

# NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

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## HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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FIRST SESSION—MARCH 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2015

SECOND SESSION—FEBRUARY 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

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## NOMINATIONS

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TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2015

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

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Glyn Townsend Davies, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand  
William A. Heidt, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia  
Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to Mongolia  
Atul Keshap, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and to the Republic of Maldives  
Alaina B. Teplitz of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal  
David Hale, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
Sheila Gwaltney, of California, to be Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory Gardner, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch, Gardner [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Murphy, and Kaine.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing will come to order.

Let me welcome you all to today's full Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on nominations.

I want to thank Senator Cardin for working with this date and the witnesses today supporting this important hearing today.

We will have two panels today, the first on nominees from East Asia and Pacific region, and then at 11 a.m., Senator Risch will take over for a second panel of nominees from the South and Central Asia region.

I first want to welcome all the family members who are here today for this distinguished panel this morning.

In the first panel of witnesses, we will hear from three nominees: Mr. William Heidt to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia; Mr. Glyn Davies to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand; and Ms. Jennifer Galt to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

I had an opportunity to meet personally with all of these well-qualified nominees, and I want to warmly welcome them and their families to this hearing today.

Thailand is the longest standing U.S. ally in Asia. The Kingdom of Siam and the United States concluded a Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1833 when our Nation was still in its infancy.

In 1954, modern day Thailand and the United States became military allies under the Treaty of Manila, and in 2003, the United States designated Thailand as a major non-NATO ally.

Despite the historically tumultuous domestic politics in Thailand, the commercial and military relationship between our nations has blossomed. The United States is Thailand's third-largest bilateral trade partner. Our militaries have averaged 40 joint exercises per year. We cooperate actively on issues as wide-ranging as humanitarian disaster assistance to law enforcement to disease control.

However, the 2014 military coup in Thailand threatens to set back the positive trajectory of our relationship unless Bangkok moves decisively to restore democracy.

So I look forward to hearing from Mr. Davies today on how we can maintain and grow our strong relationship while exerting efforts to see Thailand successfully move back to the democratic path.

Cambodia represents an opportunity for the United States to build another long-standing partnership in Southeast Asia. After the unparalleled brutality of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge regime and the civil war that ensued in the 1970s and the 1980s, Cambodia seems to have finally found a semblance of stability and a democratic footing.

The July 2013 elections and the 2014 power-sharing agreement between the ruling Cambodian People's Party and the main opposition groups, unified as the Cambodian National Rescue Party, are hopeful steps forward, although progress remains fragile.

Cambodia is the poorest country in Southeast Asia with GDP at about \$2,600 per person, and the country is heavily dependent on overseas development assistance, including from the United States.

So I look forward to hearing from Mr. Heidt on moving the democratic process forward, but also assisting Cambodia with its economic and development challenges.

Next but certainly not least, we will move to East Asia and Mongolia. Sandwiched between two world powers, Russia and China, Mongolia has major strategic importance for the United States. Since transitioning from socialism to democracy in 1992, Mongolia has held six direct Presidential elections and six direct parliamentary elections.

The country possesses vast mineral wealth, although corruption and economic development remain serious issues in that country.

Despite the difficult geopolitical environment, Mongolia has been a strong ally to the United States. Mongolian troops were part of the coalition during the Iraq war and continue to serve alongside U.S. troops in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

So I look forward to hearing from Ms. Galt on how we can strengthen this critical partnership between our nations.

And now I will turn it over to Senator Cardin for this hearing.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, thank you for holding this hearing so that we can consider these three nominees.

I want to thank all three of them, as you already have, and their families. This is an incredible service to our country that you are willing to perform in a place far away from where we are today. So we know it is a sacrifice. We know your families are making those sacrifices, and we thank you for your willingness to represent the United States in these foreign policy posts that are strategically important to U.S. security and economic interests.

Glyn Davies is well known to many members of this committee for his recent service as the Special Representative for North Korea Policy, but he has also served as U.S. Representative to the IAEA and senior positions in the East Asia Bureau and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This experience will provide an important background for his service in Thailand, if confirmed, particularly given recent events there.

William Heidt is currently the executive assistant to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment at the Department of State, a position which will be invaluable given the economic and development opportunities we have in Cambodia. Mr. Heidt also has held a senior post in Warsaw, at the U.N., Indonesia, and in Cambodia. So he brings a great deal of experience to this position.

And finally, Jennifer Galt, who currently serves as our counsel general in China. She has been a senior advisor in the Department of Public Affairs and also served NATO, as well as previous posts in China and India.

So, Mr. Chairman, we are very fortunate to have three career diplomats before us who have devoted their professional life to serve our country. And I thank them again for their willingness to serve in three important posts in the United States foreign policy.

You already mentioned Thailand is one of our longest friendships, 180 years of cooperation in public health, trade, in security and education. But as you also pointed out, the recent coups have presented tremendous challenges to Thailand and its relationship with the United States. The restoration of democratic governance must be our top priority. And I must tell you it is taking too long, and we must push for early elections so that we can move forward with this democratic country.

I also want to point out that it is a Tier 3 country in our Trafficking In Persons Report and that is unacceptable. So we need to continue to push Thailand to do the right thing on behalf of ending modern day slavery.

In Cambodia, they are on a Tier 2 Watch List for trafficking. That is unacceptable, and they will need our help again in dealing with this. As you pointed out, it is the poorest country in the region and has huge challenge, but lots of potential, potential in economics. The environmental issues are challenging, but there is a great prospect there. And certainly expanding their democratic institutions will present a full array of opportunities for the U.S. mission in Cambodia.

And Mongolia. It is one of the youngest democracies. It has been supportive of our military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and is a country that is the newest member of the OSCE, an organization where I have devoted a good deal of my attention.

So I think all three of the posts offer important strategic partnerships with the United States and a great opportunity, but also challenge and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Glyn Davies is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as senior advisor in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Department of State.

Previously, Mr. Davies served as Special Representative for North Korea Policy; Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Office in Vienna, Austria; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary, East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau; Senior Advisor, Foreign Service Institute Leadership Management School; Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs; Political Director for the U.S. Presidency of the G8 with rank of Ambassador; and Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in London, United Kingdom.

Mr. Davies earned an M.S. at the National War College in 1995 and a B.S. from Georgetown University in 1979. He has been the recipient of numerous Senior Foreign Service performance and honor awards, fluent in French.

Welcome, Mr. Davies and your family. And we look forward to hearing your comments this morning.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GLYN TOWNSEND DAVIES, NOMINATED  
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND**

Ambassador DAVIES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. Thank you for the chance to appear before you today.

I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand. I thank both the President and Secretary of State Kerry for their support.

I also thank all members of the committee for this opportunity to speak to my qualifications. Throughout my career, I have worked to develop the experience to lead my colleagues in strengthening America's security and advancing its prosperity. If confirmed, serving as chief of mission in Bangkok would draw on all of my 36 years as a Foreign Service officer.

My family is my greatest strength. I would like to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Jackie; daughters, Ashley and Teddie; son-in-law, Chapin; and granddaughters, Josie and Cybbie. Josie and Cybbie and my wife and daughter are sitting behind me today.

Thailand and the United States share a long and a deep friendship. Thailand is, as you said, our oldest treaty ally in Asia. We work together to advance regional security, expand trade, improve public health, assist refugees, counter human trafficking, illegal narcotics, wildlife trafficking, and protect the environment. Few bilateral relationships are as broad and beneficial.



Over the past decade, Thailand's internal political divide has polarized Thai society. We do not take sides in this, but we do stress our strong support for democratic principles and our commitment to our historic friendship with the Thai people.

Since the coup, the United States has publicly and privately made clear our concerns about the disruption of Thailand's democratic traditions and the limits placed on civil liberties, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Democracy can only emerge when the Thai people freely and fairly elect their own government. As required by law, the United States suspended certain assistance until a democratically elected civilian government takes office. When that occurs, our relationship can return to its fullest capacity.

Our call for restoring democracy does not advocate for a specific constitutional blueprint. That is for Thailand's people to decide through an inclusive political process. If confirmed, I will support their democratic aspirations.

Mindful of our long-term strategic interests, we remain committed to our security alliance. Thai and U.S. troops fought side by side in both Vietnam and Korea, and together we hold many bilateral and multilateral exercises, including Asia's largest, Cobra Gold. These allow us to increase coordination and cooperation to respond to humanitarian and natural disasters. We collaborate extensively on public health issues, including research on a vaccine for HIV/AIDS.

The United States is Thailand's third-largest trading partner. Our companies are major investors there. Our Embassy in Bangkok, supported by our consulate general in Chiang Mai, is a regional hub for the U.S. Government and one of our largest missions in the world.

Our people-to-people ties are strong. Thousands of Thai and American students study in each other's countries. The Peace Corps has been in Thailand for over 50 years. Americans have long admired and respected Thailand's traditions and culture. His Majesty King Bhumibol has led his people with compassion for close to 70 years and has worked tirelessly for their advancement.

Thailand is a founding member and leading voice in all of the region's multilateral institutions. We work with Thailand and through those bodies to advance regional growth and security.

We also work with government and civil society organizations to address human trafficking. If confirmed, I will encourage Thailand to take robust action to combat it.

Thailand has been a key partner on humanitarian issues, sheltering thousands of Burmese refugees, as well as the Rohingya and vulnerable populations from some 50 nationalities. Thailand hosted a regional conference in May on the migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. We stress the need to save lives and treat vulnerable migrants humanely. We also partner with Thailand to respond to natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Nepal earlier this year.

We care deeply about Thailand and about its people. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee to advance our broad range of interests in that country. While we will continue to do much with Thailand, we look forward to its return to democracy.

so our joint efforts can reach their fullest potential. We believe the Kingdom of Thailand can find reconciliation, establish democracy, and fulfill its historic destiny as a great and free nation.

Thank you again for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Davies follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GLYN TOWNSEND DAVIES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand. I thank the President for the confidence he has placed in me by putting me forward to the Senate for consideration, and thank Secretary of State Kerry for his strong support. I am grateful to all the members of the committee for this chance to speak to my qualifications and intentions.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1980, and have sought throughout my career to develop the experience and skills to lead interagency colleagues in strengthening our country's security and advancing our prosperity. If confirmed, serving as Chief of Mission in Bangkok would be the culmination of that 36-year effort.

My family is my greatest strength. I would like to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Jackie, daughters Ashley and Teddie, son-in-law, Chapin, and granddaughters, Josie and Cybbie.

Thailand and the United States share a long and enduring friendship. Thailand is one of our oldest treaty allies in Asia. We collaborate on a remarkably wide range of issues, including advancing regional security, expanding trade and investment, enhancing public health, assisting refugees and displaced persons, countering illegal narcotics and wildlife trafficking, fighting transnational crime, and protecting the environment. Despite the limitations we have had to impose on aspects of our engagement after Thailand's May 2014 military coup, few bilateral relationships are as broad and yield as many benefits to both countries.

Over the past decade, Thailand's internal political divide has dramatically deepened, polarizing not just the political class but society as a whole. We have not taken sides in this debate, but have stressed our unwavering support for democratic principles and our commitment to our historic friendship with the Thai people.

Since the coup, the United States has consistently underscored both publicly and privately our concerns about the disruption of Thailand's democratic traditions and accompanying restrictions on civil liberties, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. We maintain that democracy can only emerge when the Thai people freely and fairly elect their own representatives and leaders. As required by law, the United States has suspended certain assistance until a democratically elected civilian government takes office. When that occurs, our bilateral relationship can return to its fullest capacity.

Our call for the restoration of civilian government, a return to democracy, and full respect for human rights, including freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly, does not mean we advocate for a specific constitutional or political blueprint. Those are questions for the Thai people to decide through an inclusive political process that allows for an open and robust debate about the country's political future. If confirmed, I will continue to support the democratic aspirations of the Thai people.

Mindful of our long-term strategic interests, we nonetheless remain committed to maintaining our security alliance. Thai and U.S. troops fought side by side during the Vietnam and Korean wars, and together we hold many bilateral and multilateral exercises, engagements, and exchanges, including Asia's largest multilateral military gathering, Cobra Gold. These interactions provide invaluable opportunities to increase coordination and cooperation, including on providing humanitarian assistance and responding to natural disasters.

The United States is Thailand's third-largest trading partner, and American companies are major investors in Thailand. Our Embassy in Bangkok, supported by our consulate general in Chiang Mai, is a regional hub for the U.S. Government and remains one of our largest missions in the world. We collaborate extensively on public health issues, a cornerstone of our bilateral cooperation, including promising research on a possible vaccine for HIV/AIDS.

Our people-to-people ties are strong and growing. Educational linkages help thousands of Thai and American students study in each other's countries. The Peace Corps has deployed volunteers across Thailand for over 50 years. The American people have long admired and respected Thailand's rich traditions and culture. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the only monarch ever born in the United

States, has led his people with compassion and integrity for almost 70 years and has been a tireless advocate for the advancement of the Thai people.

Thailand is a founding member and a leading voice in all of the region's multilateral institutions, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the East Asia Summit, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI). The United States will continue to work with Thailand and through the region's institutions to further our mutual goals of stimulating trade and economic growth and promoting regional security.

We work with the Thai Government to strengthen its efforts to address the country's human trafficking problem. We also support civil society organizations that help identify and protect victims and promote the rights of migrant workers. If confirmed, I will encourage Thailand to take robust action to combat human trafficking.

For many years, Thailand has been an important partner on humanitarian issues. It hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees after the Vietnam war. Today, Thailand shelters some 110,000 Burmese refugees and asylum seekers in nine refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma border, as well as the Rohingya and vulnerable populations from some 50 nationalities. Thailand hosted a regional conference in May on the migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. We continue to work closely with Thailand and other affected countries to address the sensitive issue of irregular migration with a priority on saving lives and urging humane treatment of vulnerable migrants. We also work closely with the Thai to respond to natural disasters, including the devastating 2008 cyclone in Burma and the earthquakes in Nepal earlier this year.

We care deeply about our bilateral relationship and about the people of Thailand. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee to advance our broad range of interests in Thailand. While we will continue to do much together, we look forward to its return to democracy so that our joint efforts can reach their fullest potential. We believe the Kingdom of Thailand can find reconciliation, establish democracy, and fulfill its historic destiny as a great and free nation.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Davies.

Mr. Heidt is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as Executive Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment in the Department of State. Previously, Mr. Heidt served the Department of State as Deputy Chief of Mission in the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland; Counselor for Economic and Social Affairs, U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York; economic counselor, U.S. Embassy, Jakarta, Indonesia; Special Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs; also as finance and development officer, Embassy Jakarta in Indonesia; and economic and commercial officer, U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Mr. Heidt earned a B.A. at Pennsylvania State University in 1984 and an M.A. at George Washington University in 1986. His awards include Department of State Senior Foreign Service performance, superior honor, and meritorious honor, as well as joint Department of State and Department of Labor award for excellence in labor diplomacy. He speaks fluent Cambodian, as well as Polish, Indonesian, and German.

Welcome, Mr. Heidt, to you, your family and friends.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. HEIDT, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you very much, Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senator Kaine.

It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary

Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee to advance the United States broad range of interests in a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Cambodia.

I am accompanied today by my wife, Sotie, and son, Allen, who are sitting right behind me to my right, and who have served overseas tours with me in hot cities and cold ones too, ranging from Cambodia, Indonesia, Poland, and New York City.

I have spent the bulk of my 28-year Foreign Service career working on the interlinked challenges of promoting America's prosperity overseas and helping developing countries enact the policies and build the institutions they need to improve living standards, protect the environment, and compete in a global economy.

One of my most memorable Foreign Service tours was in Phnom Penh from 1997 to 1999 where I worked on a number of the most critical issues facing the country, including illegal logging, food security, and building a sustainable garment industry with decent and dignified conditions of work.

Cambodia has changed dramatically since that time. GDP growth has exceeded 7 percent annually for the past decade, and as a result, the national poverty rate has fallen from well over 50 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2012. Life expectancy has increased substantially as well. If confirmed, I plan to make growing the trade and investment relationship between the United States and Cambodia a top priority.

Cambodia's performance on human rights and democracy issues has been more uneven. The most recent national elections in 2013 drew unprecedented public involvement but were also marred by allegations of fraud. After a yearlong post-election standoff, the ruling party and opposition reached agreements on power-sharing in the National Assembly and reforming the country's election law and National Election Committee.

But despite these negotiated agreements, concerns remain about provisions that appear to limit the activities of NGOs in the democracy area and that open the door for increased influence by the Cambodian military and other government officials in election campaigns. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the government, opposition, and civil society to strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions.

