience and dedication to duty despite COVID-19's toll. Infrastructural challenges like telecommunications are very real, for both U.S. and local personnel. Travel times to/from the United States also have the potential to affect our staff's well-being. I understand Embassy N'Djamena prioritizes Embassy morale through tools such as a community liaison office, town halls, and social events for staff to connect with leadership. I understand the new Community Liaison Officer is implementing a robust menu of social activities to appeal to our entire staff - both American and local.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve morale at Mission N'Djamena?

*Answer.* If confirmed, the safety and security of the Embassy community will be of primary importance. I will seek to support American employees and their families to create an inclusive and welcoming culture where individuals are safe and can achieve professional and personal goals. The welfare of our local Chadian and third-country staff members is also of great importance to me, and I commit to meeting regularly with the local staff committee in a spirit of open and constructive dialogue. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that employees and families have safe and acceptable housing, and that embassy services for employees are efficiently delivered to maintain quality of life. In a high-threat environment such as N'Djamena, if confirmed, I will devote extra attention to assuring the physical safety of employees and family members. In addition, if confirmed, I will clearly communicate the nature of the embassy's mission and strategic direction so that employees and family members understand how their work and presence in such an isolated and difficult place serves the national security interests of the United States.

*Question.* How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission N'Djamena?

*Answer.* Having led small missions in the past, I am cognizant of the particular challenges such missions face regarding resources and workload. If confirmed, I will lead regular discussions with all Mission agencies to establish and review goals and develop strategies and tactics to achieve common objectives. If confirmed, I will engage all employees and stakeholders to conceive and articulate clearly what we will do, and how we will do it despite our size and resource limitations. As appropriate and necessary, I will work with the Department to identify resource gaps and seek ways to address those when possible. If confirmed, I will also create a culture of inclusion in which all employees' contributions are valued.

*Question.* Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission.

- How would you describe your management style?

*Answer.* I aspire to create a leadership culture in which all are encouraged to contribute, create, and grow. If confirmed, I would like to create the ideal workplace in which people achieve shared objectives while respecting and valuing everyone's contributions. This requires from leadership and employees a recognition of individuals' strengths and areas of development, and a respect for shared values, inclusion, and our institutions.

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

*Answer.* I do not believe there is an acceptable place for 'berating' subordinates, either in public or in private.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I expect to collaborate closely with the deputy chief of mission to conceive goals, then implement and oversee tactics and activities to achieve those goals. If confirmed, I will work with the deputy chief of mission to articulate and maintain high ethical standards and create a culture of inclusion and respect. I believe deputy chiefs of mission are most effective, productive, and valued when they are permitted to work with independence, while understanding that the chief of mission is ultimately responsible in all ways for the work of the Mission.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ask the deputy chief of mission to lead our mission-wide efforts to train, develop, and empower our small but dedicated staff to serve effectively in a challenging environment while promoting U.S. interests. I will also ask the deputy chief of mission to lead recruitment efforts for our Foreign Service positions and work with other agencies to ensure that their personnel feel fully integrated into Embassy N'Djamena's policy formulation and implementation.

If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with the deputy chief of mission on policy implementation, engagement with the Chadian transitional government, and outreach to key groups, like civil society and youth, through traditional and social media. The deputy chief of mission at any mission must be able to stand in for the ambassador as needed and potentially on short notice; if confirmed, I will ensure that my deputy chief of mission has the knowledge, skills, and awareness to stand in for me with confidence.



*Question.* In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for foreign service officers are imperative, though often lacking.

Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

Answer. Yes, I do.

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

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and fellow foreign diplomats stationed in Chad.

- In your opinion, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

Answer. The most effective U.S. diplomats are those who actively engage broadly with people throughout all parts of society in the country to which they are assigned. Embassy N'Djamena has actively left the capital to engage civil society, local government, media, and members of the international community throughout the country. In my previous assignments, I have similarly sought opportunities for the U.S. Embassy team to experience life and outreach outside embassy walls. Travel within Chad is difficult and time-consuming, but it is also critical to our work as diplomats. Chad is three times the size of California and has very few paved roads; if confirmed, we are going to put hard miles on our vehicles and our bodies, but we will be a presence outside of N'Djamena.

