

**NOMINATIONS OF THE 110TH
CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION**

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—
JANUARY 30 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 24, 2008
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
110TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

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JIM WEBB, Virginia	DAVID VITTER, Louisiana

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

KENNETH A. MYERS, Jr., *Republican Staff Director*

*Note: Reassigned to Committee on Finance January 24, 2008.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
110TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

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JIM WEBB, Virginia	JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming*

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

KENNETH A. MYERS, Jr., *Republican Staff Director*

*Note: Appointed February 12, 2008.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2008

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

Beecroft, Robert Stephen, to be Ambassador to Jordan
Cunningham, James, to be Ambassador to Israel
Hoagland, Richard, to be Ambassador to the Republic of
Kazakhstan
LeBaron, Joseph Evan, to be Ambassador to Qatar

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:40 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Lugar, Coleman, and Voinovich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much for coming to order.

This hearing on the four important nominations for ambassadorships is now open, and I apologize for starting a few minutes late. Thank you for being here.

I should apologize also for the hiatus of 2 days. We had an emergency in terms of scheduling, and I really appreciate everybody's understanding. I presume you understood. [Laughter.]

I am delighted to be here with my ranking colleague, Senator Coleman, and we both welcome you, and Senator Voinovich also.

It is really excellent, the best moments of sitting on this committee when we get to have confirmation hearings is when we get a group of professionals in front of us who have distinguished careers. And each and every one of you brings that to the table.

This is just a process by which we can examine your thoughts about the countries and regions that you are being charged with the responsibilities for, and we will certainly try to expedite these nominations as rapidly as we can. I am confident that will be pretty rapid in the next days.

So, having taken the edge off all of your testimony, I gather a number of you have family here. Let me just make a few opening comments, and then we would love to have you introduce your family. And then we look forward to your statements.

First of all, we have James Cunningham, the nominee to be ambassador to Israel, whose distinguished career includes postings in

Italy, the United States mission to NATO, the U.N., and most recently, as consul general in Hong Kong.

Robert Stephen Beecroft, the nominee to be ambassador to Jordan, served in the State Department as executive assistant to Secretaries Rice and Powell. Before that, he was posted to Syria and Saudi Arabia and brings extensive experience in the region.

Ambassador Joseph Evan LeBaron, nominee to be ambassador to Qatar, comes to us after serving as ambassador of Mauritania and has had several other postings in the region, including Istanbul, Amman, Ankara, and Doha.

Ambassador Richard Hoagland, the nominee to be ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan, has previously served as ambassador to Tajikistan. And before that, Ambassador Hoagland served in Russia, Uzbekistan, Pakistan twice, and in Afghanistan.

These are all significant positions that you have been nominated for. Our relationships with each of these countries—Israel, Jordan, Qatar, and Kazakhstan—offer enormous opportunities and very real challenges. I just met a moment ago with Wali Khan from Pakistan, who led a successful effort to win seats in the FATA area in Pakistan and beat back the religious parties, which was a surprise to a lot of people. So it is a very interesting development.

And yesterday, I met with the foreign minister from Jordan, where we have a terrific relationship and a lot of ongoing issues, obviously.

Over the past six decades, there is no one on this committee who needs to be reminded of the special nature of our relationship with Israel, based on any number of different values—shared history, culture, political, and strategic interests. And those connections extend well beyond our governments, as we know.

In my numerous trips there in the last 24 years, I have had the pleasure of gaining an even deeper respect and affection for that relationship, and I think it is known throughout the world that the United States is never going to waver in that commitment.

But Israel faces grave threats. Hezbollah is stronger. Hamas is stronger in many ways and has complicated the issues of the peace process. And so, there are tens of thousands of people in Israel, southern Israel, living under constant threat of rocket attack. And I might say I think were it us or any other country under similar circumstances, they might not have exercised as much restraint as the leadership in Israel has.

Needless to say, it is vitally important at this moment to continue forward in the peace process and to work toward that agreement. We all understand the goal—two States living side-by-side in peace and security. Getting there is the hard part. We came so close at Taba a few years ago. The framework, I think most people who study it understand, it is the getting from A to that framework that is critical.

I might add that in the visits I have made there, it is my judgment that the administration has too long been sitting on the sidelines in that effort. That began to change for the better with the Annapolis conference.

But I can remember meeting with President Abbas in Ramallah 3 years ago, when he was first elected, and listening to him express his knowledge that he knew what we needed to do—what he need-

ed to do, which was disarm Hamas. But then he asked me the pregnant question, "You tell me how I am supposed to do that," and pointed to the lack of radios, cars, police, basic Politics 101, when measured against Hamas and their ability to deliver in the street.

So I think that there is much time to make up for here, and last week we met with President Abbas when he was here. And I think it is important for the administration and Congress to work together to forward that.

Next door, the United States has a very strong and growing partnership with Jordan, undoubtedly one of our most important allies in the Middle East. And Jordan's contributions in the fight against terrorism in Iraq and the Middle East peace process have really been quite extraordinary.

King Abdullah was an early and visionary voice in warning of the dangers of three civil wars in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. He has been indefatigable in his support of the post Annapolis negotiations, consistently encouraging the President and the Israelis and the Palestinians with a sense of urgency, and we are grateful for that and have enormous respect for those efforts.

And Jordan's efforts to bolster the Abbas government are key to countering the influence of Hamas in laying any groundwork for a lasting peace. So continuing that relationship is one of our principal goals.

The war in Iraq, I might add, has exacted a very heavy toll on Jordan, and all of us are concerned about some 400,000, 500,000 Iraqis living in Jordan. The foreign minister and the ambassador this week underscored their request for \$500 million in additional supplemental funds, which includes assistance for displaced Iraqis in Jordan, and I look forward to hearing from Mr. Beecroft sort of where we are heading on that.

The United States also counts on Qatar as an important partner in counterterrorism efforts and host to major United States military facilities. So we look forward to hearing how we are coordinating our security cooperation, and what could be done to strengthen regional organizations like the Gulf Cooperation Council.

At the same time, there have been some concerns the Qatari citizens may have provided support to al-Qaeda. Fatah officials affiliated with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas publicly asserted that the Qataris have provided financial assistance to Hamas.

In 2003, the Qataris approved a new constitution giving women the right to vote and run for office through elections for the advisory council, but they have still not been held.

Despite those and other reforms, the State Department found that "serious problems" remained in Qatar's human rights record, and Qatar is 1 of only 16 Tier 3 human trafficking countries, meaning that it has neither implemented minimal trafficking standards nor made significant efforts to do so. And I hope you can discuss today sort of what we can expect with respect to those issues.

And finally, Kazakhstan is a key partner—Sacha Baron Cohen notwithstanding—a key partner on issues including combating extremism, proliferation, and human trafficking. And it is also obvi-

ously a very important petroleum producer. Very persistent concerns linger over the human rights issues, including the government's treatment of prisoners, arbitrary arrests, limitations on freedoms of speech, assembly, and association.

It is always tricky in a country in that part of the world when there are those kinds of interests—those kinds of issues balanced against a set of interests that are compelling in their strategic importance to us. And working through those things is the art of diplomacy, and we look forward to hearing thoughts about how that will work, particularly given the fact that Kazakhstan is slated to take over the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010.

So, Ambassador Hoagland, we look forward to hearing from you about the promised improvements in those areas, and we can have a good conversation today.

So let me turn it over to Senator Coleman. When he is finished, I hope each of you will make an opening statement. I know you are all well schooled by the State Department. We listen to a 5-minute or so opening. Your full testimony will be placed in the record as if stated in full, and we look forward to a good conversation.

**STATEMENT OF HON. NORM COLEMAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA**

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have a more in-depth opening statement. I would like to have that put in the record.

Senator KERRY. Without objection, that is in the record.

Senator COLEMAN. I appreciate that.

Your opening statement touched on so many of the salient points. We do have before us a group of professionals with distinguished careers. It makes our job much easier. This would be a good opportunity to visit with them and kind of lay out some of the concerns, issues of great concern, and get their perspective.

I would note to Ambassador Hoagland, who came before this committee as a nominee to ambassador of Romania and I was not able to support moving that forward, it had nothing to do with the distinguished career and service of the ambassador, and I really look forward to moving this nomination forward.

I do appreciate all of the gentlemen here. I really appreciate the quality of your service, and you are willing to take on some tough challenges. All of these nominees are nominees to countries which are important to this country. They have been friends. They have been allies. They are of strategic importance in an area of the world in which there is great danger today.

Earlier today, I participated in a Holocaust memorial service. It is the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, and our relationship with Israel transcends current-day issues. It goes way beyond that.

These are, I think, the most challenging times. The threat of Iran getting a nuclear weapon, how do we handle that? Rockets being launched on an almost daily basis into Israel from Gaza. How do we move forward in other areas without resolving that? So there are areas of deep concern.

King Abdullah in Jordan has been an incredible leader, a unifying force in, again, an area that is of the greatest importance to

us. And Jordan now is facing, as the chairman has noted, challenges—Iraqi refugees. Jordan in the past has dealt with Palestinian refugees, now Iraqi refugees, and what have we learned? And we have an interest in the stability and the economic security of Jordan. And so, I would be—look forward to visiting with the ambassador about that.

And in terms of Qatar, a military partner, a leader in counterterrorism. Also, by the way, the home of Al Jazeera, and questions to be raised there in terms of what is their role and what is Qatar's role? And there have been, I have noticed, some developments vis-a-vis Al Jazeera and Saudi Arabia, which is kind of a lessening of some of the conflict there. And are there things that we can learn from that or things that can be done to work with our ally?

And then, finally, in terms of Kazakhstan, this is a key partner in Nunn-Lugar cooperation in threat reduction. They are a key partner in reducing the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. I think that is the single-biggest threat, the threat of somebody getting a bomb and a nuclear bomb and using it. It transcends any of the dangers that we have faced in the past. There isn't margin of error for wrong choices.

And so, we have before us distinguished professionals who are nominees to be ambassadors to important friends and allies in an area where the margin of error for the wrong choice and the wrong policy and the wrong judgment is very, very thin. And the consequences of wrong choices are pretty overwhelming.

So there is a great responsibility. I simply end where I started in thanking these gentlemen for their commitment to service, for their distinguished careers, and I look forward to moving these nominations forward, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Coleman.

Why don't we begin? We will just sort of run down one side to the other. I think it is just easy. So do you want to begin?

STATEMENT OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Mr. BEECROFT. Sure, happy to, sir.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to serve as ambassador to Jordan. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Rice for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my best to live up to their trust and to work as closely as possible with this committee to carry out my responsibilities.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by expressing appreciation for my family. My wife, Anne, my children, Blythe, Warren, Sterling, and Grace, are here with me today. It is my family's support and sacrifice that has, more than anything else, helped me to carry out my responsibilities as a Foreign Service officer.

Mr. Chairman, we have no closer friend or ally in the Arab world than Jordan. In the Middle East and around the world, Jordan work closely and constructively with us to promote peace and security and to fight terrorism. At home, it is engaged with the sometimes difficult and complicated task of reform, a process that we actively support and encourage.

There is no more telling example of Jordan's positive efforts in the region than its close cooperation with us to help realize a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As one of only two Arab states to sign a peace accord with Israel, Jordan is committed to the roadmap and is tangibly supporting the process, including by providing such things as police training for Palestinian security forces.

With Iraq, Jordan is actively involved on the humanitarian front, taking in hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees. It has increasingly taken steps to ensure the dignity and well being of those refugees, opening its schools and hospitals to them, working with the international community to provide assistance, and facilitating our own refugee admissions program.

Jordan is also working with us and the Iraqi Government to increase security. It has, for example, hosted over 54,000 Iraqi police officers for training.

Outside its immediate region, Jordan was at the forefront of publicly supporting our efforts in Afghanistan, where it has deployed a field hospital and a demining unit. Jordan has also become a leading troop contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations worldwide, having sent military and police personnel to places such as Haiti, Cote D'Ivoire, and Darfur.

Jordan has also begun pursuing reform at home. For example, in 2006, the government rolled out a 10-year roadmap for economic and political development. It then took a step forward by allowing Jordanian monitors to observe its 2007 parliamentary elections.

Through our assistance programs, we are supporting Jordan's reform agenda. We are, however, also engaged with its government and its people to encourage broader democratic development. Our efforts include work to expand citizen participation in the country's political and economic systems, strengthen independent media, the judicial system, and the rights of women and laborers, and increase religious tolerance.

If confirmed, I will work diligently with the Jordanian Government and people to pursue our democratic reform, development, and security goals and to strengthen the bilateral relationship. I will also work to ensure that all of our assistance effectively and efficiently advances those goals.

I appreciate and value this committee's oversight of our mission in Jordan. If confirmed, I look forward to welcoming the committee's members and staff to Amman. Your presence and interest are a vital element in ensuring that we remain productively and successfully engaged for the Government and the people of Jordan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Beecroft follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to serve as ambassador to Jordan. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Rice for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my best to live up to their trust and to work as closely as possible with this committee to carry out my responsibilities.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by expressing appreciation for my family. My wife, Anne, and my daughters, Blythe and Grace, are here with me today. My two sons are unable to be here because of school obligations. It

is my family's support and sacrifice that has, more than anything, helped me carry out my responsibilities as a Foreign Service officer.

Mr. Chairman, we have no closer friend or ally in the Arab world than Jordan. In the Middle East and around the world, Jordan works closely and constructively with us to promote peace and security and to fight terrorism. At home, it is engaged with the sometimes difficult and complicated task of reform, a process that we actively support and encourage.

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Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Mr. Beecroft.

We have been joined by the ranking member of the full committee. Senator Lugar, do you have any opening comment you want to make?

Thank you very much.

We will turn then to your testimony, Mr. Cunningham. I begin by noting you had the good sense to be born in Allentown, PA. My wife is thrilled. [Laughter.]

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM, NOMINEE TO
BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Thank you for that, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

It is an honor to appear before you as President Bush's nominee to become the United States next ambassador to Israel. I thank the President and Secretary Rice for the trust they have placed in me, and I look forward, if confirmed by the Senate, to working very closely with this committee and with the Congress.

Unfortunately, my wife, Leslie, and our two daughters, Emma and Abigail, could not be here today. But I do want to thank them, and particularly my wife, for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I am truly honored, as I may have the opportunity to serve our Nation in Israel at this particular time. We have always had a special relationship with Israel, stretching back to its founding 60 years ago. Over those six decades, we have forged a bond based on historic, personal, and cultural ties, on mutual interest and shared values, and on a record of together confronting difficult issues.