The building of a vibrant, homegrown civil society is one of Cambodia's most impressive achievements since the 1993 Paris Peace Accords, but NGOs in Cambodia today face deep uncertainty in the form of a draft law on associations and nongovernmental organizations that is soon to be considered in the National Assembly. Provisions in this draft law would appear to limit the activities NGOs may engage in and create burdensome registration and reporting requirements for them. The United States has spoken about these concerns and the lack of public consultations to date on the law. If confirmed, I will work closely with civil society and the government to encourage the creation of stable and supportive conditions for a vibrant civil society in Cambodia.

Cambodia has also made progress in recent years on several crucial humanitarian and justice issues. With assistance from the United States Government and a number of NGOs, Cambodia has

made great strides in reducing child sex trafficking, one of the saddest and most pernicious social problems the country has faced. The State Department and USAID continue to work with Cambodia to reduce labor trafficking, which remains a significant problem in Cambodia and its neighbors.

The United States supports the work of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to help the people of Cambodia find justice and hold accountable those most responsible for the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. If confirmed, I will work with fellow tribunal supporters and the Cambodian Government to ensure that the tribunal completes its critical mission.

The United States supports Cambodia's reemergence on the world diplomatic stage and has encouraged it to play an independent, principled role in ASEAN and other regional institutions. We have supported Cambodia's integration into the ASEAN Economic Community and collaborated with it in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, or YSEALI. Through YSEALI, the United States is engaging young Southeast Asians and encouraging them to view their country's goals and challenges in a regional context. The program has been enormously popular in Cambodia, and if confirmed, I will make youth engagement a top priority.

Mr. Chairman, it is fitting to conclude with a few words about Cambodia's young people. It is one of the youngest nations in Southeast Asia, with 70 percent of the population under the age of 30. Young Cambodians today are very favorably disposed toward the United States. Like young people everywhere, they want good jobs, a chance to engage in the political and social life of their country, and the opportunity to build a family. They are one of the main reasons I am optimistic about the country's future today.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I would, of course, be happy to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Heidt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. HEIDT

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee to advance the United States broad range of interests in a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Cambodia.

I am accompanied today by my wife, Sotie, and son, Allen, who have served overseas tours with me in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Poland.

I have spent the bulk of my 28-year Foreign Service career working on the interlinked challenges of promoting America's prosperity around the world and helping developing countries enact the policies and build the institutions they need to improve living standards for all, protect the environment, and compete in the global economy.

One of my most memorable Foreign Service tours was in Phnom Penh, from 1997-99, where I worked on some of the most critical issues facing Cambodia—controlling rampant illegal logging, feeding the 10-percent of the country who went hungry every dry season, and helping the Cambodian Government build a sustainable garment industry with decent and dignified conditions of work. I am proud that in 2000, after my return from Phnom Penh, I was awarded the joint Department of State—Department of Labor award for labor diplomacy for my work strengthening workers' rights in Cambodia's garment sector.

Cambodia has changed significantly since that time. Cambodia's GDP has grown more than 7 percent annually for the past decade on the strength of increased agri-

cultural production, a booming tourism industry, investment in real estate and construction, and growth in garment exports. As a result, the poverty rate fell from well over 50 percent in 2000 to just over 17 percent in 2012, and is surely lower today. Life expectancy has increased from 67 years in 2006 to 71.2 years in 2013, due to improved food security and health care. If confirmed, I plan to make growing the trade and investment relationship between the U.S. and Cambodia a priority. I also hope to advance our cooperation on health issues, which make a direct impact on the Cambodian people.

Cambodia's performance on human rights and democracy issues has been more uneven than its economic progress. The most recent national elections in 2013 drew unprecedented public involvement and were the most peaceful in Cambodian history but were also marred by allegations of fraud. After a year-long, post-election stand-off, the ruling party and opposition reached an agreement on power sharing in the National Assembly and to reform the country's election law as well as Cambodia's National Election Committee, which oversees elections.

But despite these negotiated agreements, concerns remain, including with regard to provisions that appear to limit the activities of nongovernmental organizations in the democracy area and open the door for increased influence by the Cambodian military and other government officials in election campaigns. The United States has a long history of supporting Cambodia's democratic development through foreign assistance funding and people-to-people contacts. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the government, opposition, and civil society to strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions and raise the level of public confidence in them. Conducting free and fair communal elections in 2017, and national elections in 2018, will be a key test for the Government.

The building of a vibrant, home grown civil society is one of Cambodia's most impressive achievements since the 1993 Paris Peace Accords ended years of conflict. Cambodian and international NGOs deliver crucial social services, educate the public on issues ranging from health to information technology, build people-to-people contacts with countries around the world, and develop the skills of thousands of Cambodian workers. It is no exaggeration to say that NGOs are one of Cambodia's finest faces to the world.

But NGOs in Cambodia today face deep uncertainty in the form of a draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations that is soon to be considered in the National Assembly. Provisions in this draft law would appear to limit, in vague terms, the activities NGOs may engage in, and create burdensome registration and reporting requirements for NGOs. The United States has spoken about these concerns, the lack of public consultations to date on the law, and the law's overall intent. If confirmed, I will work closely with civil society and the Government to encourage the creation of stable, and supportive conditions for a vibrant civil society in Cambodia.

Cambodia has also made progress in recent years on several crucial humanitarian and justice issues. With assistance from the U.S. Government and a number of NGOs, Cambodia has made great strides in reducing child sex trafficking—one of the saddest, and most pernicious social problems the country has faced. The State Department and USAID continue to work with Cambodia to reduce labor trafficking, which remains a significant problem in both Cambodia and neighboring countries. The United States supports the work of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to help the people of Cambodia find justice and hold accountable those most responsible for the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. We will continue to work with fellow Tribunal supporters and the Cambodian Government to ensure the Tribunal completes its critical mission. And as one of the few Asian countries that is party to the Refugee Convention, Cambodia has made important progress in developing procedures to identify and protect refugees. At the same time, if confirmed, I will strongly urge it to apply those protections to people seeking asylum on its territory, including the Montagnards from Vietnam.

Cambodia is playing an increasingly active role in the Southeast Asia region. The United States supports Cambodia's reemergence on the world diplomatic stage, and has encouraged it to play an independent, principled role in ASEAN and other regional institutions. We have supported Cambodia's integration into the ASEAN Economic Community and collaborated with Cambodia in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative or YSEALI. Through YSEALI, the United States is engaging with the 65 percent of Southeast Asians under the age of 35 and encouraging them to view their countries' goals and challenges in a regional context. The program has been enormously popular in Cambodia, and if confirmed, I will make youth engagement a priority.

Mr. Chairman, it is fitting to conclude my testimony with a few words about Cambodia's young people. Cambodia is one of the youngest nations in Southeast Asia with

70 percent of the population under 35. Most Cambodians were not even born during the brutal Khmer Rouge period and years of civil war, events that continue to define our perceptions of Cambodia. Young Cambodians today are very favorably disposed toward the United States, and like young people everywhere, want good jobs, a chance to engage in the political and social life of their country, and the opportunity to build a family. They are one of the main reasons I am optimistic about the country's future.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you, I would be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Heidt.

And finally, let me extend a special welcome to a fellow Coloradoan, Ms. Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, our nominee for Mongolia. Ms. Galt is a proud graduate of Colorado College in Colorado Springs, and her father is a professor emeritus at my alma mater of Colorado State University.

Ms. Galt is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, currently serves as principal officer at the U.S. consulate general in Guangzhou, China, a position she has held since 2012.

Previously, Ms. Galt served in the Department of State as Senior Advisor in the Bureau of Public Affairs from 2011 to 2012; Public Affairs Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels, Belgium; and Deputy Director, Office of Public Diplomacy, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2008 to 2010. She also served as public affairs officer, U.S. consulate general, Shanghai in China; assistant cultural affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Beijing; assistant public affairs officer, U.S. consulate in Mumbai; and information officer, American Institute in Taiwan.

Ms. Galt earned a bachelors of the arts, as I mentioned, from Colorado College; M.A. from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; and an M.S. from the National Defense University.

She has won numerous awards from both the Department of State and earlier from the United States Information Agency. She speaks Mandarin Chinese, French, Italian, Spanish, and Serbo-Croatian.

Welcome, Ms. Galt. I look forward to your comments today.

**STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ZIMDAHL GALT, NOMINATED  
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO MONGOLIA**

Ms. GALT. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, Senator Kaine, it is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me, and if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to build on the already strong ties between the United States and Mongolia.

My career in the Foreign Service spans 27 years, most of them spent in Asia. I joined the Foreign Service out of a commitment to serve my country and have consistently sought assignments where I felt I could make a difference and contribute to advancing an important relationship.

The love and support of my family has sustained me throughout. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my husband, Fritz, and my children, Phoebe and Dylan, who have traveled the globe with me, and to my father, Bob Zimdahl, and my brothers, Randy, Bob, and Tom. I am enormously proud that my daughter Phoebe, a rising college junior, is here with me today.

This is an exciting year for United States-Mongolia relations, as we mark the 25th anniversary of Mongolia's decision for democracy, a milestone that the Senate recognized in its June 1 resolution. Our partnership has grown stronger since then-Secretary Baker first visited the newly democratic Mongolia in 1990. As the only former Soviet satellite in East Asia to choose democracy, Mongolia is an important model in the region and, as the saying goes, punches above its weight on issues of strategic interest to the United States, including coalition military efforts, peacekeeping, and the promotion of democratic principles and values. Our relationship is one of shared interests and is characterized by enormous potential.

There are many opportunities for the United States to deepen our partnership with Mongolia. I would like to highlight a few where I would focus my attention, should I be confirmed as Ambassador.

Mongolia and the United States share a common interest in promoting peace and stability. Mongolia is a stalwart partner in Afghanistan and deploys capable peacekeepers wherever they are needed, including currently in Sudan and South Sudan. Just last week, the United States and Mongolia conducted our yearly multinational peacekeeping exercise, Khaan Quest. Mongolia demonstrates leadership in international fora to promote democracy and human rights, such as the Freedom Online Coalition and the Community of Democracies. Mongolia is a model of democracy and has demonstrated a willingness to mentor others in the region, offering training and exchanges with leaders from Burma to Kyrgyzstan. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Mongolian officials to advance our shared interests in these critical areas.

Recent high-level engagement in Mongolia has demonstrated our commitment to enhancing commercial opportunities for U.S. companies. In the last 6 months, we resumed trade and investment framework agreement talks, launched a new economic policy dialogue, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation began the process of developing a second compact with Mongolia. Each of these initiatives is an opportunity to expand economic growth, model responsible business conduct, promote trade and investment, and create opportunities for U.S. companies. The Mongolian Government demonstrated its interest in attracting foreign investment by signing and ratifying the U.S.-Mongolia Transparency Agreement in December 2014. The Mongolian Prime Minister is traveling to Washington and New York this week to deliver the message that Mongolia is open for business, our business.

Mongolia's recent progress on a major copper and gold mine with a Western company signaled to the international community its renewed seriousness of purpose in attracting foreign direct investment. With large reserves of coal, copper, gold, uranium, and other



minerals, there are many opportunities for U.S. companies in mining and related sectors. If confirmed, I would support these opportunities by actively informing potential U.S. investors about the investment climate and advocating on their behalf.

I believe that two key components of U.S. support for Mongolia's democracy and its independence and leadership in the region are engagement with its nascent civil society and deepening people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I would continue the work of my predecessors in areas such as the rights of persons with disabilities. I would, if confirmed, continue our robust subnational cooperation as well, including the Alaska-Mongolia State Partnership and the sister city relationship between Ulaanbaatar and Denver in my home State of Colorado. If confirmed, I would also look forward to supporting one of our largest Peace Corps programs anywhere, with over 150 volunteers in country. Peace Corps Volunteers work side by side with Mongolians in English teaching, health care, and community youth development.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it would be the highest honor for me to serve our country as Ambassador to Mongolia. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure that the United States delivers on the strategic and historic opportunities of the next century of Mongolia's democracy.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Galt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ZIMDAHL GALT

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to Mongolia. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Senate to build on the already strong ties between the United States and Mongolia.

My career in the Foreign Service spans 27 years, most of them spent in Asia. I joined the Foreign Service out of a commitment to serve my country and have consistently sought assignments where I felt I could make a difference and where I could contribute to advancing an important relationship. My career has taken me to the former Yugoslavia, Taiwan, India, the U.S. Mission to NATO, and, multiple times, to China.

The love and support of my family has sustained me throughout. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my husband, Fritz, and my children Phoebe and Dylan, who have traveled the globe with me, and to my father, Bob Zimdahl, and my brothers Randy, Bob, and Tom. My father, in particular, has demonstrated his support by visiting us at every overseas post. I am enormously proud that my daughter, Phoebe, a rising college junior, is here with me today.

This is an exciting year for U.S.-Mongolia relations, as we mark the 25th anniversary of Mongolia's decision for democracy, a milestone that the Senate recognized in its June 1 resolution. Our partnership has grown stronger since then-Secretary Baker first visited the newly democratic Mongolia in 1990. As the only former Soviet satellite in East Asia to choose democracy, Mongolia is an important model in the region and, as the saying goes, punches above its weight on issues of strategic interest to the United States, including coalition military efforts, peacekeeping, and the promotion of democratic principles and values. Our relationship is one of shared interests and is characterized by enormous potential.

There are many opportunities for the United States to deepen our partnership with Mongolia. I would like to highlight a few areas where I would focus my attention, should I be confirmed as Ambassador.

*Sustaining our strong partnership across sectors:* Mongolia and the United States share a common interest in promoting peace and stability. Mongolia is a stalwart partner in Afghanistan, and deploys capable peacekeepers wherever they are needed, including currently in Sudan and South Sudan. In April 2014, the United

States and Mongolia signed a Joint Vision Statement that articulated the parameters for our security relationship, acknowledging the important role Mongolia plays as a stabilizing influence in Asia and commending Mongolia's support for U.N. peacekeeping operations around the world. Just last week, the U.S. and Mongolia conducted our yearly multinational peacekeeping exercise, Khaan Quest. Mongolia demonstrates leadership in international fora to promote democracy and human rights, such as the Freedom Online Coalition, hosting a successful annual conference in May; and the Community of Democracies, hosting the Ministerial in 2013. Mongolia is a model of democracy and has demonstrated a willingness to mentor others in the region, offering training and exchanges with leaders from Burma to Kyrgyzstan. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Mongolian officials to advance our shared interests in these critical areas.

*Strengthening economic ties and creating opportunities for U.S. businesses:* Recent high level engagements in Mongolia have demonstrated our commitment to enhancing commercial opportunities for U.S. companies. In the last 6 months, we resumed Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks, launched a new Economic Policy Dialogue, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation began the process of developing a second compact with Mongolia. Each of these initiatives is an opportunity to expand economic growth, model responsible business conduct, promote trade and investment, and to create opportunities for U.S. companies. Mongolia Government demonstrated its interest in attracting foreign investment by signing and ratifying the U.S.-Mongolia Agreement on Transparency in Matters Related to International Trade and Investment (the Transparency Agreement) in December 2014. The Mongolian Prime Minister is traveling to Washington and New York this week to deliver the message to U.S. companies and Members of Congress that Mongolia is open for business, our business.

Mongolia's recent progress on a major copper and gold mine with a Western company signaled to the international community its renewed seriousness of purpose in attracting foreign direct investment, which has declined 85 percent since 2012. With large reserves of coal, copper, gold, uranium, and other minerals, there are many opportunities for U.S. companies in mining and related sectors. If confirmed, I would support these opportunities by actively informing potential U.S. investors about the investment climate and advocating on their behalf. I would also continue our efforts to promote a more diversified economy in Mongolia and to generate increased commercial opportunities for U.S. companies, including support for Department of Commerce efforts such as the U.S.-Mongolia Business Forum, which this year will focus on agriculture. I would encourage good governance, transparency, and responsible business conduct, including through working with the Mongolian Government to implement the Transparency Agreement.

*Enhancing civil society and people-to-people ties with Mongolia:* I believe that two key components of U.S. support for Mongolia's democracy and its independence and leadership in the region are engagement with its nascent civil society and deepening people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I would continue the work of my predecessors in areas such as the rights of persons with disabilities, where, thanks to exchanges between government leaders and civil society, we are working with Mongolian parliamentarians on draft legislation that may include lessons learned from our Americans with Disabilities Act. I would, if confirmed, continue our robust subnational cooperation as well, including the Alaska-Mongolia State Partnership, which began with cooperation between the Alaska National Guard and the Mongolian Armed Forces, and has grown to include economic and social ties. I am particularly pleased that Mongolia's ties to the United States also include a sister city relationship between Ulaanbaatar and Denver, in my home State of Colorado. If confirmed, I also would look forward to supporting one of our largest Peace Corps programs anywhere, with over 150 volunteers in country this year. Peace Corps volunteers work side by side with Mongolians in English teaching, health care, and community youth development. The efforts of these volunteers—our grassroots ambassadors in Mongolia—have been extremely effective.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it would be the highest honor for me to serve our country as Ambassador to Mongolia.

