

**BEYOND ISIS: COUNTERING TERRORISM,  
RADICALIZATION, AND PROMOTING  
STABILITY IN NORTH AFRICA**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST,  
SOUTH ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA  
AND COUNTERTERRORISM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

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**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA,  
CENTRAL ASIA AND COUNTERTERRORISM,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Johnson, Young, Kaine, Murphy, and Booker.

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

Senator RISCH. I am going to call the meeting of the subcommittee to order. Thank you all for coming today.

A couple of things to start with, number one, we are going to have votes starting at 3 o'clock. We will deal with that when we have to deal with that.

The second thing is, this committee does not meet as frequently as many other committees, the primary reason being that the issues that we deal with are of sufficient magnitude that they are generally dealt with by the whole committee. So either this committee wraps itself around the other or vice versa, depending upon how you look at it.

But in any event, we really deemed that this was an appropriate subject, however, for this subcommittee. Obviously, the complexity of dealing with the issues on North Africa are certainly worthy of our consideration, thus, the meeting today. And we have a very good panel to help us deal with this, people who deal with this all the time.

So thank you all for being here.

Ambassador Sales, I know your travel schedule has been quite robust. And as a result of that, I appreciate you accommodating us, to actually be able to be here yourself today.

North Africa is an important region for the United States, as well as transatlantic security. Several years ago, we watched the Arab Spring begin in Tunisia and then spread across the Middle East. People in the region wanted a better life and were clearly

tired with the slow pace of change. Despite their aspirations, the pace of change has not met their expectations.

Today, we still see weak institutions, and strong leaders make change difficult. And in the process, safe havens continue to exist for terrorists.

The region, especially Morocco and Tunisia, has seen a significant number of their people, of their citizens, join ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Now these fighters pose a threat as they return to the region, to their own homeland.

Morocco and Algeria have strong institutions to collaborate with the United States. In Tunisia, the Government is stable, but still fragile, and requires a commitment to help build their institutional capacity.

ISIS's increased presence in the Sinai is troubling, to say the least. The attacks against Coptic Christians and Muslims, like the recent mosque attack, highlight how large a threat ISIS still is in the region.

In Libya, we see rival factions and weak institutions undermine the capacity to govern the country, leaving few partners to work with in the fight against terrorism. The byproduct is freedom of movement for terrorists to plan, train, and finance their activities.

At the same time, countries around the region are competing for influence and power rather than helping the domestic leaders build capacity and effective institutions to govern their own country. This only undermines counterterrorism efforts.

However, this challenge is not something that can be confronted solely through military force. Targeted U.S. airstrikes have been helpful, but political resolution in Libya is vital to building long-term partner capacity and actually rooting out terrorism.

If factionalism persists, we will never get beyond military action.

Also, I worry that the broader region is becoming not just a training ground for terrorist camps, but a base of operation as deeper affiliations with international terrorist organizations are growing. This has profound implications for European security, as smuggling and extremists themselves cross the Mediterranean into Europe.

There is an opportunity for the United States to partner with our allies in Europe and the gulf to help bring more stability to the region, and I look forward to hearing our witnesses help explain how we can accomplish this challenging task.

I know that Senator Kaine wants badly to join us today, but like all of us, he has challenges, and he is going to be here. So we will look forward to his opening statement when he gets here.

In any event, I want to thank both Ambassador Sales and Ambassador Polaschik, and ask you to honor us with what you have to say. And we will start with Ambassador Sales.

**STATEMENT OF HON. NATHAN SALES, AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE, COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ambassador SALES. Thank you very much, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Kaine, and other members of the subcommittee. I would like to thank you for inviting me to discuss U.S. counterterrorism efforts in North Africa.

And, Mr. Chairman, should I pause now to hear from Senator Kaine? Very good.

I would like to thank you for holding this hearing, and I am especially grateful to you for scheduling this hearing at a time that allows me to personally participate.

Our top priority in the region is to prevent terrorist groups from threatening the United States by denying them the ability to operate in the continent's vast, under-governed spaces.

Terrorists who enjoy safe haven are capable of exporting violence around the world, striking us here at home and striking the homelands of our closest allies. We saw al Qaeda do this from Afghanistan in the 1990s through 9/11. More recently, we also saw ISIS do the same thing from its false caliphate in Syria and Iraq.

This is the reason why we are helping the sometimes-fragile states of North Africa build their counterterrorism capacity. We want to develop their capabilities to the point where they are able to defend themselves without relying on assistance from the United States.

Today, ISIS is on the ropes in Syria and Iraq, but significant challenges remain—ISIS networks in North Africa, as you have already mentioned, Senator; foreign terrorist fighters from the region who have traveled to the war zone and now seek to return home; al Qaeda affiliates, like AQIM.

Today, I am going to highlight several areas where the CT Bureau and the rest of the State Department have been working with our North African partners to address these and other problems.

First, law enforcement and criminal justice. Strong, stable, and responsive governments are an important bulwark against terrorism. That is why we help partner nations develop appropriate legal frameworks to effectively prosecute terrorist offenders. In particular, we strengthen our partners' ability to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate terrorism-related crimes. We also help them build crisis response teams that are capable of responding to terrorist attacks in real-time.

Second, border security. Terrorists exploit long, porous borders in remote and loosely governed parts of the continent. An important part of the solution to that problem is information-sharing. For that reason, we have worked with our interagency partners to conclude HSPD-6 agreements with dozens of countries, including a number in North Africa. As you know, HSPD-6 calls for information-sharing about known and suspected terrorists.

We have also worked to stem the flow of FTFs across international borders. This means getting our partners to use Interpol's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database and other resources.

We are also expanding the PISCES program. That rather elaborate acronym is Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System. It is a mouthful, but what it does do is provide state-of-the-art border-screening systems to 24 countries.

A third important CT tool is designations. The State Department has listed a number of foreign terrorist organizations that are active in North Africa. Examples include ISIS Sinai, ISIS Libya, AQIM, and Ansar al-Sharia. Using these designations enables us to help cut off the financial flows that are the lifeblood of these organizations.

Fourth, we work to counter radicalization in a way that is tailored to each North African country's unique circumstances. It is not enough to stop FTFs from traveling to the war zone or remove them from the battlefield. This is a battle of ideas, and we also need to delegitimize the radical ideology that attracts them in the first place and prevent them from getting into terrorist pipelines.

Finally, looking beyond Foggy Bottom, the Department of Defense continues to advance U.S. counterterrorism priorities in North Africa by taking the fight directly to the enemy.

On October 29th, our soldiers captured Mustafa al-Imam, who was allegedly involved in the 2012 Benghazi terrorist attacks. We have transferred him to the United States for prosecution, where he will face justice for his alleged crimes. We continue to investigate the perpetrators of this attack, and we look forward to bringing them to justice.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you again for holding this hearing. I will now turn the floor over to Ambassador Polaschik, who will discuss some of the political and diplomatic aspects of our efforts in the region.

Thank you.

[Ambassador Sales's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. NATHAN A. SALES

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the subcommittee: Thank you for the invitation to discuss U.S. counterterrorism efforts in North Africa, which form a critical part of our global campaign against ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates. Our primary goal in the region is to prevent terrorist organizations from threatening the United States and our interests by denying them the ability to operate in the continent's vast, under-governed spaces. Terrorist groups with safe haven are able to export their violence around the world, striking our homeland and those of our closest allies. We saw al-Qa'ida do this from Afghanistan in the 1990s through 9/11; more recently, we saw ISIS do the same from Iraq and Syria.

To mitigate the threat posed by terrorist groups in North Africa, we are helping fragile states build capacity as well as leveraging highly capable states' counterterrorism expertise. We want to develop our African partners' counterterrorism capabilities to a point where they need not rely on assistance from the United States to defend themselves.

ISIS is on the ropes in Iraq and Syria. But as the group loses control over territory in its core, it is essential that we prevent it from reconstituting itself elsewhere. In particular, ISIS maintains networks in North Africa that seek to conduct or inspire attacks on the continent, in Europe, and against U.S. interests. Furthermore, North African foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) have figured prominently in the ranks of ISIS militants in Iraq and Syria, and we must remain vigilant against the threat posed by FTFs returning home. Algeria's long conflict with the Armed Islamic Group in the 1990s underscored how important it is for countries to effectively manage the risks posed by returning terrorist fighters. I note that Algeria today is a highly capable counterterrorism partner that is attuned to these risks and sharing its hard-won insights with like-minded partners, including the United States. We also remain concerned about al-Qa'ida's affiliates in the region, especially al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and their growing reach into other parts of Africa.

Today, I will highlight several specific areas where the Bureau of Counterterrorism has been working with North African partners to address these and other challenges: training law enforcement officers and judges how to handle terrorism cases; strengthening information sharing and terrorist screening; cutting off the flow of money to terrorist groups; and countering the radical ideologies used by ISIS and its affiliates to recruit new members.

*Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, and Crisis Response*

Strong, stable, and responsive governments that provide security and economic prosperity for their citizens are an important source of strength against terrorist threats. This is why the CT Bureau works closely with partner countries to develop



appropriate legal frameworks to bring criminal cases against terrorist offenders. In particular, we assist partners with strengthening their ability to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate terrorism crimes. We also help them develop crisis-response capabilities to address terrorist incidents in real time.

To investigate, we work closely with our interagency partners to provide assistance to law enforcement units so they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and tools to detect, thwart, and respond to terrorism. This includes training, equipping, and mentoring crisis response units, canine teams, bomb squads, fusion centers, and cyber investigation teams.

To prosecute, we work with lawyers to enable them to prepare persuasive, well-developed cases that draw on different kinds of evidence and that lead to convictions. Examples include case-based mentoring designed to help prosecutors secure convictions or working with countries to develop counterterrorism prosecution cells that are versed in terrorism case law.

To adjudicate, we work with judges on procedural and substantive issues so they have a better understanding of the complexity of terrorism cases and the types of evidence that will be brought to bear. We round out our efforts in the criminal justice system by working with prison officials to provide training and technical assistance so they can effectively punish convicted terrorists and identify those who may be receptive to rehabilitation.

For instance, we have partnered with Tunisia's security services to improve their ability to detect, respond to, and mitigate terrorist threats. In May, the Tunisian National Guard launched a raid that resulted in the death of a senior ISIS leader who was believed to be planning attacks during Ramadan. Just last month, Tunisian tactical and investigative units collaborated to arrest members of an alleged terrorist cell; an investigation is ongoing under the auspices of the Public Prosecutor's offices.

Promoting this kind of interagency coordination is a staple of the training and assistance we provide to our partners. We are also working with Algeria's national criminal forensics laboratory to provide forensics training to judiciary and law-enforcement personnel, which the Algerians are now able to share with neighbors.

And last month in Egypt, we concluded our first train-the-trainer course on Explosive Incident Countermeasures. This will help Egypt address bomb threats and train other first responders on the identification, neutralization, and safe disposition of explosive devices.

#### *Information Sharing, Borders, and Aviation*

Terrorists do not respect borders, so it is no surprise that ISIS and al-Qa'ida adherents range across parts of the Maghreb and also further south in Mali, Niger, and other Sahel countries. They seek to exploit long, porous borders in remote and loosely governed areas of the continent.

This is why the CT Bureau focuses on improving border security—especially through information sharing at international borders, where there is a critical need to detect and prevent terrorist travel. With the FBI-administered Terrorist Screening Center (TSC), and in coordination with interagency partners, the State Department has concluded bilateral arrangements with a number of countries to exchange information about known and suspected terrorists pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD-6), including in North Africa.

We also have encouraged our partners to stem the flow of suspected FTFs across their borders. This means getting countries to make greater use of INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Document and other databases and resources related to FTFs—resources that allow countries to screen travelers and to assist their law enforcement agencies in identifying and investigating terrorist travelers. We also continue to expand the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) program, which provides state-of-the-art border screening systems to 24 countries.

On aviation security, we are expanding our counterterrorism cooperation with Egypt, and we expect to provide enhanced explosives detection and screening technologies, training, and canines in 2018. Likewise, in 2017, the CT Bureau revitalized a dormant bilateral relationship with Libya and provided aviation security training to 24 participants of the Libyan Aviation Authority from six airports across Libya.

#### *Designations and Countering Terrorist Finance*

A third important tool in our comprehensive approach is terrorist designations and countering the financing of terrorism. Designating individuals and terrorist groups exposes and isolates terrorists and their supporters, denies them access to the U.S. financial system, and enables authorities to prosecute them for their crimes

and prevent them from entering this country. Moreover, designations can assist or complement the law enforcement actions of other U.S. agencies and other governments, whether through their own or UN designations.

The State Department has designated a number of entities operating in North Africa as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, including ISIS-Sinai Province, ISIS-Libya, AQIM, Ansar al-Shari'a, and the al-Mulathamun Battalion. We continue to identify individuals and entities for designation to combat terrorism and disrupt terrorist financing in the region.

#### *Preventing Radicalization and Recruitment*

There are a wide variety of reasons why so many FTFs come from North African countries. Some were motivated by a desire to overthrow the Assad regime and others by ISIS's call to join its false caliphate. Still others were exposed to radical ideology in environments that had struggled to build strong public and private institutions capable of countering messages of hate. This appears to have been the case in Tunisia, from which as many as 3,000 to 6,000 FTFs traveled to the conflict zone in Iraq and Syria. By contrast, in Algeria, where the memories of the "dark decade" fighting Islamist terrorists remain fresh, the societal and institutional arrangements put in place seem to have prevented any major outflow.

Countering radicalization in a way that is tailored to each North African country is another critical component of a comprehensive approach to counterterrorism. We must do more than simply identify and stop FTFs from traveling or remove them from the battlefield. We need to delegitimize the violent ideology that attracts them and also prevent them from getting into terrorist pipelines in the first place.

In Morocco, for example, we are using lessons from the fields of public health and disease control to confront radicalism in local communities by detecting, interrupting, and changing behaviors and community norms.

In addition, the CT Bureau works closely with the Strong Cities Network (SCN). The SCN is the first global network of mayors, municipal-level policy makers, and practitioners united to build community resilience to extremism in all its forms. The network has more than 100 city members from Los Angeles, New York, and Chattanooga, to Peshawar, Nairobi, and Vilvoorde. Tunis is the first North African member, and SCN also has cities from northern Cameroon and Mauritania in its Sahel ranks.

#### *Military Action*

While I am not here to discuss in detail the use of force against terrorists, the Department of Defense continues to advance our counterterrorism objectives in North Africa by taking the fight directly to the enemy. We have come a long way from the middle of 2016, when Libya's branch of ISIS was the strongest ISIS affiliate outside of Iraq and Syria. U.S. direct action and our partnership with Prime Minister al-Sarraj's government and its aligned forces forced ISIS out of Sirte and placed significant pressure on the ISIS-Libya network, hampering its ability to conduct complex attacks and project significant threats outside the country.

Separately, on October 29, U.S. forces captured Mustafa al-Imam, who was allegedly involved in the 2012 Benghazi terrorist attacks, and transferred him to the United States for prosecution. We continue to investigate and identify all those who were involved in the attack, and we will spare no effort to bring the perpetrators to justice.

#### *Working with Partners*

Finally, it is important to understand that our efforts in North Africa are not in isolation. To the contrary, we are working with European allies, other key partners, and multilateral institutions to amplify our efforts and make a larger impact. Morocco and Algeria in particular are regional leaders in multilateral counterterrorism initiatives, including those of the African Union, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF).

We welcome Morocco's support and leadership as our co-lead of the GCTF's Initiative to Address Homegrown Terrorism. Over the course of the next year, a series of regional workshops will identify innovative prevention programs for addressing the challenges of homegrown terrorism. Algeria also plays an important role in the GCTF, co-chairing the West Africa Region Capacity-Building Working Group, which helps mobilize assistance to help West African countries build capacity to counter terrorism. GCTF members remain committed to addressing returning FTFs, countering terrorist financing, enhancing border security, building capacity, and preparing national action plans in African countries.