We have a vibrant and growing economic relationship, which I look forward to building on. Israel has been a close partner in combating terrorism and extremist violence, especially over the past 7 years. And the United States has always been a stalwart advocate of Israel's security, a result of the exceptional support Israel enjoys in this country. That will, I am confident, continue to be the case. Our interests in Israel are strategic and enduring.

This past August, the United States and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding that will underpin our security relationship through 2018. The arrangement calls for \$30 billion to be provided over 10 years, subject to congressional approval of the yearly appropriation. This will allow Israel to maintain its qualitative military edge and to strengthen its ability to defend against terrorism.

A strong partnership with a secure Israel is at the core of our goals in the Middle East. The President has now undertaken a new initiative to promote progress along the roadmap and the realization of his vision of a two-State solution. At Annapolis, President Bush and Secretary Rice brought together Prime Minister Olmert, Palestinian President Abbas, Foreign Minister Livni, Prime Minister Fayyad, and leaders from nearly 50 other nations.

The decision by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas to launch negotiations on core permanent status issues with the aim of agreement by the end of this year is a significant achievement. The parties are meeting regularly, and there is underway now a structured process.

While this process will not be easy, there is now a way ahead to reach an agreement that will break the history of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and pave the way for two states to live side-by-side in peace and security.

The President traveled to Israel and the Palestinian territories in January. Secretary Rice will be there again this week for the latest in what have become nearly monthly trips to the region. Just last week, both King Abdullah and President Abbas were in Washington. We continue our efforts through the quartet and through the mandates of General Dayton, General Jones, and General Fraser to solve problems and monitor the parties' adherence to roadmap commitments.

If I am confirmed, my highest priority will be to contribute to the strongest possible relationship with Israel and to help make the goal of peace and stability among the peoples of Israel and their neighbors a reality.

Mr. Chairman, for more than 30 years, I have tried to advance America's interests, to enhance America's security, and to promote

our bilateral and multilateral relationships. I have spent much of that time working with regions in conflict, societies in transition, and people trying to move beyond their histories in search of a better future.

In 5 years as ambassador to the U.N. in New York, I learned a great deal about the dynamics and pain of this troubled region so vital to U.S. interests. I think no one underestimates the difficulty of reaching the goals we have set for ourselves.

I am both a realist and an optimist, and I am thrilled that the President and Secretary Rice have offered me the prospect of being part of this historic endeavor. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to support their efforts.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Cunningham follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as President Bush's nominee to become the United States next ambassador to Israel. I thank the President and Secretary Rice for the trust they have placed in me. I look forward, if confirmed by the Senate, to working closely with the Congress to advance our interests in the region. I will welcome frequent opportunities to consult with you, and I encourage you to visit often.

I would like to begin by noting that unfortunately, my wife, Leslie, and our two daughters, Emma and Abigail, could not be here today. I want to thank them, and particularly my wife, for their support, and for the important contributions they themselves have made to the pursuit of America's interests over the course of my career.

Mr. Chairman, I am truly honored that I may have the opportunity to serve our Nation in Israel at this particular time in history. We have always had close and special relationship with Israel, stretching back to Israel's founding 60 years ago. Over those six decades, as our friendship with Israel has grown stronger, we have forged a bond based on historic, personal, and cultural ties, on mutual interests and shared values, and on a record of together confronting difficult issues of consequence to both our nations. Over the course of our relationship, and especially over the last 7 years, Israel has been a close partner in combating terrorism. And the United States has always been a stalwart advocate of Israel's security, a result of the exceptional support Israel enjoys in this country—among the American public, from the 11 American administrations that have held office since Israel's founding, and from Congress. That will, I am confident, continue to be the case. Our interests in Israel are strategic, and enduring.

This past August, the United States and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding that will underpin our security relationship through 2018. The arrangement calls for \$30 billion to be provided over 10 years, subject to Congressional approval of yearly appropriations. This will allow Israel to maintain its qualitative military edge and to strengthen its ability to defend itself against terrorism. This is essential for Israel to maintain its vibrant, successful, and entrepreneurial society.

A strong partnership with a secure Israel is at the core of our goals in the Middle East. The President has now undertaken a new initiative to promote progress along the roadmap and the realization of the President's vision of a two-state solution. At Annapolis this past November, President Bush brought together Prime Minister Olmert, Palestinian President Abbas, Foreign Minister Livni, Prime Minister Fayyad, and leaders from nearly 50 other nations. The decision by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas to launch negotiations on core, permanent status issues, with the aim of reaching an agreement by the end of this year, is a significant achievement. The parties are meeting regularly and a structured process is now underway. While this process will not be easy, there is now a way ahead to reach an agreement that will break the history of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and pave the way for two states to live side-by-side in peace and security.

The priority the administration attaches to this effort is clear. The President traveled to Israel and the Palestinian territories in January and recently announced his intention to return in May. Secretary Rice will be there again this week for the lat-

est in what have become nearly monthly trips to the region. Just last week both King Abdullah and President Abbas were in Washington. We continue our efforts through the quartet and through the mandates of General Dayton, General Jones, and General Fraser to solve problems and monitor the parties' adherence to road-map commitments. If I am confirmed, I assure you that my highest priority will be to contribute to the strongest possible relationship with Israel, and to help make the goal of peace and security between the people of Israel and their neighbors a reality.

I would also like to mention our economic relationship with Israel. 2007 was a monumental year for Israel's economy, which maintained its robust expansion of the past 4 years in achieving annual growth rates over 5 percent. Unemployment was at its lowest level in a decade and the government deficit has not been lower since the mid-1980s. 2007 was also a critical year in United States-Israel economic relations. Trade between our countries increased by 12 percent and United States tourism in Israel reached the highest level ever. I look forward to building further upon these very positive trends in our economic relationship with Israel.

Mr. Chairman, on a personal basis, for more than 30 years I have tried to advance America's interests, to enhance America's security, and to promote our bilateral and multilateral relationships. I spent significant portions of that time working with regions in conflict, societies in transition, and people trying to go beyond their histories in search of a better future. In 5 years as ambassador to the U.N. in New York, I learned a great deal about the dynamics and pain of this troubled region, so vital to U.S. interests. I do not think anyone underestimates the difficulty of reaching the goals we have set. I am both a realist, and an optimist, thrilled that the President and Secretary Rice have offered me the prospect of being part of this historic endeavor. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to support their efforts.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, sir.
Ambassador Hoagland.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD E. HOAGLAND, NOMINEE TO
BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today.

I am deeply honored that President Bush and Secretary Rice have entrusted me with their confidence and nominated me for the post of ambassador of the United States to Kazakhstan.

If confirmed by the Senate, I will work diligently and faithfully on behalf of the American people to pursue United States foreign policy goals and to deepen the strategic partnership between the United States and Kazakhstan. I look forward to working in close consultation with the Congress in pursuit of those goals.

Before I go further, with your permission, may I recognize three people who have traveled to—

Senator KERRY. Please, we invite you to do so. We were wondering who they belong to back there. [Laughter.]

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I would like to recognize two dear friends, Mr. Igor Lanskoy and Vladimir Sadov, one who has traveled many thousand miles to be here today.

I would also like to recognize Elizabeth Jones, former ambassador to Kazakhstan, former Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia. And I especially want to thank her for her trust and support when she pushed me forward for my first ambassadorship. A very great lady, and I am grateful to her.

Kazakhstan is an important partner for the United States. It is geographically strategic, ethnically diverse, resource rich, ninth-largest country in the world, roughly the size of Western Europe. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and bordered by Rus-

sia, China, and the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan's size, location, and resources make it key to regional stability.

Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon reserves should rank it in the top 10 oil producers in the world by 2015. Kazakhstan established its credentials for leadership immediately after its independence. It was the first country to renounce its nuclear weapons voluntarily after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Today, Kazakhstan is contributing to coalition efforts in Iraq, where it has deployed eight rotations of engineering troops since 2003. In addition, Kazakhstan is implementing almost \$3 million in reconstruction for Afghanistan in 2008.

Kazakhstan is a strong and reliable partner on nonproliferation. Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, Kazakhstan has cooperated extensively with the United States for over a decade to ensure that weapons of mass destruction-related materials and technical knowledge will not fall into terrorist hands.

If confirmed, I would continue to promote the United States-Kazakhstan strategic partnership's three primary goals. First, we seek to advance democratic and market economic reforms. Second, our common security interests include bolstering Central Asian sovereignty and independence, fighting terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and stemming narcotics trafficking. Third, we have a strategic interest in fostering the development of Central Asia's very significant energy resources. United States companies have recognized Kazakhstan's potential and are cooperating with Kazakhstan to develop its tremendous oil and gas resources.

Mr. Chairman, we supported Kazakhstan to act as chairman in office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for 2010. If I am confirmed, I will work with Kazakhstan to fulfill its commitments to that organization, to reform its election and media laws, to liberalize its political party registration requirements by the end of 2008.

In addition, Kazakhstan pledged to preserve the current mandate of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent a large part of my career serving in countries of the former Soviet Union. The historic, cultural, and economic ties between Russia and Kazakhstan are strong, and no one disputes the value of those ties. However, we are gratified that Kazakhstan values its national independence and sovereignty and chooses its own multiple partners based on its own national interests. Kazakhstan is in no one's special sphere of influence.

If confirmed, I will draw on my many years of experience in the region to ensure that the already-strong United States-Kazakhstan partnership continues to grow and prosper. Kazakhstan is an important country with a promising future.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Hoagland follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD E. HOAGLAND, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored that President Bush and Secretary Rice have entrusted me with their confidence and nominated me for the post of am-

bassador of the United States to Kazakhstan. If confirmed by the Senate, I will work diligently and faithfully on behalf of the American people to pursue United States foreign policy goals and to deepen the strategic partnership between the United States and Kazakhstan. I look forward to working with the Congress in pursuit of those goals.

Mr. Chairman, Central Asia is a region of significant importance to United States national interests. Recognizing the uniqueness of each of the five Central Asian nations and their sovereignty and independence, United States policy supports the development of fully sovereign, stable, democratic nations, integrated into the world economy and cooperating with one another, the United States, and our partners to advance regional security and stability. We do not view Kazakhstan or any other Central Asian nation as any external state's special sphere of influence; rather we seek to maintain mature bilateral relations with each country based on our foreign policy goals and each country's specific characteristics and dynamics.

Kazakhstan is an important international partner. It is geographically strategic, ethnically diverse, and resource rich. It is the ninth largest country in the world, roughly the size of Western Europe. The population is 15.6 million, 59.2 percent Kazakh, 25.6 percent Russian, with the remainder divided among many ethnic minorities. The largely secular population is 65 percent Muslim, 30 percent Russian Orthodox, with the remainder divided among many smaller faiths. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and bordered by Russia, China, and the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan's size, location and resources make it strategically important and key to regional stability. Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon reserves should, by 2015, rank it as one of the top 10 world oil producers.

Kazakhstan established its credentials for leadership early. It was the first country to renounce its nuclear weapons voluntarily after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Today, Kazakhstan is contributing to coalition efforts in Iraq. Kazakhstan has deployed eight rotations of engineering troops to Iraq, working on water purification and explosive ordnance disposal. To date, they have destroyed 4.5 million pieces of ordnance. Since 2001, Kazakhstan has provided cost-free over flights to over 6,000 U.S. military aircraft supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In addition, Kazakhstan announced almost \$3 million in assistance for Afghanistan for 2008, which includes funds for food and seed and to build a hospital, road, and school. Kazakhstan has established a peacekeeping battalion and is working to ensure that unit is trained and equipped to be compatible with NATO forces. Following an intense debate within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Kazakhstan was selected to be Chairman in Office of the organization in 2010, the first former-Soviet republic to achieve that goal.

Kazakhstan is a key partner on nonproliferation. Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, Kazakhstan has cooperated extensively with the United States for over a decade on a host of projects to eliminate its Soviet-legacy weapons of mass destruction infrastructure, secure materials of proliferation concern, and redirect former weapons of mass destruction scientists to peaceful purposes. United States-Kazakhstan cooperation has ensured that weapons of mass destruction-related materials and technical knowledge will not fall into terrorist hands. Our bilateral Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement was extended for an additional 7 years on December 13, 2007, allowing programs and projects to continue uninterrupted.

Recognizing Kazakhstan's important role in Central Asia, in September 2006, President Bush and Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev reaffirmed the strategic partnership between our two countries, declaring our commitment to a shared vision of stability, prosperity, and democratic reform in Central Asia and the broader region.

If confirmed, I would continue to promote the United States-Kazakhstan strategic partnership's three primary strategic interests. First, we seek to advance democratic and market economic reforms. Economic reform attracts and sustains foreign investment while democratic reforms will improve opportunities for Kazakhstanis to participate openly in civic life. Together these are the only reliable ways to establish long-term stability. Second, our common security interests include bolstering Central Asian sovereignty and independence; fighting terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and stemming narcotics trafficking. Third, we have a strategic interest in fostering the development of Central Asia's very significant energy resources. The region's resources can substantially advance international energy security, provided they have a reliable path to global markets via multiple pipelines that avoid geographic chokepoints or transportation monopolies. Energy can also form the basis of long-term economic growth and prosperity. All three sets of interests—democratic development, security cooperation, economic reform and energy—are interrelated and must advance together.

Economically, Kazakhstan has laid a solid foundation for its market economy and future prosperity. Financial reform has created a banking system comparable to those in Central Europe. Pension reform has created a fully funded pension system with \$9.89 billion in assets. Kazakhstan's oil-driven economy has averaged 9.6 percent real growth over the past 3 years. Growth toward the end of 2007, however, slowed due to a tightening of credit largely related to global liquidity problems and the overvalued local real estate market. Growth in 2008 is predicted to be between 5 and 7 percent. Nonetheless, thanks to strong economic policies and oil wealth, Kazakhstan has dramatically reduced the percentage of its population living below the level of subsistence from 28.4 percent in 2001 to 13.8 percent in 2007.

United States companies have recognized Kazakhstan's potential and are cooperating with Kazakhstan to develop its tremendous oil and gas resources. They hold major stakes in Kazakhstan's two largest oil and gas projects, Tengiz and Kashagan. Our companies do face some difficulties, including problems with the tax authorities and stiff environmental fines. Kazakhstan also passed legislation last year allowing it to terminate oil and gas contracts in the name of the country's national economic security interests, though President Nazarbayev stressed that the legislation would not be used retroactively against contracts already in place when the legislation went into effect. Despite these concerns, it is clear that our companies and the Government of Kazakhstan are committed to a long-term partnership in Kazakhstan's energy sector.