America's security and prosperity are closely and increasingly linked to the Asia-Pacific. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade is to lock in the increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and military—from the administration's sustained rebalance to the region. I welcome the opportunity to be on the front lines of this endeavor. If confirmed, I will lead a diplomatic mission of approximately 200 U.S. and Mongolian employees, representing five agencies. I will do my very best to ensure that all members of that community and their families have the leadership, security, and support they need to engage on behalf of the United States, so that Americans continue to sustain and benefit

from the growth and dynamism in the Asian region. If confirmed, I will also do my utmost to ensure that the United States delivers on the strategic and historic opportunities of the next century of Mongolia's democracy.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Galt, and thanks to all of you again for your comments this morning.

And since I cannot just talk to you the entire time about Colorado, we will have to spread out the conversation a little bit.

Mr. Davies, 38 years in the Foreign Service, your experience. Thank you for your commitment. What is the biggest change that you have seen over that time, starting from your first experiences to today in terms of public diplomacy?

Ambassador DAVIES. In terms of public diplomacy, I think the explosion in—let us call it—the globalization of media has been the biggest change. When I came into the Foreign Service, the United States of America was reaching hearts and minds overseas in very traditional ways, publishing millions of copies of magazines for young Indians every month, for instance, using radio, touring music stars, and so forth. Today, we can reach young people in most countries in their shirt pockets through their mobile devices, and it requires a much more considered approach to how we get the word out to peoples all around the world, in particular young people, about America, what it stands for, and why it is that they should look to the United States as a friend and ally. So the challenge has become much more complex. But I think we are making the changes necessary to step up.

Senator GARDNER. And specifically to Thailand, in terms of the length of the military coup, do we have any idea how long we are looking at this lasting, this military exertion of power? Is there a way that the United States can influence the length of that or the timing or speed up the reforms for democracy, free elections, and sort of adding a third component to that with the support and loyalists to the former Prime Minister, is it even possible to have free and fair elections in Thailand?

Ambassador DAVIES. Well, I believe that it is possible for Thailand to have free and fair elections. They have done it in the past. In recent generations, they have had decades' worth of experience of democracy. They can get back to that. The current junta, the coup government, claims that that is their aspiration. They have set up a very lengthy, somewhat elaborate process to get back to it. You are right. The goal post does continue to recede. That is a big concern. We want them to get back to democracy as soon as possible. We would like to see elections very soon.

But at the end of the day, the truth is this is up to Thailand, its leadership, and its people to work out. But I have confidence they can do it. And if confirmed, I am going to bend every effort to convey to them the views of the United States and would encourage them to get back on that democratic path.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Mr. Heidt, Hun Sen has ruled Cambodia since the mid-1990s basically without interruption. What do you see as Cambodia's likely political future, should Hun Sen move toward retirement? Are there scenarios where there could be military interference if there is a retirement there as well? What do you do in such a scenario?

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you for the question, Senator.

There has been a lot of stasis at the top of Cambodia's ruling elite in the last 20 years. Of course, in 2013, we had a very good and meaningful election for Cambodia. It was the most open election in Cambodian history. Public participation was very broad, very enthusiastic. The opposition party did much better than anyone expected and even despite some pretty deep-seated irregularities in the election process.

So it left many observers with the feeling that with a reformed National Election Commission and some additional support from the international community, Cambodia can take another step forward in the next election just as they took a step forward in 2013. So there is optimism that with continued support, we could see a better democratic future for Cambodia.

I do not deny, of course, that there are also concerns about increased military—the possibility under the new law for increased military activity in the campaign. That law does permit, for the first time in Cambodia, the military and senior government officials to be involved. And that is a concern and it is something we are going to have to monitor very closely. If confirmed, I hope to do that.

Senator GARDNER. You mentioned the opposition party. How is the power-sharing arrangement working between the two parties, the CPP, the CNRP?

Mr. HEIDT. Senator, that is a \$64,000 question with respect right now to Cambodia. Both the Prime Minister and Sam Rainsy—they have both spoken publicly about their desire to start this culture of dialogue. The relationship is clearly more cooperative than at any time in the 20 years since I have been following Cambodia. Of course, as a general rule, we encourage dialogue in Cambodia. We think that is very important to have constructive dialogue, peaceful dialogue that can help Cambodia put forward the reforms and policy changes they need to improve the lives of ordinary Cambodians. Whether this new collaboration between the two will lead to that kind of genuine change, I think it is much too early to say, very honestly, and I think it is something that if confirmed—it is definitely something we are going to keep a very close eye on.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Heidt.

Ms. Galt, in your opening remarks, you talked about Mongolia being the only former Soviet satellite state that had moved or transitioned toward democracy. Yet, in preparing for this morning's hearing, the background briefings on Mongolia—the corruption challenges to—corruption at the local level throughout the government. Yet, we have had six Presidential elections, open elections there. What more can the United States do to address the full transition to a democracy, reducing corruption, but strengthening and building democracy?

Ms. GALT. Thank you, Senator, for your question.

Indeed, Mongolia is a democracy but it is a young democracy, and it shares many of the same challenges as other young democracies in terms of solidifying the rule of law.

And I think there are two areas where we can continue our work with Mongolia—and if confirmed, I would look forward to doing

that—to solidify and strengthen some of their institutions to combat corruption.

One is to support Mongolia's leadership in international fora to promote democracy. Mongolia has shown a willingness to reach beyond its borders, to export both democracy and security. And we continue to work with Mongolia to strengthen its own institutions. And recently our increased economic engagement is very important in that regard. So with its signing of the U.S.-Mongolia Transparency Agreement, Mongolia has indicated its willingness to improve its own institutions to combat corruption and to combat transnational crime as well. Our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks and our new Economic Policy Dialogue gives us other platforms to talk about institutional reforms.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is another tool that we can use to enhance Mongolia's democratic behavior. MCC leadership tells me that based on the successful completion of their first compact, they believe very strongly that Mongolia has learned many lessons from working with us on the first compact. And, if confirmed, I would look forward to working with Mongolia and working with the Millennium Challenge as they develop a second compact for Mongolia.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Galt.

Senator CARDIN.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Once again, thanks to our witnesses.

In each of your countries, I think to a large extent the success of our mission depends upon us standing strong on the principles of our country, the universal principles that we espouse on human rights, good governance, anticorruption, rights of all individuals. That to me is the bedrock of America's foreign policy. And we have seen too many places in the world where we have deviated from that commitment. The stability that we hoped for did not exist and will not exist.

So in all three of the countries, there are challenges in trafficking in persons. Thailand is probably the worst. It is a Tier 3 country, which means that it has failed. There are reportedly tens of thousands of victims in Thailand, mainly from other countries, that have been trafficked into Thailand for labor abuse and for sex trafficking. Obviously, that cannot continue.

It is more of a challenge because in Thailand we are now past the 1-year anniversary of this coup, and it was not the first coup in modern history. And I must tell you my patience is running thin with Thailand. We talk about a commitment to early elections, and when a country is operating under a coup government, human rights are always going to be challenged, as we have seen.

So, Mr. Davies, I appreciate your view that we cannot intercede into the internal politics of a country, and I agree with that. But for the sake of the rights of the people of Thailand and for U.S. principles, there must be an urgency in Thailand proceeding with democratic elections and dealing with its human rights issues.

Your comments?

Ambassador DAVIES. Thank you very much, Senator. I think that is exactly right, and I think that is job one for anyone who represents the United States in Thailand to bring home to, in par-

particular, the current leadership the importance of moving quickly, swiftly, allowing for, if need be catalyzing an open, inclusive public debate about the way forward for Thailand. I believe most Thais do want to get back to democracy. The situation now is untenable. It is not good for Thailand, first and foremost, to have a suspension of civil liberties, of sending civilians through the military justice system, and so forth.

So for me, if confirmed, this would be something I would lean into very hard to convey publicly and privately the importance we attach to Thailand's getting back to the democratic path, breaking this cycle of periodic military coups that, quite frankly, goes all the way back three generations to the 1930s, and putting Thailand once and for all firmly and finally on the path to democracy.

So I take your words to heart. I want to work with this committee to see this through. I do think it is not a job that is going to be done in an instant because they are a divided society, divided polity. There are serious issues that have to be worked out domestically, which is why I said it really is, first and foremost, their challenge to confront. But I think you are right. We have a role to play. They listen to us. We are going to use that bully pulpit.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for your answer. We recognize it will not happen overnight. But it is already over a year since this coup, and I think many of us expected further progress than we have seen to date. So there is an urgency here. I just hope that you will transmit that to the people of Thailand that we are with them, but we will not tolerate the suspension of civil liberties.

Ambassador DAVIES. Yes, sir.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Heidt, in regards to Cambodia, they are not doing much better in trafficking. They have been downgraded to a Tier 2 Watch List country. As has already been pointed out, they are a poor country. So it is interesting that they are also designated because they are a source of trafficking. So it is not only that they are victimized by people in Cambodia being trafficked out, there are also people that are being victimized within Cambodia. So they have human rights issues.

The most recent concern that has been expressed by human rights groups is the draft NGO law, which has serious concerns among NGOs about whether they are going to be able to operate effectively in Cambodia.

So would you just share with me and this committee your commitment to advance the basic human rights as our representative, if confirmed, in Cambodia?

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you very much, Senator.

Of course, promoting democracy and human rights has been a central part of our program in Cambodia since I was there before, ever since the 1993 Paris Peace Accords.

In the area of trafficking in persons, it is an area where U.S. involvement has made a real difference. Both directly and through NGOs, we have really been able to give Cambodia good assistance, and as a result, as I mentioned in my statement, they have been able to make substantial progress on the issue of child sex trafficking. Now, that of course, is a particularly pernicious and dreadful problem, and I think it is important to give them credit for that progress.

At the same time, as you mentioned, there is a pretty substantial labor trafficking problem in Cambodia flowing out to neighboring countries, flowing into Cambodia from its neighboring countries. And so certainly there is much more work to be done in that area in terms of building cooperation between Cambodia and the labor-receiving countries, especially Malaysia. There is some evidence of complicity by government officials in trafficking—that is a big problem—and as well as pretty much a complete lack of victim assistance. When we find victims of trafficking, the government has very little assistance that they can offer.

So that is something I am absolutely committed to working on that issue while I am out there, if confirmed. Like I say, it has been an area where we have great success before that we can be proud of, and we will continue to do that.

On the NGO law, of course, the concern there is that it will limit the ability of the NGOs to do some of the good work they are doing. NGOs perform a range of important services in Cambodia. We have spoken to the government and publicly about this law, and we frankly do not really see a need for it. We do not think there is a giant problem that needs to be solved by that. But if the government goes ahead with the law, as it appears very likely—they considered it in the National Assembly today in Phnom Penh—today, their time. They considered it and pushed it out to three separate National Assembly commissions. So it appears that it is going to move forward. We have counseled them to consult widely when they do it and to do it with a light touch, to focus on basic transparency issues, not to make it a giant problem that really squelches civil society in Cambodia.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for that answer.

If the chair would indulge me for one remaining question. Ms. Galt, Mongolia is an encouraging country. There is a lot of progress being made. They are Tier 2 on trafficking, which means they still are not meeting the minimum standards, although the report does point out they are making progress. So they are moving in the right direction.

As I also pointed out, they are one of our allies. But there are challenges regarding human rights and concerns about internationally recognized freedom for its citizens.

I want to get your response to a potential issue, and that is, Mongolia is resource-rich, which can become a problem for a country if it is not managed properly. We have seen it as a source of corruption in other countries. We have seen it as a source of environmental problems in other countries. We have seen it as a management issue creating problems with democracy in other countries.

My question is, How will you focus on our mission in Mongolia as to how they handle their resources to make sure that it is used for the benefit of the people of Mongolia and not used as a source that could be problematic for funding corruption or antidemocratic principles, which we have seen in too many countries around the world?

Ms. GALT. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

First, on the issue of trafficking, indeed, this continues to be a concern in Mongolia, and if confirmed, I would work very closely

with the Government of Mongolia to combat trafficking. We have a U.S. Government program working with an NGO in Mongolia to raise public awareness of trafficking and to work to implement Mongolia's antitrafficking legislation. So I would look forward, if confirmed, to continuing on that front.

I think on the corruption issue, you are absolutely right. This is very much on Mongolia's radar and very much on our radar, as Mongolia develops its rich resources.

I think there are, again, two areas, as I said earlier, where we can continue to work closely with Mongolia to encourage them to develop these resources in a transparent and fair way. And if confirmed, I would look forward to doing that.

The first is to continue to support Mongolia's leadership in international institutions, including the Freedom Online Coalition and the Community of Democracies, which are fora in which Mongolia can learn best practices and develop its own mechanisms and techniques for combating corruption domestically and for developing its economy.

And then the second is our economic engagement. I think through working with the Government of Mongolia to implement the recently signed and ratified Transparency Agreement, that gives us an opportunity to work very closely with them to develop procedures, develop their institutions, and strengthen their institutions to combat corruption. So I would look forward to working with them on both of those fronts in that challenge area.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the witnesses and to the entire panel of the seven nominees who are before us today, I am only able to be here for the first panel. And I regret that because you all really do a credit to the Nation with your extensive service. And I thank each of you and I also thank your families and friends who are here and who have been supportive.

Ms. Galt, if I could start with you since we are just finishing on Mongolia, I am fascinated by a number of aspects of the country and its transition from socialism to democracy. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index for 2014, Mongolia was ranked 61st out of 167 countries ranked in the democracy index. For a democracy this new that has transitioned from socialism, that is not bad. If you dig into the ranking, the EIU classifies Mongolia as a, quote, flawed democracy with high marks for electoral processes and civil liberties but lower marks for government functioning, political culture, including a high degree of corruption in local politics.

Talk a little bit about your game plan if you are confirmed to go in and accelerate the pro-democracy trends and institutional improvements that Mongolia seems to be embracing but that need improvement.

Ms. GALT. Indeed, if confirmed, this would be one of my highest priorities to work closely with the Government of Mongolia to strengthen their institutions, to combat corruption, and to ensure a transparent and free market for external investment. And I think



encouraging and advocating for more U.S. investment in Mongolia is one way that would be very useful and productive for encouraging transparent economic engagement in Mongolia. So that is one area that I would work on, if confirmed.

The second area is through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. As I mentioned earlier, the Millennium Challenge leadership tells me that they feel very strongly that Mongolia has learned some good lessons from the first compact. And as they are engaging in their constraints analysis and negotiations on a potential second compact for Mongolia, that will be a tool that we can use to further influence the institutional development and to ensure that Mongolia's economic growth going forward is equitable and fair.

I think a third area I mentioned before, but we have an ongoing engagement and plans for a new program with the Government of Mongolia working with them on justice reform. And that is a third area that I would have a high priority in terms of improving their institutions and their capacity to handle corruption and to deal transparently with corruption issues.

Senator Kaine. There have been some high profile cases in Mongolia where foreign investors have been caught up in business disputes and then blocked exit visas to leave, Canadians, in one instance an American. Those have to create challenges in terms of encouraging more investment.

What is the progress of the Mongolian Government in putting reforms in place that would avoid those unless absolutely necessary?

Ms. GALT. Indeed, I think investor confidence is at a low point right now in Mongolia. But, again, our recent economic engagement gives me a lot of encouragement as to potential for a positive trend in the future. And if confirmed, I would continue to work very closely on our economic front. So, number one, implementing the Transparency Agreement is one very important platform. A second is our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and our Economic Policy Dialogue, which gives us another opportunity to engage. And then finally, the Millennium Challenge would be another opportunity to grow Mongolia's capacity in terms of its institutions. So those would be three areas where I would work very closely were I to have the opportunity.

Senator Kaine. And finally, the United States is sort of deemed by Mongolia as the most important of its, quote, "third neighbors," so the neighbors that do not have borders with Mongolia. As we are dealing with so many issues on this committee and in the Senate generally about bilateral relations between the United States and China and the United States and Russia, I am interested in how Mongolia handles those bilateral relationships and what are the current kind of temperature in those sets of bilateral relationships between Mongolia and China and Russia.

Ms. GALT. Indeed, Mongolia is in a tough neighborhood. I think the chairman mentioned sandwiched between Russia and China. And so it is very much in Mongolia's interest to maintain a stable, positive relationship with both Russia and China. Russia and China are both strong economic partners to Mongolia. China purchases 80-plus percent of Mongolia's resources. So it is very important for Mongolia to maintain a positive economic trade and political relationship with China.