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

Answer. If confirmed and as health and safety conditions permit, I will encourage U.S. diplomats to engage actively, broadly and in-person with local populations in and outside N'Djamena. If confirmed, I will encourage active engagement through social and virtual media to supplement this outreach. If confirmed, I intend to regularly visit people throughout Chad and use those visits to facilitate contacts for the rest of my team.

*Question.* Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Chad?

Answer. The Chadian public is receptive to both U.S. Government programs and messaging on our policy priorities. Chad's demographics pose a range of challenges and opportunities for U.S. public diplomacy engagement: 65 percent of the population is under 25 years of age; the median age is 16.8 years; but reaching this dynamic population can prove difficult for our small mission. For example, as the transition in Chad gains momentum, we have at times found our ability to fully engage constrained by the lack of consistent staffing in our public diplomacy section. We currently have a temporary duty Public Affairs Officer and do not have a full-time, U.S. direct hire employee arriving until Summer 2023 to help fill this gap. As is the case in many public diplomacy sections across Africa, inadequate and inconsistent staffing inhibits broader public diplomacy efforts. Nonetheless, I am fully committed to proactive recruitment for this and other important positions at Mission N'Djamena.

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

Answer. Chad's population is overwhelmingly young, which means most people are in their primary or secondary school years. Many young people either do not have access to quality education or must leave school because of economic hardship. This difficult educational landscape also impacts the acquisition of English. While these are public diplomacy challenges—bolstering education and English acquisition—they are also opportunities for us to gear our efforts to these necessary endeavors, that will attract a new, large generation to our standard.

*Question.* How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with Main State and respect the inter-agency process on policy formation. Our public diplomacy messaging will reflect this in amplifying messaging on the political transition.

*Question.* “Anomalous health incidents,” commonly referred to as “Havana Syndrome,” have been debilitating and sidelining U.S. diplomats around the world for years. They have caused serious, negative consequences for U.S. diplomacy, yet many believe that the Department is not doing enough to care for, protect, and communicate to its personnel. The past occurrences and ongoing threat of anomalous health incidents among embassy personnel and their families poses a serious challenge to morale. When personnel at post fear for their safety or doubt that their case will be taken seriously if they were affected, the performance of embassy operations can suffer.

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

Answer. Yes, I do.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to talking as openly as you can to Mission N’Djamena personnel?

Answer. Yes, I commit to transparent communication with Mission N’Djamena personnel as it relates to anomalous health incidents and any other matters that would have an impact on the health and safety of Mission N’Djamena personnel and their families.

*Question.* Have you received a briefing on the anomalous health incidents that have occurred to U.S. Government personnel around the world, including at U.S. embassies and other diplomatic posts? If you have not, and if you are confirmed, do you commit to receiving a briefing on the incidents before you depart for your post?

Answer. I have received a briefing on the anomalous health incidents that have occurred to U.S. Government personnel around the world.

*Question.* In the event of an anomalous health incident among your embassy personnel or eligible family members, do you commit to maintain detailed records of the incident, and share the information with the State Department and other embassies to contribute to the investigation of how these attacks are affecting U.S. missions and personnel around the world?

Answer. Yes, I do.

*Question.* Whether or not anomalous health incidents occur at your embassy, how will you work to restore and preserve morale that may be lost due to the knowledge these attacks have been occurring at posts around the world?

Answer. If confirmed, I will pay close and continued attention to the welfare and morale of embassy staff and identify opportunities to prioritize Embassy morale through tools such as regular town halls or social events for community members and their families.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. ALEXANDER MARK LASKARIS BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* How do you view recent developments in Chad in regard to democracy and a restoration of constitutional order?

Answer. In the aftermath of then-President Idriss Deby’s death in April 2021, the United States called for a peaceful, timely transition of power to a democratically elected and civilian-led government. If confirmed, I will continue to stand with the people of Chad in advocating for a democratic and representative government as the best path to long-term peace and prosperity in the country, as well as the region. If confirmed, I will encourage the Transitional Military Council to hold an inclusive national dialogue as soon as feasible, followed by a constitutional referendum and free and fair elections.

If confirmed, I will continue our coordination with like-minded embassies in Chad to stand with the Chadian people and support the transition. Since April 2021 when then-President Idriss Deby was killed by rebel forces, both the Government of Chad and the rebel groups have respected the cease fire. As it has now been over a year, the longest time Chad has known without internal armed conflict, this should be seen as a demonstration of the will of all—the Chadian people, the military leaders, the transitional government leaders, and the rebel leaders—to bring peace and reconciliation to the country through an inclusive National Dialogue and elections. If successful, these elections would mark the first time there has been a peaceful transition of power since independence.