#### *Conclusion*

The United States uses a range of tools and resources and works closely with the governments of North Africa and other partners to comprehensively address ter-

rorism. We are encouraged by reporting from our diplomatic posts about how our training and resources are directly assisting partners to disrupt terrorist operations, prosecute terrorist suspects, and protect borders. I will now turn the floor over to Ambassador Polaschik, who will discuss the political and diplomatic aspect of our approach to this region. We greatly appreciate Congress's support. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Ambassador Polaschik?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOAN POLASCHIK, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Kaine, subcommittee members, thank you for the invitation to appear before you.

As Ambassador Sales just described, ISIS and other terrorist groups have been significantly degraded in this region. Nevertheless, these groups continue to capitalize on political friction, economic frustrations, and regional fragmentation in their quest to destabilize our partners and threaten attacks against U.S. interests.

As an integral component of our counterterrorism efforts, the United States is working closely with our partners in North Africa as they seek to advance political reconciliation, promote economic reforms, and strengthen civil society to ensure a robust and comprehensive approach to our collective threats.

I would like to speak briefly about our specific efforts and also would like to submit a statement for the record.

Turning first to Libya, where the ongoing political crisis continues to impact security throughout the region, Libya must first overcome the current political impasse to achieve lasting stability. That is why the administration recently hosted Prime Minister al-Sarraj in Washington to reaffirm support for his Government of National Accord and U.N.-facilitated efforts to mediate a political settlement.

We urge all Libyans to engage constructively in the U.N. process and pursue their ambitions through the ballot box. Any attempt to impose a military solution will only fuel civil conflict, providing ISIS and al Qaeda with opportunities to use Libya as a base to threaten the U.S. and our allies.

The potential for greater instability in Libya is of particular concern to Tunisia. As Tunisia consolidates its democratic transition, economic stagnation and social marginalization have prompted approximately 4,000 Tunisians to join ISIS. U.S. engagement is focused on supporting Tunisia's efforts to enhance its ability to respond to this threat, bolstering Tunisia's judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute those involved in terrorism, and tackling the root causes of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

In Tunis last month, the Deputy Secretary of State spoke directly with Tunisian leaders about the country's economic challenges, pledging U.S. support, but urging quicker implementation of reforms that are vital to ensuring all Tunisians are able to participate fully in political and economic life.

Algeria, where I recently served as U.S. Ambassador, has witnessed a dramatic improvement in its political, economic, and security situation since the 1990s. Today, Algeria stands as a highly effective counterterrorism partner, able to deny terrorists safe haven

within its borders and working to build the capacity of its more fragile neighbors. A measured but effective political and economic liberalization in recent years has undergirded this transformation.

Morocco continues to distinguish itself as a capable security partner and regional leader, particularly with respect to countering violent extremism and radicalization on the African continent. Morocco is a net exporter of security.

For example, in close cooperation with us, Moroccan personnel have trained counterterrorism forces in Senegal and Chad, while Morocco has lent powerful support to the G5 Sahel to strengthen the regional response to terrorism.

Egypt remains an important strategic partner. Its most pressing internal security challenge is the ISIS affiliate in northern Sinai.

Let me pause to reiterate the U.S. Government's condolences for the horrifying November 24th mosque attack, which killed over 300 Egyptians.

ISIS has also targeted Egypt's Christians via appalling church bombings and attacks on pilgrims. Other terrorist groups have claimed attacks on Egyptian officials and police outside the Sinai.

For Cairo, instability in Libya and the potential for ISIS to regroup there represent critical threats to Egyptian security.

We remain committed to supporting Egypt's efforts to defeat terrorist threats. Building on decades of strong security ties, we are seeing growing counterterrorism cooperation and continuing strong military-to-military efforts across a range of programs.

Turning briefly to economic stability, President el-Sisi has taken bold and necessary steps on reform, and the economy is improving, albeit slowly.

Finally, we will continue to emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to counterterrorism that protects and minimizes damage to civilians. We have been engaged in a frank but, as yet, inconclusive dialogue about Egypt's restrictive NGO law and Egypt's convictions of employees of U.S. NGOs.

We have raised and will continue to raise at senior levels our concerns about policies that challenge democratic governance. And we continue to stress the fundamental importance of respect for human rights, civil liberties, and the need for a robust civil society.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kaine, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[Ambassador Polaschik's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOAN POLASCHIK

PROMOTING POLITICAL STABILITY AND COUNTERING TERRORISM IN NORTH AFRICA

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Kaine, subcommittee members, thank you for your invitation to discuss U.S. efforts to promote political stability and counter terrorism in North Africa. As Ambassador Sales just described, ISIS and other terrorist groups have been significantly degraded in this region. Nevertheless, these groups continue to capitalize on political friction, economic frustrations, and regional fragmentation in their quest to attract new recruits, destabilize our partner governments, and threaten attacks against U.S. interests and our partners in Africa and Europe.

As an integral component of our counterterrorism efforts, the United States is working closely with our partners in North Africa as they seek to advance political reconciliation, promote economic reforms, and strengthen civil society to ensure a robust and comprehensive approach to the threats we collectively face in this region.

In Libya, our objective is a stable, unified Libya capable of working collaboratively with the United States and our international partners against terrorism and fostering security and prosperity for the Libyan people. Prime Minister al-Sarraj and his Government of National Accord (GNA) have been stalwart partners in these efforts. We also commend the tireless diplomacy of U.N. Special Representative Ghassan Salamé to resolve this conflict and achieve a political solution.

Turning first to Libya—where the ongoing political crisis continues to impact security throughout the region—that country must overcome the current political impasse to achieve lasting stability. That is why the President, Secretary Tillerson, and other senior U.S. officials hosted Prime Minister al-Sarraj in Washington over the past week to reaffirm support for U.N.-facilitated efforts to mediate a political settlement and help Libya prepare for national elections in 2018. As the U.N. Security Council recently affirmed, the Libyan Political Agreement must remain the framework for a political solution to the conflict and peaceful transition. We urge all Libyans, including “Libyan National Army” Commander Haftar, to engage constructively in this U.N. process and pursue their ambitions through the ballot box. Any attempts to impose a military solution will only fuel a renewed civil conflict, providing ISIS and Al Qaida with opportunities to again use Libya as a base to threaten the United States and our allies.

In 2016, forces aligned with Prime Minister Sarraj and the GNA expelled ISIS from Sirte, dealing a significant blow to what was the most significant ISIS presence outside of its core in Syria and Iraq. Today, in parallel with ongoing military efforts to ensure ISIS cannot regroup in central Libya, we are helping Libyan authorities consolidate these gains through targeted stabilization programs, such as training for Libyan personnel on the safe removal of explosive remnants of war that ISIS fighters left behind. As communities liberated from ISIS control rebuild, we will encourage the Libyan government to expand economic opportunities, restore health and other basic services, and promote inclusive governance, steps that are critical to fill the gaps in weakly governed areas of the country that ISIS exploited in 2015 to gain a foothold in Libya.

The potential for greater instability in Libya is of particular concern to neighboring Tunisia. As Tunisia consolidates its remarkable democratic transition, a complex web of interrelated factors have spurred radicalization and prompted approximately 3,000 to 6,000 Tunisians to join ISIS: chronic youth unemployment and economic stagnation, feelings of social marginalization, and terrorist recruitment techniques honed to highly localized grievances. U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance programs are accordingly focused on supporting Tunisia’s efforts to reorient its security efforts to respond to this threat; bolstering Tunisia’s judicial capacity to investigate, prosecute, and incarcerate those involved in terrorism cases; and tackling the root political and economic causes of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. Recent polling by the International Republican Institute suggests further reason for concern: nearly 90 percent of Tunisians claimed that corruption is now worse than under the Ben Ali dictatorship, and roughly half of Tunisia’s young people aspire to emigrate, legally or not, to Europe.

Six years after the Jasmine Revolution set the Middle East ablaze, economic opportunities have often lagged behind the unprecedented openings for free political expression. Prime Minister Chahed and his government have outlined encouraging plans to shift this trajectory through greater economic inclusion, a revitalized private sector, and a stronger and more effective judiciary. Certain reforms, including cuts to public sector wages, will be painful in the short term, and further test Tunisia’s political and societal cohesion. We support Tunisia’s continued progress with the IMF to promote macroeconomic stability, curtail public expenditure growth, and promote budget transparency. The United States will provide targeted assistance to build capacity, increase economic literacy, and strengthen Tunisia’s still fragile institutions, but the fundamental responsibility for ensuring Tunisia weathers its current economic challenges will rest with the Tunisian people and their elected leaders.

In Tunis last month, Deputy Secretary Sullivan spoke directly with Tunisian leaders about these challenges, pledging U.S. support but urging quicker implementation of reforms vital to ensuring all Tunisians are able to participate fully in both political and economic life. Policies that enable private sector-led job creation, spur innovation, and empower civil society groups to hold their government accountable will address the very grievances that terrorists seek to exploit to attract young Tunisians to their vile cause.

Algeria, where I recently served as U.S. Ambassador, has witnessed a dramatic improvement in its political, economic, and security situation since the “dark decade” of the 1990s. Today, Algeria stands as a highly effective counterterrorism partner in the region, both able to deny terrorists safe haven within its borders and,

increasingly, export its best practices to more fragile states across Central Africa and the Sahel.

A measured but effective political and economic liberalization in recent years has undergirded this transformation. Since 2011, the Algerian Government has adopted a path of gradual political reform: lifting a state of emergency in place for nearly two decades, enhancing the role of the parliament, re-instating presidential term limits, and creating an independent electoral commission. Last month, Algerians peacefully went to the polls to elect municipal governments. Encouragingly, the Algerian government also recognizes that economic reforms and a greater openness to foreign investment are critical ingredients for its lasting stability. As the country seeks to adapt to persistently low oil prices, the parliament has begun to rein in public subsidies and boost taxes, unpopular but necessary steps to stabilize the Algerian economy. Onerous import restrictions, however, continue to limit Algeria's competitiveness and dampen prospects to knit Algeria more closely to the international community.

Morocco continues to distinguish itself as a capable security partner and regional leader, particularly with respect to countering violent extremism and radicalization on the African continent. Morocco is a net exporter of security. For example, in close cooperation with us, Moroccan personnel have trained counterterrorism forces in Senegal and Chad, while Morocco has lent powerful support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force Initiative to strengthen the regional response to terrorism.

At home, a persistent, small-scale protest movement has highlighted the intersection of political instability and counterterrorism. In response to the tragic death of a fish vendor last year in a confrontation with local authorities, Moroccans in an underdeveloped northern region have demanded greater investment in their region, more help creating jobs, and fairer treatment by security forces. We are encouraged that Moroccan leaders have begun to respond to these economic concerns, easing political tensions and denying terrorists the chance to exploit grievances to recruit new members.

Finally, six years after Tahrir Square and three years after President al-Sisi's election, Egypt remains an important strategic partner facing a number of challenges. Its most pressing internal security challenge is the ISIS affiliate in Northern Sinai; let me pause for a moment to reiterate the U.S. government's deepest condolences for the horrifying November 24 mosque attack, which killed over 300 Egyptian citizens. ISIS has not yet claimed responsibility for the attack, the worst in modern Egyptian history, but we are confident ISIS was responsible. We have seen reports of ISIS flags at the scene. ISIS has also targeted Egypt's Christians, killing more than one hundred over the last year, including by appalling church bombings and attacks on Christian pilgrims, and by efforts to drive Christians out of the Sinai Peninsula. In addition to ISIS' campaign in Sinai, other terrorist groups have also claimed attacks on Egyptian officials and police outside of the Sinai, and many of the above-mentioned attacks on Christians have taken place in mainland Egypt. In October, militants killed numerous Egyptian police officers in an attack in the Western Desert region.

Egypt's 750-mile border with Libya represents an additional security challenge. For Cairo, instability in Libya and the potential for ISIS to regroup in Libya represent critical threats to Egyptian security.

We remain committed to supporting Egypt's efforts to defeat terrorist threats. Building on decades of strong security ties, we are seeing growing counterterrorism cooperation, and continuing strong military-to-military efforts across a range of programs. We conducted the first Bright Star joint military exercise in eight years, with a new focus on contemporary, asymmetric threats. U.S.-origin equipment, for example mine-resistant vehicles, contributes daily to the Egyptian Armed Forces' ability to effectively confront the challenges.

I want to turn briefly to economic stability. President al-Sisi and his government have taken bold and necessary steps on economic reforms supported by the United States and the international community, and the economy is improving, albeit slowly. These reforms have included floating the currency, introducing a Value Added Tax and reducing fuel subsidies, and expanding social spending to support the less fortunate. Egypt is committed to continue reducing its deficit and making structural reforms to improve the business environment and spur investment. These steps to strengthen the Egyptian economy are extremely important to promoting Egypt's long-term stability.

We will continue to emphasize with our Egyptian government interlocutors the importance of a comprehensive approach to counterterrorism that protects and minimizes damage to civilian populations. We have been engaged in a frank, but as-yet inconclusive, dialogue about Egypt's restrictive NGO law, and Egypt's conviction of employees of U.S. NGOs. We have raised—and will continue to raise at senior lev-

els—our concerns about policies that challenge democratic governance, and continue to stress the fundamental importance of the respect for human rights, civil liberties, and the need for a robust civil society.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Kaine, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about ongoing efforts in North Africa to promote political and economic stability in order to achieve a lasting victory against terrorism in this complex region. I look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much. That was a really good, comprehensive overview. And obviously, we have the right panel here to delve into this.

So with that, Mr. Ranking Member, did you want to make a statement?

I am going to reserve my questions, so I will yield to you.

Senator KAINE. I apologize for being a few minutes late. But it spared you hearing an opening statement from me, so there is some good news.

All right, let me just jump right into questions.

One of the things that I am always puzzled by, and I think you can each offer some insight into this, is that there are relatively stable countries in North Africa that we work closely with—Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria. And yet, a large number of the foreign fighters that go to fight with ISIS come from these nations.

Why is that the case? Why have they been such producers of foreign fighters who go fight with ISIS?

Ambassador SALES. Thanks for the question, Senator. And let me say, it is good to see you again.

I think the answer to that question is very context-specific. I think different countries have experienced radicalization and the migration of foreign terrorist fighters for different reasons.

So Tunisia, for instance, has sent anywhere from 3,000 to 6,000 foreign terrorist fighters from North Africa into Syria and Iraq. Morocco, by contrast, has sent about 1,700. The numbers for some of the other countries are substantially lower.

In the case of Algeria, which exhibits a very low incidence of foreign terrorist fighter movements, I think part of the reason for their relative success in the region is because of their long history throughout the 1990s of combating Islamist violence in Algeria. I think that experience has helped Algeria create governmental institutions and civil society institutions that help their population, that sort of inoculate their population against the siren song of radicalism.

Of course, not perfectly. All countries could stand to do a better job. But I think that experience from the 1990s has been one factor that has contributed to the relatively advantageous situation when it comes to foreign terrorist fighters.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask a second question. The President's announcement today about Jerusalem, this body has long recognized the reality of Jerusalem as the center of government for Israel. But the reason that Presidents have not taken the step before now has not been because of that reality. It has been because of advice by allies in the region, including allies of Israel like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, who have basically said, if the U.S. weighs in on that, it may well lead to extremism in the region that

could be dangerous either to Israel or potentially dangerous to the U.S., U.S. Embassy personnel, et cetera.

Is that a concern that we should be taking seriously following this announcement? And what is the State Department doing to try to protect our Embassy personnel in the region?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Well, Senator, I hope that you have had a chance to listen to the President's statement. I know you all have very busy schedules. I was just reading very quickly the transcript myself, to make sure that I had the latest information.