Exchange programs are at the core of the United States-Kazakhstan strategic partnership. Academic, cultural, and professional exchanges are one of the most effective tools to promote the free exchange of information and ideas and to increase mutual understanding between citizens of the United States and Kazakhstan. Kazakhstani students study in the United States under the auspices of the Future Leaders Exchange, Hubert Humphrey Fellowship, Muskie Graduate Fellowship, and Fulbright Fellowship programs. Since 2005, Kazakhstan's Presidential Scholarship Program, "Bolashak," has sent annually 3,000 plus students to universities in the United States and many other countries around the world.

Democratic political institutions, civil society and the independent media remain underdeveloped in Kazakhstan; the presidency dominates the political system; and the parliament elected in 2007 has representation from only one political party—the President's. We regularly encourage the government to move forward by taking concrete steps toward reform, and we have assistance programs that promote democratic reform and the development of civil society and independent media.

We supported Kazakhstan's candidacy to act as chairman in office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but recognizing its political reform trajectory, we asked Kazakhstan to delay its chairmanship from 2009 to 2010 so that it would have time to undertake several democratic reforms. If I am confirmed, I will work with Kazakhstan to prepare for its 2010 chairmanship and to fully meet the commitments it made to Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe participating states when it accepted the chairmanship. Kazakhstan committed to work closely with the organization to reform its election and media laws, and liberalize its political party registration requirements by the end of 2008. It committed to reform the media law in line with recommendations from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Freedom of Media Representative, which include, among others, to reduce criminal liability for defamation in the media and to liberalize registration procedures for media outlets.

Kazakhstan has begun engaging the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and civil society on the election and media laws, and we are continuing to monitor and encourage its progress. I will work with government and civil society partners alike to ensure that these reforms are implemented. In addition, Kazakhstan pledged to support and preserve the current mandate of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the integrity of its election monitoring efforts. Our broader vision is for a strong, independent, and democratic Kazakhstan that is a leader and anchor of stability in the region. We believe Kazakhstan's service as chairman in office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will help serve that broader vision.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent a large part of my career serving in countries of the former Soviet Union. The historic ties between Russia and Kazakhstan are strong—Kazakhstan has the largest ethnic Russian population of the Central Asian republics. These historic, cultural, and economic ties with Russia are important to Kazakhstan. However, we are aware that Russia is often at odds with United States efforts to promote democracy and the sovereignty of the Central Asian republics. Kazakhstan values its national independence and chooses its own partners. Kazakhstan is in no one's sphere of influence. If confirmed, I will draw on my many

years of experience in the region to work with the Government of Kazakhstan and to reach out to the people of Kazakhstan to ensure that the already strong United States-Kazakhstan partnership continues to grow and strengthen. Kazakhstan is an important country with a promising future.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Ambassador.
Ambassador LeBaron.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH EVAN LEBARON, NOMINEE TO
BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF QATAR**

Ambassador LEBARON. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is a great privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as United States ambassador to the state of Qatar. I am grateful to President Bush and Secretary Rice for the confidence they have placed in me.

Unfortunately, my wife, Ellie, and my daughter, Petra, could not be here today. They are in Indiana right now, where my daughter is finishing her final exams at Indiana University in Bloomington. [Laughter.]

Senator KERRY. Is she registered?

Ambassador LEBARON. Hope so. I have been involved in the Middle East for over 35 years. That includes serving as ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania during that country's historic transition to free and fair elections. Confirmation by the Senate as United States ambassador to Qatar would be a special honor for me because I began my diplomatic career there. It was my first assignment.

Qatar is a strategically located country right in the middle of the Gulf. We have many interests there. There are nearly 10,000 private United States citizens living in Qatar, and 200 more arrive every month. They are business representatives, their families, military contractors, university faculty, and medical professionals.

There is a large United States military presence in Qatar, a presence deeply valued by both countries. This presence is enormously important. It plays a pivotal regional role in our efforts to stabilize Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa.

Qatar's natural gas reserves, they are the third largest in the world after Russia and Iran. United States energy companies already have invested over \$40 billion in Qatar's oil and gas sectors.

Qatar is the world's largest exporter of liquid natural gas, LNG. And Qatar will become one of the largest suppliers of LNG next year to the United States, when a large LNG terminal in southwest Texas is completed.

There are huge business opportunities in Qatar. Over the next 5 years, Qatar plans to spend billions of dollars on domestic infrastructure projects. If confirmed as ambassador, I will work closely with our Foreign Commercial Service to advise United States companies on business opportunities in Qatar and to advocate for United States companies.

Qatar is the home of Al Jazeera, the influential satellite news service that broadcasts around the clock to the Middle East, North Africa, and elsewhere. Qatar can play a major role in helping us tell America's story to the millions of Arabs and Muslims who watch Al Jazeera.

Qatar has been a friend to the United States. In 2006, Qatar provided over \$70 million to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The aid included a \$17 million grant to Xavier University, the only historical black Catholic university in the United States.

Back at home in Qatar, Qatar is engaged in several important reforms, and we are helping. It is overhauling its primary and secondary educational system along a U.S. model. At the university level, Qatar has imported not just the United States model, but the United States universities themselves. There are now several well-known United States universities with branch campuses in Qatar. They include Georgetown, Carnegie-Mellon, Texas A&M, Virginia Commonwealth, Northwestern, and Cornell's medical school. And we think more will come.

There is also some good news on Qatar's political development. Qatar has held successful elections three times for seats on the country's central municipal council, an important institution. And there are plans to hold elections for a national parliament, with the United States assisting through the Middle East partnership initiative.

Amid all of this growth and development and good news, there are challenges, however. For example, there are hundreds of thousands of foreign workers in Qatar who too often live in poor conditions. They have few avenues of redress in employment disputes. If confirmed, I will continue the sharp focus of the United States on the plight of these workers.

Another example, Qatar has a highly activist foreign policy that often involves issues of direct concern to the United States Government, issues such as Iran, Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lebanon, and Sudan. This regional activism sometimes requires intense diplomatic effort by the United States to ensure that Qatari and United States interests and approaches are compatible.

That said, Israeli foreign minister Livni just paid an important official visit to Qatar just a few days ago. It was her first visit to an Arab state beyond Egypt and Jordan. Also, Israel has a trade office in Doha. The United States has been urging Arab States to take actions exactly such as these to improve Israeli-Arab ties and to further the peace process.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, if confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with you, with the Congress to strengthen the partnership and to deepen the trust between Qatar and the United States.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador LeBaron follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH EVAN LEBARON, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF QATAR

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the state of Qatar. I am honored by the confidence that President Bush and Secretary Rice have placed in me.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with this committee, and with other Members of Congress, to strengthen the partnership between the United States and the state of Qatar and to advance the strategic objectives of the United States in the Gulf and in the broader Arab and Islamic worlds.

I began my diplomatic career in Qatar. I am thrilled that, if confirmed, I will be returning there as ambassador. I have been involved in Middle Eastern affairs for

over 35 years, including serving as United States ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in 2003–2006, during Mauritania's historic transition to free and fair elections. To serve now as the United States ambassador to the state of Qatar would be a special honor. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to forge personal and governmental ties with the Qatari people and with the Qatari Government in order to deepen the trust between our two countries and to expand the security and prosperity of our two countries.

The country to which my wife and I would return looks very different from the place we left over 25 years ago. What was once a quiet corner of the Middle East is now a thriving and cosmopolitan society. It is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

It is also a place where the United States has many interests. Over 9,000 private United States citizens now live in Qatar, and our embassy estimates that 200 more arrive each month. They include business representatives and their families, military contractors, university faculty, and medical professionals.

This large influx of Americans has created a sharp increase in the demand for American Citizen Services last year—it was up nearly 30 percent last year. The demand for visa services rose 70 percent between 2006 and 2007, and it is continuing to increase at a similar pace this year. Everywhere I look in the relationship between Qatar and the United States, there is growth. From the burgeoning trade relationship, the new direct air service between Qatar and the United States, to the increase in American tourists to Qatar and the growing enrollments at United States universities.

If confirmed as ambassador, I will work to ensure this growth continues, that the United States mission continues to meet the needs of our citizens in Qatar and to encourage Qataris and Qatar's many foreign residents to travel, study, and invest in America.

There is, as well, a large United States military presence in Qatar, one that plays a critical role in our efforts to bring stability to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa, and to confront al-Qaeda and its associated networks in the region. The United States-Qatari military relationship is extremely strong, deeply valued by both. Qatar's Al Udayd Air Base hosts the United States Air Force's 379th Air Expeditionary Wing as well as the Combined Air Operations Center. Over a billion dollars in construction projects is either planned or already underway at Al Udayd. More than 70 percent of that money comes from the Qatari Government.

The U.S. mission plays an important role in advancing U.S. regional policy goals through the Gulf Security Dialog, and its interconnecting pillars on regional security, Iraq, defense cooperation, counterterrorism, counterproliferation, and critical energy infrastructure protection.

Qatar hosts important United States military facilities, the CENTCOM Forward Headquarters, al-Udayd air base, and CENTCOM's Combined Air Operations Center. These bases are critical for United States military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. Mission plays a vital role in coordinating this relationship. The mission also participates in the planning for further development of U.S. installations through the Military Cooperative Committee. It is in daily contact with Qatar's armed forces. It consults frequently with senior U.S. military and civilian officials, as well as with visiting Members of Congress.

United States strategic interests in Qatar include Qatar's critical and growing role in United States energy security. United States energy companies have invested over \$40 billion in Qatar's oil and gas sectors. Qatar's natural gas reserves are the third largest in the world, after Russia and Iran. Qatar is already the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas. When the Golden Pass LNG terminal in southwest Texas is completed in 2009, Qatar will become one of the largest suppliers of imported LNG to our country, if not the largest.

The income Qatar derives from oil and gas exports is very large, especially given the small size of Qatar's native population, just 200,000 in a total population of about 1 million. Over the next 5 years, the Qatari Government plans to spend billions of dollars on domestic infrastructure projects. Even with all that spending, the Qatari Government projects annual national budget surpluses in the tens of billions of dollars starting in 2010, as production from its gas fields increases.

Clearly, Qatar presents immense opportunities for American businesses and investors. If confirmed as ambassador, working closely with Commerce Department and State Department offices, I will advocate aggressively for United States bidders on major Qatari Government tenders. I will work closely with the embassy's Commercial Service office to advise United States companies on developing business opportunities in Qatar and I will lead trade missions to the United States. I will support the U.S. defense industry, as appropriate, in the context of advancing our Nation's security objectives. Qatar's wealth also creates many opportunities for direct

inward investment to the United States. If confirmed as ambassador, I will have a special responsibility to ensure that the United States is an attractive destination for Qatari investment, both private and official.

In addition to its importance in military, energy, and commercial affairs, Qatar can play a pivotal role in helping the United States tell its story to the Arab and Muslim world. Qatar is the home of the Al Jazeera satellite television network, which broadcasts around-the-clock in Arabic and English. If confirmed as ambassador, I intend to work closely not only with the Qatari media, but also with Al Jazeera to strengthen understanding of the United States and our policies among the millions of Arabs in Al Jazeera's audience.

Transnational terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain at the forefront of United States concerns in the Middle East. Qatar's strategic location and its plans to become a major transit point for people and cargo in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa will further increase the need for the United States to strengthen United States-Qatar collaboration on counterterrorism and counter-proliferation efforts, including law enforcement and judicial cooperation, information sharing, and training.

In the area of democratization and education, Qatar is using its wealth wisely by investing in important reforms. Qatar is completely overhauling its primary and secondary schools along a United States model of competitive charter schools. At the university level, Qatar has imported not just the American model, but the United States universities themselves. There are six well-known United States universities with branch campuses in Qatar: Georgetown, Carnegie-Mellon, Texas A&M, Virginia Commonwealth, Weill-Cornell Medical School, and Northwestern. Even more will come.

Qatar has been a friend of the United States. In 2006, Qatar provided \$100 million to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The aid included a \$17.5 million grant to Xavier University, the only historically black Catholic university in the United States.

In terms of Qatar's political development, there is also good news to report. Qatar has held successful elections three times for seats on the country's Central Municipal Council. There are plans to hold elections for a national parliament. The United States is assisting this important development. Through technical training under the Middle East Partnership Initiative, Qatar will be able to strengthen this elected legislative body. Transparency International favorably ranks Qatar in terms of perceived corruption, listing it as 32nd in a global ranking of 179 countries. That's the best ranking in the entire Arab Middle East and North Africa. The United States is 20th.

Amid all this growth and development and good news, there are challenges, of course. Freedom House continued to list Qatar as Not Free in its 2007 report, in terms of political rights and civil liberties. The latest State Department Human Rights Report also highlighted those issues, adding that legal and cultural discrimination against women limited their full participation in society. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of foreign workers in Qatar too often live in poor conditions, and have few avenues of redress in employment disputes, the report noted. If confirmed, I will continue the deep engagement by the United States with the Government of Qatar on developing and implementing solutions to these problems.

Qatar has a highly activist foreign policy, often on issues of direct concern to the United States Government, including Iran, Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lebanon, and Sudan. This often requires intense diplomatic efforts by the United States Government to ensure that Qatari and United States interests and approaches are compatible. That said, Qatar is unique among its neighbors in that Qatar maintains a public relationship with Israel; Israel maintains a trade office there, and Israeli FM Livni recently participated publicly in a conference in Doha. We welcome this important engagement. The United States has been urging Gulf states to take actions exactly such as these to improve Israeli-Arab ties and to further the peace process.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an exciting time to be in Qatar. It is an important time. Qatar is opening up. It is on the move. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Congress to strengthen the partnership, and to deepen the trust between Qatar and the United States of America.

Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much.

Again, let me just to repeat that there is a tremendous amount of experience at the table in all of you, and we appreciate that.

I think perhaps, Ambassador Hoagland, interestingly, you have perhaps the most time in place in a sense. Others have been in other places and other parts of the world, but I think your background in that region is particularly helpful and important in understanding what is happening there.

Let me begin, if I can, with you, Ambassador LeBaron, since you just wrapped up and just sequentially flows that way. But what is your view of the current level of support? We have heard consistently about some of the elite circles within Qatar supporting al-Qaeda and some money going to Hamas, et cetera. Can you share with us your perception of that and how that might or might not complicate the relationship?

Ambassador LEBARON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We have seen those reports. We are concerned about those reports. The Qatari Government has denied providing that financial support to Hamas. It is certainly a subject of great concern to us.

There is overt political relationship between Qatar, the Government of Qatar and Hamas, clearly. But the full extent of that relationship, all of the dimensions of it are not fully clear to us.

If I am confirmed, I certainly will take this up with the Government of Qatar and present the point that with great wealth comes great responsibility. And is it responsible the positions, the policies that they have adopted in relation to Hamas? I would like to explore that. I would like to hear how they explain it, what their rationale is, and to express the very deep concern that the United States has and to carry on that dialog.