However, I think there is room for all of us. There is room for Russia and China and for Mongolia's third neighbors. And so if confirmed, I would look forward to continuing to enhance both our political, economic, and military partnership with Mongolia.

I think in addition to the strength of those aspects of our partnership, U.S. soft power is a very powerful force in Mongolia. Young people are looking to the United States. Young people are studying English, thanks in large part to our Peace Corps over the years, and studying in the United States and returning to Mongolia. So the influence of the United States as a fellow democracy and our shared values is a powerful offset to the economic power of Mongolia's neighbors.

Senator Kaine. Thank you for those answers.

One question for you Mr. Heidt. I noticed that there are analysts that are concerned about the Prime Minister's placement of his sons in political positions of power within Cambodia and what that might portend in the future. We have seen in other nations around the world, whether it is Libya or Egypt or Syria, once a structure of a ruling family starts to be kind of perpetuated, that can lead to really significant internal dissent.

What is the likelihood of that or your assessment in Cambodia? What can the United States do to promote a more vigorous democracy, not confined just to a single family?

Mr. Heidt. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

Of course, Hun Sen's sons, as you mentioned—several of them are active, very active in the CPP. Our sense is looking at that, that it is like many political parties. It is a complex structure. There are lots of people who want to move to the top. The folks that I have talked to—there is not a sense that there is some pre-ordained path for the two of them. It is not North Korea. It is a big competitive party with lots of ambitious people in it. And so even despite the obvious birth advantages the two have, my sense is that there is no guaranteed route to the top for them.

Of course, the other issue is, as we saw in 2013, electoral politics in Cambodia are getting more competitive. And the extent to which the opposition is able to rally and unify around strong candidates, promote good candidates from below, the extent to which, with international help, Cambodia's election institutions get stronger and can deliver better elections, those things also make it less likely that some sort of family system develops in Cambodia. So I do think it is a very competitive situation and one, of course, if confirmed, I will keep an eye on.

Senator Gardner. Thank you. And thank you to the witnesses today for your testimony, your comments, and your willingness, again, to serve.

And in breaking with Senate tradition, we are going to stay on schedule and stand in a short recess until Senator Risch joins us and we reconvene at 11 o'clock.

[Pause.]

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

Senator RISCH [presiding]. Thank you all for coming. This Subcommittee on Near East, South and Central Asia of the Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

And today we have for hearing four nominees for different positions around the world.

First of all, I want to thank all of our nominees for being here today and your families and for your willingness to serve. The countries you are nominated to are tough posts, to say the least, and it really highlights that you and your families are willing to make the sacrifices to go and to serve in those posts. We really do appreciate your efforts in that regard.

First, I am going to introduce all of you at once. I want to talk about each of the countries very briefly and talk about where we are with them, and hopefully, you will correct me if I am inaccurate or add to that if you think that is appropriate.

Obviously, Mr. Hale is going to Pakistan. And while the official U.S. policy toward Pakistan is to assist the creation of a more stable democratic and prosperous Pakistan, the United States-Pakistan relationship is an important but equally frustrating relationship, as we all know. Support for U.S. presence in Afghanistan has been vital, but over the years, Pakistan's support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and the safe havens in the FATA has set back efforts to move Afghanistan and the region forward. The idea of a new Silk Road across South and Central Asia would bring economic prosperity to many, especially in Pakistan, but border disputes with India cripple the cooperation.

Recently this spring, a number of us had the opportunity to meet a delegation from the Pakistani governing body, the Parliament that were here. And I have to say I think all of us were impressed with their sincerity and their commitment to do the things that would better the United States-Pakistan relationship.

The June 2014 operation against militant groups in FATA was a good effort to bring more stability to the border with Afghanistan, and hopefully the United States-Pakistan strategic dialogue can produce more tangible results politically and economically.

The past several years have shown us that despite enormous U.S. aid, Pakistan will only prosper when the country can create a stable environment for trade and foreign direct investment. To achieve this kind of success, the international community needs a serious partner in the Pakistan Government that can deepen its political institutions and work through its relationship with India and others. After our meeting with the delegation from Pakistan, I think all of us believe that they have a sincere commitment to attempt to do that.

Regarding Nepal, the recent earthquake in Nepal has been tragic and the international commitment to Nepal has shifted accordingly. The outpouring of support from around the world requires a sustained focus on rebuilding the country, but donor coordination is going to be a daunting task and we must make sure both U.S. assistance and other aid is timed appropriately and not wasted on projects that are neither needed nor helpful for the people of Nepal. These kinds of things happen, of course, when you do get a flood

of cash that comes in after a serious problem as has taken place in Nepal.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, I also hope there will be a renewed sense of unity that can help Nepal move forward and find the political consensus necessary to finally draft a new constitution which, as we all know, they have been struggling with for some time.

In addition, you will have a particularly important job taking care of our people. While Embassy Staff work to help Nepal build, they are also rebuilding their own lives and making sure they get their own support, and that will be crucial.

Regarding Sri Lanka and the Maldives where Mr. Keshap is headed, the January election and change in power has created a substantial shift for the region. The government's efforts to tackle corruption, deepen reconciliation, and rebalance its position among the other regional powers provide an enormous opportunity for Sri Lanka. The new President, we hope, will maintain his commitment to change, and if indeed he follows through on that, it is going to be a sea change for the region.

Ms. Gwaltney is going to the Kyrgyz Republic. Central Asia, as we all know, has been a hard place for the United States. English is often the fourth or fifth language spoken, if at all, in the region. The dominance of Russia and the proximity of China, as well as the Soviet legacy, presents significant challenges and tempered expectations. The Kyrgyz Republic clearly embodies all of these intersecting challenges. However, there is still a lot of work we can do leading up to the parliamentary elections in October, and hopefully we can find some success helping to develop their economy. But I worry about the destabilizing role that Russia can play for its own strategic interests.

With that said, I look forward to all of your testimony.

First of all, I would like to briefly introduce each of the nominees here starting with Mr. David Hale, who has been nominated for the Pakistan posting. Mr. Hale is a native of New Jersey who also received his undergraduate degree from the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and joined the Foreign Service in 1984. Mr. Hale has extensive experience in the Middle East, serving at posts in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, and others, including his most recent as U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon. He is clearly experienced in tough postings and jobs that might make Pakistan look like an easy assignment.

Ms. Gwaltney is going to the Kyrgyz Republic. Ms. Gwaltney is from Woodland, CA, with a B.A. from UC-Davis, a masters from George Washington University. Again, her extensive experience working in and around Russia. Ms. Gwaltney has substantial experience to support her in this new role.

Ms. Teplitz, appointed to Nepal, was born in Chicago, IL, and received her B.A. at Georgetown University. She has served in numerous positions at the State Department and the region. With her management background and the current challenges in Nepal, she is well suited to assume this position.

Mr. Keshap, who has been appointed to serve in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, was born in Nigeria, educated at the University of Virginia with both a bachelors and masters degree. Mr. Keshap has

extensive experience with Southeast Asia, including his current post as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at State. He has won numerous awards for his work and, at the same time, has found time to well raise his four children.

So in any event, thank you all again for the willingness to serve and your families likewise for the willingness to serve.

Now we would like to hear a few minutes from each of you. We will start with Mr. Hale, who has been nominated for Pakistan.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID HALE, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN**

Ambassador HALE. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the introduction and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the Senate on how best to advance U.S. interests in Pakistan.

I have had the privilege of serving in the Foreign Service for 31 years, and most of my career has been spent advancing U.S. interests in the Middle East and the Muslim world as Ambassador to Lebanon, as U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East, and earlier as Ambassador to Jordan.

During my previous tours as Ambassador, my highest priority was the safety and security of all American personnel, information, and facilities, as well as the safety and security of American citizens. And if confirmed, I will have no higher priority in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a strategically important country for achieving U.S. national security interests. We have a strong stake in Pakistan's ability to combat militancy and strengthen its democratic institutions. And broadly speaking, the United States has four core interests in Pakistan: first, defeating al-Qaeda and countering militancy; second, nonproliferation and nuclear security; third, political and economic stability which includes respect for human rights; and fourth, regional stability, including improved relations with Afghanistan and with India.

And while there is more to be done on all fronts, the last few years have witnessed progress toward these goals as the United States and Pakistan have built a more stable, forthright relationship. With regard to counterterrorism, Pakistan has taken important actions that have brought to justice several senior al-Qaeda leaders. It launched a significant military operation in North Waziristan last June, capturing large weapons caches and closing safe havens for multiple terrorist groups. We welcome Pakistan's commitment to target all militant groups on Pakistani soil equally, an objective that is absolutely in the interest of the United States and one on which, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Pakistan Government to advance.

We and the Pakistanis also share deep concern and must remain vigilant for any sign that ISIL is gaining a foothold in Pakistan. Our shared strategic interests extend well beyond any particular group. It is from the ungoverned spaces in remote parts of the border region that spring a multitude of threats, both militant and

criminal, affecting Pakistan, the region, and the broader world, including America.

We are also actively engaged with Pakistan on strategic stability and nonproliferation issues. While our governments do not see eye to eye on all issues, we share a number of common interests, including the high importance of ensuring nuclear security and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Relations with its neighbors play an important part in Pakistan's security and prosperity. Pakistan has undertaken important outreach to Afghanistan following the Afghan election, and the two countries have made some progress toward terrorist safe havens on both sides of the border. Given the drawdown in United States forces in Afghanistan, it is all the more critical that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan be strong and cooperative and that Pakistan continue to put pressure on the Taliban to join an Afghan-led peace process. Pakistan's relationship with India is critical to Pakistan's future, and the normalization of relations between those two countries is vital both to them and to the region.

Experience has demonstrated that sustained, consistent engagement with Pakistan provides us with the best chance to address challenges and advance our core interests. The United States-Pakistan strategic dialogue is the mechanism that underpins our cooperation in areas of shared interest, from counterterrorism to energy, from economic growth to defense and security. All six of the strategic dialogue working groups have met within the last year.

U.S. civilian assistance to Pakistan has delivered impressive results and must continue. Our signature projects in Pakistan have added 1,500 megawatts to Pakistan's electric grid and built over 1,100 kilometers of road.

U.S. security assistance to Pakistan is equally important. It directly supports Pakistan's ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations, clear terrorist safe havens, and stem the flow of deadly improvised explosive devices, which have killed far too many civilians and security personnel.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and this committee, with our extraordinary team in both Washington and Pakistan, with the government and people of Pakistan and with the community of Americans of Pakistani descent here in the United States.

And, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, let me reiterate how deeply honored I am to be here today and to be nominated as the Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Hale follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If I am confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with the Senate on how best to advance U.S. interests in Pakistan.

I have had the privilege of serving in the Foreign Service since 1984. Most of my career has been spent advancing U.S. interests in the Middle East and the Muslim world, including most recently as Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic. Before

that, I served as the U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, and earlier, as Ambassador to Jordan.

During my previous tours as Ambassador, my highest priority was the safety and the security of all American personnel, information, and facilities, as well as the safety and security of American citizens. If confirmed, I will have no higher priority in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a strategically important country for achieving U.S. national security interests. We have a strong stake in Pakistan's ability to combat militancy and strengthen its democratic institutions. Broadly speaking, the United States has four core interests in Pakistan: first, defeating al-Qaeda and countering militancy; second, nonproliferation and nuclear security; third, political and economic stability which includes respect for human rights; and fourth, regional stability, including improved relations with Afghanistan and India.

While there is more to be done on all fronts, the last few years have witnessed progress toward these goals as the United States and Pakistan have built a more stable, forthright relationship. With regard to counterterrorism, Pakistan has taken important actions that have brought to justice several senior al-Qaeda leaders. It launched a significant military operation in North Waziristan last June, capturing large weapons caches and closing safe havens for multiple terrorist groups. We welcome Pakistan's commitment to target all militant groups on Pakistani soil equally—an objective that is absolutely in the interests of the United States, and one on which, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Pakistani Government to advance. We and the Pakistanis also share deep concern and must remain vigilant for any sign that ISIL is gaining a foothold in Pakistan. Our shared, strategic interests extend well beyond any particular group; it is from the ungoverned spaces in remote parts of the border region that spring a multitude of threats, both militant and criminal, affecting Pakistan, the region, and the broader world, including the United States.

We are also actively engaged with Pakistan on strategic stability and nonproliferation issues. While our governments do not see eye to eye on all issues, we share a number of common interests including the high importance of ensuring nuclear security and preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. We are pleased that Pakistan is fully engaged with the international community on nuclear safety and security issues, including as an active partner in the Nuclear Security Summit process.

At the same time, Pakistan is an often boisterous democracy of nearly 200 million people with a growing economy. In 2013, it completed its first democratic transition from one elected civilian government to another. The Government of Pakistan has made real strides in unlocking Pakistan's growth potential, and is working to advance an economic reform program in close collaboration with the International Monetary Fund. Just last week, Moody's recognized the government's progress by raising its sovereign credit rating. Still, there is work to be done. Rule of law, tolerance, and respect for the rights of all citizens are guiding principles for all thriving democracies.

Relations with its neighbors play an important part in Pakistan's security and prosperity. Pakistan has undertaken important outreach to Afghanistan following the Afghan election, and the two countries have made some progress against terrorist safe havens on both sides of the border. Given the drawdown in U.S. forces in Afghanistan, it is all the more critical that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan be strong and cooperative, and that Pakistan continue to put pressure on the Taliban to join an Afghan-led peace process. Pakistan's relationship with India is critical to Pakistan's future. The normalization of relations between the two countries is vital, both to them and to the region.

Experience has demonstrated that sustained, consistent engagement with Pakistan provides us with the best chance to address challenges and advance our core interests. The U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue is the mechanism that underpins our cooperation in areas of shared interest, from counterterrorism to energy, from economic growth to defense and security; all six of the Strategic Dialogue working groups—law enforcement and counterterrorism; economics and finance; energy; defense; strategic stability and nonproliferation; and education, science, and technology—have met within the last year.

U.S. civilian assistance to Pakistan has delivered impressive results and must continue. Our signature projects in Pakistan have added over 1,500 megawatts to Pakistan's electric grid, and built over 1,100 kilometers of road. Each year, the United States sponsors thousands of Pakistani exchange students to the United States—including a larger investment in the Fulbright Program than anywhere else in the world. These are long-term investments which advance bilateral people to

people exchanges, Pakistan's stability and growth, and help promote a pluralistic and tolerant society.

U.S. security assistance to Pakistan is equally important and is directly supporting Pakistan's ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations, clear terrorist safe havens, and stem the flow of deadly improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which have killed far too many civilians and security personnel. Our security assistance, like our civilian assistance, is geared directly toward meeting critical U.S. national security objectives.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and this committee, our extraordinary team in both Washington and Pakistan, who are dedicated and accept risks in order to achieve the goals of the American people, with the government and people of Pakistan, and with the community of Americans of Pakistani descent here in the United States. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy and members of the committee, let me reiterate how deeply honored I am to be nominated as the Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Hale, thank you very much.

We have been joined by Ranking Member Murphy, and if you do not have opening statement, we will move on.

Senator MURPHY. Keep going.

Senator RISCH. Ms. Teplitz, you are next. We would like to hear what you have to say.

**STATEMENT OF ALAINA B. TEPLITZ, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF  
NEPAL**

Ms. TEPLITZ. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for the U.S. Ambassador to Nepal. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve our country.

And I would like to recognize some of my family who are with me today, my sons, Max and Miles Mellott. And a shout-out to those who could not be here because I would not be at this table without them and their support.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted in your remarks, right now when people think of Nepal, they invariably think of the horrific earthquake of this past April and the tremendous damage it wrought. That tragedy has brought together the people of Nepal, the country's neighbors, and the international community to help the victims recover and the country rebuild.

And while much has changed in Nepal since the earthquake, our overall priorities for the country remain the same: to strengthen its democracy, advance its economic growth, and improve its resiliency. If confirmed, I will work to advance these goals and build on the achievements of my predecessors and our 60 years of positive engagement with Nepal.

I will speak first about the last objective, improved resiliency, and then discuss the other two priorities. At the top, I would like to extend the Department's profound gratitude to Congress for its support for seismically safe housing for U.S. Embassy personnel in Kathmandu. It saved the lives of our mission personnel and enabled them to immediately assist with rescue and relief efforts, thus saving more lives and reducing the quake's impact on Americans, Nepalese, and others.

The first responsibility of every U.S. Ambassador is to ensure the safety and security of American citizens, and if confirmed, I will



continue to prioritize investments that will protect our personnel and citizens.