I think we need to look at a few issues here. First, as you said, the President recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and its seat of government. But in his remarks, the President also said a number of important things about the final status and stressed that the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties. The United States has not taken a position on boundaries or borders. We realize—

Senator KAINE. If I could just interrupt, because I do not want to run over time. I have the statement here, and it does include that.

The piece I am particularly interested in is one aspect of the President's statement. This is a summary: Departments and agencies have implemented a robust security plan to ensure the safety of our citizens and assets in the region.

That suggests that the administration was aware that this could have some negative security consequences for Embassy personnel and others in the region prior to making the announcement.

What is the State Department doing? What are these robust security plans? What is the State Department doing to try to protect our people, in the event that this announcement leads to the kinds of events that the King of Jordan and others have suggested it might?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. The safety and security of American citizens, both our American citizens working for the U.S. Government, but, of course, our private American citizens throughout the world, the security of our installations, the safety of the thousands of troops that we have throughout the world, including in the region, are of paramount concern for this administration, and especially for Secretary Tillerson, who starts all of his staff meetings with a focus on security.

So this is something that we have been weighing very carefully. We have been meeting internally. We have been sending messages out to our Embassies and consulates throughout the world, asking them to think about these issues.

And of course, we are also talking to our partner governments, to make sure that we are doing everything possible to ensure the safety of our American citizens throughout the world.

Senator KAINE. Do you know whether we have deployed, for example, additional Marine security guards or other military or other protective assets into areas that are likely to be affected, should some of these concerns occur?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Senator, I would be happy to provide more information in a closed session.



Senator KAINE. Okay, all right. That is fine. That is enough for my first round of questions. I may have more.

Senator RISCH. Sure. We will get back to you. Thanks so much. Senator Young actually got through the door before you did, Senator.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Chairman.

This hearing, like so many others, underscores for me the importance of us, once again, focusing on the need for this committee to pass an Authorization for Use of Military Force.

As my colleagues know, I introduced legislation to that end back in March. I have enjoyed working with many of my other colleagues to understand the importance of this issue, and have led on this issue, and applaud the chairman's recent efforts to take up this cause. And hopefully, we can keep moving forward on that front.

Ambassadors, the counterterrorism discussion often focuses on the kinetic element to the exclusion of other elements of that fight. Now, it is certainly true there are some terrorists who are irreconcilable and simply have to be taken off the battlefield through military means.

But a comprehensive CT strategy has to be more than that. It has to focus on capturing or killing today's irreconcilable terrorists while also addressing sources, root causes of radicalization.

Ambassadors, based on your current positions and your lifetime of experience, what do you see as the connection between, on one hand, our international development efforts working with our partners and, on the other, the fight against terrorists?

Ambassador SALES. Well, Senator Young, thank you for the question.

I think there is a very tight and close relationship between development that leads to well-established, democratic institutions, prosperous economies on the one hand, and counterterrorism successes on the other.

Democracy is a great bulwark against terrorism, and efforts to build democracies that are open and transparent and responsive to their citizens, and protective of basic civil rights, are key counterterrorism tools.

And the reason for that, I think, Senator, is because democratic governments that provide their citizens a voice, an opportunity to be heard, falsify the false claim of terrorists that a resort to violence is necessary to address one's concerns. That is never the case, but it is especially not the case in a democratic government.

And so I think that the broader suite of USG policies that seek to develop the economies of countries around the world and to strengthen their commitment to democracy pay a number of dividends, not the least of which are counterterrorism dividends.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Ambassador Polaschik, could you also speak to this issue, and perhaps focus not just on our efforts to nurture and promote democracy, but also maybe to more basic human needs—hunger, medical attention, and economic development?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Of course, yes.

And this is something that we are trying to do, to take a holistic approach to the drivers of radicalization. And as Ambassador Sales

said in his previous response, I think the context is different from country to country, from individual to individual. So we are trying to tailor our overall engagement in various countries to address what we see as specific needs.

So for example, in Tunisia, there is a lot of focus not just on strengthening the capacity of the law enforcement and the security services, but also looking at what it is going to take to create employment, so that the large numbers of very highly educated young people actually have good, satisfying jobs.

We have the Tunisian American Enterprise Fund that is creating small enterprises. There is a robust USAID program. We have, of course, all our MEPI programs that are focused on youth leadership and training.

In terms of the kind of basic humanitarian needs, as you know, a lot of countries in our region have higher levels of income, so we don't have a lot of USAID missions in the classic sense.

Of course, we have programs in Morocco. We have programs in Egypt, Jordan, throughout the region. Libya and Yemen, things are focused more on the sort of transition.

Humanitarian assistance is obviously a very, very key part of this for countries that are in conflict. The U.S. has delivered hundreds of millions, in fact, billions of dollars of aid in recent years.

Senator YOUNG. My sense, informed by some recent authoritative reports, is there is going to be an increasing need for our country to focus on this, working with other international partners. There are two reports that recently came out.

The first report was published just yesterday by the World Food Program USA that demonstrates the link between food insecurity and instability.

And the second report was produced by the United Nations Development Program. It is entitled, "A Journey to Extremism in Africa," and this report highlights the link between lack of developments, on one hand, and violent extremism, on the other.

With unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce both of these reports in the record.

[The reports mentioned above may be accessed through the hyperlinks below:]

[https://www.wfpusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/wfp\\_food\\_security\\_final-web-1.pdf](https://www.wfpusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/wfp_food_security_final-web-1.pdf)

<http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf>

Senator YOUNG. And lastly, I would just like to ask the Ambassadors whether you have had a chance to review these reports.

Ambassador SALES. Not yet, Senator, but will look forward to doing so.

Senator YOUNG. You as well?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Likewise.

Senator YOUNG. All right. Thank you, Ambassadors.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator BOOKER?

Senator BOOKER. I have some questions, but just a quick follow-up.

I mean, that is what worries me, is that the budgets reflect priorities, and we seem to be focusing, when it comes to North Africa,

sub-Saharan Africa, far more on our military expenditures, which are essential and necessary. And the various counterterrorism coalitions that we are in are extraordinarily important.

But I do worry about seeing budgets being proposed from the administration that are slashing a lot of critical programs that ultimately create an environment for stability, where we deter folks from a pathway toward radicalization. In addition, our diplomatic resources in Africa, have also been cut as well as investments we are making in institution-building and the like.

I wonder if you could comment on that, because Senator Young has made this point numerous times, and I tend to agree with him. I am actually growing more worried that we are relying on our military interventions with the thought that might somehow not only solve the immediate problems but also the longer term causes of radicalization.

Ambassador SALES. It is a great question, Senator. Thank you for raising it.

I think Ambassador Polaschik and I, and the entire State Department and the administration, would give you the same answer. And that is that the kinetic aspects of our counterterrorism strategy are important and vital, and so are various other non-kinetic aspects of our counterterrorism strategy. And that is why we are here today to tell you about them.

Let me, if I could, just give you a couple of examples of some of the things that we are doing in North Africa in the civilian space, in the border security, law enforcement, and CVE space to round out the full suite of whole-of-government tools that we are using to address these threats, both short-term and long-term.

So in places like Algeria, for instance, we are partnering with local law enforcement to develop their ability to investigate terrorism-related crimes. We are working with judges to help them understand how to handle complex terrorism cases, how to deal with evidence, how to deal with witness protection and facility protection. And we are also working with prison officials to help them manage the very difficult issues that arise when you are trying to incarcerate.

Senator BOOKER. And I appreciate that. And maybe for a QFR, I would love to get the full details of this, being that I only have 3 minutes left.

Specifically to the point about food aid, the proposal of the administration is to cut the funding to the very programs that reports like this one show are necessary for us to create stability.

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Senator, if I might jump in on that, I think there are some very interesting and positive developments in North Africa with respect to international cooperation, because this is a part of the world where the impact of the terrorism, of the migration flows, of the smuggling is felt very keenly by Europe.

So actually, Tunisia is a really good example, and Libya as well, where we have ramped up our assistance very quickly. We have given huge sums of money to help strengthen Tunisian institutions, to help them get through that initial period. And then the rest of the international community has come in to help pick up the slack and take on other projects.

So for example, there is a G7 initiative underway in which we are sharing the burden with our partners to help address all of these needs that you outlined. Libya is also another very positive example where the United States is doing part of it, but the Europeans are also doing a very major part.

So I think as we look at the realities of this administration's budget request, something that we have done very, very effectively is to work with our international partners to make sure that we are looking holistically at the needs and to make sure that other partners are engaging in areas where we might not be able to engage as robustly as we have in the past.

Senator BOOKER. Okay. I wish we had more time.

When you mention Tunisia, I get worried about the corruption going on in their government, and problematic efforts like their Administrative Reconciliation law, which gives sort of blanket immunity for civil servants. And these are obviously the things that create grievances.

I just want to, in my remaining moments, ask about the human trafficking problem. I am sure you all saw the CNN videos with what is to me heartbreaking evidence of modern-day slavery, the trafficking going through areas that my subcommittee covers. There is a lot of evidence that these human trafficking and, in fact, according to EU reports, the decrease in registered migrants does not necessarily translate into one-to-one reduction, because of the overall flow as new routes are going.

This is happening, the flow of human trafficking, the modern-day slavery. This is something I know weighs on your hearts and anybody who is aware of the degree of it. There are today desperate people who are fleeing, seeking opportunities, and ending up being sold into slavery.

It is unconscionable. It is unacceptable. It should enrage this Nation. And we should be doing something about it.

So in the remaining moments, could you let me know what the U.S. is doing to try to help address this situation, what kind of humanitarian aid, migration-related assistance we are providing, and how we are cooperating with our allies in the region, specifically with the EU? And has the State Department considered doing things to hold the perpetrators of these abuses accountable, including sanctions under the Magnitsky Act or other authorities?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. We share 100 percent your concerns about this horrifying situation. And Libyan Prime Minister Sarraj was just in Washington last week. That certainly was a topic of discussion. The Security Council met recently to talk about this, and the United States expressed its deep concern over this.

On the humanitarian front, we have been engaged in supporting migrants, providing humanitarian assistance, since the very early days of the revolution back in 2011. This is, unfortunately, not a new development in Libya.

So we continue to be very, very engaged, working with IOM and others to make sure that the people caught up in these horrific crimes get the care and assistance that they need.

With respect to trying to get a handle on it, I think this comes back to many of the issues that Ambassador Sales was talking about, making sure that there are appropriate border controls.

But it also comes back to the root causes, as the Senator has also identified. The people who are coming from these countries elsewhere in the continent whose lives are so desperate that they are willing to make that journey across the Sahara, clearly, something needs to be done so that they have prospects in their own countries.

So it is a multifaceted approach. It is something that we are looking very carefully at, and we coordinate very closely with our colleagues in the African Affairs Bureau to make sure that we are looking at this in a very holistic way.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Senator JOHNSON?

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the witnesses for your testimony and your service to your country.

In the committee that I chair, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, we have an annual threat hearing. And 2 years ago, FBI Director Comey testified or predicted that as we tighten the noose around ISIS in Syria—Iraq and Syria, at that point in time—we were going to see a diaspora, a spreading of foreign fighters into other regions.

This year, FBI Director Wray and some of the other witnesses, NCTC Director Rasmussen, had more encouraging testimony, saying that we are really seeing those fighters stay there and die in Raqqa, although, we have heard reports of fighters leaving Raqqa.

Today, we had a hearing on this evolving fight. Let's face it, there is a new phase now as we have denied them the territory, but we have not denied them the cyber caliphate. But it was actually pretty encouraging, saying that because Turkey has shut down the migrant flow, it is actually quite difficult for ISIS foreign fighters to leave that warzone, leave Syria.

Because we did not have a representative from the Department of State, I just want to ask the Ambassador and the secretary, do you agree with that assessment? Are they pretty well trapped in that warzone?

Ambassador SALES?

Ambassador SALES. Thanks for the question, Senator Johnson.

I think the situation today is a lot better than it was in 2014. There are much stricter border controls in place today to monitor and prevent the movement of foreign terrorist fighters across international borders. That is not to say, however, that the threat has gone away. I think the threat has simply changed.

So as you know, the Paris attacks 2 years ago, November 2015, were carried out by foreign terrorist fighters who had gone to the warzone and then come home. We are still seeing terrorist attacks today in Europe, in the United States, most recently in New York City on Halloween, by people who have not traveled to the warzone, but rather are inspired by the radical ideology and message of hate that ISIS perpetuates.

ISIS is very savvy when it comes to using social media as a megaphone to broadcast their message, and they are able to reach people who have no capacity to travel to the warzone. That is one of the concerns, Senator, that I think we need to focus on.

Senator JOHNSON. I understand that, but I am asking specifically about those foreign fighters being able to escape that warzone. And 2 years ago, we had the migrant flow through Turkey. We have clamped down on that. Are there other escape avenues?

Secretary Polaschik, by the way, that sounds like a very Wisconsin-type name. [Laughter.]

Senator JOHNSON. Correct, Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Yes.

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Well, Senator, I actually grew up here in Alexandria, Virginia, but my family is from North Eastern Pennsylvania.

So, yes, in terms of the other routes, as Ambassador Sales said, the Turks and others have really clamped down, but no system is infallible.

I think what is positive, since the hearing that you referenced, is the actions that we have taken in Libya, and we have had a very good counterterrorism partner in Prime Minister Sarraj and the GNA. So we have very effectively, with the Libyans, degraded ISIS's capacity in Libya, and then the follow-on strikes in other desert camps.

So I think the scenario that I was very worried about when I was sitting as U.S. Ambassador in Algeria, that it would squeeze ISIS corporate headquarters and they would pop up in North Africa, actually has not happened.

I know from speaking with the Algerians who follow these issues very, very closely, they are concerned about the follow-on effect into the Sahel region, which is outside of my particular area of expertise within the State Department, but as Ambassador Sales and others have pointed out, a region with weak institutions, a limited capacity.

So I think one of the very positive things that the administration is doing is working with the stronger partners in North Africa to help build the capacity of the weaker Sahel states.

Morocco, as I mentioned in my opening statement, has been doing great work. Algeria does as well. And I think this is something that we can really continue to do, because these states share the same vision that we have, in terms of the need for security, stability, and those kinds of economic reforms as well.

Senator JOHNSON. You might have answered my final question here.

In a full committee hearing, Chairman Corker pointed out that there are 19 different nations that the Defense Department is operating in to try to prevent the spread of terrorism.

Obviously, history shows us that we have failed states like Afghanistan. If we allow those to continue to fester, terrorism builds, like we allowed ISIS to rise in the ashes of al Qaeda in Iraq.

One of the top priorities, I would imagine, of this administration would be to prevent that from happening. In your regions that you are responsible for, which is or which are the nations most at-risk for being that failed state that that type of terrorist activity could blossom in?

Ambassador SALES. Well, Senator, it is difficult to say who is at the top of the list or who is at the bottom of the list. I would say that all countries have their challenges. And let me explain in a

bit more detail, mindful of the time, what we are doing to help them meet those challenges.

It is essential that the sometimes-fragile states develop reliable and strong and capable institutions to deliver basic government services, such as law enforcement, such as criminal justice, such as border security. These kinds of capabilities that we enjoy in the United States and in much of the developed world are useful tools in the counterterrorism toolkit.

But I would go one step further and say that, in building CT capabilities in these areas, we also help these countries address some of the concerns that Senator Booker poignantly raised a moment ago. A state that is capable of preventing a terrorist from coming across its border is also capable of preventing a human trafficker from coming across its border. A state that has courts that are capable of adjudicating terrorism-related crimes also has courts that are capable of adjudicating human-trafficking-related crimes.