If confirmed, I would welcome a conversation with you and your appropriations colleagues on expanding our democracy and governance support, as I believe these activities have been underfunded in Chad.

*Question.* Is it time to call the “military transition government” what it was, namely a coup? If not, how is the situation in Chad not a coup?

*Answer.* My understanding is that the Department carefully reviewed the events in Chad and concluded that the military coup restriction in section 7008 of the annual appropriations act had not been triggered with respect to Chad. I understand that the Department assessed that then-President Idriss Deby was not duly elected as the head of government of Chad, nor were his designated constitutional successors in the National Assembly. Separately, the African Union carefully examined the events in Chad and determined that the actions that lead to the formation of a Transitional Military Council taking power in the aftermath of the battlefield death of the former president was not a coup d’état. The African Union continues to monitor the situation and support Chad’s transition.

*Question.* What should be the consequences if Chad fails to hold elections by October 2022 as the administration has publicly called for?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue the administration’s pressure on the Transitional Military Council to adhere to a peaceful, timely transition process leading to free and fair elections, resulting in a democratically elected and civilian-led government. If this happens, it would mark the first time since independence that Chad will experience a peaceful transition of power. It is important that we continue to see progress in the steps that will lead to elections, but it is equally important that these are done well and not rushed to ensure that there is a genuinely inclusive transition and movement toward democracy in Chad. Absent consistent and concrete progress on this transition timeline over the next few months, if confirmed, my Embassy N’Djamena team and I would explore options within the interagency to strengthen democratic institutions and promote good governance in Chad while holding accountable those responsible for delays or efforts to undermine democracy. If confirmed, I would welcome a conversation with you and your appropriations colleagues on expanding our democracy and governance support to Chad.

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**Correspondence Supporting the Nomination of Hon. Elizabeth Richard to  
be Coordinator for Counterterrorism**

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Honorable Robert Menendez  
Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Menendez,

My attention has been drawn to an article that has appeared in Politico that has suggested that Elizabeth Richard, as ambassador to Lebanon, took undue security risks in directing the departure of a U.S. military Quick Reaction Force (QRF) from Beirut in the aftermath of the assassination of Qasim Solemani.

I consider this allegation to be the rankest and most baseless example of character assassination that I have witnessed over the course of my four decade career as a Foreign Service Officer.

Elizabeth and I worked together over a period of five consecutive years in two of the most critical threat postings in the State Department. Elizabeth was a senior officer in Islamabad, Pakistan when I served there as Deputy Chief of Mission. When I was selected as ambassador to Sana'a, Yemen, I prevailed on Elizabeth to serve as my deputy precisely because I knew that she was a rock solid officer whose judgment I could rely on regardless of any situation that we found ourselves in.

Over the course of three years together, as Sana'a was experiencing the political and security upheaval of the Arab Spring as well as the continued threat from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Elizabeth and I did go through a number of serious security challenges, including repeated personnel evacuations and drawdowns, an attack on the embassy in 2012, and street battles fought among rival Yemeni military units in and around the area of our embassy and staff housing facility. In all of those instances, Elizabeth's judgment and perspectives on all issues related to the security of our staff and personnel were unerring.

There were moments when the outcome of events might have been very different for us. But I take as a point of pride that no American or Foreign Service National employee of the embassy was injured or worse during that period. I don't know that we could have been as successful had I not been able to rely on Elizabeth. So when I read an article that suggests that Elizabeth was somehow derelict in ensuring the security of the embassy and staff in her mission in Beirut, I am outraged. I know that Elizabeth handled the security in Beirut with the same care and attention to detail that she did in Sana'a. Moreover, I know that she acted only after a complete and thorough review of the situation with her Country Team and her security team. (I also know, from my own service in Beirut, that our security team there is the best of any

U.S. embassy in the world, so when they were on board with Elizabeth's perspective, that should be taken as the gold standard.)

I hope, as the Committee evaluates Elizabeth's qualifications to serve as the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, that it will ignore these ugly and baseless allegations and recognize Elizabeth for the outstanding officer that she has been and will continue to be in this new assignment.