And as Nepal moves to the reconstruction phase, we will work with its government and its neighbors in Asia to help it build back better, to provide protection to the most vulnerable, to improve resiliency against future disasters, and to ensure that investments in Nepal's infrastructure are economically sound and environmentally stable. And as you pointed out, if confirmed, I will share your focus on donor coordination throughout this effort.

Turning now to the second priority, advancing Nepal's economic growth. As we work to help Nepal's economy grow and advance, we must look to leverage its location among the booming economies of South Asia. With more investments in infrastructure, the creation of a business- and investment-friendly environment, and a more integrated regional market, Nepal's entrepreneurs could harness the region's economic potential and create tremendous prosperity for their nation. Nepal's recent eligibility for a Millennium Challenge Corporation—MCC—compact should help it develop some of that economic potential. If confirmed, I will actively look for opportunities to improve the business environment and support American investment in Nepal.

I would lastly like to discuss our priority of strengthening Nepal's democracy. In 2006, the country emerged from a decade of civil conflict with a commitment to creating a constitution that would seal a lasting peace. The American people can be proud of the role they have played in Nepal's transition from violence to peaceful politics. That process is still underway. And there has been some significant progress lately. Nepal became eligible for an MCC compact because of its democratic progress. But much remains to be done, and our Government will help Nepal where we can to advance its constitutional process and cement a hard-won peace.

Maintaining that peace will require a firm commitment to human rights, and if I am confirmed, the promotion and protection of human rights will remain a central priority for Mission Kathmandu. This particularly includes protections for Tibetan refugees, for women, for disadvantaged populations, and for those vulnerable to trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the many challenges we will face in these efforts, from maintaining good coordination with Nepal's Government and our international partners, to ensuring our resources are being spent effectively.

My career in the Foreign Service has been dedicated to the efficient management of resources, whether for our missions in Kabul, Dhaka, Belgium, or here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute or in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. My experience, it would seem, is very timely for this posting.

With the support of Congress, our Government is preparing for a large recovery and reconstruction effort in Nepal, and if confirmed, I hope to draw on my management experience and expertise to help ensure the people of Nepal get the best assistance we can give and that the U.S. taxpayers get the biggest bang for their buck.

As that assistance effort progresses, I would, if confirmed, look forward to working closely with this committee and others in Congress to ensure our work reflects our shared priorities.

Thank you again for the opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Teplitz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALAINA B. TEPLITZ

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Nepal.

I would like to recognize some of my family who are with me today and without whom I would not be at this table before you: my sons Max and Miles Mellott.

Mr. Chairman, right now when people think of Nepal, they invariably think of the horrific earthquake of this past April, and the tremendous damage it wrought. That tragedy has brought together the people of Nepal, the country's neighbors, and the international community to help the victims recover and the country rebuild.

And while much has changed in Nepal since the earthquake, our overall priorities for the country remain the same: to strengthen its democracy, advance its economic growth, and improve its resiliency. If confirmed, I will work to advance these goals and build on the achievements of my predecessors and our 60 years of positive engagement with Nepal.

I will speak first about the last objective, improved resiliency, and then discuss the other two priorities. At the top, I would like to extend the Department's profound gratitude to Congress for its support for seismically safe housing for U.S. Embassy personnel in Kathmandu. It saved the lives of our mission personnel and enabled them to immediately assist with rescue and relief efforts, thus saving more lives and reducing the quake's impact on Americans, Nepalese, and others.

The first responsibility of every U.S. Ambassador is to ensure the safety and security of American citizens, and, if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize investments that will protect our personnel and citizens in Nepal.

And as Nepal moves to the reconstruction phase, we will work with its government and its neighbors in Asia to help it to "build back better"—to provide protection to the most vulnerable, to improve resiliency against future disasters, and to ensure that investments in Nepal's infrastructure are economically sound and environmentally sustainable.

I will now turn to the second priority, advancing Nepal's economic growth. As we work to help Nepal's economy grow and advance, we must look to leverage its location among the booming economies of South Asia. With more investments in infrastructure, the creation of a business- and investment-friendly environment, and a more integrated regional market, Nepal's entrepreneurs could harness the region's economic potential and create tremendous prosperity for their nation. Nepal's recent eligibility for a Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact should help it develop some of that economic potential. If confirmed, I will actively look for opportunities to improve the business environment and support American investment in Nepal.

I would lastly like to discuss our priority of strengthening Nepal's democracy. In 2006, the country emerged from a decade of civil conflict with a commitment to creating a constitution that would seal a lasting peace. The American people can be proud of the role they have played in Nepal's transition from violence to peaceful politics. That process is still underway, and there has been some significant progress lately—Nepal became eligible for an MCC Compact because of its democratic progress. But much remains to be done, and our government will help Nepal where we can to advance its constitutional process and cement a hard-won peace.

Maintaining that peace will require a firm commitment to human rights, and, if I am confirmed, the promotion and protection of human rights will remain a central priority for Mission Kathmandu. This especially includes protections for Tibetan refugees, for women, for disadvantaged populations, and for those vulnerable to trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the many challenges we will face in these efforts, from maintaining good coordination with Nepal's Government and our international partners, to ensuring our resources are being spent effectively.

My career in the Foreign Service has been dedicated to the efficient management of resources, whether for our missions in Kabul, Dhaka, or Belgium, here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute or in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

With the support of Congress, our government is preparing for a large recovery and reconstruction effort in Nepal, and, if confirmed, I hope to draw on my manage-

ment experience and expertise to help ensure the people of Nepal get the best assistance we can give, and that the U.S. taxpayers get the biggest bang for their buck.

As that assistance effort progresses, I would, if confirmed, look forward to working closely with this committee and others in Congress to ensure our work reflects our shared priorities.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Ms. Gwaltney?

**STATEMENT OF SHEILA GWALTNEY, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

Ms. GWALTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy.

It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and their staff to promote and protect U.S. interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

I have had the privilege of serving our country for 31 years as a Foreign Service officer. I have served as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic, Ukraine, and Russia and have worked on issues related to this region for most of my career. I can think of no higher honor than to return to represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States to the Kyrgyz Republic, a country I know and respect for its rich culture, natural beauty, and warm and hospitable people. I deeply appreciate the love and support of my family and friends throughout these years.

The principles that have guided U.S. policy toward the Kyrgyz Republic remain as relevant today as they were when the country attained independence 23 years ago. Our long-term focus has always been to support and respect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. Our strategic goals are to facilitate and strengthen the Kyrgyz Republic's stability, prosperity, and democracy.

The Kyrgyz Republic is Central Asia's leader in democratic development. In 2011, following the election of President Atambayev, the Kyrgyz Republic accomplished the first democratic transfer of Presidential in Central Asia. The Kyrgyz Republic has an independent Parliament and a vibrant and active civil society, with thousands of nongovernmental organizations working in a wide variety of fields. If confirmed, I would work with the government and people of the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen the country's democratic institutions, support the continued growth of civil society, and promote respect for human rights.

Our security cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic is focused on the common goals of countering terrorism, improving border security, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics. The United States and the Kyrgyz Republic need to work together to fight human trafficking and other transnational threats. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen our existing partnership and continue our joint efforts to address regional and global security challenges.

Expanding markets and opportunities for American business is a top priority worldwide. As Secretary Kerry says, "Foreign policy is economic policy." If confirmed, I would work with the Kyrgyz Republic to bolster private sector-driven economic growth, including the promotion of American economic and business interests. The Kyrgyz Republic has been a regional leader in pursuing market reform and our two nations can work together to expand prosperity for both our countries.

People-to-people contacts remain the bedrock of our diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging people throughout the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening ties between the American and the Kyrgyz people. Public diplomacy efforts promote a positive understanding of the United States and help build deep and lasting ties between our countries.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to ensure that our mission continues to provide U.S. citizens resident in or visiting the Kyrgyz Republic the highest quality service and utmost protection.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great privileges of my career has been the opportunity to help lead teams of Americans serving at our embassies overseas that are dedicated to the advancement of U.S. interests. If confirmed, I would do my best to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of my colleagues and their family members who serve at our Embassy. I would maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral values for our mission, including ensuring that the principles of nondiscrimination and respect for diversity are respected by all in our mission.

If confirmed, I would always be available to this committee, its members, and staff, to discuss and work together in pursuit of U.S. national interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of the subcommittee and look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gwaltney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHEILA GWALTNEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and their staff to promote and protect U.S. interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

I have had the privilege of serving our country for 31 years as a Foreign Service officer. I have served as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic, Ukraine and Russia and have worked on issues related to this region for most of my career. I can think of no higher honor than to return to represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States to the Kyrgyz Republic, a country I know and respect for its rich culture, natural beauty, and warm and hospitable people. I deeply appreciate the love and support of my family and friends throughout these years.

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thousands of nongovernmental organizations working in a wide variety of fields. If confirmed, I would work with the government and people of the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen the country's democratic institutions, support the continued growth of civil society, and promote respect for human rights.

Our security cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic is focused on the common goals of countering terrorism, improving border security, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics. The United States and the Kyrgyz Republic need to work together to fight human trafficking and other transnational threats. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen our existing partnership and continue our joint efforts to address regional and global security challenges.

Expanding markets and opportunities for American business is a top priority worldwide. As Secretary Kerry says, "Foreign policy is economic policy." If confirmed, I would work with the Kyrgyz Republic to bolster private-sector-driven economic growth, including through the promotion of American economic and business interests. The Kyrgyz Republic has been a regional leader in pursuing market reforms and our two nations can work together to expand prosperity for both our countries.

People-to-people contacts remain the bedrock of our diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging people throughout the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening ties between the American and Kyrgyz people. Public diplomacy efforts promote a positive understanding of the United States and help build deep and lasting ties between our countries.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to ensure that our mission continues to provide U.S. citizens residing in or visiting the Kyrgyz Republic the highest quality services and utmost protection in times of need.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great privileges of my career has been the opportunity to help lead teams of Americans serving at our embassies overseas that are dedicated to the advancement of U.S. interests. If confirmed, I would do my best to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of my colleagues and their family members who serve at our Embassy. I would maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral values for our mission, including ensuring that the principles of nondiscrimination and respect for diversity are respected by all in our mission.

If confirmed, I would always be available to this committee, its members and staff, to discuss and work together in pursuit of U.S. national interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of the subcommittee and look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

We are now going to have a series of questions. I am sorry. I did not mean to pass you up, Mr. Keshap. Your turn. I apologize.

**STATEMENT OF ATUL KESHAP, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA AND TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE MALDIVES**

Mr. KESHAP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, Senator Shaheen.

It is, indeed, an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and to the Maldives. I am grateful to President Obama for his trust and confidence in nominating me and to Secretary Kerry and my State Department colleagues, particularly Assistant Secretary Nisha Biswal, for their support.

Permit me to begin, Mr. Chair, by thanking my wife, Karen Young Keshap, who is also a Foreign Service officer, for her love and support throughout the two decades we have served our country and for raising our four wonderful children, Carolyn, Emily, James, and Charlotte, who are here today.

I am honored to be here as well with my respected mother, Zoe Antoinette Calvert, who served in the U.S. Foreign Service in the 1950s and 1960s in our Embassies in India and the United Kingdom. I also pay tribute to my late father, Dr. Keshap Chander Sen,

an immigrant to this country from India, who served the United Nations as a development economist.

Mr. Chairman, due to my father's U.N. service, my early years were spent at schools overseas, where the children of American diplomats were my earliest friends. My parents' service and my upbringing instilled in me a firm dedication and commitment to American values and led me to a career in the Foreign Service.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priorities will be to ensure the safety and security of American citizens and to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people.

In Sri Lanka, our primary interest is to help the people of that island succeed as a prosperous, unified, reconciled, peaceful, and democratic nation.

At the beginning of this year, the people of South Asia's oldest democracy courageously chose a new path of hope and renewal. Since January, Sri Lanka has made progress on challenging issues from fighting corruption and media censorship to beginning the long process of healing after decades of war.

We want to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including media freedom and freedom of religion. We want to help build a lasting peace and fellowship among Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious communities, including credible justice, accountability, and reconciliation that can facilitate closure for those who suffered and lost loved ones during the war. It is important to get this right, and the U.N. and the international community can lend useful insight to the efforts of the Sri Lankan people.

Economically, the United States is Sri Lanka's largest export market. While our trade volume is currently relatively low, I believe there is great potential to expand our partnership.

In the security realm, our de-mining efforts have helped farmers return to once war-ravaged land. There is also room for closer cooperation on disaster response and maritime security. Sri Lanka is a regional leader in the fight against cybercrime, a contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations, and is focused on disrupting drug trafficking and fighting maritime piracy. As we look to advance our interests across the Indo-Pacific, Sri Lanka can be a critical partner.

I will now turn to the Maldives where a young and dynamic populace is on the front lines of climate change. This island nation also faces challenges with youth unemployment, rising extremism, and social unrest. We are worried, however, about the current state of rule of law, due process, and human rights. All citizens should be allowed to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We must remain engaged, however, on several important mutual interests, including countering violent extremism, reducing the impact of climate change, and as with Sri Lanka, ensuring security in the Indian Ocean. We want a better relationship with Maldives so that we can deepen that cooperation. And we want to help it return to the democratic path on which it courageously embarked a few years ago and look forward to strengthening our relationship when that happens.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, Senator Shaheen, the democratic progress, economic growth, and security of Sri Lanka

and Maldives affect not just their own countries, but the broader Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will consult closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. values and interests.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Keshap follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ATUL KESHAP

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Mr. Chairman, due to my father's U.N. service, my early years were spent at schools overseas, where the children of American diplomats were my earliest friends. My parents' service and my upbringing instilled in me a firm dedication and commitment to American values, and led me to a career in the Foreign Service.

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Mr. Chairman, the democratic progress, economic growth, and security of Sri Lanka and Maldives affect not just their own countries, but the broader Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will consult closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. values and interests.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Now we will go through a round of questions from each of us. Since I tried to short you, Mr. Keshap, I will start there.

Your description of what has happened recently in Sri Lanka with the election of the new President certainly reflects, I think, all of our hopes and our good wishes for the people of that country.

I hear your description of it. What is happening today? Is that movement increasing? Is it decreasing? Has it leveled off? Where are we today as far as the movement from the January election?

Mr. KESHAP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I take great heart and confidence in the significant desire of the people of Sri Lanka to embark upon a new path in their country. The election of January 8 reflected a broad-based decision by the people of Sri Lanka to improve relations with the international community, to strengthen democracy and human rights, to reinforce civil society, and to really put Sri Lanka on a path toward a process of reconciliation that can yield a unified peaceful country. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I would work very hard toward helping the people of Sri Lanka to achieve that vision. Secretary Kerry was in Sri Lanka on May 2, and he spoke very eloquently about the United States desire to help the Sri Lankan people with this.

Obviously, the politics in any democracy are going to be robust and at times messy. There is a lot that needs to be worked out. There are some significant issues that have stemmed from three decades of conflict and post-conflict period. But I think that the United States can be a good friend to the efforts and the vision of the people of Sri Lanka and really contribute to the achievement of that vision. And if confirmed, I look forward to adding my energy to that.

Senator RISCH. We appreciate that.

Regarding the Maldives, you made brief reference to the fact that there is this growing extremism in the country. Recent media reports indicate that about 200 of the young people there are radicals who have left and gone to fight with ISIS. For a small country like that, 200 is a pretty substantial number, particularly in light of the fact that if that is what it is, it is usually underreported. So it is probably higher than that.

What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. KESHAP. Mr. Chairman, it is a matter of concern. And we have an ongoing conversation with the Maldives about this issue and others.

From my perspective, I think that what we want to do is try to encourage the people of Maldives and the Government of Maldives to ensure greater freedoms and democracy for their people. That is the key to ensuring stability, to attracting quality investment, to ensuring economic growth, to giving people opportunity, and hopefully also to countering violent extremism. This is an issue that is very much on the radar, and I appreciate your perspectives on this as well. And if confirmed, I would work very hard with the Government of the Maldives and with partners in the United States who work on countering violent extremism to address this issue.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much. Appreciate that.



Ms. Teplitz, we both made reference in our previous comments to the donor coordination. Tell me a little bit about your thoughts in a little more detail how you plan to attack that.

Ms. TEPLITZ. Thank you, Senator.

I think the donor coordination issue is actually one of the most critical for the success of our programs and assistance to the Nepalese people in this recovery phase. My colleague, Ambassador Bodde, has been leading the donor coordination effort in Kathmandu, and if confirmed, that is something that I intend to do as well. And I think it is essential for the United States to be in front of that effort, both with bilateral donors and multilateral donors, to ensure that assistance is well targeted, not duplicative, and well aligned with the needs of the people of Nepal.

Senator RISCH. Have you found that the people of Nepal are open to the U.S. assistance in that regard as far as donor coordination is concerned?