So the CT investments that we are making pay a number of dividends not just in the CT space, but across-the-board, I think.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Both of you would like to ask some more questions. Why don't we take a short recess? We can go down and vote at the end of this one, at the beginning of the next one, and come back in a few more minutes, if that is all right with you.

With that, we will be in recess until we get back. [Recess.]

Senator RISCH. We will come back to order again. I see we have lost the onlookers, but we have the important people here, which is a good thing.

I apologize for that, but the wheels of justice turn slowly on the floor of the Senate, slower than most places.

Thank you, again, for coming. And thank you so much for your input.

Senator Young, you had some follow-up.

Senator YOUNG. I want to thank the Ambassadors again for their presence here today.

I would like to turn to discussing the importance of cyber warfare in fighting against terrorism.

Would you agree, first of all, that our Nation's cyber activities are increasingly important as we carry out the fight against ISIS, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and other terrorist actors?

Ambassador SALES. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. Do you have any thoughts related to policy, funding, or other legislative initiatives that we need to be embarking on to improve our cyber capabilities?

Ambassador SALES. Senator, that is a very big question, and I do not think I am prepared to answer it in its entirety, so let me answer a couple smaller pieces, specific facets of that question, as best I can today. And we are happy to come back and discuss it.

Senator YOUNG. It is a broad question, of course. I want you to focus narrowly on the counterterrorism context, please.

Ambassador SALES. Right. I think one of the vulnerabilities that we face is that the shady figures who are willing to sell on the dark web, exploits that are capable of taking advantage of vulnerabilities in commonly used software products, they have in-

sufficient scruples to prevent them from selling to rogue states. They sell to organized crime, and my concern is that they would also be willing to sell these sorts of cyber weapons to terrorist organizations.

I am not aware of any intelligence indicating that that is, in fact, happening. But it is a risk that I think is a risk that we should take seriously and think about addressing.

Senator YOUNG. Just days ago, I visited Fort Meade, Army Cyber Command, specifically the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade, Task Force Echo, in order to gain more information about DOD cyber activities as they relate to counterterrorism. And I had the pleasure of visiting with members of the Indiana National Guard, who are part of this unit, and learning more about their work. And so I just wanted to let people publicly know that I am proud of their activities.

As things come up, I hope you will let this committee know and our office about things we ought to be doing here on the Hill to further their efforts and others who are involved in this fight.

I would like to turn to another technology issue, and it is ISR. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 9 of this year, General Waldhauser, who is Commander of AFRICOM, stated that only approximately 20 percent to 30 percent of AFRICOM's ISR requirements are met.

On October 30, I asked Secretary Mattis about this ISR shortfall, and he said General Waldhauser was 100 percent correct. Secretary Mattis said all geographic combatant commands suffer from an ISR shortfall.

The Secretary said, "There is a finite amount of ISR assets, and we deal them out like gold coins to the various commands."

Ambassador Sales, as the coordinator for counterterrorism, do you agree with the assessments of General Waldhauser and Secretary of Defense Mattis regarding this shortfall?

Ambassador SALES. Senator, I certainly am not in a position to second-guess military experts on what their operational needs entail, in light of their hardware capabilities.

Senator YOUNG. So the implications, as I understand it, are pretty severe, right? So this will deal an adverse sort of blow to our situational awareness, our support of operations. And it will prevent us from getting early notice about various threats.

I have no doubt that members of the military and others involved in these efforts are doing the best they can with limited resources.

But despite these efforts, can you provide any additional detail on, operationally, how the lack of ISR has impacted our efforts in North Africa?

Ambassador SALES. Senator, it is a great question, and I defer to the Pentagon, because it is DOD that determines what their operational requirements are, and they operate the assets that are designed to advance those operational needs. So I defer to them, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Okay, as a diplomat, you work with other countries, our NATO allies, quite a bit. Have there been conversations with them about how they might help augment our resources in this area?



Ambassador SALES. Senator, one of the most important commitments that President Trump has asked our allies to make in NATO, but elsewhere as well, is to share a greater portion of the burden of our mutual self-defense.

We are constantly talking with NATO allies and other allies about what they can do to contribute more to our shared efforts. And I suspect that ISR would be no exception to that.

Senator YOUNG. You are not aware of any specific conversations about North Africa and the needs there, dialog with—

Ambassador SALES. I have not participated in any such conversations, but perhaps Ambassador Polaschik could elaborate.

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Senator, I think that we could probably have a good discussion in a closed session about some of these issues, because there is good counterterrorism cooperation with a number of our partners in the region. But we would have to do that in a closed session.

Senator YOUNG. Along with the Embassy security stuff. Okay.

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Yes.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator KAINE?

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

As I think about counterterrorism challenges in North Africa more generally, one of the issues that I am very troubled about is what I think is now sort of a permanent problem of migrants and refugees.

I have a very different thought than the President does about what to do about it, but I actually think that he is right that this refugee crisis, at any point in time with tens of millions of people as refugees or migrants, it does raise concerns about terrorists sneaking over borders. And it raises all kinds of other concerns.

Even well-meaning people seeking a refugee status moving into a country like Jordan that doesn't have many resources, of water, for example, can create all kinds of instability in Jordan, or refugees from Syria that go into Lebanon when there is not enough of a school system for the Lebanese kids can create all kinds of challenges.

So terrorism, instability, there are major, major issues that refugee and migrant populations create. And frankly, I think we are used to thinking of refugee and migrant issues as sort of episodic, but I think we, frankly, have to view them as sort of normal and likely to be somewhat permanent, based on weather emergencies, violence, civil war, corruption. All kinds of issues drive this.

You are the first State Department witnesses I have had before me since this happened, so you get the benefit of being asked the question. But I was stunned when the Trump administration announced on Friday or Saturday that they were pulling out of the global dialogue on refugee issues in Mexico this week.

Every Nation in the U.N. General Assembly voted on a non-binding compact in September of 2016, it was even called the New York compact, to basically say this refugee issue is getting out of hand, and we ought to come up with best practices to deal with it.

The nations of the world were gathering in Mexico this week to talk about, what are new best practices for dealing with migrants and refugees?

A principals meeting was called by the administration last week to try to decide what to do about the compact and about the meeting this week.

My own investigation as to what happened suggested that, going into that meeting, the State Department, the Department of Defense, CIA Director Pompeo, and U.N. Ambassador Haley all believed that the U.S. should participate, that solving this problem was more likely to happen in an effective way if the U.S. was at the table rather than not.

But my own discussions with people who were there suggested that others, the chief of staff of the White House, the White House advisor Steve Miller, and the Attorney General said, no, we should pull out of even having a dialogue with other nations about refugees. And reporting from folks in the meeting was that the reason advanced was this was an issue that was part of the Obama administration, and we should not stay with it.

Given your brief, both of you, in working on counterterrorism issues, do you think that we will be able to better deal with those issues if the U.S. is absent from a global dialogue about the extent of the problem and how we should handle it? Or do you think we are more likely to come up with good answers to this problem, if the U.S. is at the table?

Ambassador SALES. Senator, I cannot speak specifically to the decision about the IOM. But what I can tell you is that, regardless of what multilateral fora the United States is engaged in, we are constantly undertaking robust, bilateral dialogues with other countries that face the same problems and share the same values as us. That is especially true when it comes to the movement of persons related to the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

So we are constantly having conversations with countries in the Middle East that can be transit countries for the movement of persons, legitimate refugees who need our assistance, but also terrorists who might seek to exploit our hospitality. We are working with and dialoguing with countries that are sources of foreign terrorist fighters, including in North Africa. And we are also in conversations with countries that could be the targets of attacks mounted by foreign fighters who have tried to exploit refugee flows in Europe and elsewhere around the world.

So I would just caution that, whatever the United States' engagement is in certain multilateral institutions, there are other conversations that are taking place, very robust conversations that are taking place, to address these matters of global concern.

Senator KAINE. And I understand that, but would either of you care to offer a defense for why the United States should not be participating in this global compact that we agreed to support less than a year and a half ago?

Ambassador POLASCHIK. Senator, from the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' perspective, we would have to take that question for the record. I have not been following the issue myself personally.

Senator KAINE. That is fair.

Ambassador SALES. Likewise.

Senator KAINE. We will ask it for the record, then.

Thank you.

Ambassador SALES. Thank you, Senator.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

I have some questions, but given the lateness of the hour, I am going to submit them for the record.

Senator RISCH. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you for your service.

We do a number of these hearings, and I have to tell you that your focus and your command of these issues is impressive. We sincerely appreciate that.

Anything else, for the good of the order? If not, we are adjourned. [Whereupon, at 3:58 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. JOAN POLASCHIK BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question 1.* ISIS is the most prominent Salafi-jihadi group in Libya, but other groups are also active there, including al-Qa'ida. What conditions allow Salafi-jihadi groups to operate in Libya? And what threat do groups like AQIM and Ansar al Sharia pose to the U.S. and its allies?

Answer. While the Government of Prime Minister Sarraj remains a committed counterterrorism partner, the Libyan Government lacks effective border and internal security forces to prevent terrorist groups such as ISIS, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and other al-Qa'ida affiliates such as Ansar al Sharia from operating in under-governed spaces to plot, inspire, and direct terrorist attacks. These groups represent a substantial threat to the United States, our interests, and our allies. In particular, AQIM and its associates aspire to conduct attacks against U.S. interests and those of our allies and partners in North Africa and Europe. We continue to develop our counterterrorism relationship with Libya to ensure that ISIS and other terrorist groups are not in a position to threaten to regional security. In the long term, the Libyans must achieve greater political stability and build unified and effective national security forces to counter terrorism from these groups.

*Question 2.* The peace process in Libya is deadlocked. The involvement of foreign backers, including U.S. allies and partners that back different factions, is prolonging the conflict. What are the implications for U.S. interests if the Libya conflict continues to drag on? What role should the U.S. play to bring our partners together behind a single process?

Answer. The only viable way to achieve a stable transition to a more permanent, unified Libyan Government is through an inclusive, Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, based on the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). Any attempts to impose a military solution or bypass the political process will only further destabilize Libya. Armed conflict among Libyans will only benefit ISIS and other terrorists and empower criminal networks that profit from smuggling irregular migrants and illicit arms. Prolonged conflict in Libya would continue to threaten U.S. interests and those of our allies, and exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation.

We strongly support U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Libya Ghassan Salame's Action Plan for Libya, which offers a roadmap for helping Libyans negotiate amendments to the LPA and make the necessary preparations for successful national presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018. We have urged the international community to unite behind the U.N.'s mediation efforts. Proliferating international initiatives will complicate rather than advance the cause of peace and stability. Our key regional partners have a particularly important role to play in encouraging their Libyan contacts to exercise restraint and engage constructively with the U.N.-facilitated political process.

The United States also supports Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj's efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation. During Prime Minister al-Sarraj's visit to Washington earlier this month, President Trump, Secretary Tillerson, and other senior U.S. officials underscored our commitment to helping Libyans achieve polit-

ical stability, defeat ISIS and other terrorists, and build a better, more prosperous future for the Libyan people.

*Question 3.* While Khalifa Haftar rejects political Islam, and has the support of the Egyptians and the Emiratis, there is concern his position on political Islam further fuels extremism as there is no place for Islamic political factions to go. How do you see Haftar's role in bringing stability to Libya? If we are trying to counter terrorism, do efforts to work with Haftar support that goal?

Answer. There is no military solution to Libya's problems. We continue to believe General Haftar should be a part of a negotiated political solution to the Libya political crisis, but this will need to result from negotiations and compromise from all sides. We remain concerned about the potential for conflict between General Haftar and forces aligned with Prime Minister al-Sarraj's Government of National Accord (GNA), if Libyans do not reach a political solution. Fighting among Libyan armed groups will only prolong the suffering of the Libyan people and could enable ISIS to reassert itself.

Prime Minister al-Sarraj has been a reliable partner for the United States on counterterrorism. GNA-aligned forces made great sacrifices in eradicating ISIS from Sirte, making Libya and the world safer. The United States supported those efforts by conducting nearly 500 air strikes at the request of Prime Minister al-Sarraj, and we continue to coordinate with the GNA on air strikes on ISIS desert camps and other targets to prevent ISIS from reestablishing control over territory. To defeat ISIS in the long term, Libyans, including General Haftar, must come together to achieve political reconciliation and build a more unified government and unified national security forces, under civilian control. We urge all Libyan forces to unite and turn their guns against the real threat of ISIS and other terrorist groups.

*Question 4.* The human trafficking problem in Libya is massive. Trafficking and smuggling also fund militias in Libya, which fuels the conflict. ISIS and al Qaeda also benefit from this smuggling and trafficking. How should the U.S. target these smuggling networks and other pipelines? How would this affect both the Libyan conflict and the ISIS and al Qaeda threat?

Answer. Transnational crime networks and terrorist groups have extended across Africa due to advances in global trade, transportation, and communications networks. Despite divergent goals, these groups engage in activities that could be mutually reinforcing. Both terrorist groups and criminal human trafficking networks have attempted to exploit Libya's instability. The only sustainable solution to human trafficking in Libya is an inclusive, unified government and unified national security forces capable of providing security to the Libyan people and controlling Libya's territory and borders. The international community must therefore provide full backing to the U.N.-facilitated political process, while ensuring that all efforts to counter migration in Libya support this process and overall stability.

Since 2011, the United States has contributed more than \$150 million in humanitarian assistance in Libya. In addition to humanitarian assistance that will be determined in FY 2018, this year we intend to invest \$43 million on stabilization efforts and increased border security. We coordinate our assistance with the U.N. and other partners, who also have active programs aimed at restoring stability to Libya to advance our shared national security interests.

On December 7, the United States joined with partners at the U.N. Security Council in adopting a Presidential Statement to call attention to reports of migrants being sold into slavery in Libya. The Security Council welcomed the Libyan Government of National Accord's announcement that it will investigate the allegations and hold perpetrators to account. We will continue to work with Libya and the international community to combat human trafficking.

*Question 5.* Given the attacks that have occurred in the Sinai, and especially the recent Rawdah attack, have the Egyptians requested U.S. support in their fight against terrorism? What specifically have they requested?

Answer. We continue to see strong interest from Egypt in counterterrorism cooperation and we have a robust set of training and security assistance programs to support their efforts. Even prior to the November 24 attack, the United States was responding to many of Egypt's counterterrorism-focused procurement requests. For example, nearly 1000 Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, seen by Egypt as a key counterterrorism tool, have been provided to the Egyptians under the Excess Defense Articles program over the past year. Over the past two years, the United States has also provided increased counter-IED training to Egypt.

The United States continues to work with Egypt to address the challenges posed by terrorism, as we seek to enhance Egyptian capacity through multiple avenues. In September 2017, for the first time since 2009, the United States and Egypt con-

ducted the joint military exercise “Bright Star” with a new focus on counterterrorism operations. Egypt and the United States also recently concluded our first Defense Resourcing Conference, in which we agreed on a Five Year Security Assistance Roadmap (FYSAR) that identified key procurement requests based on Egypt’s capability gaps and operational needs. The FYSAR prioritizes U.S. security assistance to Egypt within a framework of counterterrorism, Sinai security, maritime security, and border security. However, it will take time for Egypt to adopt strategies, doctrine, tactics, systems, and technologies that are more appropriate and effective for addressing their current security challenges. Our renewed engagement through the FYSAR is an important tool to facilitate that transition and reorient our mutual security assistance priorities.

*Question 6.* How effective are Egyptian counterterrorism forces in providing the types of proactive surveillance and patrolling necessary to identify and prevent attacks?