Sincerely,  
Gerald M. Feierstein

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**Correspondence Supporting the Nomination of Hon. Elizabeth Richard to  
be Coordinator for Counterterrorism—continuing**

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The Honorable Robert Menendez  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable James Risch  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Senators:

I am writing after seeing the article suggesting that Ambassador Elizabeth Richard did not execute her duties as our Ambassador to Lebanon in a responsible manner.

I have known and worked closely with AMB Richard for nearly 15 years. I consider her to be among the very finest Diplomats our Nation has produced. Any suggestion that she was irresponsible regarding security flies in the face of every experience I have had with her. We worked together, not only in Lebanon, but also when she the Deputy Chief of Mission in Yemen — both locations with extraordinary security threats. On every occasion she demonstrated extraordinary skill and expertise in making decisions regarding security postures of US facilities and person. She was an extraordinary collaborator and I never any reason to think otherwise.

Our Nation needs her in position as our Department of State CT Coordinator.

Thank you.

Vr,

Joseph L. Votel  
General, US Army (Retired)  
Former Commander, US Special Operations Command and US Central Command

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Senator Robert Menendez  
Senator James Risch  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

May 10, 2022

Dear Chairman Menendez:  
Dear Ranking Member Risch:

I was shocked to see the article in Politico last night trying to undermine the nomination of Elizabeth Richard. These cowardly individuals waited years to come forward with a highly distorted story to attack a brave and experienced officer who is eminently qualified to be the Department's coordinator for CounterTerrorism.

I have known Elizabeth Richard about twenty years during her lengthy and diverse service in high profile and dangerous posts. In 2004, I asked her to be the law enforcement representative in Afghanistan when I was the Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. She played a critical role in developing the Afghan police and the Afghan prosecutor's office. She led a team of brave civilians who travelled regularly to rural police bases. She always emphasized to her young and inexperienced team the value of good security practices and consulted closely and constantly with our security professionals.

Some years later, I asked her to join me in Pakistan to handle the critical issue of developing the Pakistan Afghanistan border. The US was almost completely dependent on Pakistan to supply 130,000 American troops in Afghanistan. All the fuel and most other supplies for US troops came across Pakistan to two border crossings into Afghanistan. Elizabeth entirely overhauled these border crossings to benefit our troops in Afghanistan and to reduce smuggling of people and goods into Pakistan. She designed a program to identify fertilizer from Pakistan used in roadside bombs in Afghanistan and worked with fertilizer plants in Pakistan to shut down smuggling. This saved American and Afghan lives.

I was Assistant Secretary for the Middle East when Elizabeth was Ambassador in Lebanon, and I visited her in Beirut in 2016. Lebanon was a dangerous country and there was often threat information against Americans given the presence of Hezbollah. As you would expect from someone with her counter terrorism experience, Elizabeth was entirely attuned to these threats and always took necessary action to protect her staff and the American citizen community. Having served in places like Colombia and Pakistan, I know what good local security looks like. The security apparatus protecting the Embassy and our personnel in Beirut was first rate. There was nothing more important to Elizabeth than the security of her personnel. No one is more qualified to protect both our own personnel and our country from terrorist attacks. I hope the Committee will confirm her quickly.

Sincerely,

Anne Patterson (Retired Amb. to El Salvador, Colombia, Pakistan and Egypt)

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**Correspondence Supporting the Nomination of Hon. Elizabeth Richard to  
be Coordinator for Counterterrorism—(continuing)**

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The Honorable Chairman Senator Menendez

The Honorable Ranking Member Senator Risch,

I write to you today in support of the confirmation of Ambassador Elizabeth H. Richard for the position of Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in the U.S. Department of State. Ambassador Richard has been my colleague and friend since we served together in the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan from 2008 until 2010. As you may recall, this was the period of the Marriott Hotel bombing and other terrorist activity in Islamabad and the height of the Tarik-e Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) success in taking control of territory within 90 miles of the Pakistani capital.

In my experience Ambassador Richard has proven to be not only one of our very best diplomats, but also one of our most highly respected diplomats within senior U.S. military circles. She has earned that respect as a result of her outstanding leadership, teamwork, and total dedication to achieving our U.S. National Security objectives. She also has consistently demonstrated sound judgment and unwavering vigilance to ensuring the safety and security of her U.S. and host nation employees, and all American citizens visiting or residing in a number of high threat countries where she served.