Senator KERRY. Is it your judgment that we have sufficient initiatives in place now to protect against currency export/import?

Ambassador LEBARON. They are being put in place. Certainly there is a high level of United States Government engagement with Qatar on this very subject, and there has been a response, a positive response by the Government of Qatar. So I am encouraged by this. I think that it can be better. I think it will be better, but it—

Senator KERRY. I hope you would take, when you get on the ground there, a hard initial look at that and convey our concern, the Congress and the committee's concern with respect to that issue. Because, clearly, there is a lot of money flowing in the region to Hamas, Hezbollah, to al-Qaeda, et cetera. And in a sense, perhaps our most effective tool is the finance structure in terms of really having an impact.

Ambassador LEBARON. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. That would be great.

Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Beecroft, you kind of—you are coming, Mr. Beecroft, from the role of executive assistant to the Secretary, and obviously, she has enormous confidence and trust in you. And Mr. Cunningham, from Hong Kong and from a series of places that other than the U.N. are not sort of directly Israel-centric or Mid-east-centric.

So, share with us, is this an effort in both of your parts, is there a portfolio that you are carrying specific to the talks in the next months, and if so, do you have some specific expectations with respect to your roles in those talks? Why don't you begin, Mr. Cunningham?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the attributes that I bring to this enterprise are not just my experience in New York, but the way I was—the way I used my time in New York to learn about the dynamics of the region. And when you are negotiating under difficult circumstances with strongly contrasting parties, you have a chance to see where their core interests lie and to understand better how they view their problems and their challenges.

And I was continually impressed, for instance, during my time there with the sensitivities that Israel, quite correctly, places on its security interests and its need to defend itself.

Senator KERRY. Did you travel there? Did you get a chance to meet any of the current leaders?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I did not meet the current leaders. I have met some of the previous leaders.

Senator KERRY. In New York or—

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. In New York, not in the region. I met the foreign minister, for instance, who came to—came to meet with us. We had mounted a major effort to get Israel introduced into the Western group in the U.N., which seems like a simple thing but actually required engagement at the presidential level to get it done.

What I hope to do over the next 6 months, if confirmed, is to help the Secretary and the President understand as clearly as possible what is happening within Israel and their concerns as we go through this process. The Secretary keeps talking about the difficult decisions that will have to be made, and they are difficult, and we will need to have the best understanding possible of what the calculus is that goes into making those decisions.

And as I have said in my statement, I have worked in my career in a number of areas where things have been very difficult and reconciling different interests has been difficult, and I hope I can help in that regard.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Beecroft.

Mr. BEECROFT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start by saying I spent 3 years in the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau at the State Department, working closely with Ambassador Cunningham when he was up in New York on the full range of Middle Eastern issues, particularly Iraq. This was trying to keep sanctions in place and make them effective.

I have also served in Damascus and in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for a number of years. And in addition to that, my responsibilities with Deputy Secretary Armitage and with Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice have been, first and foremost, to keep an eye on the Middle East, coordinate with the bureaus and the interagency, and travel to the countries with those individuals to meet with the foreign leaders and meet with them back here in Washington.

So I believe I do have some experience in the region, and I look forward to applying it and carrying out what the administration and this committee would like to see done there across the range of issues.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Cunningham, currently Prime Minister Olmert is expressing the hope that what they might be able to achieve is sort of a broad outline of principles with respect to the

Palestinian Authority. We met this past week with President Abbas, who was here, who, on the contrary, hopes that there is going to be quite a detailed and specific statement with respect to what is achieved.

Where are we in sort of bringing that together, in your judgment, and how do you see that, if you do, coming together? How do we bring such a diverging view of what the expectations are to a mutual understanding?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I think what we do is push forward or help the parties push forward as far and as quickly as they can to sort out the issues between them and to highlight the decisions that need to be made. I understand what you are saying about President Olmert. I think that we need to remember that we are not just dealing with a document. We are dealing with a process that has different facets.

And I don't think anybody can predict that this—at this stage how far down the path that we have opened up at Annapolis we will be able to go. We have the bilateral negotiation component of that, but we also have the building capacity component for the Palestinian Authority, the security component.

We have the push underway to identify progress under the roadmap and to monitor what is being achieved in implementing the roadmap on both sides. And we have, very importantly, a regional context that we are trying to build to broaden support for a successful solution, however far we can get in the region among Israel's Arab neighbors and countries in the Gulf.

So there is much more involved here than what comes out in terms of a document or an agreement, although that is obviously very important. These other efforts should flow into supporting a maximal outcome on terms of an agreement that we can get in this period.

Senator KERRY. Well, obviously, we wish you well with that. It is tricky, especially given the timeframe. I think the politics may be difficult.

Just a last question before my time is up. Ambassador Hoagland—well, let me just say, I want to welcome, the Kazakh ambassador Idrisov is here. I am delighted to welcome him to this hearing.

Mr. Hoagland, can you just very quickly sort of share with the committee where Kazakhstan is right now with respect to the keeping of its commitments made in 2007 in terms of assuming the leadership of the security and cooperation?

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. I am talking about the democratization, human rights commitments.

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Right. With very intense negotiations, with a lot of help from European partners, with some forward thinking by the leadership of Kazakhstan, there was agreement reached that Kazakhstan would have four commitments, four primary commitments in moving forward toward its chairman in office for OSCE for 2010.

Those included electoral law reform, media law reform, liberalizing political party registration, continuing to refine the system of local governance, and another one that is very important also, a

commitment to preserve OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its current mandate and oppose any attempt to weaken it.

Work is moving forward in all of these. For example, on reforming the media law, working groups have just been established to put together public input from journalists, from civil society, from the government for the reforms that will be needed and that should be implemented before the end of 2008. The process is underway.

Certainly, if confirmed, I would very much look forward to working closely with the government and with civil society to move this process toward a successful completion.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much for that.

And before I recognize Senator Coleman, pro forma question that we need to ask everybody. Does anybody here—and I would like just an affirmation for the record—have any issue which might present a conflict of interest in the performance of your responsibilities as an ambassador to the place you have been named?

Ambassador LeBaron.

Ambassador LEBARON. I have no such conflict, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Ambassador Hoagland.

Ambassador HOAGLAND. I have no conflict of interest, sir.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Cunningham.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. None.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Beecroft.

Mr. BEECROFT. No, sir.

Senator KERRY. And is there any issue from which any of you would see that you would have to recuse yourself with respect to any deliberations in any of those countries? Ambassador LeBaron.

Ambassador LEBARON. No, sir.

Senator KERRY. Hoagland.

Ambassador HOAGLAND. I have been told by the Office of Legal Ethics that I need to divest myself of Microsoft stock because Microsoft is active in Kazakhstan.

Senator KERRY. Anywhere you go, you have to divest—

[Laughter.]

Senator KERRY. I am sorry, go ahead.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. No, I don't have any conflict of interest.

Mr. BEECROFT. No, sir.

Senator KERRY. Well, thank you all very much. I appreciate it.

Senator Coleman.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Cunningham, I appreciate the opportunity I had to meet with you before this hearing. I did indicate at that time some concern about the relatively light background in Israeli or Arab affairs. And certainly your understanding of the diplomatic process at a time that we are engaged in very sensitive negotiations, I think, is important, and we really can't afford not to have an ambassador to Israel. And so, you are going to be there, assuming you are confirmed, at a very important time.

Let me throw out a question, and it probably can be touched upon by Mr. Cunningham and actually Mr. LeBaron and Mr. Beecroft. It is about Hamas.

On the one hand, there is a concern about the Qatar relationship with Hamas. Hamas right now presents one of the greatest kind of challenges and obstacles. We have met with President Abbas earlier this week, and the battle is between extremism and moderation, and Hamas represents the extremism.

And if I could just get kind of a sense from all three—and obviously, the Jordanians have such a critical role. They have a stake in the forces of moderation prevailing over extremism. So if I could, Ambassador Beecroft, in terms of the Jordanians, do they have any role, can they be helpful in supporting forces of moderation in the Palestinian areas and lessening the influence of Hamas?

Mr. BEECROFT. Thank you, Senator Coleman.

Yes, I believe they are actively playing a role that is helpful and that is encouraging moderation, tolerance, and lessening the influence of Hamas. Among other things, Jordan has just completed training of approximately 400 Palestinian security forces, Presidential Guard, in Jordan. They have returned to the West Bank.

They are currently training 600 more, which will be deployed up in the north—the hope is near between Nablus and Jenin—in order to take responsibility there that the Israelis will allow them to take. This has been carefully coordinated with Israel and, of course, with the Palestinians.

In addition to that, they are providing things like electricity to build stability on the West Bank and encourage President Abbas's government. They are no friend of Hamas. They have repeatedly made that clear. I think it is a benefit to Israel to have a country that is stable, secure, and moderate on its eastern border and one that takes border security very, very seriously to prevent infiltration of extremists, terrorists, and/or shipment of arms and that type of thing.

So, yes, I think they are playing an active role. They do coordinate closely with the Israelis and with the legitimate Palestinian Government that we recognize.

Senator COLEMAN. Ambassador LeBaron, I would come to you and come to Ambassador Cunningham last on this question. Doesn't the folks in Qatar see the negative influence of Hamas in the region? I am concerned about their relationship with Iran. What can we do, what can we expect of them, and is there anything that we can do to influence them at this very kind of delicate time in the peace process?

Ambassador LEBARON. Qatar has followed for some time now an activist foreign policy in which they have relationships with both the moderates and the extremists across the Arab world to include North Africa. This seems to be a deeply engrained principle in their current foreign policy.

By that, I mean clearly they have an overt relationship with Hamas at a time that the United States Government properly is trying to isolate Hamas. At the same time, Qatar has opened relationship, a continuing relationship with Israel and has welcomed visits by the foreign minister, as we have just seen.

As I understand it, sitting here in Washington preparing, if confirmed, to go to Qatar, this is part of a general principle in their approach toward the region in its entirety to include an open relationship with Iran. So is there more that we can do? Yes.

In recent weeks, there have been a series of higher and higher visits by top United States officials to the Gulf to include Qatar. At every one of those visits, this concern by the United States is expressed. I think this introduces pressure to take another look by the Qataris at their principle of an open set of relationships across the region with extremists that actually work against development in the region, that work against progress to include the peace between Arab and Israelis.

You know, the Qataris participated in Annapolis, too. They have implicitly recognized the right of Israel to exist through a recognition of the two-State principle, which they have adopted. So I think that there is a chance, there is an opportunity to press this point with the Qataris to get them to reassess and to change and to join us in a more effective approach to the region, one that promotes not extremism, but moderation. One that promotes development and not sort of a return to conflict and violence.

Senator COLEMAN. Ambassador Cunningham, when President Abbas was here last week and visiting with Members of the Senate, he was very critical of President Carter's visit and discussion with Hamas, very critical. And made the point that it really—I think his comment was something to the effect of President Carter is speaking to Hamas, and Hamas thinks the current President is going to call next, that somehow this is a step of some kind of recognition, and he made it clear it undermined his efforts.

So I presume we are not going to be talking to Hamas. What can we do to kind of stop them from tossing rockets into Israel on a regular basis? Is there something we can do that we are not doing?

And not, by the way, just vis-a-vis our relationship with Israel, but since you are going to be in the region, are there any of the other Arab neighbors that we can lean on to play a more constructive role in lessening the level of violence so as to allow a peace process to move forward?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. First, let me say I don't think there is much danger of this President picking up the phone and calling anybody in Hamas. So that is—we have a very clear view on that.

I don't want to get into the merits of President Carter's visit. But let me say from a strategy and policy point of view, it seems to me what all of us who want to have peace—peace in the region have a common goal and obligation. You put it quite correctly. We have a conflict here between extremism on one side and moderation and political responsibility on the other.

We need to find a way to place a premium in the region and a commitment to moderation and political responsibility and strengthen the effort to isolate and ultimately wear down, however we can do that, the extremists. That is the process—that is part of the process that is underway now after Annapolis. It will take time and effort to do that.

We can certainly play a part. We have a very active dialog with the Israelis about how they might enhance their security from various threats all the way from Iran to local threats from Hezbollah and from Hamas. We can help them through that.

We can help keep the issue before the political leadership of the states in the region that are not now playing such a prominent role. There is a good dialog going on between Egypt, Israel, and

Jordan. But there are other countries in the region that can and should be playing a role in bringing more and more pressure to bear on Hamas to make it more and more unrewarding and unpalatable to engage in the kind of politics and behavior that they are engaging in.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you. I think we could be here all day pursuing this issue. My time is up, and I yield.

Senator KERRY. Thanks a lot, Senator Coleman.

Senator LUGAR.

Senator LUGAR. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just respond to Ambassador LeBaron that we were delighted to have Petra as an intern in this committee during the summer. She has experience on the committee that perhaps has been a guide for you as you have prepared for the hearing today? [Laughter.]

Ambassador LEBARON. I ride on her coattails, Senator.

Senator LUGAR. I look forward to being on the campus in Bloomington this weekend as a commencement speaker for the law school and perhaps will have an opportunity to see her there.

Ambassador LEBARON. Thank you, sir.

Senator LUGAR. I just want to ask Ambassador Hoagland some questions, first of all, about Turkmenistan. You were most helpful during our visit in January. During the change of the presidency in Ashgabat, you have been instrumental in representing American interests and inviting Americans to visit the country. I appreciate the time you took with me and helping me better understand Turkmenistan. I appreciate your assistance in meeting the President of the country, and leaders in the energy business that is of tremendous significance.

But first you were serving there as a charge because we have not had an ambassador in Turkmenistan for quite some time. And for the moment, we are unlikely to have a nominee. A nominee was withdrawn for that position, and now you are moving on to Kazakhstan.

This troubles me and many others because this is a critical moment in the development of the relations between the new President and his neighbors, as well as with the United States. I am hopeful that this will be a promising course. Would you just state for the record again the importance of having an ambassador to Turkmenistan at this time?

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Thank you, Senator. I would be glad to state that. But first, let me thank you personally for the effort you made to visit Kazakhstan—Turkmenistan in January. That was a really important visit. The country is changing dramatically with its new leadership, and the more that we can engage at high levels, the stronger our relationship will be.

I think your visit was especially important because of a cultural factor. You remember the President said that you are a living legend. He listened very, very closely to you, and we saw movement on a number of our issues after your visit. So I thank you for that.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you.

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Of course, I feel it is important that we should have a confirmed and an accredited ambassador. We haven't

had one since July 2006, and during this crucial period of change, it is something that we have to have.