Answer. Egypt remains an important strategic partner, which continues to face a number of security challenges. Building on decades of strong security ties, we are seeing growing counterterrorism cooperation across a wide range of programs. In particular, we are working with Egyptian counterterrorism forces to build their capacity to effectively provide the types of proactive surveillance and patrolling necessary to identify and prevent attacks. Our efforts include training Egyptian law enforcement instructors on Explosive Incident Countermeasures (EIC), to include practical exercises against a wide range of explosive targets. In the coming year, Law Enforcement Units will be trained in improving counterterrorism tactics, improving aviation security through the provision and training of new equipment and bomb sniffing canines, and modernization of Egypt’s doctrine away from conventional conflict towards the asymmetrical threat it now faces. We stand ready to continue to assist Egypt to improve its effectiveness at countering terrorism.

*Question 7.* Do these attacks mark a new phase for ISIS and CT efforts in the region? How concerned are you that ISIS is now turning its attention toward Israel, especially its cooperation with Hamas?

Answer. The United States is concerned about the increasing sophistication and lethality of ISIS attacks in the Sinai. We have growing concern that ISIS’s Sinai affiliate is gaining strength in the Nile River Valley and mainland Egypt, as evidenced by double church bombings in early 2017 and the mosque attack on November 24. To date, ISIS-Sinai has focused its attacks on Egyptian security forces, tourists, and religious minority groups in an effort to destabilize and discredit the Egyptian Government. We are committed to helping Egypt defeat the threat from ISIS-Sinai through increased security cooperation.

The United States is also concerned about the threat ISIS poses to the security and stability of the entire region. Israel is a long standing U.S. counterterrorism partner with sophisticated counterterrorism capabilities, and we support Israel and other partner nations in the region in their counterterrorism efforts against a range of terrorist groups. While at this time we do not assess that Hamas and ISIS are cooperating, we closely monitor both ISIS’s and Hamas’s strategy and tactics and adjust our approaches accordingly. Exploiting fissures between terrorist groups is can be an effective counterterrorism strategy.

*Question 8.* What is your assessment of Tunisia’s political stability and efforts to improve its security forces?

Answer. Tunisia has made important progress in political reform since the 2011 revolution. It held successful presidential and parliamentary elections, finalized a progressive new constitution in 2014, and has a vibrant civil society and free press. Tunisia is also building the capacity of its security forces, which have demonstrated improved performance, particularly in border security and counterterrorism operations.

Tunisia’s transition to democracy is nevertheless fragile. Economic opportunities have lagged. There is intense public frustration over unemployment, perceived corruption, and the slow pace of reform. We are encouraged by Prime Minister Chahed’s efforts to press forward with critical reforms to address these challenges, in partnership with the International Monetary Fund. We also have encouraged Tunisia to move ahead with municipal elections, currently scheduled for March 25, 2018. The municipal elections are an important step for consolidating Tunisia’s democracy, and offering an opportunity to re-engage youth in the political process. We maintain an ongoing dialogue with government officials and civil society members about a full range of political issues in Tunisia.

The United States is helping consolidate stability and democracy in Tunisia by promoting business growth, job creation, and bilateral trade; urging Tunisia leaders

to continue to strengthen governance, respect for the rule of law, and human rights protections; assisting civil society to effectively interact with government and helping Tunisia reorient its military and civilian security forces to be more responsive to the ongoing terrorist threat.

*Question 9.* What is the status of the joint NATO-Tunisia Intelligence Fusion Center?

Answer. There is not currently a joint NATO-Tunisia Intelligence Fusion Center, and we are not aware of any plans to establish one. NATO provided limited, unclassified advisory support when the Tunisian military established its own intelligence fusion center three years ago.

#### *Regional Cooperation*

*Question 10.* Can you please describe some of the specific actions the Europeans are taking to confront these security challenges?

Answer 10. We work closely with our European partners to advance efforts in resolving conflicts across the region. The United States European allies are key financial, material, and diplomatic contributors to stabilization efforts, particularly in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. This helps combat the conditions that enabled organizations like ISIS and al-Qa'ida to flourish. Our European partners are also a vital source of manpower for a number of counterterrorism initiatives currently taking place across the Middle East, which the Department can brief in a classified setting.

In addition, NATO has been a critical partner for the United States and is a cornerstone of U.S. national security. NATO adds unique value in the fight against terrorism and recently increased its overall counterterrorism efforts at the NATO's Leaders Meeting in May. NATO is working its way through a robust combating terrorism action plan, is a member of the D-ISIS Coalition, has established a high level CT coordinator, and is doing important work on sharing information to address foreign terrorist fighter and other terrorism-related challenges.

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#### RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. NATHAN SALES BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

#### *Libya*

Like many of my colleagues in the Senate, I am alarmed by the awful conditions migrants face in Libya as well as the abhorrent slave markets that recently were prominently featured in U.S. and international media outlets. You mentioned during the hearing that Secretary Tillerson raised the issue with Libyan Prime Minister Sarraj during his meeting on December 1.

*Question 1.* Could you provide us with more specifics about that conversation? What efforts, if any, is the Libyan Government taking to address the issue?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson and other senior U.S. officials discussed allegations of trafficking in persons with Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj during his November 30-December 5 visit to Washington. Prime Minister al-Sarraj reiterated the commitment that his Government of National Accord (GNA) made publicly to investigate the allegations of trafficking in persons and hold perpetrators accountable. We understand that the GNA's interagency committee is actively carrying out this investigation. Since December 6, the GNA has also encouraged U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other agencies to open offices in Libya and invited the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to regularly monitor and report on refugees and migrants in Libya, including those detained in official detention centers.

U.S. efforts are focused on reinforcing the GNA's condemnation of human trafficking and its commitment to investigate fully these reports and hold those responsible to account. The United States supported a December 7 U.N. Security Council Presidential Statement that expressed grave concern about these reports, condemned such actions as heinous human rights abuses, and called upon authorities to investigate such activities and bring perpetrators to justice. The United States continues to contribute to assistance programs that support the humanitarian needs of refugees, migrants, and individuals in detention in Libya. Prime Minister al-Sarraj and the GNA are a vital partner in efforts against human trafficking.

*Question 2.* You also noted some of the steps the United States has taken to mitigate the crisis such as working with IOM but underscored the importance of a multifaceted approach. In what ways can we engage with our allies to address this situation? Has Secretary Tillerson raised this issue with our regional partners?

Answer. To address the irregular migration crisis emanating from Libya, the United States continues to engage with our allies bilaterally and multilaterally. On December 7, the United States joined with partners at the U.N. Security Council in adopting a Presidential Statement to call attention to reports of migrants being sold into slavery in Libya and condemn such actions as heinous abuses of human rights. The Security Council welcomed the Libyan Government of National Accord's (GNA) announcement that it will investigate the allegations and hold perpetrators to account. The United States has consistently worked to address the migration issue in Libya, through both humanitarian assistance and support for the stabilization process. Since 2011, the United States has contributed more than \$150 million in humanitarian assistance for Libya to help refugees and migrants, as well as those displaced by violence. We coordinate our assistance with the U.N. and other partners, who have active programs aimed at supporting the humanitarian needs of refugees and migrants and restoring stability to Libya to advance our shared national security interests. In addition, we continue to coordinate our border security assistance with European partners through the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Libya. EUBAM was originally established in 2013 and continues to engage with Libyan officials to counter the trafficking of persons from Libya to Europe. We are also supporting the efforts of the G5 Sahel to counter terrorism and improve security in the Sahel region. In October, Secretary Tillerson announced that the United States will contribute \$60 million in bilateral to support the G5 Sahel's joint counterterrorism force.

We also strongly support U.N. Special Representative Ghassan Salamé's efforts to advance political reconciliation and help end the conflict in Libya. The only long-term solution to the challenge of migration through Libya is to help Libyans build a more unified government and unified national security forces capable of stabilizing the country and securing its borders.

#### *Tunisia*

*Question 3.* I am extremely concerned with the multiple delays in Tunisia's local elections originally scheduled for 2016 and most recently postponed until March 2018. What is the State Department's position on the delayed elections?

Answer. Municipal elections are an important step in Tunisia's democratic consolidation, and we support the Tunisian Government's efforts to proceed as quickly as possible. Following a series of technical delays, we are encouraging Tunisian leaders at the highest levels to move ahead with what will be the country's first municipal elections. The latest announced date for municipal elections is May 6, 2018 based on a formal decree issued by President Beji Caid Essebsi on December 19, 2017.

The Tunisian parliament also has an important role to play in creating an appropriate legal framework for municipal authorities to work within after elections. We expect the Tunisian parliament will soon finalize and pass legislation that will define the mandate of the municipal authorities.

*Question 4.* Do you view these postponements as a worrisome sign? What are we doing in country to encourage a continuation of the democratic process?

Answer. Tunisia has made important progress in political reform since the 2011 revolution. It held successful presidential and parliamentary elections, finalized a progressive new constitution in 2014, and has a vibrant civil society and free press. This year, Tunisia passed numerous laws enhancing personal and economic rights, including a law against gender-based violence. President Beji Caid Essebsi also repealed a decree banning Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims. Municipal elections will be another important step in Tunisia's democratic transition, and we are encouraging Tunisian leaders to move ahead. The election is currently scheduled to take place on May 6, 2018 based on a formal decree issued by President Essebsi on December 19, 2017.

We assess that Tunisia remains on a positive track in its political transition, but its democracy is still fragile and it continues to require international support. We regularly collaborate with the Government of Tunisia and civil society on a range of democratic governance and human rights issues. Our assistance programs support Tunisian efforts to promote open and transparent governance, improve how government ministries and parliament communicate with citizens, organize and administer successful elections, and strengthen the effectiveness of civil society organizations.

*Question 5.* We have heard concerning reports about a draft law in Tunisia similar to Egypt's restrictive NGO law that limits foreign funding. What can the State Department tell us about this draft legislation and what are we doing in Tunisia to encourage a strong and vibrant civil society?

Answer. We understand the Tunisian Government is considering new proposed legislation that would aim to create a more efficient and transparent mechanism for registering and administering civil society groups, and to address illicit foreign financing.

The Tunisian Government has committed to draft the new law with input from civil society organizations; at this stage no new legislation has been drafted. The Tunisian Government has confirmed to us that any new legislation would respect freedom of association and would not impose any cap on foreign funding. We meet frequently with Tunisian Government officials and civil society activists to discuss this proposed legislation as well as the status of civic engagement in Tunisia.

In addition, to date the democratically elected and independent Parliament has shown its commitment to an iterative and consultative legislative process.

Recognizing the importance of this proposed law to the development and empowerment of Tunisian civil society, U.S. foreign assistance supports programs that develop a strong and vibrant civil society in Tunisia. Current U.S. funded programs in Tunisia, implemented by State and USAID, foster dialogue between the Government and civil society actors to ensure that their perspectives are incorporated in the resulting legislation, strengthen civil society and citizens' capacity to engage the Tunisian Government on local governance issues, prepare marginalized Tunisian communities to play an active role in the political process, support training for local government officials as well as journalists and other media professionals, and foster community dialogues about security sector and legal reform.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO  
HON. JOAN POLASCHIK BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

*Embassy Security*

*Question 1a.* In light of the President's announcement on the relocation of our Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, please detail: [What are] The additional security measures that have been put in place to prepare for any violence or instability?

Answer. The Department identified a number of countries that were considered to be most likely or possible to experience unrest. These were then categorized into High and Medium tiers. Posts assessed as being at the highest risk were required to convene Emergency Action Committees (EACs) and assess security; posts assessed at lesser risk were also notified of the impending decision and were encouraged to convene EACs. In the EAC, posts reviewed and enhanced their security profiles for threats from demonstrations and terrorist attacks, and sought additional assistance and resources from both the U.S. Government and host nation authorities.

For posts that requested additional U.S. resources, the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) Office of Mobile Security Deployments (MSD) sent DS Special Agents with additional training to Algiers, Algeria; Amman, Jordan; Cairo, Egypt; Entebbe, Uganda; and Muscat, Oman. Operational Medicine personnel were located with each team, and agents in Entebbe and Muscat were deployed with contract aviation assets to provide a shorter response time to the surrounding region. Additional DS Agents augmented security support in Tel Aviv, Israel, Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. At each step, DS closely coordinated with Department regional and functional bureau counterparts, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and other interagency colleagues to ensure shared awareness of plans and the disposition of available resources for potential contingency response.

In addition, DS augmented the U.S. Secretary of State's (SECSTATE) protective detail, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nation's protective detail, the Saudi Ambassador and Foreign Minister's details, and the Israeli Ambassador and Defense Attaché details. This included counterassault and counter-surveillance teams, additional local uniformed police, and local law enforcement augmentation at foreign missions across the United States.

*Question 1b.* What military assets, including additional Marine Security Guards, have been deployed to the region and globally to augment Embassy security?

Answer. The State Department deployed Marine Security Augmentation Units (MSAU) to Amman, Jordan; Cairo, Egypt; Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israel; and Khartoum, Sudan. The units in Cairo, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem were originally tasked with supporting the Vice President's visit, but were also available to support the posts, if required. For information on other military assets deployed, the Department defers to DoD.



*Question 1c.* Please detail the Department's risk assessment of terrorist groups (such as Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS) using this announcement to incite further violence and acts of terrorism.

Answer. Please see the classified response to this question.

*Global Compact on Migration*

*Question 2.* I was stunned with President Trump's decision to withdraw from a global international dialogue on migration. Every nation in the world signed on to a non-binding declaration in September 2016 to determine best practices for a global migrant and refugee process that is growing exponentially and only getting worse. A conference in Mexico the first week in December intended to bring together global stakeholders to begin this dialogue on best practices. Did the State Department send any representatives to the conference?

Answer. No. The United States did not send representatives to this conference because we withdrew from engagement in the Global Compact on Migration discussions.

*Question 3.* Do you believe we will be better able to deal with these issues if the U.S. is absent from a global dialogue about the extent of the problem?

Answer. Yes. National sovereignty is the fundamental basis for international cooperation. The United States will continue to cooperate internationally on migration issues, but it is the responsibility of sovereign states to ensure that migration is managed consistent with national laws and policies, while complying with their international obligations.

*Question 4.* Do you believe that if the United States remained a part of the Compact on Migration, we could have shaped the discussion to align with U.S. interests?

Answer. No. The negotiations on the GCM will be based on the New York Declaration, a document adopted by the U.N. in 2016 that sets forth contributions to the "global governance" of international migration as among the goals for the GCM and contains a number of policy goals that are inconsistent with U.S. law and policy.

*Question 5.* Do you believe a non-binding treaty, which includes voluntary commitments impinges on U.S. sovereignty?

Answer. Primary jurisdiction to set their respective domestic immigration laws and policies rests with sovereign nations. A global instrument like the GCM that aspires to strengthen "global governance" of migration could contain commitments related to the entry and stay of migrants that are inconsistent with the United States' immigration laws and policies, which are within the United States sovereign authority.

*Counterterrorism in North Africa*

*Question 6.* The U.S. military presence continues to grow across North Africa and the Sahel mainly for counterterrorism operations. The events in Niger that resulted in the death of four U.S. service members highlight the blurring line between "advise and assist" missions and combat operations. Please discuss the threat in this region and CT and border coordination between Niger with Algeria and Libya.

Answer. Please discuss the threat in this region and CT and border coordination between Niger with Algeria and Libya. Counterterrorism (CT) efforts in North Africa are a crucial part of our global campaign against ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates, as these organizations continue to threaten U.S. interests and those of our allies. Our primary goal in the region is to prevent terrorist organizations from establishing safe havens from which they can threaten the United States and its interests. As ISIS loses control over territory in its core, it is essential that we prevent it from reconstituting itself elsewhere. ISIS maintains networks in North Africa that seek to conduct or inspire attacks on the continent and in Europe. Furthermore, there are many North African foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) among the ranks of ISIS militants in Iraq and Syria, and we must remain vigilant against the threat posed by FTFs returning home. We also remain concerned about al-Qa'ida's affiliates in the region, especially al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and their growing reach into other parts of Africa.