Ms. TEPLITZ. Sir, my understanding through consultations is that we have a very excellent relationship with the government, with other actors, civil society, nongovernmental organizations. We have had a very productive relationship there, and I see no reason why that would change and look forward, in fact, if confirmed, to engaging in a dialogue with an array of people to best serve the people of Nepal.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. Appreciate that.

Ms. Gwaltney, the country you are going to is an interesting country. And of course, they have the tremendous influence of Russia because of the years that they spent there under their thumb.

Tell me a little bit. The fact that we have withdrawn from the Manas Air Base and the fact that the Chinese are attempting to increase their influence there—what are your thoughts on our prospects for hanging onto our ability to exert hopefully some U.S. influence there?

Ms. GWALTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I agree with your assessment that the Kyrgyz Republic is located at the intersection of many challenges.

First, I would like to state that we are grateful to the Kyrgyz people for the Manas transit center and for the support that they provided to the ISAF forces in Afghanistan. It was never intended to be a permanent facility, and we cooperated very closely with the Kyrgyz Government for an orderly transition to that facility.

More broadly, Senator, to your question about regional influence of Russia and China, for the most part Chinese influence is economic. China is Kyrgyzstan's largest trading partner, and it has made clear that it has an interest in expanding trade and expanding linkages throughout the region. There may be some complementarities between the Chinese view and our view on the importance of increasing economic linkages among the countries of Central Asia and between the countries of Central Asia and other regions.

With regard to Russia, it is true that the Kyrgyz Republic and Russia have a shared history. They have a number of economic linkages. But as recent as the April bilateral consultations that we had with the Kyrgyz Government here in Washington, the Kyrgyz made clear to us their interest in having a strong and productive

relationship with us. We think it is very important that Kyrgyzstan have the space to make its own decisions about its political autonomy, about its economic linkages, about the future of the country. We do not think that it is appropriate for any country to impose a zero sum approach on the Kyrgyz. We think the Kyrgyz should have the right to make decisions for themselves. And if confirmed, Senator, I intend to work very hard to deepen and expand our cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Finally, Mr. Hale, tell me a little bit about the relationship between the Special Rep for Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Assistant for South and Central Asia and yourself. How do the three of you work as far as that country is concerned? We know the complexity of it, and as I said, those of us who met with the Members of Parliament here in April were impressed with their stated purposes. But tell me how the three of you work in that regard?

Ambassador HALE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have, obviously, just begun my consultations. I am still serving at the embassy in Beirut. But if confirmed, I look forward to a very close working relationship with both the Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia and the Special Representative.

I myself served as a special envoy. So I can stress from firsthand experience the importance that there be very much a whole-of-government approach to any problem that a special envoy is focused on. A special envoy representative brings a higher level of focus and energy to a particular issue, but success very much depends upon a cooperative relationship with all of the entities in the government, including the Assistant Secretary, for watching the bilateral relationships and the geopolitical and strategic picture in the region.

As Ambassador to Pakistan, if confirmed, I would report to the Special Representative and to the Secretary of State ultimately, but I expect very close integration with the Bureau.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to all of you. I am sorry that I missed the very beginning of your opening remarks.

Ambassador Hale, thank you for your service after very difficult and tumultuous service in Beirut. I am glad that you are going to get a few years off in Islamabad. I do not know how you managed that, but we are grateful that you accepted the appointment.

We are having a debate here about what constitutes our national security budget. Right now, there is a proposal that the Senate and the House exceed the budget caps for the Defense Department, but that we do not exceed the caps for other spending that many of us would consider to be instrumental to national security. On that list would be our foreign assistance programs.

One of the most important jobs you are going to have is to oversee the implementation of the Kerry-Lugar-Berman act. Can you give us your understanding as to the update of its implementation? I know a little bit of a rocky start in terms of getting the money to the right partners on the ground. But how important is that pro-

gram, is that funding stream to our ability to influence events on the ground inside Pakistan today?

Ambassador HALE. Well, I think it has proven to be critically important. Obviously, our primary goal is to enhance Pakistan's cooperation with us in the counterterrorism field. But I think we have all learned over time that simply relying and focusing on a traditional military-to-military assistance approach is not going to get the full results that we require. Pakistan needs to have stability. It needs to have a government that is addressing the needs of its people. It needs to ensure that the citizenry can turn to the traditional leaders for energy, for education, for all of the things that countries expect to receive from their state. This is a challenge in Pakistan. It is a poor country. It is an emerging democracy.

But the resources that the Kerry-Lugar-Berman process has brought to Pakistan I think have shown results already. They are focused in several key areas. I mentioned energy, but also education, economic growth, health. And a very important category is stabilization so that when Pakistan is clearing out certain areas, like they are today in North Waziristan, of insurgents, that there is an ability and resources to rush in in that golden hour with the kind of services that citizens expect.

Also, I think there is an important point to bear in mind. This relationship serves best our two sides when it is predictable, when the Pakistanis and the Americans who are looking at this relationship can see for years out what the expectations are, what the deliveries will be. And I think for Pakistan to sustain what we feel they must for their interests and ours in terms of security cooperation, it is critical that we be helping them in these developmental fields as well.

Senator MURPHY. We watched video and reports yesterday of Taliban attacks on the Parliament building in Kabul. Very disturbing to watch. There are other advancements that the Taliban has made, taking control of several towns in the north and in the west. And yet, there are also reports of the facilitation of a dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan Government.

So let me ask a specific question. What is your understanding today of the disposition of ISI with respect to its coordination with some of these elements within Afghanistan? I know we have made a lot of progress there and there were reports of commitments made in Secretary Kerry's last bilateral meetings with respect to the Haqqani network I know separate and aside from some of the issues surrounding the Taliban. But as the situation seems to get more unstable inside Afghanistan, are the Pakistanis able to help us try to address some of those security concerns inside Afghanistan?

Ambassador HALE. Well, Senator, this is a crucial area. It will be one that I will be very much focused on if I am confirmed.

I do think that there has been progress. We have seen, I think, a change in direction by the Pakistani leadership itself. There are opportunities posed by the election of President Ghani in Afghanistan, the emergence of new leaders in Pakistan. And they are talking and beginning to coordinate a strategy.

In May of this year, we saw that Prime Minister Sharif and President Ghani met, and they pledged joint efforts to crack down

on the very groups that you have mentioned based in each state's territory. And they are talking about coordinate operations that will be undertaken to basically eliminate these safe havens along the border area.

Obviously, words are one thing. What we need to see beyond these commitments, important as they are, is actual action on the ground and effective steps to be taken. And I think that that is something we will be, obviously, pressing for, in addition to targeting the militant groups, pushing them and pressurizing them into the political reconciliation process that ultimately is the best means for stabilizing Afghanistan.

Senator MURPHY. To Ms. Teplitz and Mr. Keshap, the same question. You are going to be in countries that have to balance themselves between two great powers, between China and India. Could you just speak to what the U.S. interests are with respect to which way those two countries lean or attack? Why would we care about the direction of either of those countries is having in terms of trying to manage their alliances with those two countries? Mr. Keshap first and then Ms. Teplitz.

Mr. KESHAP. Sure. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

I think the overarching U.S. goal is to try to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen their democracy to the greatest extent possible. By doing that and by fostering the real culture of accountability and meaningful reconciliation for the past, it can lay the foundations for a really prosperous and unified democracy going forward that can be a real platform for stability not only in its region, in the Indian Ocean region, but across the Indo-Pacific.

I do believe that America's most enduring partnerships are with democracies, and so if confirmed, I would very much want to direct my energies and efforts and those of my team toward intensifying the U.S. bilateral relationship in a way that is helpful and relevant to the people—

Senator MURPHY. So you are saying let us just focus on the quality of democracy, or is that a way of saying we should be agnostic as to the question of their balance of allegiance between China and India?

Mr. KESHAP. Senator, I think the issue here is to make sure that Sri Lanka can be a robust and contributing partner to security in the Indian Ocean. And in that regard, they obviously will need to make their own choices, but I do feel that the United States should always be the preferred partner in advancing democratic values, rules-based order, transparent norms, and peaceful settlement of disputes. And I do think we can work in concert with democracies in advancing those strategic goals.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Teplitz.

Ms. TEPLITZ. Thank you, Senator.

And while I echo many of the sentiments of my colleague here about the situation with Nepal, I think the U.S. interests are for a prosperous and stable South Asia. Nepal is a part of and a partner in achieving that. It does have to balance its two neighbors, China and India, as you have pointed out. And I think our role in that is ensuring at this stage that there are positive and coordinated contributions to the earthquake recovery effort. This actually gives us an opportunity to work very closely not only with the Gov-

ernment of Nepal, with whom we have a very strong relationship, but also with these neighbors to have a very productive outcome and what happens on the ground in Kathmandu is going to be crucial in contributing toward a positive outcome. And if confirmed, I definitely plan to make this careful balance a priority.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I have a hard stop and I have to go to another meeting. But I wanted to give Senator Shaheen a chance to ask questions and also, Senator Murphy, if you have any more questions. If not, if you would close the meeting for me when we are done.

The record will remain open until close of business on Thursday for questions. So we will put that into the record.

With that, Senator Murphy, I am going to turn this over to you and Senator Shaheen for questions.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for your willingness to continue to serve. For many of you, you have served for many years, and we very much appreciate that.

I want to pick up, Ambassador Hale, where Senator Murphy left off in terms of the renewed efforts to improve negotiations with Afghanistan and Pakistan and the possibility that that might help with moving the dialogue with the Taliban and hopefully moving towards peace. Can you talk a little bit about what your assessment is of whether they are making progress and whether you see the potential and what the United States can do to help with that effort?

Ambassador HALE. I think it is at an early stage, frankly, to make sweeping judgments, but it does appear that they are on the right path. President Ghani's commitment is very clear. He is staking a lot on this. It is going to require cooperation from Pakistan, and I think, again, Prime Minister Sharif has made the right commitments, said the right words. It has been followed up by travel by General Rahil, the military chief of staff, and by intelligence officers as well.

There has to be actually, as I said earlier, actions that follow up on these commitments, and so we will be judging that. Will there be actions against the safe havens? Will they be cutting off the terrorist financing links? Will they be really putting their influence behind the effort to do what you just said, to encourage meaningful participation in the Afghan-led reconciliation process?

We have talked about this for a while. I think that there is a new opportunity here and a new atmosphere because these are new leaders who are doing this. And I think that the fact that Pakistan itself has suffered so greatly from terrorist attacks, most recently the tragedy in Peshawar, also the Karachi airport attack, that may have contributed to the shift and understanding that Pakistan's national security interests really are at stake here and that the stability and the security and building a democracy in Afghanistan is every bit as important to the people of Pakistan as it is to those in Afghanistan.

All I can say, Senator, is that if confirmed, my job will be primarily to focus on this endeavor, given the stakes for the United States here, and I will put my full effort behind that.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you see, as Prime Minister Sharif has taken over, any progress on the effort to be more inclusive in Pakistan to reduce what we would call hate crimes in the United States against people who are against non-Muslims?

Ambassador HALE. I believe I will have to get out there myself, if I am confirmed, and make a judgment and come back to you and your staff. But there is a long way to go. So I hope democracy will be more inclined to be respectful of minorities and of its people. I do not know for sure, but you look at the record, and there is, as I said, a tremendous task ahead. Religious minorities, women, other vulnerable segments of that society definitely need protection, and the United States needs to stand up, speak loudly about that, but also work behind the scenes with quiet diplomacy so that Pakistan's elected leaders understand what is at stake here and also to use the tools in our assistance program, which Congress has been so generous in providing so that NGOs and other groups are able to provide all kinds of programs, can help not just with protections but to advance recognition of the importance of the rights of minorities.

Senator SHAHEEN. I visited in Pakistan several years ago right after they had gone into the Swat Valley and were responding to terrorist attacks there and was very impressed with the effort of the government and the military to take on—really to fight against their own citizens to address the terrorism threat. But recent reports have suggested that those efforts have been less successful than I certainly would have hoped based on that effort several years ago. And I wonder if you have any reports on the commitment there and the extent to which the military has been able to take on some of these terrorist elements.

Ambassador HALE. Well, again, I think it is important to remember the context, which is that Pakistanis themselves are suffering greatly from the attacks and threats posed by these groups. That is point one.

Point two. I think any rational analyst of Pakistan and the situation there would recognize that tolerating one group of extremists or insurgents on your soil while just targeting another group is not going to create a stable environment at all. So that is, I think, a very important lesson for any leader in that region to understand.

Third, I think it is important to remember where the successes have been. Pakistan's military leadership and its soldiers have done admirable work in countering the al-Qaeda threat and doing maximum effort to eliminate that. Always gaps, but there have been arrests. There have been some substantial activities. Countering IED's is another area where they export the manufacture and the export of these IED's into Afghanistan. Wrapping that up, again not completed, but substantial efforts have been invested in that.

Working on these areas of insurgents and militants is the next big project, and obviously, there has been progress. I do not have the firsthand experience that you have, Senator, in observing this. I am concerned by your observation and I will want to look into that myself when I get out there. But right now, the campaign in North Waziristan has produced results. It has cleared out substantial areas. It is soaking up safe havens. It is critically important

that other groups not come in now and exploit those areas and that the state remain present not just with the constabulary in the army but, as I said earlier in response to a question, that the whole of government is rushing in there and providing the services and the economy that any Pakistani should expect of their government.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY [presiding]. Thank you, Senator.

I just have two more questions.

Ambassador HALE, there are different reports about the effectiveness of ISIS in establishing a foothold within Pakistan. Many suggest that there is a lot of factors that are going to inhibit their ability to grow more than a handful of activists there.

What is your understanding heading into Islamabad as to how much time you might be spending on this question of ISIS presence inside Pakistan?

Ambassador HALE. Well, again, I will need to get there, if I am confirmed, to judge for myself. But the briefings I have had suggest that so far the ISIS threat is relatively small and contained. But having served, as I have, so many years in the Levant, complacency is the last thing I am taking with me to Pakistan on this front. ISIS has shown that it is potent and it can exploit areas that are ungoverned quite rapidly, and we all know there are ungoverned spaces in Pakistan. So while there may be cultural and other factors that have reduced ISIS's ability at least initially to make inroads, I think we have to be very vigilant about that and make sure that the Pakistani leadership knows, as I think those in the Levant do, that moderate Muslim leaders themselves are the first targets of this phenomenon and therefore have an extra responsibility to preempt them.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Gwaltney, should we care about the Kyrgyz Republic's joining the Eurasian Union? Is this an economic body that presents any kind of real threat to the United States without membership on the western edge of Russia? Is this something that you think you are going to be spending time on, or should we just let it lie and not worry too much about it?

Ms. GWALTNEY. Thank you, Senator, for your question.

The Kyrgyz Republic is poised to join the Eurasian Economic Union in the upcoming weeks. And one thing that we have made very clear is, of course, first and foremost, our support for free trade, and secondly, equally importantly, is the fact that as a member of the WTO—and the Kyrgyz Republic was the first former Soviet Republic to join the WTO in 1998—but that in its accession to the Eurasian Economic Union, the Kyrgyz Republic needs to be mindful and to uphold its obligations under the WTO.

I think it is early days, sir, to be able to calibrate exactly what the economic impact of accession to this organization will be, but if confirmed, it is certainly something that I will pay a great deal of attention to not only because of Kyrgyzstan's WTO commitments but because I am committed to the promotion of American exports and support for American business. And we will want to keep that space open.

Senator MURPHY. Well, thank you to you all. I am tempted to ask my staff to do some quick research on what parliamentary maneuvers I can use now that I am in charge of the subcommittee. [Laughter.]

But instead, I will just note that the record does stand open. So if you do get followup questions from members of the subcommittee who are not here, I hope you will turn them around quickly.

And with that, using bottled water, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:15 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF GLYN TOWNSEND DAVIES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DAVIES'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

*Question.* If the Thai junta by the start of 2016 fails to remove restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and schedule elections, what steps do you think are appropriate to increase pressure on General Prayuth? Do you think it's appropriate to cancel the military exercises known as Cobra Gold? Why not? If Cobra Gold was to continue in 2016, do you agree that it should be kept at a scaled-back level, or scaled back even further?

*Answer.* Following the coup, we suspended, as required by law, \$4.7 million in military assistance funds (FMF, IMET, PKO) until a democratically elected civilian government takes office. We have also cancelled some high-level engagements, military exercises, and training programs with the military and police. We continue to thoroughly review all our engagements with Thailand. If confirmed, I will closely monitor political developments and continue actively to urge the military government to remove restrictions on civil liberties and return Thailand to democratic governance as soon as possible. I will also encourage the military government to make the political reform process as inclusive as possible to reflect the broad diversity of views within the country.

