

Statement of Yael Lempert
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 4, 2023

Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden’s nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I would like to thank the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, and the Congress more broadly, on U.S. interests in Jordan.

Since joining the Foreign Service 25 years ago I have spent most of my career working either in or on the Middle East and North Africa, including in Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and Israel, as well as in domestic assignments at the State Department and on the National Security Council staff under three Presidents. It is impossible to sufficiently express my appreciation to my family for their stalwart support throughout my career, especially to my husband, Andrea, and our wonderful daughter, Bianca, who are most impacted by this itinerant lifestyle, and to my parents and siblings, who - no matter how much worry I caused them, serving in a post-war zone and through a revolution - always supported me in this life of serving our country. I want to particularly recognize my late father, U.S. Air Force Captain and ophthalmologist Philip Lempert, who instilled in me a devotion to public service, and always believed in me and that I would reach this day.

As President Biden has said, “The role Jordan plays as a force for stability in the Middle East can’t be overstated”. The strategic partnership between the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is key to advancing U.S. priorities throughout the region, and to promoting regional security and stability. The United States has a profound interest in supporting the political and economic reform agenda laid out by the Jordanian government to address persistent economic, environmental, and regional challenges – from unemployment to water scarcity to the spillover effects of the crisis in Syria.

U.S. priorities in Jordan are focused on supporting economic growth, strengthening water security, and deepening our strong security cooperation. These goals are advanced through our new seven-year assistance MOU, which supports key reforms centered on improving the lives of Jordanians– including essential public services, tackling the water crisis, and expanding economic opportunities. Thanks to strong Congressional support, U.S. economic assistance to Jordan using Fiscal Year 2023 funds includes over \$1.2 billion aimed at bolstering Jordan’s stability and strengthening our partnership. If confirmed, I will work with Jordanian leaders, the IMF and others to support Jordan’s reform and modernization efforts and to ensure that our assistance package is used effectively.

As a Major Non-NATO Ally and crucial member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Jordan has long been a key ally in the fight against terrorism, while also supporting international peacekeeping efforts and providing humanitarian assistance. Our new MOU includes a minimum of \$400 million annually in Foreign Military Financing for Jordan, making it among the largest recipients of Foreign Military Financing globally. This funding bolsters Jordan’s

capacity to play a stabilizing role in the Middle East, helps to address emerging threats and ensures continued interoperability with U.S. and Coalition forces.

Jordan has long offered a refuge to those displaced by regional conflicts and crises, most recently in the extraordinary generosity that the Jordanian government and its people have shown to Syrians. The United States has contributed over \$2.2 billion in humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan since the conflict in Syria began. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for humanitarian assistance from our partners and in international fora to promote burden sharing and ensure we collectively provide for those in need. I will also promote regional integration and support Jordan's important role in contributing to regional peace and prosperity. Next year marks 30 years since Jordan signed its historic peace treaty with Israel; Jordan's commitment to working towards peace between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as partnering with the United States and others to advance de-escalation efforts, is indispensable.

The U.S. Embassy in Jordan is among the largest in the world, with a talented, dedicated, and diverse team of American and local staff that, if confirmed, I would be proud to lead. The safety and security of the Embassy team and of U.S. citizens in Jordan – including the over 33,000 Americans residing there and the more than 150,000 American tourists who visit annually – will always be my foremost priority.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, if confirmed, I will work to further strengthen the vital U.S.-Jordan partnership and to ensure that it serves U.S. interests and reflects U.S. values. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.