Cooperation on counterterrorism, information sharing, and border security is important to counter the terrorist threat in North Africa. Algeria is one of our most capable CT partners in the region, and the Algerian Government is working to mitigate the FTF threat and enhance security on its border with Libya and Niger. We are encouraging Algeria to continue to use its considerable expertise to help other Trans-Saharan states build their capacity to counter terrorism.

Libya's ongoing political divisions and instability remain a significant challenge. Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj's Government and its aligned forces have been stalwart U.S. CT partners. With support from U.S. airstrikes, our Libyan partners expelled ISIS from Sirte, which was once its principal stronghold outside Iraq and Syria. We continue to coordinate with Prime Minister al-Sarraj's Government on strikes on ISIS desert camps and other targets to prevent it from regrouping. To defeat ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and other terrorists in the longer term, and establish effective control over their country's borders, Libyans must achieve political reconciliation to build a more stable, unified government and national security forces, under civilian control.

Niger maintains a relatively small 17,000-person security force charged with securing the country's borders, among other security priorities. Terrorist organizations and transnational traffickers use Niger's northern spaces to travel between Libya and Mali. In addition, terrorist organizations operate in Niger's western tri-border region with Mali and Burkina Faso and along its southern border where ISIS-WA and Boko Haram operate. This three-pronged threat remains difficult for Niger to address. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, and Benin) assist Niger to fight these threats. The United States maintains a robust bilateral assistance program with Niger through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and other mechanisms.

*Question 7.* How frequent are high risk CT raids involving U.S. personnel becoming in North Africa as we work to combat ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates?

Answer. I would defer to the Department of Defense for the details of their counterterrorism operations involving U.S. personnel in North Africa.

*Question 8.* What is the role of State CT in reviewing and providing input on counterterrorism operations in Niger? Does the Embassy have a role in reviewing these decisions?

Answer. The Department of Defense (DoD) provides advise/assist/accompany support to counterterrorism elements of the armed forces of Niger. On the civilian side, a number of State Department bureaus-including African Affairs, CT, Near Eastern Affairs, Legal, and Political-Military Affairs-develop counter-terrorism strategy and implement approved policies and programs related to Niger and its neighbors. Embassy Niamey and other relevant diplomatic posts in the region join these inter-agency discussions and provide input on drafted materials, coordinated through their State Department country desks.

In addition to its role in strategy and policy development, the CT Bureau also provides foreign assistance to help Nigerien civil authorities build their civilian counterterrorism capacities. We support border security-related training, the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES), Anti-Terrorism Assistance, a DOJ special prosecutor as a Resident Legal Advisor, and countering violent extremism programs. The CT Bureau and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security manage the law enforcement component of the annual FLINTLOCK-series of DoD exercises that seeks to improve the military-law enforcement interface of Niger and other west African states that participate in the exercises.

*Question 9.* What is your assessment of the larger long-term threat to the region, al-Qaeda or ISIS? Or more local groups, such as Boko Haram that adopt transnational causes. Do they compete for the same resource pool? How do their goals overlap and differ?

Answer. Both ISIS and al-Qa'ida (AQ) have affiliated and associated groups in northern Africa. In almost all cases, ISIS and AQ have either managed to graft themselves on to existing terrorist groups, or those groups have chosen to affiliate with them. Accordingly, the nature and goals of these ISIS and AQ offshoots tend to be highly context- and region-specific.

Our most immediate concern is that ISIS will attempt to disperse or relocate fighters to Africa from its collapsing core in Syria and Iraq, and that this will allow it to reinforce existing groups and enhance their ability to threaten the region, Europe, and U.S. interests.

We also remain concerned about the continuing threat from AQ's affiliates in the region-especially al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which is the outgrowth of the Armed Islamic Group that terrorized Algeria in the 1990s, and Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM), a consortium of three terrorist groups responsible for attacks on hotels and resorts, including ones in which U.S. persons were killed.

While ISIS remains largely estranged from local populations in North Africa, AQIM has more successfully melded into local dynamics. While these organizations compete for recruits and ideological primacy, their distinct networks do not nec-

essarily compete for financial resources. Both organizations seek to take over the region, attack our allies and interests, and impose their harsh ideology.

*Stability in North Africa:*

*Question 10.* How do you think the region will be able to deal with its rising income inequality, youth bulge, and financial crisis in the next few years? Is it headed for a major crisis? What is the State Department doing [to] help with economic reforms? Do you think we could/should do more?

*Answer.* The State Department continues to monitor the region closely and recognizes the significant challenges to regional stability posed by social and economic issues. The State Department, through bilateral dialogues and support of economic reform programs guided by international financial institutions, continues to encourage sustainable, long-term economic growth that will contribute to a more stable, resilient North Africa, and the region as a whole. However, we recognize that development assistance alone is not enough to secure the region's future economic growth. We are encouraging governments to create an enabling environment for the private sector to make its contribution to development goals. With the right opportunities, the region's growing population will be an engine of economic growth, as young people contribute to a productive labor force.

States across North Africa continue to contend with a variety of economic challenges, including unemployment, income inequality, and a growing youth population. Many of these countries are taking proactive steps to address their economic challenges.

For instance, in Morocco, the Government continues to promote economic growth by encouraging private investment and diversification. The Government of Morocco is working to address inequality by decentralizing government, holding public officials accountable for the implementation of development projects, and working to improve vocational training and access to economic opportunities.

In Algeria, the Government is working to diversify the economy away from its traditional reliance on hydrocarbons to spur growth and create new opportunities for youth employment. Algeria is concurrently seeking to reform its hydrocarbon sector to attract new foreign investment and exploring the possibility of developing shale gas to drive additional economic growth.

In Tunisia, economic opportunities have lagged behind the unprecedented opening for free political expression that followed the 2011 revolution. With U.S. encouragement, the Government is focusing on advancing economic reforms, which include restructuring the banking sector and reducing public sector expenditures in coordination with its \$2.9 billion IMF Extended Fund Facility loan. These reforms are the key to spurring long-term, private sector-led economic development and addressing the economic grievances that sparked the revolution.

Post-revolution Libya's political and security problems have created steep economic challenges, including significantly reduced oil production, dwindling foreign reserves, exchange rate distortions, a bank liquidity crisis, and contested leadership of the country's key economic institutions. Over the past 15 months, however, Libya has begun to rebuild its oil sector, tripling output since September 2016. We have worked closely with key stakeholders from the Government of National Accord and Libyan economic institutions, including the Central Bank of Libya and the National Oil Company, to help them reach agreement on key economic policy measures. In 2017, Libya passed its first annual budget since 2013, an important step toward restoring the Government's ability to provide basic services to the Libyan people.

In Egypt, the Government implemented a series of politically difficult reforms in 2016 that saved the economy from crisis. Since then, Egypt's economy has stabilized and financial markets have improved markedly. Egypt has significant structural issues to tackle such as a bloated and inefficient bureaucracy. Still, the IMF assesses Egypt's reform program is broadly on track.

In addition to bilateral programs, the State Department works across the region through Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) funding for the Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP). Through this program, we are engaging on business formation, contract enforcement, insolvency law, currency conversion, royalty repatriation issues, and franchising. Improving these economic and legal issues will strengthen economies and make them more resilient in the face of financial shocks.

*Tunisia:*

*Question 11.* How fragile is Tunisia's democracy and what more can be done to shore it up? Should we be concerned that Tunisia may be backsliding?

*Answer.* Tunisia has made important progress on social and political reform since the 2011 revolution. It held successful presidential and parliamentary elections, fi-

nalized a progressive new constitution in 2014, and has a vibrant civil society and free press. This year, Tunisia passed a law against gender-based violence, and the President repealed a decree banning Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims, making it the only country in the Middle East and North Africa that legally allows women to marry non-Muslims.

Despite this, Tunisia's transition to democracy remains fragile. U.S. assistance employs a balanced approach to help Tunisia meet its interrelated political, security, and economic challenges. Since 2011, the United States has provided nearly \$575 million to help Tunisia enhance its national security, as well as over \$580 million for programs focused on economic growth and economic reform. We have also provided over \$235 million for programs that promote democracy, good governance and human rights, and we regularly engage with senior government officials on these issues. We encourage Tunisian leaders to continue to make progress on political reforms, for example, by moving ahead with municipal elections. We regularly consult with Tunisian civil society and support its critical role in contributing to public debate and advancing democracy.

To consolidate the country's democracy, the Tunisian Government needs to maintain the pace of progress it has made in addressing security concerns and must also make further headway in addressing Tunisia's significant economic challenges. Intense frustration over high unemployment and perceived corruption continues to undermine public confidence in the democratic transition.

*Question 12.* Tunisia's Parliament is currently considering a draft law that would criminalize even mild criticism of Tunisian security services with significant prison time as well as grant security personnel impunity for use of excessive force against civilians. If Tunisia moves forward with such a draconian law, how would this impact the U.S.-Tunisian partnership?

*Answer.* We are closely monitoring this draft law. In November, the Tunisian Parliament conducted public hearings with Tunisian and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups on the contents of this draft legislation. During these hearings, the NGOs and civil society groups clearly voiced their concerns about the draft law. Following this exchange, Parliament tabled the law for further review to take into account the concerns voiced by civil society and to ensure that the resulting draft strikes a balance between supporting Tunisia's security forces and upholding Tunisia's commitment to protect human rights. We will continue to engage with the Tunisian Government, Tunisian parliamentarians, and civil society actors to track the progress and content of this legislation. We maintain an ongoing dialogue with Tunisian Government officials on democracy and human rights issues, including the values of government transparency and respect for freedom of speech that have been central aspirations of Tunisia's revolution.

*Question 13.* The human rights situation in Egypt remains concerning. Under a new law signed by President al-Sisi last May, NGOs have been severely restricted from operating in the country. Egypt also continues repression against the LGBT community, with reports of arrests and invasive medical exams on perceived LGBT individuals bordering on torture. Free speech and assembly have been curtailed and many minority groups fear persecution and violence. What is State doing to express concern over this kind of repression and what has been the Egyptian Government response? What leverage do we have to pressure the Egyptian Government to better address these issues?

*Answer.* The Trump administration remains deeply committed to our strategic relationship with Egypt. However, we continue to have serious concerns about the human rights situation, including restrictions on freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression. President al-Sisi's signature of the restrictive NGO law, which threatens the ability of civil society to function without interference, and the arrests targeting the LGBTI community are just two examples of this broader problem. We continue to raise our serious concerns about these issues with senior Egyptian Government officials, and stress the fundamental importance of respect for human rights and the need for a robust civil society for Egyptian stability and prosperity. We are also engaged in a frank dialogue about the 2013 convictions of 41 employees of U.S. NGOs. We consider resolution of these issues to be fundamental to advancing our bilateral relationship.

The lack of progress in response to U.S. policy concerns thus far contributed to Secretary Tillerson's August 2017 decision to withhold the expenditure of \$195 million in Fiscal Year 2016 Foreign Military Funds after issuing a national security waiver. The Secretary was unable to certify that Egypt was advancing democracy and human rights, but the Secretary issued the waiver because maintaining our security relationship with Egypt remains in our national interest. The Secretary also decided at that time to reprogram \$95.7 million in economic and military assistance

for use in other high priority countries as another way to indicate our concern. The Secretary is focused on ensuring that our foreign assistance delivers on U.S. interests, and delivers value for the American people, and the decision to withhold expenditure of the \$195 million in FMF reinforced our determination in this regard.

The Government of Egypt and the Trump administration are committed to improving our partnership, and that desire, and the mutual benefits for both our nations from a strong relationship, are powerful incentive. We will continue to engage the Egyptian Government at the most senior levels on how it plans to better address U.S. concerns, hopefully preventing a recurrence of this situation.

#### *Algeria*

*Question 14.* Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who is nearly 80 years old and has been largely incapacitated by a stroke, has been President of Algeria since 1999 and removed term limits allowing him to be President for life. What is State's assessment of the likely succession plan for Bouteflika and Algeria's preparations for a peaceful transition of power?

Answer. Algeria's next presidential election is in 2019. Constitutional reforms announced in January 2016 reinstated a two-term limit on the presidency, a limit previously removed before President Bouteflika ran for a third term in 2009. Algeria has clearly delineated, constitutionally mandated succession procedures. We fully expect the Government will follow them if the need arises.

#### *Morocco*

*Question 15.* Morocco has been a leader in the region for promoting counter-radicalization and sponsoring moderate representations of Islam. King Mohammed VI in particular has been particularly vocal in this space. Do you think Morocco can lead the rest of the region in this effort? How can the Sunni Arab countries better work together to address shared concerns of extremism?

Answer. The Moroccan Government actively implements its national strategy for countering violent extremism (CVE) and promoting traditional Maliki Islam. King Mohammed VI's descent from the Prophet Mohammed and his constitutional role as Morocco's "Commander of the Faithful" give him religious legitimacy to advance CVE efforts. To help other countries in Africa develop their capacity to counter violent extremist ideology, Morocco has opened an international imam training center in Rabat that has provided a moderate religious curriculum to over 700 imams and preachers from Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Tunisia, Guinea, Libya, and Nigeria. Morocco's efforts to counter flows of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) include counter-radicalization programs, especially within prisons.

Morocco co-chairs the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and previously co-chaired the GCTF FTF working group under the auspices of which Morocco co-led the effort to develop The Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon, which the U.N. Security Council drew upon when drafting U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178. As a member of the GCTF's CVE Working Group, Morocco shares good practices on messaging with other GCTF members and non-members. Morocco has valuable lessons to share with its neighbors and it can play a particularly effective leadership role in Africa. Several other Sunni Arab countries have similar domestic, regional, and even international programs to counter violent extremist ideology and promote traditional religious interpretations and discourse.

#### *Western Sahara*

*Question 16.* Do you see any progress in the near future in resolving the dispute over Western Sahara? What role can the United States play in the peace process?

Answer. We support the U.N.-led diplomatic process for Western Sahara and efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable, and mutually acceptable political solution to the conflict that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We support the work of the U.N. Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for the Western Sahara, as well as the mandate of the U.N. Mission for the Referendum on Western Sahara (MINURSO) peacekeeping mission.

In August, the U.N. Secretary General appointed former German President Horst Kohler as his new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara. To date, Personal Envoy Kohler has met with the heads of state of Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania and with the Polisario's leadership. However, Morocco and the Polisario have not met directly since 2012, and tangible progress in resolving the dispute over Western Sahara will require the parties to work together.

*Libya*

*Question 17.* What is the long-term political solution for Libya and are neighboring and regional states playing a helpful or harmful role?

Answer. The United States desired end-state in Libya is a more inclusive government capable of providing security to the Libyan people, addressing their economic and humanitarian needs, and partnering with the international community to defeat ISIS and other terrorists. President Trump and Secretary Tillerson welcomed Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj to Washington on December 1 and discussed the need to move forward with political reconciliation.

The United States strongly supports U.N. Special Representative Ghassan Salamé's efforts to help the Libyan parties negotiate a political solution within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement and prepare for successful national elections in 2018. Prime Minister al-Sarraj's Government continues to face many challenges, but it has also taken important steps to stabilize the country, including through counterterrorism partnership with the United States to defeat ISIS. Ultimately, only a political solution and a peaceful transition can stabilize Libya. Attempts to bypass the U.N.-facilitated process or impose a military solution would only destabilize Libya and benefit only ISIS and other terrorists.

Increased international alignment is critical to stabilizing Libya, and it has been a core goal of our diplomatic efforts. The United States urges the international community and all states in the region to support U.N. mediation efforts. We continue to closely coordinate with our partners in the region on how to address the situation in Libya. Libya's neighbors and other key countries in region have a critical role to play in urging Libyan contacts to engage constructively with the U.N.-facilitated process.

*Question 18.* How are peace talks between the warring factions progressing?