Senator LUGAR. Let me ask, with regard to Kazakhstan, you have mentioned the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. Currently, negotiations are underway with the government on expanding our efforts there. Astana has been highly cooperative and made many significant decisions. At the time of my visit in that country, in January, there was dispute over a laboratory for dangerous pathogens.

It was a legitimate dispute in which one section of the government felt that agriculture and health work should not be conducted in the same building. Some argued that the buildings should be simply demarcated. Others pointed out that in the case of a particular pathogen, parts of the building are designed to hold and annihilate livestock, quite apart from human beings. The United States disagreed and pointed out that the plan was working well in other countries. I don't know how that has been resolved.

But I would just say that there are a number of issues of this variety in terms of weapons of mass destruction, including leftovers from the former Soviet Union. And so, I just ask you to exercise due diligence on these issues as they come forward from our DTRA program in the Pentagon.

Andy Webber has been a particular emissary, well acquainted with Kazakhstan and with you. But this is a critical moment and I would ask for your strong support in this area.

The second question I have is that in January, a very large conference of six international oil companies was in gridlock with the Kazakh Government. Essentially, whatever the justification, the Kazaks felt that even though these six may have invested estimates of \$50 billion onwards up to \$100 billion in attempting to extract energy from one of the most significant areas in the Caspian Sea situation, they had not been successful thus far. Therefore, income to the Kazakh Government had not come about.

So the Kazakhs wanted to become a stockholder or an equity holder in the investment. As a result, profit distributions would go to the government first before they went to the stockholders of these six international companies. Essentially, an agreement along those lines appears to have been reached in the last week or two.

Can you give us any insight on that negotiation? Likewise, has there been any decision on where the oil exports will go? Our hope is that a great deal of that energy supply would move across the Caspian Sea, even join the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Can you give any insight as to how that is proceeding?

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Thank you, Senator. I would be glad to do that.

I think if I tried to answer every one of those questions, we might be here until late in the evening. So let me try to hit the top of each one, sir.

The negotiations with the consortium. I think when you have a number, in this case six plus one, of 800-pound gorillas fighting for the same bed, the game is going to get pretty rough sometimes. That doesn't mean that they can't work out the problems. One of the problems in that particular negotiation was that the lead for

the consortium was not meeting its responsibilities. And so, Kazakhstan had legitimate concerns over that.

I know a number of the companies that are—leaders of the companies that are involved in this, and they are working towards a satisfactory conclusion. Kazakhstan, like many other countries, is concerned about the future of its national wealth in the ground. Some people talk about resource nationalism sometimes. There has been a new law passed for subsoil resources in Kazakhstan.

But one thing that is terribly important, I think, is the commitment that President Nazarbayev has given to the companies already active, including the U.S. companies, that that will not be applied retroactively. If confirmed, of course, as ambassador, it would be my responsibility, one of my highest responsibilities to protect the interests and property of the United States citizens and to advocate in any way appropriate for their business interests.

You also asked—let me answer this very briefly—about getting the oil out because oil is—right now Kazakhstan is producing 1.48 million barrels per day, and that is going to rise very quickly in the coming years. Almost all oil has to go out through Russia right now. They are not going to be able to get it out.

Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have recently signed an intergovernment agreement, if I am not mistaken, and that will help in bargaining in the first instance oil across to the BTC, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, possibly also through Supsa to Batumi. That work is underway. I would look forward to also being deeply engaged in that, if confirmed.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much. And I hope, as appropriate, you can report back to this committee from time to time how it goes. This is of critical importance in several areas, including our energy committee as well as our foreign relations effort.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Senator Lugar.

Senator Lugar, I want you to know that as you were being praised by Ambassador Hoagland, both Senator Coleman and I shared the incredibly heavy thought of how much better it is to be a living legend than the alternative. [Laughter.]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH Thank you.

Mr. Hoagland, I am really pleased that you understand the responsibility that Kazakhstan has in terms of being the minister in charge of the OSCE, and you are familiar with how important it is that we continue to support ODIHR and those tolerance and nondiscrimination offices on the core budget.

And any information that you could get back to me on what the status is in replacing Christian Strohal, who is now head of ODIHR, I would appreciate it, because it is really important that Kazakhstan and everyone understand how important that person is to the future in terms of the responsibilities of ODIHR.

If you have any recent information on that, I would like to have it because we are really trying to figure out who is the best person. To my knowledge, right now, our Government is not pushing anybody for that role. But I really think it is important that we do have a role in making sure that we get the right person there.

Ambassador HOAGLAND. Senator, I agree with you. The OSCE plays an important role throughout the entire region. It has played an important role throughout the entire region. Many of its most important functions are under attack. For the specific question you asked, I am sorry, I don't have that precise information. But I would be glad to take the question, sir, and get the information to you.

Senator VOINOVICH I would really appreciate that.

And Mr. LeBaron.

Ambassador LEBARON. Yes, sir.

Senator VOINOVICH On Qatar and the Gulf Cooperation Council, it is good news that Israel is starting to have a relationship with Qatar, and I suspect that you will be meeting, periodically, with your counterparts on the council. It seems to me that the better the relationship that can be developed between that council and Israel, the better off everyone is going to be.

I think their involvement in pushing the two-State solution, their concern about a mutual enemy right now of Iran I think is really important that that be as developed as much as it possibly can.

Ambassador LEBARON. Yes, sir.

Senator VOINOVICH Mr. Cunningham, what role are you going to play? Let me just be candid with you.

We have got 7 months—maybe—left of this administration working on a “two-state” solution. I would like to know what has the Secretary of State has told you about what role, if any, you are going to play in the two-state solution or the immediate problem of trying to reconcile the differences of the border dispute with Gaza, or working things out somehow with the Hamas problem, which is fundamental to moving forward with even the contours of a two-state solution.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Senator, I spoke to the Secretary yesterday morning, as a matter of fact. And she made very clear to me that she believes several things. The parties on both sides of the dispute in Israel and the Palestinian Authority do want to make progress and do want to get ahead and do want to establish the maximum amount of agreement that they can over the next 7, 8 months, however much time there is.

She also said that they understand, as she believes, that time is not on their side, that there is a process and an energy and an urgency now to making progress, although, as I said in my statement, nobody underestimates the difficulties of dealing with these very complex and long-enduring issues.

What she wants me to do, if I am confirmed, is she wants me to help her have the best understanding of the dynamics in the region from Israel's point of view, of Israel's concerns about its security, to have me build the strongest possible security and political relationship that we can have with Israel. Because at the end of the day, it is confidence in that relationship that helps Israeli leaders take the kinds of decisions or even examine the kinds of decisions that they are going to be looking at over the next couple of months.

I think she would also want and expect me to be conveying as clearly I can and as I can help to do to all sectors of Israeli society what our views are about the situation in the Middle East and

what it is that we are trying to do to help the parties in the Middle East who want to have peace, a peaceful and a stable relationship.

Senator VOINOVICH Well, I have to be candid, Mr. Chairman. I have some real problems with that. I just finished a book by Aaron Miller called "A Much Too Promised Land." I don't know if you have read it or not. If you look at where we have been successful in some of our initiatives there, it takes a unique set of circumstances.

I just wonder, you are going to come in there without really any background. It takes a while to figure out who the players are and get at it. And it seems to me that if we are going to make the kind of progress we would like to make there, it is almost going to take a full-time effort on the part of the Secretary of State. We have got Mr. Welch involved and we have Abrams at NSC. We have Secretary Rice, and Mr. Chairman, you have got three generals over there.

From an organizational point of view, it doesn't look like it could be that successful. And I am really concerned that with this short amount of time, whether or not you will be able to fulfill the role that the Secretary wants you to play there. Would you like to comment on that?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Well, I never said it was going to be easy. I don't think anybody expects that any aspect of this is going to be easy. But the individuals that you have mentioned are really focused on all aspects of the process from now through the next several months. And as I said earlier, there are four major different paths that we are trying to bring together.

You commented on the organizational aspect of this. Elliott Abrams, David Welch have been working on these issues intensively for quite some time, as has the Secretary herself been, and Ambassador Negroponte, who I just saw today. They are focused and determined on bringing the maximum effort that we can muster to make as much progress as possible over the next couple months, both in the region and directly to the extent that we can be helpful in the bilateral negotiations.

I understand your assessment that this is going to be quite difficult. But it is a time and a place where there is an opportunity, and I think we owe it to our friends and to ourself to try to make the most of it.

Senator VOINOVICH Well, I would really like to get more information about the role you are going to play. Because from an organizational perspective, it takes a while to get the nuances of what is going on and meeting the people, and you are dealing with some tough individuals. How to handle them and what to do is going to be very, very important to our success there. Frankly, I would rather not know that you are the one that is going to be out in front, that somebody else is doing it and maybe you are a backup or have some other role to play.

So I am very interested in finding out just exactly what that portfolios ? What do they expect to do? I would also like to know who is on the team, how are they going to get this, who is in charge, and how they are going to work this out?

But right now, it looks to me like we have got too many people over there doing too many things, and I am concerned about the

coordination of that effort, if we expect to get anything done in a very short time between now and the next administration. For those of you in the State Department here, I want you to know that I would like to have that information, and I am sure maybe the chairman would be also interested in the same thing.

Senator KERRY. Well, I was going to say we are going to leave the record open for 3 days. We do want to try, depending on obviously the sentiment of the committee, Senator, to move the nominations, absent some fundamental opposition to them. But you certainly deserve an answer to that question, and we will leave the record open for 3 days. And I am confident that they will comply and get that to you.

Senator VOINOVICH Thank you very much. And please don't get me wrong here, you have got a great background. I am just worried about the time we have left and the challenge that is there.

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I appreciate that, and I assure you, I am, too. And my colleagues are as well. And I hope we can give you an answer that will alleviate some of your concerns.

Senator VOINOVICH Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Cunningham, just a last question, if I can? I think we have sort of reached a point where a lot of the questions—I mean, we could go on asking about the policies ad infinitum, and I would love to. But I think that in terms of the committee's purpose here that that will not serve a lot.

And I think if we get to some tough places, as is usual, since you haven't been there yet and you are not yet confirmed and you are not in place, we are going to learn that you need to get there to find out so you could answer the question. So that is the circular nature of these proceedings.

But if I can ask you, Mr. Cunningham, what is your view with respect to the chatter about Israel's back channel efforts right now that are taking place with respect to Syria? And if you would comment on whether or not this administration—my hope would be the administration is not going to get in the way of those or object to them or somehow indicate displeasure with respect to them.

And I wonder what your take is? If you can—if you have had some communication directly about that, or can you share with us your view of this?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Senator.

There are obviously signals going back and forth, as you all have seen in the press and in the regional press about messages being transmitted about interest in some kind of talk, reopening the Syria discussion. I think our view is we don't think that is a particularly promising angle to pursue under present circumstances. But I don't think that we have—let me rephrase that, if peace is possible, if progress on peace is possible, that would be—that would be something to be welcomed.

But as a practical matter and given the amount of difficulty that Syria is causing on some very important issues throughout the region, I don't think that we think that it is particularly promising right now.

Senator KERRY. But the administration's interest has been quite to the contrary, not to talk is an actual part of our policy. And if Israel is undertaking something that runs counter to that, my

question is are we going to register displeasure? Are we going to try to stand in the way of it, or are we going to give full opportunity for them to pursue what they think is in their interest?

Ambassador CUNNINGHAM. I am not privy to the considerations at that level, either in Israel, obviously, or privy to what they may have told us at the highest level, and that would be a conversation to be held at very high level.

I think that the prospect of opening a discussion with Syria would have another difficulty attached to it, which is that Israel now has its attention focused on, as the Senator said, on its process with the Palestinians in the region. Opening up another front for negotiation, as it were, might prove difficult, both for the current negotiations and for an establishment trying to deal with some very difficult problems already on the table.

We have—you are quite right. We have taken the position that it is not very useful right now for us to be talking to Syria. They know the issues that they need to address that are of concern to us, particularly in Lebanon, their relationship with Iran, their relationship with Hezbollah, and other things that they know are of great concern to us.

If the time comes to have a discussion, I think it is clear what the issues will be, but we don't think that right now it is promising.

Senator KERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Beecroft, am I correct that this good-looking young family back here belongs to you or—

Mr. BEECROFT. I know it seems improbable. But, yes, they do, sir.

Senator KERRY. No, on the contrary. Well, we want to thank them for being here. They have been attentive.

And let me say to all of your families that we really do appreciate what they put up with in the course of all of this. There are long hours, a lot of absences in some cases, and sometimes some hardship. So we really respect that and appreciate it, and we thank all of you for coming today and being part of this process.

So the record will stay open for these 3 days. I don't anticipate a lot of questions, but whatever will be submitted we will get to you right away. And thank you, and we wish you well and look forward to personal updates maybe somewhere along the road.

We stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF HON. JOSEPH EVAN LEBARON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Question. In the 2007 State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, Qatar is ranked as a "Tier 3" country, "not fully comply[ing] with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and not making significant efforts to do so." What has been the impact on efforts to eliminate trafficking of placing Qatar in the Tier 3 category? Has this designation prompted the Government of Qatar to make any significant or notable efforts to comply with standards to eliminate human trafficking? If confirmed, what actions will you take to address the problem of human trafficking and to urge the Government of Qatar to make progress on this issue?

Answer. We remain very concerned about Qatar's record with trafficking in persons issues. While the Government of Qatar has made some progress over the last year in referring some trafficking victims to its shelter and successfully implementing legislation prohibiting the use of under age camel jockeys, many issues remain. The Government of Qatar has drafted comprehensive antitrafficking legislation in the past year, but it has yet to be approved and enacted. Of special concern to us are foreign laborers, who are subject to Qatar's rigid sponsorship laws, which effectively leave them at the mercy of their employers. The Government of Qatar has made some progress on a new law to change some of the more onerous sponsorship regulations, yet this also remains in the drafting stage.

If confirmed, I will continue to make trafficking in persons a priority for the mission, and will actively engage the Government of Qatar at the highest levels to encourage more tangible progress in preventing labor exploitation and other forms of human trafficking.

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

Answer. Identifying the most important actions is easy. They involved the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, when I was the ambassador there, 2003–2006.

On August 3, 2005, a coup brought to power a group of military officers headed by Col. Ely Ould Muhammad Vall. As so many other coup leaders do, Col. Vall promised to hold elections for a new president at some undetermined time.

I knew that it was very important to get the coup leaders to take immediate, concrete steps towards fulfilling that promise. It was one thing to talk about elections; it was quite another to take tangible steps toward them.

Three days after the coup, therefore, I pressed Col. Vall to invite the United Nations to send technical advisors to help Mauritania plan for and execute free and fair elections, and to set an early, specific date for them. I kept up the pressure on him throughout August, and, about 3 weeks later, in late August, he finally agreed to issue the invitation.