Ambassador Richard is arguably the most informed and experienced senior State Department official in the field of counter-terrorism, having served in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Lebanon, and having been intimately involved in coordinating U.S. military counter-terrorism activities in those countries.

I wholeheartedly believe Ambassador Elizabeth H. Richard is the right person at the right time to assume the duties of Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in the U.S. Department of State and humbly request you vote to confirm her today.

Very Respectfully,  
Robin L. Fontes  
Major General (retired), United States Army  
Boise, Idaho

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1435 Q Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009-3807

May 10, 2022

Chairman Menendez  
Ranking Member Risch  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Risch:

Aware that Ambassador and Career Minister Elizabeth Richard will appear before your committee today for confirmation hearing, I am taking the liberty to write in reaction to the May 9 *Politico* article citing unnamed sources about Ambassador Richard's service leading the U.S. Embassy in Beirut.

As a former chief of mission at Embassy Beirut myself, I am aware of the security considerations that must have guided Ambassador Richard and Embassy Beirut's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) in deciding not to extend the Quick Reaction Force that was deployed in the aftermath of the U.S. assassination of Qassim Suleimani. Having participated in many EAC meetings over the years, I am certain that Ambassador Richard (with her extensive experience working in difficult and challenging postings) and her colleagues, including representatives of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the State Department, carefully considered the question of QRF extension. During my tenure in Beirut, one always, *inter alia*, had to monitor carefully the local reactions, including from Hezbollah, to any Embassy activity and presence: it is inconceivable to me that the QRF presence was not noticed by Hezbollah, whose operatives may have questioned whether QRF deployment was truly only a defensive measure.

In the end, as the *Politico* article itself notes, "Richard's call on the QRF did not have any overt negative implications for the security of the embassy." In other words, she and her EAC, in consultation with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, made the right decision, allowing the QRF (which was never intended to be a permanent presence) to be deployed elsewhere as needed.

Given Ambassador Richard's real-life exposure to countries affected by terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, I hope the Committee will quickly confirm this distinguished diplomat to be the State Department's Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Feltman

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**Correspondence Supporting the Nomination of Hon. Elizabeth Richard to  
be Coordinator for Counterterrorism—(continuing)**

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Arlington, VA  
May 10, 2022

To the Honorable Robert Menendez,

I respectfully write to convey two related sentiments.

First, to express my professional and personal support for Ambassador Elizabeth Richard's nomination to be the next Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Department of State. I served with Elizabeth in the US Counterterrorism community for more than a decade of my military career in US Special Operations, and we served together in Pakistan for three of those years. I have also known every CT Coordinator in State Department for the last 20 years, and while all were quite gifted, I believe none of them has had the combination of personal courage, intellectual strength, and deep operational experience that Ambassador Richard possesses.

Second, I wish to convey my personal disagreement with the accusations recently and publicly leveled against Ambassador Richard's performance as US Ambassador to Lebanon. I have also worked with most of the US Ambassadors in Lebanon for the last two decades, and many been extraordinary. Yet, Ambassador Richard has still been the finest to serve there during my career. Beyond Lebanon, I have been privileged to see first-hand how Elizabeth works effectively in some of the most conflict-afflicted areas of the world, and had the privilege to see her consistent personal bravery, her ingenuity, her care & compassion for American and Foreign personnel alike, and her unerring ability to always "think strategically, not just tactically".

Regarding the specific allegation that she is somehow "insubordinate", Ambassador Richard is one of the most faithful, diligent, and consistently respectful US officials I have ever had the privilege to work with. She is never insubordinate, even when peoples' lives are quite literally "on the line". But Elizabeth is always willing to speak-truth-to-the-powerful when appropriate, while nonetheless remaining respectful and mindful of her place in the leadership chain. Perhaps one of the highest compliments I can pay her is that I have personally seen her diligently, energetically, and faithfully implement decisions that I knew she disagreed with, but once the decision was made, had the courage and fortitude to set her personal views aside, and accomplish whatever directive was required.

The Department of State, and all of America, would strategically benefit from Ambassador Richard's confirmation to be the next Coordinator for Counterterrorism at State Department.

Very Respectfully,



Michael K. Nagata  
Lieutenant General, US Army (Retired)

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