The United States decided to proceed with Cobra Gold 2015 because of the importance of the annual, multilateral exercise in fulfilling the U.S. commitment to regional stability. Bringing together nearly 30 nations, Cobra Gold is the largest such exercise in Asia and has for 30 years been an integral part of the U.S. commitment to strengthen our security engagement in the region. Cancelling the exercise would make it more challenging to sustain our military's interoperability with regional allies and partners.

Cobra Gold 2015 was significantly refocused and scaled down in light of the Thai military's ouster of the civilian government, with an increased focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. We have decided to proceed with planning for Cobra Gold 2016 due to its importance in expanding regional cooperation and capacity building. As in 2015, the exercise will be scaled down and focus on building regional cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

If confirmed, I will evaluate the scale and focus of the exercise and seek necessary adjustments in light of political developments in Thailand.

*Question.* Will you continue to use public diplomacy, as the State Department has since the May 2014 coup, to raise concerns about censorship and arrests of Thai citizens for exercising their rights to free speech and assembly?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Thailand, both publicly and privately, to remove undue restrictions on civil liberties, including limits on fundamental freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. My priority will be to urge Thailand to institute a genuinely inclusive reform process that reflects the broad diversity of views within the country. As part of this effort, I will continue to use all tools at our disposal, including public diplomacy and diplomatic engagement, to encourage Thailand to lift restrictions on civil liberties and swiftly return to a democratically elected civilian government that respects human rights.

*Question.* Thailand was designated a Tier 3 country for trafficking in persons in the State Department's 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report. What new ideas do you



have for motivating the Thai Government to get serious about cracking down on human trafficking—not just with isolated raids and written action plans, but serious, sustained, and comprehensive efforts to clamp down on trafficking networks—not just sex trafficking but trafficking of migrant labor and refugees from Burma?

*Answer.* If confirmed, my arrival as the new Ambassador will provide a fresh opportunity for the United States to highlight both publicly and privately our principled stance against human trafficking. Thailand's Tier 3 ranking in 2014 reflected the shortcomings in the Thai Government's efforts to address the country's vast human trafficking problem. In the 2014 TIP Report, we outlined a series of recommendations for the Thai Government to improve its antitrafficking response.

If confirmed, I will encourage Thailand to conduct thorough investigations of reports of trafficking, including in cases with alleged government complicity, and to bring trafficking offenders to justice. I will also continue to advocate for proactive government efforts to identify and protect victims, and support international and civil society organizations that play a role in identifying and assisting victims and promoting the rights of migrant workers.

The Department's TIP Office currently provides approximately \$1 million in funding for three projects in Thailand that are focused on trafficking prevention, protection for victims, raising awareness, promoting access to justice for victims, and increasing investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. Additional project funding for FY15 is currently under consideration.

We will continue to provide specific technical assistance requested by the Thai Government related to trafficking investigations and prosecutions as well as general support for building the capacity of their law enforcement and rule of law institutions. We welcome the efforts made by Thailand to stand up a Human Trafficking in Persons Division in the criminal courts system that will focus exclusively on human trafficking cases. We also welcome reports that the Royal Thai Police has issued over 100 arrest warrants related to migrant smuggling and abuses against migrants—which may include human trafficking, including the warrant for a three-star Army official.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage Thailand to take robust action to combat human trafficking and eliminate forced labor.

*Question.* What role do you see for the private sector—for U.S. companies and Thai companies—in fighting the use of forced labor in Thailand?

*Answer.* The private sector has a key role to play in combating the use of forced labor in Thailand. A significant proportion of trafficking victims in Thailand are found in the seafood industry. For several years, the international community has expressed its concern over the forced labor of foreign migrants in the Thai fishing and onland seafood industries. The United States continues to call on the Thai Government to take significantly greater steps to protect foreign migrants in the fishing and shrimp industries and to punish those who are enslaving foreign workers.

Thailand is the world's third-largest seafood exporter and its products are sold at major retailers around the world. As a result, U.S. and Thai retailers have significant economic influence over the Thai seafood industry and play a vital role in ensuring that supply chains are free from the use of forced labor.

Recently, several large U.S. retailers have engaged major Thai seafood producers to address issues in their supply chain in an effort to combat human trafficking in Thailand's seafood sector. If confirmed, I will encourage private companies to comprehensively address forced labor in their supply chains and help bring together various stakeholders to develop concrete action plans to address this important issue.

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RESPONSES OF WILLIAM A. HEIDT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HEIDT'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

*Question.* If you are confirmed, the most important event that is going to take place during your tenure is the 2018 elections. Are you prepared to be as outspoken as your predecessor, Bill Todd, in publicly criticizing human rights abuses and restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and calling out politically motivated misuses of power for what they are? Do you agree that public diplomacy—and outspoken defense of human rights principles—is an important and ultimately essential diplomatic tool in the Cambodia context?

*Answer.* The 2018 elections will certainly be an important event for Cambodia and represents an opportunity for it to take another step forward toward an enduring and principled democracy. If confirmed, I will advocate both publically and privately for the Cambodian Government to stage free and fair elections, including a free election campaign period in which human rights and the freedoms of speech and assembly are respected. I will also urge and offer assistance to the government to address the irregularities, including voter registration issues, which marked the last election. Public diplomacy is also an important tool, and we will use it, along with other programs including direct diplomacy with government officials and the opposition, targeted assistance aimed at strengthening Cambodia's democratic institutions and people-to-people programs that impart American values to Cambodians. Ambassador Todd has been a tireless advocate for human rights and democracy in Cambodia. If confirmed, I will continue in that tradition.

*Question.* Do you agree that the 1991 Paris Agreements remain binding and that the United States, as a signatory, continues to have specific obligations to promote democracy and human rights in Cambodia, pursuant to the agreement's terms?

*Answer.* The United States, both as a signatory to the 1991 Paris Peace Accords and as a matter of principle, places democracy and human rights promotion as one of our top foreign policy goals in Cambodia. If confirmed, I will continue to support the wide variety of programs that help build a stronger civil society, will continue to emphasize the importance of democracy and human rights with both the government and opposition, and will continue to promote educational and cultural exchanges which expose young Cambodians to American values.

*Question.* The Cambodian Parliament, in the control of Prime Minister Hun Sen, is currently considering a troublingly restrictive new law governing nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). If that law passes in current form, will you work to ensure that the government does not abuse or misuse it to harass or persecute NGOs for their legitimate operations, including reporting and advocacy on human rights issues?

*Answer.* We are very concerned about the draft NGO law. We have spoken out publicly about the law on a number of occasions and have questioned the need for such a far-reaching law. Our Embassy in Phnom Penh continues to lobby the Cambodian Government to pursue full consultations with civil society as the draft law is debated in the National Assembly. If the law passes in its current form, if confirmed, I would closely monitor the treatment of all NGOs, international and domestic, to ensure that the new law is not used to suppress their rights of freedom of association, assembly, and speech. As appropriate, we will also share best practices from the U.S. and other countries on regulating the NGO sector in a way that facilitates the empowerment of civil society while addressing any concerns the government may have about terrorism or coordination between NGOs and the government. Any NGO law should have a light touch and require minimal governmental oversight so that civil society can flourish and play its essential role in a transparent, rights-respecting democracy.

RESPONSES OF DAVID HALE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC  
REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALE'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

*Question.* I have ongoing concerns about Lashkar-e-Taiba and the threat that it poses to the region. I hope that we will see some progress in countering this group and progress in holding its members accountable for the 2008 tragedy in Mumbai. How will you specifically increase pressure on the Pakistani Government to take action against LeT and its counterpart organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa?

*Answer.* I share your concerns regarding Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and believe it is critical that the Mumbai trial move forward and that the Government of Pakistan take steps to dismantle LeT. Pakistan's relations with India will continue to be challenged as long as LeT continues to retain any operational capacity. I understand that this issue has been raised specifically by senior officials in this administration, and if confirmed, I absolutely plan to continue our efforts to engage the Pakistani Government.

*Question.* Several international NGOs have faced challenges in legally registering in Pakistan. Over the past week, Save the Children has been ordered to leave, only to have that order rescinded. This uncertainty has made it very difficult for these

organizations to work in what is already a challenging environment. This is unacceptable. Pakistan needs to understand that undue pressure on these organizations and civil society more broadly will have significant implications for our bilateral relationship. How will you protect the interests of U.S.-funded NGOs in Pakistan?

Answer. The work of international and local NGOs to carry out their development objectives is critical to achieving Pakistan's and our own goals that we have agreed upon with the Government of Pakistan. We respect the Government of Pakistan's need for transparency from INGOs involving their activities within the country. We also agree INGOs must operate within a relevant legal and regulatory framework. However, if confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to establish a transparent and credible process that will allow INGOs, including Save the Children, to work in Pakistan legally.

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

Answer. During my assignments as Ambassador to Jordan and Lebanon, I took specific steps to promote democratic institutions, including through promoting political reforms and elections in Jordan with U.S. Government programming, and by taking active steps to strengthen democratic institutions and civil society in both countries.

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

Answer. As noted in our previously published Human Rights Reports, the most serious human rights problems in Pakistan remain attacks on religious minorities, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, poor implementation and enforcement of laws, gender-based violence, violence against journalists and media organizations, governmental practices and laws which limit freedom of religion (particularly for religious minorities), a weak criminal justice system, widespread forced and exploitative child labor, and human trafficking. I believe that our ongoing rule of law programming in Pakistan has the potential to strengthen the capacity of Pakistani police, prosecutors, and courts—as well as strengthen their relationships with civil society—and is one of the most effective tools we have to promote and protect basic human rights and counter attacks on all Pakistani citizens, including minorities. Our democracy and human rights programming is also very important, especially our support to Pakistani elections and for improving journalist standards and increasing media safety. If confirmed, I plan to advocate for these programs and to engage directly with Pakistani officials on issues of rule of law, democracy, and human rights.

*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 Pakistan in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. I will assess the situation on the ground in Pakistan once I arrive, but I understand that the security environment is a major challenge to our access to many areas of the country. Moreover, I understand it often takes time to receive approval for some of our programs. If confirmed, I plan to engage directly and consistently with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that we can implement important rule of law, democracy, and human rights programming.

*Question.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Pakistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to regularly meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Pakistan.

*Question.* If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy as well as steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of Pakistan end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. If confirmed, I will be personally involved in ensuring robust Leahy vetting occurs, as I have as Ambassador in Lebanon and Jordan. Furthermore, I plan to ensure that the country team, especially officers from the Departments of State and Defense, continue their active engagement in the Leahy vetting process, ensuring that units which have committed gross violations of human rights do not benefit

from U.S. assistance and also helping the Government of Pakistan address and prevent human rights violations. Coordination with our colleagues in Washington will also be critical to ensuring the success of our vetting process.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALE'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

*Question.* A lot of policy decisions regarding Pakistan are currently made by the SRAP (Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan), but the one issue you will be most responsible for is crisis management if there is some incident like the Raymond Davis case or the Mumbai attacks. While there are certainly many other scenarios that could occur, how would you handle these situations?

*Answer.* I will be absolutely focused on ensuring Embassy Islamabad and the constituent posts in Pakistan are fully prepared to manage a crisis, whether related to policy, a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, or other scenarios, as you rightly note are very possible. Recognizing that no two situations are identical, I have had significant crisis management experience in my career, including during my tenure as Ambassador in Jordan and Lebanon. I understand there is close coordination between Embassy Islamabad and SRAP, as well as with other relevant Department of State offices, including Diplomatic Security, the Office of the Under Secretary for Management, and with interagency partners, including the National Security Staff and the Department of Defense. I will prioritize maintaining these relationships as part of a strong, sustained contingency planning program. Above all I would use my relationship with senior Pakistani officials as needed to manage the situation.

If confirmed, I will work assiduously to build upon and strengthen the critical relationships with the Pakistani leadership that the current Ambassador and Country Team have established—and to ensure that the U.S. has the broadest possible set of contacts with senior Pakistani counterparts that could be drawn upon when needed. Finally, I would like to note that as I have stressed throughout my remarks, I believe the best contingency planning with host governments comes through sustained engagement, and increasing cooperation on areas of mutual interest. I believe this is the path our relations with Pakistan are currently on, and I look forward to working to further strengthen that engagement in support of our national interests.

*Question.* China is increasingly active in Pakistan, more than they have ever been. What do you believe is their goal in the Pakistan and the region? Do you think they will succeed and how would that success affect the U.S. relationship with Pakistan?

*Answer.* China and Pakistan have long shared close ties. We and China share a concern about Pakistan's stability, and wish to see the elimination of terrorist safe havens and support networks. We also share a desire to see a Pakistan that is economically stable, which will require a resolution to Pakistan's long-term energy crisis and an expansion in Pakistan's regional economic integration with its neighbors, especially India and Afghanistan. The administration believes the best approach is to expand engagement with both China and Pakistan on all issues, and seek to cooperate in areas of common interest. At a basic level, we do not view Pakistan as a theater for zero-sum competition between the United States and China. We believe China's engagement in Pakistan potentially can contribute to peace and stability in Pakistan and the broader region. This would help to achieve U.S. national security objectives in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the broader region.

*Question.* What success have we seen come from the Strategic Dialogue beyond formally banning the Haqqani network from Pakistan?

*Answer.* The Strategic Dialogue provides a comprehensive framework for our engagement with Pakistan, ensuring that the issues of most importance to our two governments are addressed in a significant and sustained manner, by senior officials from each side. There have been a number of notable successes: a greater focus on nuclear security and nonproliferation; progress on countering improvised explosive devices ("C-IED"); close cooperation on counterterrorism objectives and delivery of the hardware needed to achieve those objectives; increased trade, investment opportunities, and reform efforts; improvements in the energy sector; and greater access to educational opportunities.

However, I would note that the most important outcome of the Strategic Dialogue, as relaunched by Secretary Kerry in August 2013, is that it has put the bilateral relationship on a firmer foundation, grounded in our respective interests, and characterized by a more regular, forthright exchange of views—often in private. This

progress is carried forward by our daily engagements in Pakistan, involving a robust Country Team representing the full range of U.S. departments and agencies.

*Question.* Can Pakistan truly grow economically and reduce its dependence on Western aid without a rapprochement with India? How do you assess the potential?

*Answer.* We absolutely believe that greater regional trade is important for the stability, prosperity, and security of the region. We will continue to encourage India and Pakistan to find ways to increase trade and cross-border connections. However, Pakistan has a significant number of domestic reforms that are required to grow its economy, regardless of its international trade. Many factors, including reform and energy sector investments can help Pakistan grow economically. This is why we have supported PM Nawaz Sharif's economic agenda, the government's engagement with the IMF, and used our assistance funds and our Strategic Dialogue to promote reform. As a result Pakistan is in better macroeconomic health than when it began the IMF program.

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AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALE'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

*Question.* Pakistan is one of the worst violators of religious freedom in the world, in particular due, to the combination of government persecution through the blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws and government inaction by not arresting perpetrators of mob violence or cracking down on militant groups. However, the State Department never has designated Pakistan as a "country of particular concern" for its particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

◆ How can this be explained?

*Answer.* Human rights and religious freedom are among our highest objectives worldwide and in Pakistan. If confirmed, I will plan to raise these issues at the highest levels of the Pakistani Government and will use all the tools at my disposal to promote progress in these areas, recognizing that we also have many other critical foreign policy objectives in Pakistan. If I am confirmed, once I am in Pakistan I will make my own assessment of what may be effective and will consult closely with SRAP, DRL, the Secretary, and others—including Congress—on any consideration of a CPC designation.

*Question.* Sadly, no religious community is immune from violence in Pakistan. Recent months have witnessed an attack on two churches in Lahore, a brazen attack on the busload of Ismaili Muslims in Karachi, ongoing violence against Ahmadi Muslims, and targeted attacks against Shia Muslims. Despite the Pakistani Supreme Court ordering the government to create special protection forces for religious minorities, no such actions have been taken.

◆ What will you do to press the Pakistani Government to better protect religious minorities and crack down on militant groups that target religious communities? How can the U.S. Government provide support toward this effort?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I plan to raise protection for religious minorities at the highest levels of the Pakistani Government. Our immediate priority should be to identify the obstacles to improving religious freedom conditions in Pakistan and think creatively about ways to work with the Government of Pakistan to change those circumstances for the better. I believe the U.S. Government should continue to consult with the Government of Pakistan on how to prevent further atrocities against religious minorities, including by sharing information about attacks, designating the leaders of the organizations as terrorists both domestically and at the U.N., and assisting with rule of law and investigations training for Pakistani law enforcement officials.