That invitation was critically important, for two reasons. First, the U.N. does not send such experts unless specifically invited. So effective planning for elections could not begin until the invitation was issued.

Mauritania had never held free and fair elections for a president; presidential succession had always been by coup. It just had to have the U.N. there, as a first step toward such elections. Second, the invitation helped lock the coup leaders on a clear path leading toward free and fair elections. I knew that, once issuing the formal invitation, it would be hard for them to back away.

In March 2007, Mauritania successfully held an internationally-observed free and fair election for President, its first since its independence over 45 years earlier.

Throughout that period, these are the democracy promotion lessons I learned, in terms of coups:

- Quick policy decisions and associated diplomatic action are vital. So often coup leaders will say they intend to return the country to democratic rule, or to establish democratic rule. The U.S. Government must test the coup leaders' stated intention by pressing them to take immediate steps to achieve that intention.
- Public diplomacy must be an integral part of the U.S. Government response.
- Education and training must be packaged with financial assistance, with education and training taking precedence. Despite the best intentions, coup leaders will almost certainly lack the knowledge and experience necessary to plan, organize, and conduct complex democratic exercises.
- The responsibility within the U.S. Government for determining appropriate responses and implementing them should be pushed as far forward, toward the U.S. Embassy and country team, as possible. The best knowledge of a country's geopolitical terrain will reside in the field, with embassies and international organizations.
- The ties of the international community to the country must be leveraged. Well-established international aid organizations may be ideally positioned to take the lead in assisting sensitive political and electoral processes.
- Coordinated action by the international community is essential.

In addition to all the actions I took during that first year after the coup to get Mauritania on the track to democratic elections, I also seized the opportunity to help set the conditions for a democratically elected government to take up the highly sensitive and long-festering issue of Mauritania's legacy of slavery. That is another long story, but its essence is this: In 2006, I mounted a campaign in the Afro-Mauritanian community, including those exiled in northern Senegal, to give the fledgling democratic process in Mauritania a chance. This was a singular opportunity. I told them, to get a new, democratically elected Mauritanian Government

to take up the issues that had estranged Afro-Mauritanians from the Arab Moor community for many, many decades. In the end, significant parts of the Afro-Mauritanian community did get involved, and the new government has responded, taking several important steps to improve communal relations, including the return of Afro-Mauritanian exiles to Mauritania.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Qatar? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Qatar? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. By regional standards, the status of women in Qatar has improved, in part due to the influence of active women in positions of status, such as Sheikha Moza Al-Misned, the wife of the Emir and head of the education-focused Qatar Foundation. Three separate municipal elections over the last several years—with full participation by Qatari women—show that democratization is also proceeding, although the mission has developed an active training and technical assistance program to spur further progress.

The related issues of labor exploitation and trafficking in persons, discussed above, are probably the most pressing concerns we currently have regarding human rights in Qatar. If confirmed, I will continue the mission's efforts to encourage progress on these fronts, specifically the passage and implementation of effective antitrafficking legislation.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Qatar in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. There is a significant constituency in Qatari society and in the government that hopes for further progress. Energetic recent press coverage of human rights issues indicates that Qatar is ready to consider this topic more seriously. Regarding trafficking in persons, it is my hope that Qatar's Tier 3 ranking will not alienate our supporters in the government and private sector, but will instead serve as a spur to action, and I will exert every effort to encourage them to view it as such.

Question. In your new position, what steps would you take to ensure that promotion of human rights objectives will be an integral part of post/bureau activities? If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that Foreign Service officers who engage in human rights activities are encouraged and professionally rewarded for superior service?

Answer. The mission has an active program to advance human rights objectives. Recently, for example, the embassy held a successful press conference following the release of the annual human rights report that received significant coverage from local press. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the mission's strong focus on human rights. Specifically, I plan to use the country team forum to ensure that our human rights objectives are integrated into the activities of all relevant offices and agencies. The experience I have gained throughout my career, and especially as Ambassador to Mauritania during that country's transition to democracy, has taught me that coordinating with our international partners and continuing our active engagement with nongovernmental actors—including exchange programs, training, and assistance—will be critical to successful human rights promotion.

If confirmed, I will make this a priority for all mission staff, and will encourage all supervisors to include achievements in the field of human rights promotion in reviews of their employees' performance, stressing the importance of these activities to advancing overarching United States objectives in Qatar and the region.

Question. Will you commit to meeting regularly, if confirmed, with nongovernmental organizations in the United States and in Qatar who are working to promote human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I look very much forward to meeting regularly with nongovernmental organizations in both countries. The mission actively engages nongovernmental organizations working in the human rights field, and I will be happy to lead that effort.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

Question. In September 2007, the United States and Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding on nuclear power stating that the "two countries will work

together to develop requirements for appropriate power reactors, fuel service arrangements, civilian training, nuclear safety, energy technology, and other related areas." What is the current status of these efforts and what assistance has the United States provided to date?

Answer. We believe Jordan is a reliable partner for peaceful nuclear energy cooperation. We are confident that Jordan's interest in nuclear technology is solely for the purpose of peaceful, alternative energy production. Jordan currently imports 100 percent of its energy needs, and its vulnerability to world oil prices has strained its economy recently. We would like to help this valuable ally with its energy security.

As you note, the United States and Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding in September 2007, in which Jordan affirmed its commitment to non-proliferation and to rely on existing international markets for nuclear fuel services as an alternative to the pursuit of enrichment and reprocessing. We recently completed negotiations with Jordan on a Section 123 Agreement to allow United States companies to export reactors and fuel to Jordan in the context of the highest safety, security, and nonproliferation standards. The proposed agreement is currently under review in Washington and Amman. If the President approves it and authorizes its execution, the Section 123 Agreement with Jordan would be subject to a congressional review period of 90 days of continuous session before entering into force.

The Department of Energy, through Argonne National Laboratory and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, conducted a feasibility study for Jordan on the introduction of nuclear energy taking into account the IAEA milestones. The study analyzed Jordan's energy and nuclear energy goals, reviewed its infrastructure development, including safeguards and nonproliferation conventions, human resources, and regulatory framework and provided suggestions for a path forward. The methodology developed for the Jordan study could prove useful in conducting feasibility studies in other countries seeking nuclear power. Jordan also attended a National Nuclear Security Administration run seminar "Aspects of Planning and Implementing Effective Infrastructure for a Nuclear Energy Program" for countries in North Africa. We are reviewing other infrastructure-related projects for possible implementation.

Question. The Bush administration has made a concerted effort to encourage Arab neighbors of Iraq to support the Maliki government. How would you characterize the relationship between Jordan and the Maliki government? What has Jordan done to promote Sunni-Shia reconciliation in Iraq and to support the Maliki government?

Answer. The United States appreciates Jordan's efforts to help Iraq become a unified, free, and prosperous nation and Jordan's cooperation with P.M. Maliki's government. Jordan has helped lead Sunni outreach efforts in Western Iraq, and King Abdullah has made a number of public statements in support of Sunni-Shia reconciliation. Jordan has hosted over 54,000 Iraqi police for training, as well as a limited number of border, corrections, and counterterrorism personnel. Jordan has expressed deep concern for humanitarian issues, and it has provided significant humanitarian aid, set up a field hospital in Fallujah, and hosts an estimated 450,000-500,000 Iraqis who have been displaced from their homes. The Government of Jordan is an active participant in the Expanded Neighbors Process and hosts the Neighbors Working Group on Refugees. Jordan maintains a limited presence at its embassy in Baghdad but does not have a resident ambassador. We continue to urge the Jordanians to return their ambassador to Iraq and to work with them to achieve the greatest possible support for the people and Government of Iraq.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER J. DODD

Question. Have you read the cable ref: 04 STATE 258893—Peace Corps-State Department Relations?

Answer. Yes, I have read the cable on Peace Corps-State Department Relations (04 State 258893).

Question. Do you understand and agree to abide by the principles set forth in this cable?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I agree to abide by the principles set forth in the cable. We have a robust Peace Corps presence in Jordan, currently with 55 volunteers in country, and it is important that they be able to carry out their mission effectively.

Question. Specifically, do you understand and accept that "the Peace Corps must remain substantially separate from the day-to-day conduct and concerns of our foreign policy" and that "the Peace Corps' role and its need for separation from the

day-to-day activities of the mission are not comparable to those of other U.S. Government agencies”?

Answer. Yes, I understand and I accept that the Peace Corps must remain substantially separate from the day-to-day conduct and concerns of our Foreign Policy, and the Peace Corps' role and its need for separation from the day-to-day activities of the mission are not comparable to those of other U.S. Government agencies.

Question. Do you pledge, as Secretary Rice requests in 3.B of the cable, to exercise your chief of mission “authorities so as to provide the Peace Corps with as much autonomy and flexibility in its day-to-day operations as possible, so long as this does not conflict with U.S. objectives and policies”?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I pledge to exercise my chief of mission authorities so as to provide the Peace Corps with as much autonomy and flexibility in its day-to-day operations as possible, so long as this does not conflict with U.S. objectives and policies.

RESPONSES OF HON. JOSEPH EVAN LEBARON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

Question. Based on your past service as Deputy Director of the Office on Iran and Iraq in the State Department and your prospective position as United States Ambassador to Qatar, how would you describe Qatar's relations with Iran? What concerns, if any, do you have about Qatar's relationship with Iran? How does Qatar view Iran's nuclear program?

Answer. Qatar maintains an activist foreign policy, and has relationships with all countries in the region. Many Qataris see Iran as a regional power with whom they must engage to protect their own national interest. Qatar also shares the immense North Field natural gas deposits with Iran.

Regional security, and the destabilizing role Iran is playing, is a regular topic of our consultations with Qatari officials. A key element of this is Iran's nuclear program. Although Qatari officials have supported Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear program, Qatar has also voted in favor of United Nations sanctions against Iran, specifically Security Council Resolutions 1737 and 1747 in 2006 and 2007. If I am confirmed, I will lead the embassy in continuing to engage the Qatari Government on our concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions and other destabilizing actions in the region. Qatar is also sensitive to Iranian efforts to access the international banking system, and we will continue our frequent discussions with Qatari financial regulators on this topic.

Question. You have most recently served as the Foreign Affairs Advisor to Special Operations Command. Based on this experience and your prospective service as ambassador to Qatar—a country with a significant United States military presence—how would you characterize the working relationship between the United States military and the State Department. What are the major hurdles to improving inter-agency cooperation and how do we begin to overcome them?

Answer. Thank you for these questions, which are important and complex in equal measure. To keep my answer as focused as possible, I would like to comment on the working relationship overseas in U.S. embassies, where personnel from State and Defense—and from other agencies and departments, as well—must work closely and cooperatively if they are to achieve the goals and objectives of the U.S. Government.

The State-Defense working relationship in U.S. embassies is generally good, in my opinion. But it can and must be even better, especially after 9/11. I believe the best way to overcome the major hurdles to interagency cooperation is for chiefs of mission to synchronize systemically across the country team their embassy's programs and activities. That is, led by the chief of mission, country teams should synchronize the objectives, programs, operations, and initiatives contained in the various planning documents that exist for each executive branch agency and department represented on the country team, military and civilian.

Once those foundation documents are synchronized in an integrated set of programs and activities, the impact, power, and efficacy of U.S. foreign policy in the host country should improve dramatically. Metrics should be developed to determine if that is, indeed, occurring. Such synchronization is a continuing process, of course, with regular chief of mission-led country team assessment meetings required to review rigorously and to recalibrate as necessary.

I believe the U.S. military would welcome such a chief of mission-led synchronization effort in U.S. embassies, since synchronization, at least at the tactical level,

is deeply embedded in its culture and training. While the interagency synchronization I envision is more strategic than tactical, I have every intention of introducing and operationalizing this process at Embassy Doha, if I am confirmed.

Question. In February 2008, the United States Department of State reported that "military relations between the United States and Qatar are extremely close, and Qatari support remains essential for United States operations in Iraq and Afghanistan." Given the importance of United States bases in Qatar to ongoing operations in the wider Middle East, can you foresee any developments that could endanger the bilateral relationship and United States access to its bases in Qatar?

Answer. The United States military presence in Qatar is extremely valuable to both nations, and reflects shared security priorities. While we continue to engage the Government of Qatar on certain policy aspects that are of concern to the United States, including human rights, democratization, and Qatar's relations with Iran and Syria, we are currently unaware of any issues to endanger either our larger bilateral relationship or United States access to military facilities in Qatar.

RESPONSES OF HON. RICHARD E. HOAGLAND TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER J. DODD

Question. Have you read the cable reference: 04 STATE 258893—Peace Corps-State Department Relations?

Answer. Yes. I have carefully reviewed this cable.

Question. Do you understand and agree to abide by the principles set forth in this cable?

Answer. Yes. I understand and agree to abide by the principles set forth in 04 State 258893 regarding Peace Corps-State Department relations.

Question. Specifically, do you understand and accept that "the Peace Corps must remain substantially separate from the day-to-day conduct and concerns of our foreign policy" and "the Peace Corps's role and its need for separation from the day-to-day activities of the mission are not comparable to those of other government agencies"?

Answer. Yes. I understand the need to keep the Peace Corps substantially separate from the day-to-day conduct of our foreign policy and, if confirmed, will strongly support this policy.

Question. Do you pledge, as Secretary Rice requests in 3.B of the cable, to exercise your chief of mission "authorities so as to provide the Peace Corps with as much autonomy and flexibility in its day-to-day operations as possible, so long as this does not conflict with U.S. objectives and policies"?

Answer. I pledge, as Secretary Rice requests in 3.B of the cable, to exercise my chief of mission authorities so as to provide the Peace Corps with as much autonomy and flexibility in its day-to-day operations as possible, so long as this does not conflict with U.S. objectives and policies.

RESPONSE OF HON. RICHARD E. HOAGLAND TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY
SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH

Question. What is the status of the current Director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Christian Strohal and the process to select his replacement?

Answer. Ambassador Christian Strohal is scheduled to depart his post in June 2008. Finding highly qualified successor for this critical job is a high priority for the U.S. Government. We have been working with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Chairman in Office and with like-minded allies to reach consensus on the best candidate from among several outstanding contenders. We understand the Chairman in Office intends to bring the process to conclusion within several weeks.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Question. An April committee staff report on Iraqi refugees, entitled "Managing Chaos—The Iraqi Refugees of Jordan and Syria and Internally Displaced Persons

in Iraq," recommended that "the regularization of the status of Iraqis in Jordan and Syria should be made a first-order priority for American diplomats." Do you agree with this recommendation? What can be done, in your view, to encourage the Government of Jordan to take further steps toward regularizing the status of Iraqi refugees in Jordan?