Answer. The only viable way to achieve a stable transition to a more permanent, unified Libyan Government is through the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). We strongly support U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Libya Ghassan Salamé's Action Plan for Libya, which offers a roadmap for helping Libyans negotiate amendments to the LPA and make the necessary preparations for credible national presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018.

Since unveiling the Action Plan in September, SRSG Salamé has convened a joint committee composed of representatives of the Libyan House of Representatives (HoR) and the advisory State Council for a series of meetings to discuss amendments to LPA provisions on the structure of Libya's transitional executive government and security structures. In an important step forward, the HoR voted to approve SRSG Salamé's compromise package of amendments in November. While State Council leadership has so far withheld its approval, we understand many members of the State Council support the proposal. We are urging all Libyans and the international community to engage constructively with SRSG Salamé and fully support his efforts to broker final agreement on a package of amendments.

SRSG Salamé envisions the Action Plan's second step as a National Conference bringing together a broader range of Libyan actors for expanded reconciliation talks. The Action Plan also calls for simultaneous efforts to finalize a new Libyan constitution and lay the technical groundwork for elections in late 2018. Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and other Libyan leaders have also called for elections in 2018. The United States continues to urge Libyan leaders on all sides to take part in dialogue and refrain from military confrontation. Much work remains necessary to bring the parties to a workable compromise, but only a political solution and a peaceful transition can provide stability for the Libyan people.

*Question 19.* Do you believe the State Department should restart a diplomatic presence inside Libya? Are we able to effectively engage without one?

Answer. Diplomatic engagement inside Libya is important for U.S. interests. Ambassador Peter Bodde met with Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj in Tripoli on May 23—the first such visit by a U.S. diplomat since 2014. The visit demonstrated the continued commitment of the United States to political reconciliation in Libya and to our ongoing partnership with Prime Minister al-Sarraj's Government to defeat ISIS and other terrorists and support the Libyan people's efforts to build a more stable, unified, and prosperous future.

We continue to plan for resuming our operations in Libya when security conditions permit. In July 2014, our Embassy in Tripoli suspended operations due to security concerns and staff initially relocated to the U.S. Embassy in Valetta, Malta as the Libya External Office (LEO). In 2015, the LEO moved to its current location

in Tunisia, where it operates as a separate mission hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Tunis. Despite their status as a “mission-in-exile,” Ambassador Bodde and his dedicated team at the LEO engage with a wide range of Libyan interlocutors and international partners in Tunis and throughout the Middle East and Europe in order to advance U.S. interests in Libya. When security conditions permit, increased diplomatic engagement within Libya will undoubtedly bolster these efforts.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO  
HON. NATHAN SALES BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

*Other Areas for Potential ISIS Expansion in Southeast Asia—Burma*

Southeast Asia is also vulnerable to ISIS expansion, especially in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Burma.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies wrote after Burma’s security forces began so-called “clearance operations” in the Rakhine State that “The repression visited upon the Rohingya by a powerful government largely consisting of leaders from another religion present a potential, transnational flash-point for jihadi-Salafi organizations.”

The United Nations Human Rights Council resolution yesterday condemning “the very likely commission of crimes against humanity” by Burma’s security forces and others against Rohingya is a good first step toward accountability, but I remained concerned about the potential for radicalization among the Rohingya in Burma and in the camps in Bangladesh.

*Question 1.* Ambassador Sales, are you concerned that the refugee camps in Bangladesh and the displaced populations in Burma could become fruitful recruiting grounds for ISIS or similar violent extremist groups?

Answer. We are concerned about terrorist groups’ ability to recruit and inspire new followers from vulnerable populations, and we know that ISIS and Al-Qaeda are seeking to exploit the Rohingya crisis. For these reasons, we are actively engaging with the Government of Burma and the international community to address the situation in northern Rakhine State and allow Rohingya refugees who have fled to Bangladesh and others internally displaced in Rakhine State to return to their homes in safety and with dignity. We are encouraged by the November 23 voluntary repatriation agreement between Bangladesh and Burma and encourage their bilateral cooperation to continue to ensure the voluntary, dignified return of the displaced.

The United States continues to support Burma’s nascent democracy and we look to the Burmese government to commit to bringing long-term peace and security to Rakhine State by implementing the recommendations of the Annan Commission report. We are ready to support these efforts and we also urge the Government of Burma to cooperate with the UN fact-finding mission.

*Question 2.* To what extent do draconian responses by the security forces reinforce the ISIS narrative that the modern world, led by the United States, is at war with Islam and Muslim people?

Answer. We are concerned about violent extremist groups’ ability to leverage real or perceived grievances to recruit vulnerable populations to join terrorist groups or commit acts of violence. Real or perceived targeting of Muslim groups reinforces the victimization narratives that terrorist organizations use for recruitment. Conversely, U.S. actions that empower disenfranchised groups can undermine efforts to exploit these narratives. To this end, the State Department is coordinating efforts to publicly highlight U.S. humanitarian assistance to support refugees, displaced persons, and other affected communities, which totals nearly \$151 million since the start of FY 2017. In Bangladesh, the Department is highlighting the United States’ close coordination with UN agencies, other humanitarian organizations, and donor governments to support Rohingya refugees who have fled atrocities in Burma.

*Question 3.* What can the United States do to help Burma and other partner governments in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa address the underlying grievances that have fueled insurgencies among their people?

Answer. When working to prevent or mitigate the drivers of conflict and violence, we first stress to our partners that political marginalization, discrimination, the treatment of political opposition as terrorists, repression of human rights, corruption, lack of redress or accountability for past human rights violations or abuses and other governance-related factors can create rich conditions for fueling conflict and

terrorism. We stress that harsh counterterrorism and other security responses that violate or abuse human rights can significantly exacerbate conflicts and raise the risk of violent extremism. We also urge partners to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses because failure to redress human rights violations and abuses, particularly those committed by security forces, undermines security in partner countries and, ultimately, in the United States. Conversely, fostering good governance, building disciplined and accountable security forces that partner with local communities, and inculcating respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance, and social inclusion are critical bulwarks against violence and terrorism and necessary complements to countering terrorist activities.

The United State is working to understand and address the underlying grievances that have fueled insurgencies, terrorism, and other forms of violence across the globe, including in the Sahel, East Africa, Iraq, Southeast Asia, and other regions. Some countries lack the will or capacity to effectively address underlying drivers of violence in accordance with good practices while fully respecting human rights. Wherever possible, we engage such countries to move them in the right direction. When countries are reluctant to frankly identify and address drivers of violence, effective diplomacy is the first priority. When partner countries have the political will but lack human and financial resources, we support and enhance those capacities. These measures may include civil society-focused programs, governance and security sector reforms designed to help partners conduct their work in an accountable and transparent manner, and amplifying credible voices to speak out against violent extremism. We also engage partner nations to address the rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists, including by working with the criminal justice sector and prison systems in these regions.

*Syria and Russia—ISIS No Longer a Threat?*

Russia claimed today that Syria had been completely liberated from ISIS. Despite Syria's Foreign Ministry statement earlier in November that with ISIS effectively defeated, the U.S. presence in Syria was in violation of international law, the Pentagon yesterday announced that the U.S. military mission in Syria would continue until areas reclaimed from ISIS are stabilized.

Question 4. Please describe the nature of our conversations with the Russians, especially with respect to Russia's claim it can challenge the continued presence of U.S. forces in Syria. What is Russia's troop presence in Syria?

Answer. Our priorities in Syria are the enduring defeat of ISIS and degrading al-Qa'ida, and de-escalating the Syrian conflict to create the necessary space for a political solution to the crisis. The Coalition deconflicts the complex and congested battlespace over eastern Syria with Russian officials. Communication between the Coalition and the Russians ensures the safety of our collective aircrews and assets, and supports our operations on the ground. The deconfliction line enables counter-ISIS operations by all parties while ensuring physical separation between the various forces fighting ISIS. Ultimately, this deconfliction allows us all to focus on our mission: to defeat ISIS.

The President directed that we coordinate with Russia to enhance the pre-existing deconfliction mechanism and de-escalate the broader conflict in Syria—both of which dramatically accelerated the speed and efficiency of the counter-ISIS campaign. We support any genuine effort to de-escalate the levels of violence in Syria. Efforts such as the southwest ceasefire agreement negotiated by the United States, Jordan and Russia—are instrumental in reducing violence and setting the necessary though still not sufficient foundation for a political solution through the Geneva process. The United States actively supports efforts by Staffan de Mistura and his team to facilitate the UN-led talks in Geneva. We will continue to support his work and call upon Russia to help ensure the Syrian regime's serious participation in the Geneva process, in line with the spirit of the U.S.-Russia joint November 10 Presidential statement issued in Vietnam.

Russia's public comments about removal of their forces do not change U.S. priorities in Syria and the broader region. Open source reporting indicates that, at present, Russian forces in Syria number around 4,000 to 5,000 personnel. Our focus in Syria remains the enduring defeat of ISIS and support for a credible and enduring political solution. The fight is not over. Hard work remains to ensure ISIS's lasting defeat. A continued Coalition military presence in Syria is required to root out and destroy remaining pockets of ISIS and to stabilize liberated areas to ensure ISIS is unable to re-emerge.



*Question 5.* With ISIS in retreat, what does stabilization look like in Syria? What will “enduring defeat of ISIS” entail? What are the conditions on the ground that would point to “enduring defeat?”

Answer. Coalition-backed military operations have liberated nearly all of the territory ISIS once controlled in Syria and Iraq and freed an estimated 7.7 million people from ISIS’s oppressive rule. ISIS has been unable to recapture a single inch of the over 106,000 square kilometers of territory liberated in Coalition-backed military operations including important Syria urban areas Manbij, Tabqa, and Raqqa. Globally, we are enhancing cooperation and border security, aviation security, law enforcement, financial sanctions, counter-messaging, and intelligence sharing to prevent ISIS from carrying out attacks in our homelands. However, realizing that military operations, while necessary, are insufficient to achieve ISIS’s enduring defeat, the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS is committed to helping stabilize liberated communities and preventing ISIS’s reemergence.

The United States and our Coalition partners are now working with an array of local actors, including the Raqqa Civil Council, to coordinate and implement stabilization efforts. We are funding efforts to remove explosive remnant of war and to restore essential services, including water, power, and some health and education services. We are also maintaining needs-based humanitarian support. The longer it takes to establish the conditions that allow for the return or local integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the higher the risk for a potential re-emergence of ISIS or another violent extremist organization.

We are also training local security forces to hold liberated terrain, which enables stabilization activities to commence and provides stability conducive to the voluntary return of refugees and IDPs. To date, we have trained over 2,500 members of the Raqqa Internal Security Force. These forces will be a vital component of our partnered forces’ efforts to combat a likely ISIS insurgency in the weeks, months, and even years ahead.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO  
HON. JOAN POLASCHIK AND HON. NATHAN SALES BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

In recent years, hundreds of thousands of migrants from West Africa, have been loaded into the backs of pickup trucks for the deadly journey towards Libya—and eventually Europe.

But last year, the European Union began working with the Government of Niger and others in the Sahel to crack down on such smuggling.

A recent EU report notes that while there has supposedly been a reduction in migrants, “the decrease registered does not necessarily translate into a one-on-one reduction of the overall flow reaching Libya, as new routes by-passing the reinforced border controls are being exploited. These new routes are more difficult to use and riskier, leading... higher risks for the migrants.”

*Question 1.* How would you assess both U.S. and EU efforts to deal with the underlying causes of irregular migration in the Sahel and West Africa?

Answer. The search for better economic opportunities and large, well-established West African diaspora populations in Western countries draw irregular migrants. The underlying causes for irregular migration from West Africa and the Sahel include the huge youth population bulge; limited economic opportunities; restricted political freedoms; instability and chronic insecurity; and easy access to information through social media portraying migration as positive. West Africa includes some of the least developed countries in the world. Assisting countries in West Africa and the Sahel to reduce the disparities with more developed countries is a long-term project with many challenges.

The United States continues to encourage West African governments to adopt policies that will lead to inclusive economic growth and reduced incentives for migration. We also help resolve conflict, combat terrorism, and enable safe and dignified returns of the displaced. We build the capacity of governments to manage their migration flows, reduce vulnerabilities and exploitation of migrants and counter trafficking in persons. U.S. assistance in West Africa and the Sahel addresses the challenges of irregular migration through strengthening natural resource management; promoting conflict mitigation and prevention; enhancing agricultural production and market access; and promoting improved nutrition and health.

The EU has focused on building law enforcement and border protection capacity, working with host governments to reduce irregular migration, improving migration

management, and strengthening resilience. The EU also prioritizes programs that provide economic opportunities and more open societies in Africa, and those that address the humanitarian challenges posed by criminals and traffickers who prey on migrants during the long journey to Europe. At the recent AU-EU Summit, European countries noted both the responsibility of African governments to provide a favorable environment and the responsibility of the EU to assist.

*Question 2.* My concern is that such programs to clampdown on smuggling may not address the reason such migrants are making the treacherous journey. Do such programs simply increase the cost and risks for these migrants?

*Answer.* All sovereign nations must maintain control over their borders and identify, investigate, and prosecute human smuggling and trafficking. Human traffickers and smugglers put the lives and safety of those they are transporting at risk. Employing human smugglers is an inherently risky endeavor—which can lead to death and injury and the exposure of migrants to other forms of crime. In addition, some human traffickers pose as smugglers but instead subject intending migrants to forced labor or sexual exploitation. Interdicting smuggling and trafficking through effective border security prevents harm to trafficking victims and intending migrants, in addition to improving overall national and regional security. At the same time, we urge countries to avoid punishing trafficking victims for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. We emphasize to governments around the world that efforts to stem the flow of migrants should also proactively reduce and prevent vulnerability to exploitation such as human trafficking; identify and protect potential trafficking victims; and provide victims with appropriate services. Opportunities for legal migration drastically reduce the costs and risks that migrants face—and represent the preferred method of migration—subject to the sovereign right of all nations to decide if, how, and for what purposes they will accept migrants. Efforts to clamp down on smuggling go hand-in-hand with longer-term U.S. objectives of helping countries develop economic opportunities, promoting stability, and increasing political freedom.

*Question 3.* We know that while Sahel countries like Mali and Niger continue to experience violence, poverty, and lack of institutional capacity, North African countries, such as Libya, will feel the effects. What efforts are you taking to disrupt traffickers in the Sahel and create a more enabling environment for legitimate economic activities?

*Answer.* The United States recognizes that this complex challenge requires a multifaceted approach, and we are working with our Sahelian partners to disrupt and prosecute traffickers and smugglers, improve economic opportunities for youth and others in the region, and enhance stability and governance.

Most law enforcement agencies in the region are weak, under-resourced, and face severe challenges in addressing this multifaceted problem across an area of more than a million square miles. Through training and mentorship, we help law enforcement partners strengthen their institutional foundations, including strategy and coordination, and mobilize their scarce human and physical resources to meet growing threats. We are also providing assistance to improve connectivity and peer learning among law enforcement officials in the region.

Partnerships with Niger and Mali that began as part of the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) focus on enhancing the management and oversight of defense, law enforcement, and justice institutions for these governments to more efficiently, effectively, and responsibly provide security and justice services to the population. For example, through SGI, Niger has undertaken reforms to improve the management of its human, financial, and material resources, and to ensure that defense and law enforcement resources align to meet strategic priorities. Similarly, SGI supports Mali to improve defense and police human resource management systems, as well as defense planning and logistics capabilities; the country is making some small signs of progress despite the continued insecurity and peace process challenges.

As part of the Sahel Development Initiative (SDI), USAID is designing programs to reduce vulnerability to violent extremism (VE) in the Sahel by enhancing government legitimacy and increasing economic opportunities. SDI targets both communities most at risk of VE recruitment and influence and the broader enabling environment that allows VE to flourish.