Answer. The United States takes very seriously the challenge of regularizing the status of Iraqi refugees in Jordan and elsewhere in the region. The United States Government has made it a priority to intensify diplomatic efforts with Jordan and other host-country governments, and if confirmed, I will continue to focus on this issue as a top priority. We have already seen our efforts begin to bear some fruit. Last year, for example, Jordan lifted restrictions preventing Iraqi children whose parents lacked residency permits from attending public school after our embassy in Amman lobbied heavily for Iraqis to be able to attend school. Jordan has also permitted Iraqis to access public health facilities on the same basis as Jordanian citizens. In February, King Abdullah made a firm commitment to U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres that Jordan would not arbitrarily expel or refoule Iraqi refugees. We understand that Jordan is abiding by this commitment. We will continue to work with Jordan to regularize the status of Iraqi refugees and to ensure that they are protected and have access to needed services until they can return voluntarily to Iraq.

Question. The Millennium Challenge Corporation gave failing scores to Jordan in 2008 on its political rights and civil liberties assessment indicators. Will you commit to making it a priority, if confirmed, to support the freedom of Jordanians to assemble, associate, express their opinions, and participate in public life?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will make it a priority to engage with the Government and people of Jordan in support of political rights and civil liberties. To that end, I believe it is of utmost importance to continue United States support to the efforts of Jordanian reformers to improve freedoms of assembly, association, speech, press, and movement, and to increase citizen participation, particularly among women, in civil society and the government.

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

Answer. I have worked in the Middle East and in Washington to promote human rights and democracy. I count among my most meaningful experiences my responsibility for human rights at our embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

At our embassy in Saudi Arabia, I engaged directly with the Saudi Government to press for increased human rights, reform, and democratization; drafted the human rights report on Saudi Arabia; coordinated with third-country embassies to build support for a joint approach to the Saudi Government on key points of our human rights policy; conducted meetings with third-country embassies with large expatriate populations in Saudi Arabia (e.g., India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and others) to develop a coordinated approach to the Saudi Government on the need to improve and respect the human rights and religious freedom of foreign guest workers; organized meetings between United States Government officials and third-country national leaders of underground churches regarding their experiences with the lack of religious freedom and the persecution of religious minorities.

Although far from successful in resolving all human rights concerns in Saudi Arabia, this work was necessary and helpful to the cause of human rights. Specifically, it served to encourage other embassies to increase their attention to the practices of the Saudi Government and to the human rights of Saudi citizens and third-country nationals. It also helped us and others to constructively engage and influence the Saudi Government on specific human rights cases and issues. Finally, it allowed us to make the Saudi Government aware that we were monitoring particular issues, cases, and individuals and thereby discourage any government action to curtail or diminish the human rights and religious freedom pertinent to those particular issues, cases, and individuals.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Jordan? What are the most important steps you expect to take, if confirmed, to promote human rights and democracy in Jordan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As the Department stated in its 2007 Country Human Rights Report, the Government of Jordan respected human rights in some areas, but its overall record continued to reflect some problems. Jordan's most pressing human rights issues fall into four major categories—political rights and freedoms, prisoner rights, labor rights, and the rights of women and minorities. The United States continues to

monitor religious freedoms in Jordan, although Jordan has historically been a model for religious tolerance in the Arab world.

Through a broad array of efforts, the United States works in close collaboration with government officials and local civil society actors on a broad range of rights and freedoms. Our assistance aims to increase citizen participation in the political, economic, and social development of the country; increase the capacity of the parliament to promote transparency and accountability; strengthen independent media; improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the judicial system; strengthen the rights of women; and increase religious freedom and tolerance. The United States pursues these goals through direct dialog with the government and targeted programmatic assistance efforts through USAID, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. These programmatic efforts focus on the rule of law, protecting human rights, and political participation that engage both government institutions and Jordanian civil society.

In addition, the United States conducts human rights and rule of law training for the military to help instill democratic principles, including civilian control of the military, and promote respect for human rights. An ongoing U.S.-funded counterterrorism fellowship program teaches the country's military personnel how to combat terrorism while respecting the rule of law, human rights, and civil rights. Approximately 300 members of the military receive U.S.-funded training through these programs each year. We have also initiated an International Visitor Program for corrections officers to expose them to Western prison management practices.

On a regular basis, we engage Jordan on measures to combat trafficking in persons and exploitative labor practices. The United States Government is funding a 5-year program entitled, "Better Work Jordan," through the International Labor Organization and International Finance Corporation. This program includes training for management and workers on rights and responsibilities of workers, with a particular focus on migrant workers, as well as technical assistance to improve the capacity of Jordanian labor inspectors to identify and resolve labor issues. USAID has also funded an international advisor to assist the Jordanian Ministry of Labor in bringing its labor standards up to international levels. We continue to stress the importance of criminally investigating and punishing acts of forced labor.

U.S. assistance designed to advance and promote the role of women in society continues to achieve tangible success. A 3-year U.S.-supported program through an international NGO which started in January 2008 promotes advocacy against gender-based abuse and funds an annual antiviolenence campaign which holds events throughout the country.

Finally, working to promote religious freedom and tolerance, the United States sponsors exchange visits and, in numerous contacts with private American and Jordanian groups, encourages interfaith dialog and understanding. A U.S. grant supports exchange visits between Americans of diverse religious backgrounds and Jordanian Shari'a judges, scholars, and students. The embassy also regularly engages directly with government officials urging progress on applying internationally recognized standards of religious freedom and removal of restrictions on religious minorities. Examples of specific embassy actions include publicly supporting conferences to promote effective interfaith dialog, raising reported cases of religion-based harassment and intolerance, and advocating on behalf of expatriate religious workers and students who request legal residency.

If confirmed, I intend to continue these important initiatives and programs as well as increase our focus on other areas of reform, such as prisoner rights. I am confident that through our concerted efforts and work with the Government and people of Jordan, we will be able to help the Government and people of Jordan to expand and deepen their rights and freedoms.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Jordan in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. Jordan has made significant and important strides to reform. The United States supports Jordan's efforts and engages its Government and its people to encourage further reform and development. There are, however, some institutional practices and public sensitivities, as well as regional political conditions, that affect United States measures to address human rights issues in Jordan. For example, discriminatory attitudes toward women persist in certain professions and among parts of the populace; media freedoms continue to be hampered by self-censorship; the correctional system continues to draw its prison guards from the larger pool of Jordanian police, rather than fostering a professional cadre of correctional officers, which slows the process of changing management and individual attitudes; and the government faces challenges in working with Parliament to pass needed labor re-

forms concerning the abuse of foreign workers and the enforcement of labor standards. As Jordan advances its reform agenda, it will face the challenge of ensuring appropriate and complete implementation of its reforms.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Jordanian Government and people to overcome institutional obstacles, address public sensitivities, and meet the challenges of implementing their reforms. I will also work to offer the United States support and assistance needed to help Jordan successfully carry out reform and development.

Question. In your new position, what steps would you take to ensure that promotion of human rights objectives will be an integral part of post/bureau activities? If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that Foreign Service officers who engage in human rights activities are encouraged and professionally rewarded for superior service?

Answer. Promotion of human rights will be a central component of our ongoing dialog with Jordanians on reform. If confirmed, I will instruct every office in my mission to encourage and support Jordan's reform and development efforts. In addition, I will ensure that every embassy officer integrates support for our human rights agenda into her or his portfolio, and I will see that such work is professionally rewarded through the presentation of appropriate Department of State awards and the preparation of appropriate employee evaluation reports, which serve as the basis for promotion and advancement. I will also work to ensure that the promotion of human rights and democracy remains a central pillar of our USAID, DRL, MEPI, and other assistance programs.

RESPONSES OF HON. JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

BACKGROUND

You have had an impressive career as a Foreign Service officer spanning more than three decades. However, you have never been posted to the Middle East and appear to have relatively little background in Middle East affairs, including Arab-Israeli issues. In your written testimony to the committee, you stated that you "learned a great deal about the dynamics and pain" of the Middle East during your time as Deputy Representative to the United Nations from 1999 to 2004.

Question. Please explain in more detail your engagement on Israeli and Arab-Israeli issues at the United Nations.

Answer. In almost 5 years as Deputy Representative, working together with the Representative, I handled, or supervised the handling of, issues related to the Middle East in the Security Council and in the General Assembly. In my first year in New York, I worked closely with Ambassador Holbrooke on a major, successful effort to find Israel a home for the first time in the groupings of countries that do much of the U.N.'s day-to-day business and, importantly, propose countries as candidates to head U.N. groups or committees. From September of 2000, with the beginning of the second intifada, until I departed New York in the summer of 2004, I dealt with a constant stream of draft resolutions and statements in both the Security Council and the General Assembly. Some of them produced positive elements such as recognition of the importance of the Road Map, or the affirmation by the Security Council of President Bush's vision of two states living in peace, embodied in UNSCR 1397 in 2002. Much more frequently, however, we were confronted with ill-advised, unbalanced, or hostile attempts to use the U.N. bodies to prejudice events on the ground, to prejudice the outcome of political discussions, or to take actions detrimental to Israel—while ignoring or underplaying the terrorist attacks taking place against Israel itself. At the extreme, this was an almost full-time activity. Our success in defeating or turning aside unhelpful activity in the Security Council eventually led the Palestinians and others to take recourse in the General Assembly, where obtaining the votes necessary to pass tendentious measures was a more certain proposition.

This meant defending United States policy in the Middle East, and Israel's need for and indeed its right to security, in a complicated and sometimes hostile environment. It meant developing a close working relationship with the Israeli delegation, understanding the history and regional politics, and the legal and political histories of many of the issues we were dealing with—territories, terrorism, the rights and obligations of the parties, and the political processes at play and those we were trying to create. It also required an understanding of the dynamics and politics of the Arab world, and of the Palestinians themselves, since their interests are not mono-

lithic. Syria was on the Security Council for 2 years during this period, creating an additional challenge, with an intense dynamic. I developed close working relationships with some of my Arab colleagues as well, and good professional relationships with others. I also worked with and developed expertise in the relationships and interests of other major players in the region—the U.N. itself, of course, the European Union, and the Quartet.

Question. What portion of time would you estimate you spent engaged on Israeli and Arab-Israeli issues while at the United Nations?

Answer. That is difficult to estimate. At times it was almost 100 percent of my time. For example, in times of high tension there were almost around-the-clock discussions and negotiations that could last for days on end. There would also be periods of relative inactivity, although Middle East issues, including Lebanon, were a regular fixture on the U.N. agenda. I would guess that overall I spent one-quarter or more of my time on Israel and Arab-Israeli issues, and more than that percentage of my time on Iraq, which was simultaneously a pressing issue, especially after September 11.

Question. To what extent was this engagement focused on the so-called “final status” issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (defined in the 1993 Oslo accords as “Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest”)?

Answer. In many respects it was all about “final status” issues, because the debates and resolutions revolved around terror and security, the use of force and violence, settlements, the separation fence, Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon and its aftermath, the relationship of Israel to its neighbors, a two-state solution, and the rights and obligations of Israel and Palestinians under international law. Also at issue was the underlying question of whether the conditions existed, or could be created, to get underway a meaningful process leading to an end to violence and ultimately to a peace process, and the appropriate role of the international community—issues which remain relevant today in a different context.

Question. In which other of your assignments have you been engaged on Israeli and Arab-Israeli issues?

Answer. I have not been very directly engaged on Israeli and Arab-Israeli issues in other assignments, but I have dealt with other issues in the region, and have long experience applicable to the region. My first assignment to USUN, as deputy political counselor, came just after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. I was heavily engaged in the mission’s activities on Iraq, and the liberation of Kuwait and the aftermath, for the entire time I was in New York for that assignment. If I am confirmed, I believe my extensive background in security and political/military affairs, and knowledge of NATO, the European Union, and the U.N. will prove valuable, since security and international community support will be key elements of any peace process.

Question. What role do you expect to play, if confirmed, in the Annapolis process?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Annapolis process by ensuring that Embassy Tel Aviv’s resources are fully devoted to supporting the President’s and the Secretary’s personal diplomacy. I will also assist Generals Dayton, Jones, and Fraser in fulfilling their mandates. I will seek to build support among Israeli leaders and publics for the Annapolis process, and use my contacts with Israeli leaders to advance it. I will maintain the best and most constructive relationships I can with all segments of the Israeli political spectrum, ensure that United States policy and objectives are understood, and provide the President and the Secretary the best information we can on Israeli views and concerns and on the political dynamics at play. I will, of course, also present U.S. views clearly, and seek to build the closest possible relationship with this important friend and ally. I have considerable experience with difficult negotiations, and hope to contribute to finding solutions to the issues on the table.

RACHEL CORRIE

On March 16, 2003, Rachel Corrie, an American citizen, was killed by an Israel Defense Forces bulldozer in Rafah, Gaza, while protesting home demolitions.

Question. Please provide a detailed account of steps taken, if any, by the executive branch and the Department of State, including the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv, to encourage the Government of Israel to undertake a thorough, credible, and transparent investigation into Ms. Corrie’s death.

Answer. The United States Government takes its responsibilities involving American citizens abroad very seriously and has repeatedly engaged the Government of Israel at the highest levels about this issue. Immediately following Ms. Corrie's tragic death, President Bush telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to request a thorough and transparent investigation and was given personal assurances by the Prime Minister that there would be one. Additionally, then-Secretary Powell, Ambassador Kurtzer, Deputy Chief of Mission LeBaron, Assistant Secretary William Burns, and Deputy Assistant Secretary David Satterfield, among others, raised this issue with their counterparts and other appropriate authorities in the Israeli Government.

More recently, during a visit to Israel, former Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty specifically raised outstanding issues again with her counterpart at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yigal Tzarfati. Assistant Secretary Harty also gave Mr. Tzarfati a letter that reiterated the U.S. Government's request for a full and transparent investigation of the incident.

The Government of Israel has not yet fully responded to Assistant Secretary Harty's letter, and specifically her request for a full and transparent investigation. The United States Embassy in Tel Aviv will continue to follow up with the Israelis for a response to our inquiries. If confirmed, I will ensure that this follow-up takes place and press the Government of Israel for a response.

Additionally, in late October, representatives from the Department of State met with the Corrie family and with Congressman Baird and his staff at his offices to discuss concerns that the Corrie family still has with respect to the death of Rachel Corrie. We are continuing to investigate charges of irregularities with the Israeli Government's handling of the case and to respond to the family's concerns to the maximum extent.

Question. In your opinion, has a thorough, credible, and transparent investigation taken place? If not, what specific, concrete steps will you commit to take, if confirmed, to ensure that such an investigation does take place?

Answer. The Department remains committed to providing the highest standards of citizen services to the Corrie family. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Israel for a thorough and transparent investigation of the tragic death of Rachel Corrie.

RESPONSES OF HON. JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH

Question. Well, I would like to get more information about the role you are going to play [in helping to achieve progress on the ground and in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks launched at Annapolis last November].

Answer. The Administration is firmly committed to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is not only in the interest of Israelis and Palestinians, but also an American national interest. If confirmed, as Ambassador to Israel I will ensure that the embassy's resources are fully devoted to supporting the President's and Secretary Rice's personal diplomacy, and utilize my own contacts with Israeli leaders and publics across the political spectrum to solidify support for the process launched last November in Annapolis, and to advance it. I will provide the President and the Secretary with the best information available to the embassy on Israeli views and concerns, and on the political dynamics involved. I will also support the process by presenting United States views clearly to the Israeli Government and maintaining the best possible dialog between us.

Since Annapolis, we have been working to achieve progress on four parallel, complementary tracks. First we are supporting the parties' bilateral negotiations, which began in earnest shortly after Annapolis with the creation of a negotiating structure and a vigorous schedule of bilateral talks on the full spectrum of issues. The parties have kept the substance of these talks private, which reflects the seriousness of their effort. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary Welch are deeply and personally engaged in supporting the parties' efforts in this area. As the President's representative to Israel, if confirmed, I would be an integral part of our engagement with senior Israeli officials on this most delicate issue, working with the Secretary and Assistant Secretary Welch to help keep the talks on track.

Second, we are working to promote progress by the parties in fulfilling their commitments under the Roadmap. For the Palestinians, this means combating and dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism, undertaking institutional reforms, and ending incitement. For Israel, it means halting settlement expansion, removing unauthorized outposts, easing movement and access to improve Palestinian economic

and humanitarian conditions, facilitating security coordination, and reopening Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, consistent with previous agreements. The President and Secretary Rice have asked Lt Gen. William Fraser III to monitor developments in this area and to work with the parties to promote progress on Roadmap implementation. As ambassador, I would work closely with General Fraser to ensure the success of his mission, and I would utilize my regular contact with senior Israeli officials to effect visible progress on these important issues. Another element to this effort is security coordination between Israel and the Palestinians. I would engage directly with the Minister of Defense and his staff to help ensure coordination and support is as effective as possible in response to the efforts we are now seeing by the Palestinian Authority Security Forces.

Third, we are working to support Palestinian economic development and institutional capacity building. Former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his role as Quartet Representative, has taken a leadership role on this issue, identifying priority projects and working with the parties and international donors to facilitate implementation on the ground. As Ambassador to Israel I would work to ensure Israeli coordination and support for the important programs that these funds will support, as well as for the efforts of LTG Keith Dayton, the U.S. Security Coordinator, who is working to reform and professionalize the Palestinian security forces, including a program providing training and nonlethal equipment.

Fourth, we are working to sustain and expand regional support for the parties' efforts. Arab political and financial support will be crucial in order for both Israel and the Palestinians to make the difficult decisions necessary for peace. As Ambassador to Israel my role in this area would be less direct, but I would hope to use my experience in the dynamics of the region to contribute to our thinking about how to advance on this track.

Question. So I am very interested in finding out just exactly what is that portfolio? What do they expect to do? And also I would like to know who is the team? Who is in charge? How are they going to work this out?

Answer. I earlier described the four tracks we are working to advance—bilateral negotiations, Roadmap implementation, Palestinian capacity building, and building regional support. The administration has structured its effort to ensure focused attention is paid to each of these important sets of issues. Generals Dayton, Jones, and Fraser are each working on separate but related areas. Each is important, but distinct from the others. I have met two of the three, and both told me that there is no confusion among them, and that they are all in frequent contact. For Lt. General Dayton, whom I have not yet met, the focus is building the capacity and professionalism of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces and helping to foster internal reform and improved security coordination with Israel. For General Jones, the focus is on exploring the security aspects of a permanent status agreement, helping to define each party's security needs and what regional arrangements and international support might be needed. For Lt. General Fraser, the focus is on monitoring and promoting progress by both parties on their commitments under the Roadmap. At the same time, the United States Ambassador to Israel and the United States Consul General in Jerusalem are providing logistical and policy support to these missions, keeping Washington informed of developments on the ground, and maintaining our bilateral contacts and dialog with Israel and the PA.

All of this work on the four tracks, as well as the effort of our considerable diplomatic establishment in both the embassy and the Consulate General, as well as throughout the region, is conducted at the direction and under the oversight of the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, David Welch, and the Secretary of State. Their personal engagement, and that of the President, is really the engine that makes this process run, along with the good will and determination of the Israeli and Palestinian leadership who are committed to peace. The current United States structure is helping to achieve real progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and on the ground, ranging from the easing of restrictions on West Bank movement, to training and equipping the PA security forces. We are hopeful that our continued efforts will be successful in helping the Israelis and Palestinian realize our shared goal of a peace agreement before the end of 2008.

RESPONSES OF HON. JAMES B. CUNNINGHAM TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

Question. In the wake of the 2007 Annapolis Conference, many have expressed optimism that a major agreement could be reached between the Israelis and Palestinians by the end of the Bush administration. As Secretary Rice prepares to

make her fourth visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories since the Annapolis conference, much of this optimism appears to have faded. What is the status of negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority and what must the United States do at this point to jumpstart the process and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome? Also, on a related note, without the constant presence of a U.S. special envoy responsible for all aspects of the negotiation, do you believe the United States can provide the oversight of the talks necessary to ensure success?

Answer: As you know, the administration is firmly committed to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We view this as not only in the interest of Israelis and Palestinians, but also an American national interest. Since Annapolis we have been working to achieve progress on four parallel, complementary tracks.

First and foremost, we are supporting the parties' bilateral negotiations, which began in earnest shortly after Annapolis with the creation of a negotiating structure and a vigorous schedule of bilateral talks on the full spectrum of issues. The parties have kept the substance of these talks private, which reflects the seriousness of their effort. As part of this process, Secretary Rice has enlisted the services of General (ret.) Jim Jones, former Commandant of the Marine Corps and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, who is looking at the security aspects of permanent status. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary Welch are also deeply and personally engaged in supporting the parties' negotiating efforts. The President's commitment is also clear. We must recognize, however, that a peace agreement cannot be imposed from outside, and it is the parties themselves who must work through the difficult compromises necessary for peace. They are having serious discussions in an organized process. The United States will support them, will work to ensure the talks stay on track, and when appropriate we will offer ideas to help facilitate progress.

Second, we are working to promote progress by the parties in fulfilling their commitments under the Roadmap. For the Palestinians, this means combating and dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism, undertaking institutional reforms, and ending incitement. For Israel, it means halting settlement expansion, removing unauthorized outposts, easing movement and access to improve Palestinian economic and humanitarian conditions, facilitating security coordination, and reopening Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem consistent with previous agreements. The President and Secretary Rice have asked LTG William Fraser III to monitor developments in this area and to work with the parties to promote progress on Roadmap implementation. Given the secret nature of the bilateral negotiations, progress on the ground is crucial to reflect the seriousness of the process as well as progress that is being achieved in the negotiations.

Third, we are working to support Palestinian economic development and institutional capacity building. France hosted a donors' conference in December which generated pledges of \$7.7 billion dollars in budgetary and programmatic support for the PA. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee will meet on May 2 to maintain close donor coordination. Former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his role as Quartet Representative, has taken a leadership role on this issue, identifying priority projects and working with the parties and international donors to facilitate implementation on the ground. The United States is doing its part. In Paris we pledged \$545 million in support for the PA, including \$150 million in budgetary support which was delivered to the Fayyad government in mid-March. Additionally, LTG Keith Dayton, the United States Security Coordinator, is working to reform and professionalize the Palestinian security forces, including a program providing training and nonlethal equipment. There is a particularly urgent need for budgetary support for the Palestinians, and we are strongly encouraging Arab governments to do their part.

Finally, we are working to sustain and expand regional support for the parties' efforts. Arab political and financial support will be crucial in order for both Israel and the Palestinians to make the painful compromises necessary for peace. The Arab Peace Initiative was an important step. Now, as President Bush said in July, "Arab nations should build on this initiative—by ending the fiction that Israel does not exist, stopping the incitement of hatred in their official media, and sending cabinet-level visitors to Israel."

We will promote progress on each of these four tracks, each of them vital to the goal of a peace agreement by the end of the year. Secretary Rice is traveling regularly to the region to advance the process. President Bush's January trip to Israel and the West Bank, his first as President, and plans for another Presidential trip in May reflect his personal engagement and commitment to this issue. There are substantial obstacles that must be overcome to reach the goal of a permanent status agreement. And opponents of peace are working to undermine the leaders' efforts as evidenced by the serious escalation of violence in Gaza and southern Israel in February and March, and the tragic terrorist attack in Jerusalem on March 6, and

more recently against Gaza crossing points. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that an agreement can be reached before the end of 2008. Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas are partners truly committed to peace, and they enjoy our full support in their historic effort to realize the Palestinian people's aspirations for a better life and statehood, and the Israeli people's aspiration for peace and security.

Question. It is reported that Israeli maintains more than 500 checkpoints and roadblocks in the Palestinian Territories, representing one of the major points of contention in the ongoing talks. What is the status of Israeli roadblocks in the Palestinian Territories and what specific steps is the administration taking to encourage the Israelis to reduce the number of checkpoints and improve the daily lives of average Palestinians in the West Bank?

Answer. The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported on May 1 that Israeli obstacles to movement in the West Bank had increased to over 600. These range from earthen mounds, some put in place in association with specific Israeli security operations, to major checkpoints on the roads between large Palestinian population centers. The Government of Israel views these roadblocks and checkpoints as a vital component of Israel's efforts to prevent terrorists from infiltrating and carrying out attacks in Israeli cities. For the Palestinians, these obstacles to movement are both a daily nuisance and a major constraint to economic growth and development.

Israel has committed to reducing obstacles to Palestinian movement in the West Bank, both under the Roadmap, and in the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access that Secretary Rice brokered. There is an urgent need for progress in this area to build confidence between the parties, sustain popular support for negotiations, as well as to facilitate progress on important economic and capacity building projects for the Palestinians. Easing restriction on Palestinian movement is inextricably linked to Palestinian security performance. If the Israelis can trust that the Palestinian Authority security forces (PASF) are taking the necessary steps to uphold law and order and combat terrorism, it will be much easier for Israel to ease West Bank movement and access restrictions.

These are priority issues for our diplomatic missions in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and the special envoys the Secretary and President Bush have appointed to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. LTG Keith Dayton is spearheading U.S. and international efforts to train, equip, and professionalize the PASF. At the same time Quartet Representative Tony Blair and General Jim Jones (ret.) are working to integrate economic and capacity building projects with PASF deployments. We are also working with Israel to help rationalize the easing of movement and access restrictions which are necessary for these projects to succeed. Meanwhile, Lt. Gen. William Fraser III, who heads U.S. efforts to monitor and promote progress on Roadmap implementation, is reporting on progress on the ground and keeping the Secretary of State informed so she can support both parties' efforts in this area. Secretary Rice met with Israeli Defense Minister Barak and Palestinian Authority PM Fayyad on March 30 to discuss this issue, among others. That meeting resulted in agreement to remove more than 50 roadblocks and to improve security coordination. Israel followed through and removed more than 50 roadblocks, some of them significant. Much more remains to be done, and improved performance by the PASF and Israeli-Palestinian security coordination should help facilitate continued progress. Progress on the ground remains a vital component of overall progress toward peace, and as such will remain a high priority.

Question. King Abdullah II of Jordan hosted Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert yesterday in Amman. After this visit, a Jordanian royal palace statement urged Olmert to work on "improving the living conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip." Despite a significant infusion of foreign aid, the World Bank has recently warned that the Palestinian economy is not likely to grow this year, largely due to continued IDF restrictions on movement. Yet, a recent report by a group of retired Israeli generals and Palestinian officials identified 10 major West Bank checkpoints that could be removed—boosting the Palestinian economy—without jeopardizing Israeli security. Are you aware of this report, do you find the report credible, and what actions, if any, are the Israelis taking to implement its recommendations?

Answer. Improving the living conditions of Palestinians is a top priority for the United States Government and a key focus in our efforts to achieve progress between Israel and the Palestinians. As the World Bank and IMF have pointed out in recent reports, obstacles to movement and access of people and goods in the West Bank remains a serious impediment to the type of economic revival that the U.S. Government and the international community would like to see and are working to

support. We are aware of the recent study published by ex-Israeli military generals and Palestinian officials regarding the 10 West Bank checkpoints.

We continue to encourage and work with Israel and the PA to foster improved Palestinian security performance and Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, and to move forward with vital steps to ease restriction on Palestinian movement and access in the West Bank. Secretary Rice just returned from the region where she engaged with Israeli and Palestinian officials on the need to improve conditions in the West Bank, including through a reduction in the number of obstacles to movement in the West Bank that significantly undermine Palestinian economic development. We are also working to professionalize the Palestinian security forces so that they can take the necessary steps to uphold law and order and combat terrorism. These are issues that clearly are most effectively addressed in concrete terms rather than in the abstract. With that in mind, we are working closely with the parties on an integrated approach to security performance and coordination, economic development and capacity building projects, and movement and access issues. Jenin will be the first target of these collaborative efforts and we are hopeful that this new approach will yield tangible benefits and bring new life and hope to Jenin, setting an example that can be followed elsewhere in the Palestinian territories.

RESPONSE OF HON. RICHARD E. HOAGLAND TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY
SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH

Question. Any information that you could give me on just what the status is in replacing, I think it is Christian Strohal, who is now head of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, I would appreciate. Because it is really important that Kazakhstan and everyone understands how important that person is to the future in terms of the responsibilities of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. So if you have got any recent information on that, I would like to have it back because we are really trying to figure out who is the best person. And to my knowledge, right now, our Government is not pushing anybody for that role. But I really think it is important that we do have a role in making sure that we get the right person there.

Answer. The Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe announced on May 14 that all participating states had joined consensus in approving the nomination of Slovenian State Secretary Janez Lenarcic to be the next director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, replacing Ambassador Christian Strohal, who is scheduled to depart his post in June 2008. The Department of State is pleased that this highly qualified candidate for this critical job obtained the support of all 56 participating states. Ambassador Lenarcic displayed the qualities that made him an outstanding candidate when he served as the representative in Vienna of the then-Chairman-in-Office during the Slovenian chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Department looks forward to working with Ambassador Lenarcic when he assumes his position on July 1, 2008.