We also support international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in the region to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to vulnerable migrants and refugees, including emergency evacuations of stranded and abused migrants out of Libya to Niger and other countries in the Sahel. Other activities related to migrants include medical screening and consultation, training for authorities on humane migration practices, protection monitoring of detention centers, collaboration with gov-

ernments on the U.N. Migration Working Group, and rescues at sea and in the desert.

In Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, 86 percent of citizens say that democracy, despite its problems, remains the best system of governance—even more than the 70 percent polled after the Arab Spring. Yet, Tunisia was also the source of the greatest number of ISIS foreign fighters, with over 4,000 at the height.

What concerns me, however, is that over 40 percent of the population is under the age of 24 and suffers from 35.5 percent unemployment, despite largely being well-educated. As we've seen, however, without opportunities this youth budge can turn towards extremism. Even the CIA warns, "In the near term, Tunisia's large number of jobless young, working-age adults . . . and the ongoing lack of job creation and skills mismatches could contribute to future unrest."

*Question 4.* We cannot afford to lose focus on improving the livelihoods of Tunisia's youth: Ambassador Sales, can you speak about how the CT bureau ranks youth as a priority in addressing extremism and your specific engagement with Tunisia on the issue of foreign fighters?

*Answer.* Engaging vulnerable groups, including youth, is a critical element of our countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts in Tunisia and elsewhere. We regularly engage the Government of Tunisia on this issue as well as the issue of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). We support a variety of locally-implemented programs that are designed to address these challenges. Some examples include an NGO-implemented grant to foster critical thinking skills among youth around the country to help them resist terrorist narratives and recruitment. Another program guards against recruiters' efforts to use local cafés to target vulnerable, unemployed youth. We see value to supporting such Tunisian-developed, Tunisian-led programs that have credibility in the local community.

We also have a number of training and capacity-building programs to help Tunisian law enforcement address FTF-related challenges. These include advanced counterterrorism investigative training, support to a fusion center to do FTF-focused analytical work, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism cases, and border security training designed to stem the movement of FTFs. These programs are implemented by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance, the FBI, the Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training Program, and the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program.

*Question 5.* Ambassador Polaschik, more broadly how is the State department, and specifically USAID, engaging with Tunisia to encourage further reforms and U.S. investments that spur economic opportunities?

*Answer.* A top U.S. priority is to encourage Tunisia to implement necessary economic reforms, including restructuring its banking sector and reducing its public sector expenditures, in coordination with its \$2.9 billion IMF Extended Fund Facility loan program. These reforms are the key to spurring long-term, private sector-led economic development and addressing the economic grievances that sparked the 2011 revolution, including unemployment rates that range from 15 percent to over 30 percent in some regions.

Since the revolution, the United States has provided \$418 million in assistance to encourage Tunisia's economic growth and reform. In addition, the United States has granted Tunisia access to nearly \$1.5 billion in financing at favorable rates through three Sovereign Loan Guarantees, the most recent in August 2016.

A primary focus of U.S. assistance, implemented by USAID, is to promote business growth, competitiveness, and economic inclusiveness through projects that bolster small and medium enterprises (SMEs), develop work force skills, and provide technical skills on key economic reforms. Specific programs include: the Business Reform and Competitiveness Program that has helped create over 20,000 jobs for Tunisians; the \$100 million Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund which has invested \$22 million in 19 SMEs to date; a franchise development project that paved the way for U.S. franchises to establish themselves in Tunisia; and entrepreneurial training and mentoring projects that supported the development of small businesses in the interior of the country. We also advocate actively for U.S. firms, engaging the Tunisian Government on improving the business climate, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and ensuring our companies are treated well so they can invest in Tunisia and create economic opportunities that benefit both Americans and Tunisians. Finally, the Embassy works with universities and the Ministry of Higher Education to encourage the development of a culture of entrepreneurship on university campuses as well as educational reforms that connect educational institutions and the private sector and provide students the skills most needed in the job market.

*Question 6.* In October, the Carnegie Endowment released a report noting that "corruption is a destabilizing force in Tunisia, inflicting all levels of its economy, se-

curity, and political system.” In what ways, if at all are you integrating anti-corruption measures into our foreign aid?

Answer. Promoting good governance and transparency, and strengthening the effectiveness of civil society organizations (CSOs) and their capacity to hold the Government accountable, are key objectives of U.S. assistance in Tunisia.

To support the Tunisian Government’s fight against corruption, the United States is providing \$2 million to help the Financial Judicial Pole, the judicial authority for the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of corruption cases, develop its institutional framework and technical capacity to investigate and prosecute financial corruption cases in Tunisia. We are also helping the Tunisian Government and Tunisian CSOs implement the Open Government Action Plan to build trust between the Government, business, and civil society and improve the business environment. We are working with Tunisia to develop a Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact to help Tunisia alleviate poverty and meet good governance and anti-corruption benchmarks. Our Embassy in Tunis actively engages Tunisian journalists, civil society, and the public on issues of corruption and transparency, including by sponsoring expert speaker programs and an information campaign focused on U.S. approaches to fighting corruption. Similarly, the State Department recently sponsored ten Tunisian civil society leaders and government officials to participate in a three week International Visitor Leadership Program specifically targeted towards improving Tunisian understanding of anti-corruption efforts and legislation in the United States.

#### *U.S. Migrant-Related Assistance*

I am sure you have both seen the recent reports, most notably by CNN, on the horrifying videos of West Africans being sold at auctions in Libya, reminiscent of some of the darkest days in the history of mankind.

These desperate people, seeking better opportunities and fleeing corruption in their homes countries, are now held in debt bondage by smugglers and militias. I can hardly imagine the indignity of being propped up on an auction block, being sold over and over for my labor. It’s absolutely sickening and should shake us to the core to act.

*Question 7.* What assistance is the U.S. providing to relieve the situation, in terms of humanitarian aid and other migration-related assistance?

Answer. The deplorable conditions of migrants in Libya have endangered the lives of thousands of migrants from West Africa, as well as migrating refugees fleeing conflict and persecution from Central and East Africa. As part of our overall assistance to Libya since the 2011 revolution, the United States has contributed more than \$150 million in humanitarian assistance to meet the humanitarian and protection needs of internally displaced Libyans, refugees, and vulnerable migrants inside Libya. With contributions from the United States and others, the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Committee of the Red Cross, and International Organization for Migration are responding to the humanitarian situation of Libyans, refugees, and migrants through local non-governmental organizations such as the Libyan Red Crescent, and conducting detention visits to monitor conditions of detained migrants and compliance with International Humanitarian Law. The United States is also providing emergency assistance to migrants, including those who are victims of human trafficking, to help with their return to their home countries.

*Question 8.* And what steps has the State Department considered to hold the perpetrators of such abuses accountable, including sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act or other authorities?

Answer. We have seen the reports of slavery, trafficking, and other human rights abuses in Libya. We strive with all of our partners, governmental or otherwise, to hold the perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable.

In an effort to fully and faithfully implement the Global Magnitsky Human Rights and Accountability Act, the administration, through a Presidential Executive Order (E.O.) issued on December 21, 2017, launched a new sanctions regime targeting human rights abusers and corrupt actors around the world. In an Annex to the Order, the President imposed sanctions on 13 serious human rights abusers and corrupt actors. In addition, the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General, imposed sanctions on an additional 39 affiliated individuals and entities under the newly-issued Order. The Department of State concurrently submitted the “Report to Congress Pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.”

The interagency engages in extensive dialogue regarding potential targets under the E.O., including regular consultation with our embassies abroad and our experts here in Washington, NGO's, and Congress, to identify persons whose actions meet the E.O. standards of significant human rights abuse or acts of corruption. Potential designations are assessed as part of a whole of government endeavor and implemented in a manner appropriate to achieve our foreign policy objectives.

Our aim is to send a strong message of condemnation that will impel the designated individuals to change their behavior and deter others from engaging in similar behavior.

The State Department and DOD have significantly increased security assistance levels for Tunisia since the 2011 political transition, and in the context of a significant domestic and Libya-based terrorist threat.

Tunisian security forces appear to have improved their capacity and internal coordination since the large-scale attacks in 2015 and early 2016, but at the same time, Tunisia's political leaders have been slow to advance structural governance reforms and anti-corruption efforts that could help address grassroots grievances that may contribute to radicalization.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO  
HON. JOAN POLASCHIK BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

*Question 1.* Has the emphasis on counterterrorism come at a cost for Tunisia's democratic progress and accountability?

Answer. U.S. policy toward Tunisia focuses on three mutually-reinforcing goals: encouraging continued democratic progress and good governance; helping Tunisia implement economic reforms, spur private sector-led growth, and expand economic opportunities; and bolstering Tunisia's security and counterterrorism capacity. To deliver on the promise of its revolution, Tunisia must achieve progress simultaneously in all three of these areas. Because terrorist attacks have the potential to undermine Tunisia's economy and its fragile democracy, counterterrorism assistance is, in fact, a critical part of advancing and supporting Tunisia's democratic progress. By the same token, achieving accountability, democratic progress and good governance are key to economic progress, maintaining stability, and preventing and combatting violent extremism.

Terrorists seek to exploit perceptions of disenfranchisement, limited economic opportunities, and poor governance. In our assistance to Tunisia since the revolution, we have employed a balanced approach, providing nearly \$575 million for security cooperation, as well as \$580 million for encouraging economic growth and economic reform, and over \$235 million for promoting democracy, good governance and human rights, including \$90 million for rule of law and security sector reform. By providing targeted security assistance to Tunisia, we are bolstering the capacity of an impartial force to secure the country's borders, conduct counterterrorism operations, and secure an environment in which democracy can flourish. Moreover, U.S. assistance programs to Tunisia's Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice are helping Tunisia's civilian security forces become not only more effective, but also more transparent, accountable and compliant with international human rights standards.

*Question 2.* What have U.S. diplomats messaged to Tunisian counterparts regarding the problematic administrative reconciliation law, which gives "blanket impunity" for civil servants implicated in corruption, and other corruption and accountability concerns?

Answer. The State Department regularly engages with Tunisian officials and civil society on democracy and governance issues and the importance of transparency and holding officials accountable for corruption. We are aware of the concerns raised by some Tunisians about the administrative reconciliation law. We are encouraged by the robust debate associated with this matter in the Tunisian Parliament and broader society.

More broadly, we maintain an ongoing dialogue with senior leaders in Tunisia's executive and legislative branches on the importance of continuing Tunisia's democratic consolidation and efforts to meet the aspirations for better governance that the Tunisian people expressed during the revolution. We re-inforce these messages during regular meetings with the independent constitutional commissions which have responsibility for investigations into allegations of government corruption and other abuses during current and previous political regimes. Tunisians demanded an end to corruption, but recent International Republican Institute (IRI) polling shows

that they remain dissatisfied with their government's performance on this important issue: nearly 90 percent of Tunisians believe corruption has become worse since the revolution.

Prime Minister Chahed has committed to tackle this problem more effectively, and he launched an important, high-profile anti-corruption campaign in May. We have supported him and the Tunisian Government as they strive to hold individuals involved in corruption accountable. U.S. assistance programs also support anti-corruption efforts by building the capacity of the judiciary and police, developing jointly with Tunisia a Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact that prioritizes anti-corruption benchmarks, and building the capacity of civil society organizations and journalists to monitor government activities and hold government officials accountable.

*Question 3.* To what extent has Tunisia's emergent status as an important U.S. counterterrorism partner in North Africa inhibited U.S. constructive criticism regarding governance issues?

*Answer.* Bolstering our counterterrorism partnership with Tunisia has not hindered our continued, constructive engagement on democracy and governance issues with Tunisian Government officials and civil society members. During the most recent Universal Periodic Review of Tunisia, the United States raised concerns regarding lack of transparency in investigating security forces abuses, arbitrary detentions, and arrests under the state of emergency and counterterrorism laws. We also use our annual Human Rights Reports to highlight concerns.

Continued democratic consolidation and implementation of good governance practices are vital to ensuring security and stability in Tunisia and therefore its effectiveness as a security partner to the U.S. Since Tunisia's revolution, we have employed a balanced approach to our assistance, providing nearly \$575 million for security cooperation, as well as \$580 million for encouraging economic growth and economic reform, and over \$235 million for promoting democracy, good governance and human rights, including \$90 million for rule of law and security sector reform.

We also maintain an ongoing dialogue with senior government officials and civil society members about the full range of political issues, including Tunisia's progress in achieving its democratic consolidation and meeting the aspirations the Tunisian people expressed during the revolution.

*Question 4.* DOD funding for counterterrorism assistance has increased significantly in North Africa in the past decade.

Transnational Salafist-jihadist organizations as well as ISIS took root in Libya following the ouster of Qadhafi. The State Department describes Libya as a permissive environment for terrorists and a number of terrorist attacks in Tunisia and other areas have been planned in Libya or by individuals of Libyan descent.

Ms. Polaschik, in the hearing, you reiterated U.S. support for the U.N. Action Plan in Libya and stated that attempts to impose a military solution to Libya's political problems would create opportunities for extremists, including the Islamic State.

What if anything the U.S. is prepared to do to actively dissuade such an attempt or respond to any attempts to impose such a solution?

*Answer.* The United States has been very clear in our discussions with all Libyan parties and our international partners that any attempts to impose a military solution or bypass the political process will only further destabilize Libya. We have urged Libyans to exercise military restraint and engage constructively with U.N. efforts to help them reach a political solution, prepare for successful national elections, and build unified government and security institutions capable of providing security for the Libyan people and partnering with the international community to defeat ISIS and other terrorists. Renewed civil conflict would set back these efforts and benefit only the terrorists.

The United States has a strong partnership with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj's Government. We cooperate closely with the Government of National Accord and its aligned forces against ISIS, and we support Prime Minister al-Sarraj's efforts to promote dialogue and national political reconciliation. During Prime Minister al-Sarraj's visit to Washington in early December, President Trump, Secretary Tillerson, and other senior U.S. officials underscored our commitment to helping Libyans defeat ISIS and other terrorists, advance political reconciliation through the U.N. political process, and build a more stable, unified, and prosperous future for the Libyan people.

The U.N. Security Council's Presidential Statement on Libya on December 14 also sent a strong message that the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) will remain the framework for a political settlement throughout Libya's transitional period. The Security Council rejected efforts to impose incorrect deadlines on the LPA, which

threatened to undermine the U.N.-facilitated political process and justify destabilizing military action.

*Question 5.* How would the United States respond to attempts to military-led solution to the political challenges?

*Answer.* The United States has been very clear in our discussions with all Libyan parties and our international partners that there is no military solution to Libya's challenges. Renewed civil conflict will only benefit ISIS and other terrorists. The only sustainable solution to the political, economic, security, and humanitarian challenges in Libya is an inclusive, unified government that can control and govern its territory and provide a more stable and prosperous future for the Libyan people.

The United States joined the U.N. Security Council on December 14 in reaffirming the international community's commitment to a political solution based on the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). We will continue to work with our international partners help Libyans advance toward political reconciliation through the U.N.-facilitated process and stabilize their country.

*Question 5.* What is the State Department doing now to dissuade spoilers?

*Answer.* The State Department urges all Libyan parties and our international partners to fully support the U.N.'s efforts to achieve national political reconciliation and restore stability in Libya. We are actively involved with all Libyan parties, underscoring that any attempts to impose a military solution or bypass the political process will only further destabilize Libya.

We have worked closely with partners on the U.N. Security Council to ensure that the international community sends a unified message on the need for a political solution in Libya. Since December 6, the Security Council's December 14 Presidential Statement reaffirmed that the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) will remain the framework for a political settlement throughout Libya's transitional period and rejected incorrect deadlines for it. We will continue to work closely with our international partners to make clear that any attempts, including by Libyan parties, to undermine the Libyan-led, U.N. facilitated political process are unacceptable to the international community.