*Question.* While Pakistan overwhelmingly meets the country of particular concern (CPC) threshold, the U.S. Government can take other steps. For instance, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that the U.S. Government create a special bilateral engagement with the Pakistan Minorities Commission and religious minorities in Parliament. There are other possibilities for positive engagement, such as training for provincial minority affairs offices.

◆ What actions will you take to positively engage Pakistan on these issues? Would you support a special U.S./Pakistan bilateral engagement around issues of religious tolerance?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will look closely at the USCIRF recommendations. Upon initial review, I see no impediment to establishing a deeper dialogue with the Gov-

ernment of Pakistan to explore ways to promote religious freedom and protect religious minorities. The IRF Act gives us several tools to promote religious freedom, CPC designations being only one of them. Additional tools include bilateral and multilateral engagement, denying visas to the United States to foreign government officials who are responsible for severe violations of religious freedom, and implementing programming to promote religious tolerance. The Government of Pakistan has engaged us more vigorously in the aftermath of the attack on the Army Public School in Pesbawar, the Government of Pakistan has engaged with us on issues related to countering violent extremism. I believe, given Pakistan's stated recognition of the threat posed to its citizens by those who foment sectarian tension, that there is reason to expect greater cooperation in this critical area.

*Question.* Pakistan leads the world in jailing people for blasphemy. According to USCIRF, almost 40 people either are on death row or serving life sentences for the "crime" of blasphemy, a statistic unmatched anywhere else in the world. People like Aasia Bibi continue to be jailed, while others are killed by mobs—such as the Christian couple that was lynched to death in November and their bodies were thrown into a brick kiln. Pakistanis brave enough to confront blasphemy risk their lives including Salaman Taseer, Shahbaz Bhatti, and more recently human rights lawyer Rashid Rehman.

- ♦ As Pakistan is considering adding much-needed procedural safeguards to the blasphemy law, how will you work to proactively encourage Pakistan to see that these changes are made? How can you press the Pakistanis to arrest and aggressively prosecute participants in mob violence, as oftentimes they are charged but never prosecuted?

*Answer.* The Government of Pakistan's consideration of adding procedural safeguards to protect against abuse of the blasphemy law is a positive step, and one that I will support actively in my engagement with senior Pakistani officials, if confirmed. All too often, the blasphemy laws are abused by private citizens with other objectives in mind, such as to gain an advantage in land disputes, or as retribution for other disputes. I understand that as a matter of current policy, we regularly express our concerns to Pakistani authorities about the state of religious freedom in Pakistan. We continue to encourage the Pakistani Government to repeal the blasphemy law, and to hold accountable those who commit acts of violence in the name of religion. The administration urges fair and transparent proceedings where defendants and lawyers can safely argue their cases.

If confirmed, upon my arrival it will be a personal priority in Pakistan to see that more can be done to encourage the change that we seek.

*Question.* In recent weeks, Pakistan has been taking actions to heavily regulate NGOs operating in their country, including temporarily shutting down Save the Children's offices. The government is considering new NGO law which would require NGOs to operate under the Ministry of Interior.

- ♦ If this law is passed, will you work to ensure that the government does not abuse or misuse it to harass or persecute NGOs for their legitimate operations, including reporting and advocacy on human rights issues?

*Answer.* The work of international and local NGOs to carry out their development objectives is critical to achieving Pakistan's and our own goals that we have agreed upon with the Government of Pakistan. NGOs must operate within the regulations of the host government. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that NGOs are able to operate legally and effectively.

RESPONSES OF SHEILA GWALTNEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GWALTNEY'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

*Question.* U.S. policy has sought to support regional integration as a way to improve economic success. Given the withdrawal of the U.S. from Manas Air Base, the deep relationship with Russia, the growing influence of China in the region, and difficult relations with neighbors, what prospects do you have for U.S. policy in Kyrgyz Republic? What can we realistically accomplish?

*Answer.* Geographic proximity, economic links, and historical ties give Russia and China strong influence in the region. The Kyrgyz people have long had complex relationships with both of those nations. We fully support the aspirations of the Kyrgyz Republic to pursue a multivector foreign and economic policy, and we do not

accept any assertions that the Kyrgyz Republic must choose between the United States and Russia or China.

Since Kyrgyzstan's independence nearly 24 years ago, our bilateral relationship has been based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. The basis of our engagement is to support a sovereign, independent, stable, and secure state that has good relations with its neighbors and is able to provide opportunities for its people. For example, we welcomed the strong support of the Kyrgyz Republic for the CASA-1000 energy project as an example of better regional integration and cooperation. As recently as April bilateral consultations, the Kyrgyz Government has made clear its strong interest in maintaining a cooperative, productive relationship with the United States.

U.S. engagement since 1991 has made an important impact on the Kyrgyz Republic. Our assistance programs have made significant contributions to help build democratic institutions, to promote stability and prosperity in the country, to support educational exchanges, and to enhance opportunities for U.S. businesses through an improved investment climate.

The Kyrgyz Republic has a talented population with half of its citizens under the age of 25. Over 1,000 of these young men and women have traveled to the United States through the Future Leaders Exchange Program, and many more have experienced the people and values of the United States through our public diplomacy programs and through interaction with the over 1,000 Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in the Kyrgyz Republic. If confirmed, my team and I will work energetically to strengthen, deepen, and broaden the relationship between the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic.

*Question.* While U.S. policy has focused on support for democratic institutions in the country, how do you see the upcoming parliamentary elections proceeding? Will we see active participation from civil society or should we be concerned about undue influence?

*Answer.* The United States is committed to supporting the Kyrgyz Republic's continued democratic development. While democracy is broader than just elections, they are a critical component. We encourage the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen its democratic gains by holding free and fair elections in conformity with international standards. The Kyrgyz Republic has held three successful national elections since the 2010 revolution—the constitutional referendum in 2010, the parliamentary elections in 2010, and the Presidential election in 2011. The upcoming 2015 parliamentary election and Presidential elections in 2017 will be key indicators of the country's democratic progress.

The Kyrgyz Republic has a vibrant civil society, whose active participation helps reinforce the country's young democracy. In previous elections, the national NGO Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society played an exceptional role monitoring the voting process. There remain, however, significant administrative capacity challenges in the Kyrgyz Republic's ability to manage elections. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with civil society and the Kyrgyz Government to assist that nation to solidify its democratic institutions.

*Question.* With the drawdown in Afghanistan what concerns do you have regarding an increase in terrorism and drug trafficking in the country? Are we seeing an actual increase or is the government overstating what is occurring?

*Answer.* As noted in the Department of State's Country Report on Terrorism, there were no reported terrorist attacks in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2014, although security forces arrested several individuals suspected of affiliation with terrorist organizations and terrorist activities abroad. Drug trafficking routes through Central Asia are a long-standing concern and, if confirmed, I intend to work with the Kyrgyz Government and international partners to increase local capacity and enhance regional cooperation to combat this problem.

Our security cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic focuses on enhancing border security, strengthening regional counternarcotics efforts, countering terrorism and violent extremism, promoting professional conduct and respect for human rights by security forces, and working toward a stable, secure Afghanistan. We have developed the Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI) in coordination with the Drug Enforcement Administration, to intensify efforts against drug trafficking in the region. Expanding our cooperation in this arena not only helps the Kyrgyz Republic deal with security challenges, it helps solidify our diplomatic ties and deepen and broaden our partnerships.

The government of the Kyrgyz Republic is increasingly aware of the threat of terrorism in the region and the dangers of recruitment of Kyrgyz citizens by violent extremist organizations. The Kyrgyz Republic sent a high-level delegation to attend



the White House summit on countering violent extremism in February. With respect to Afghanistan, in April 2015, a U.S. interagency Afghanistan Briefing Team traveled to the Kyrgyz Republic to share assessments and explore avenues for better cooperation with top officials in the Kyrgyz Government. The Kyrgyz Government has voiced its support for the current Afghan Government and has embraced the CASA-1000 project that is planned to supply electricity in support of Afghanistan's development.

RESPONSES OF ATUL KESHAP, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA AND TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

*Question.* What is the extent of U.S. security cooperation with Sri Lanka? What are the specific conditions under which the U.S. would enhance our security relationship with Sri Lanka? What specific progress on accountability and reconciliation will the U.S. require from the Sri Lankans before moving forward on the security relationship?

*Answer.* U.S. security assistance for Sri Lanka remains limited by the policies that were in place during the previous government and focuses on four areas key to our national interests: maritime security, disaster response, peacekeeping training, and educational support. Examples include the provision of demining equipment and training to help clear mines remaining after the civil war. For the expenditure of approximately \$500,000 in the last year, Sri Lankan students have attended courses including International Law of Military Operations, Gender-Based Violence and Women's Health, Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights, Legal Aspects of Combating Corruption, and Approaches for the Re-integration of Ex-Combatants.

We can envision benefits to both our countries, and to peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region as a result of a strengthened military relationship contingent upon progress on accountability, human rights, and reconciliation. Future security assistance and programming will be greatly influenced by successful initiatives to credibly hold individuals accountable for human rights violations or violations of international humanitarian law as well as greater institutional reforms. We will continue to vet those security force units that seek U.S. assistance, and consistent with U.S. law and policy, we will not provide assistance to a unit if we have credible information that it committed a gross violation of human rights.

If confirmed, I will continue to urge reforms to ensure the Sri Lanka military functions as a professional and accountable peacetime force, dedicated to human rights, rule of law, and democracy.

*Question.* What are the obstacles to reaching reconciliation with Tamil communities in Sri Lanka? How might the United States best assist in this process? Do you support the release of the UNHRC on war crimes in Sri Lanka report this year?

*Answer.* Reconciliation will not happen all at once; it requires time and concrete actions. The current situation in Sri Lanka developed over 30 years of conflict and several difficult post-conflict years. The Sirisena government is working to restore mutual trust and confidence, for the benefit of all Sri Lankans of all ethnicities and religions. For the sake of future peace and prosperity, it is vitally important to get this right.

The Sirisena government has made a public commitment to take credible steps to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation in relation to human rights abuses and conflict-related crimes. Such processes are never easy, but the United States will continue to support credible efforts to address these important and difficult issues in a way that facilitates reconciliation as well as a durable and lasting peace for the Sri Lankan people.

We support the release of the U.N. investigation's report as part of building a peaceful, prosperous, inclusive Sri Lanka. Our assistance program over the last 5 years has sought to strengthen the participation of Tamil and other minority and marginalized communities. Moving forward, our expanding program would continue those efforts, including through economic empowerment, strengthening civil society, fostering inclusion of diverse religious and community leaders, and helping support the rule of law.

*Question.* Democratic backsliding in the Maldives is very concerning and is potentially damaging to the U.S.-Maldives bilateral relationship including military to military activities. How will you emphasize the importance of the rule of law in the



Maldives? What levers does the United States have to encourage a more democratic course in the country?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue to express our government's concern at the lack of appropriate criminal procedures during recent trials of political figures, including reports that the trials fell well short of Maldivian and international standards for due process. We are also concerned about actions that undermine democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression and assembly.

If confirmed, I would work with the government, civil society groups, and international partners to urge the Maldivian Government to uphold its commitments to rule of law, democratic principles, and human rights.

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

*Answer.* I place the highest emphasis on advancing American values of human rights, religious freedom, and democracy. As human rights officer at our Embassy in Morocco early in my career, I learned how crucial it is to help ensure strong protections for religious and ethnic minorities and NGO and political activists.

In assignments working on South Asia spanning the past decade, I engaged with governments across the region to urge greater protection for women, religious minorities, civil society, human rights defenders, and labor rights activists, and worked to raise awareness of the perniciousness of trafficking in persons.

While progress in these areas can be slow, I am most gratified by efforts undertaken by the United States, including at the United Nations in Geneva, to highlight the need for a credible process of reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

As Office Director for U.N. Human Rights from 2008–2010, as Office Director for Sri Lanka 2010–2012, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asia, 2013 to present, I contributed to efforts by the U.S. and other countries to highlight this matter in the U.N. Human Rights Council, including the passage of three important resolutions on Sri Lanka.

The political transition brought about by the January election has provided the opportunity for Sri Lanka to achieve enduring peace and prosperity, and true reconciliation if the government continues to advance democracy, human rights, accountability and political inclusion.

If confirmed, I would strive fully to advance the cause of democracy and human rights in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

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

*Answer.* We want to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. We want to help build a lasting peace and fellowship among Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious communities, including credible justice, accountability, and reconciliation that can facilitate closure for those who suffered and lost loved ones during the war.

It is important to get this right, and the U.N. and international community can lend useful insight to the efforts of the Sri Lankan people. We would assess how best to focus resources, including our assistance budget and Mission Colombo's expertise, to helping Sri Lankan-led efforts to facilitate closure.

In Maldives, we are worried about the current state of human rights, rule of law, and lack of due process. All citizens should be allowed to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

If confirmed, I would continue to urge the Maldivian Government to take steps to restore confidence in democracy and the rule of law, including through social media, a powerful vehicle for information-sharing in Maldives. I would continue to encourage and support democracy, judicial independence, and the rule of law in Maldives, joined by regional and international partners who share our strong concerns.

*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 Sri Lanka and Maldives in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

*Answer.* In Sri Lanka, for any justice and accountability process to be meaningful, it needs to be led and owned by the Sri Lankan people and needs to be credible

and transparent. This is too complex a process for any country to tackle by itself. Sri Lanka can benefit from the assistance of the international community, and we stand ready to support those efforts.

In Maldives, the challenges include politically motivated prosecutions against critics of the courts and government as well as attacks on independent institutions and civil liberties. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Maldivian Government to take steps to restore confidence in its hard-fought democracy.

*Question.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Sri Lanka and Maldives?

Answer. Yes, absolutely; I welcome such opportunities for dialogue. In my previous assignments I have cultivated robust consultation with local and international human rights organizations. If confirmed, I will further this commitment as I believe maintaining this dialogue is crucial to informing U.S. Government policies, advancing our values, and ensuring all voices are heard.

*Question.* If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy.

Answer. Human rights vetting consistent with the Leahy amendment is an integral and essential part of U.S. assistance programs worldwide. The Leahy amendment helps safeguard against perpetrators of gross violations of human rights from benefiting from our training and assistance programs. If confirmed, I will ensure Embassy Colombo will continue scrupulously to adhere to the requirements of the Leahy amendment, and the Department will vet all potential security assistance recipients.

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AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

*Question.* Given the new government how do you see Sri Lanka's rebalance toward China, the United States, and India? What policies should we be considering to assist their reforms? Do you believe their shift is sustainable?

Answer. Our overarching goal is to see Sri Lanka become more prosperous, stable, and secure to the benefit of all of its citizens and to the broader region. The United States promotes regional integration and supports Sri Lanka's cooperation with its neighbors across the Indo-Pacific region, particularly with democracies such as India, with which Sri Lanka shares bonds of history, culture, and traditions of democracy and rule of law. To the extent that India, China, and others in the region lend their energy and support to the efforts of Sri Lanka to strengthen their democracy and enhance their productivity, we welcome those efforts. To the extent that countries in the region contribute to and uphold a rules-based order, commit themselves to peaceful resolution of disputes, and defend freedom of navigation and commerce, we welcome those efforts. To the extent that countries in the region engage in trade and investment that meets the highest ethical and environmental standards, as exhibited by American companies, it can have a positive impact on living standards and prosperity.

We welcome the new Sri Lankan Government's professed desire to partner more closely with the United States, the United Nations, and the international community. It is for the people of Sri Lanka to determine their politics, but the international community can and should help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including freedom of expression, including by the media, and freedom of religion.

If confirmed, I would work with the government, civil society, and other partners to play a constructive role in helping Sri Lanka achieve its potential and deliver on the ambitions of its people, including meaningful, concrete steps to address outstanding concerns related to democratic governance, respect for human rights, reconciliation, justice, and accountability.

I do believe the shift is sustainable. The Sri Lanka voters turned out in record numbers to send a clear signal that they want to return their country to its roots of democracy, inclusiveness, and rule of law. I believe the people of Sri Lanka will continue to insist that the government move in that direction, and, if confirmed, I would seek to add my energy to U.S. efforts to help them realize their positive vision.

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AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

*Question.* President Maithripala Sirisena is positioned to lead his country in a new direction that respects religious diversity and freedom. He said in a February 2015 speech, "While protecting the country's main religion Buddhism, we also protect the rights and freedom of Hindu, Muslim, and Catholic people in practicing their religion and create consensus among them to build up this country." Since coming into office, he has created three new ministries to handle religious affairs for the Muslim, Christian, and Hindu communities respectively. In addition, the special police unit created by the former government has been disbanded.

◆ How can the U.S. Government strongly encourage the positive movement that has occurred in recent months? What programs can be undertaken to deepen respect for religious diversity and religious freedom?

*Answer.* The United States promotes respect for religious diversity and freedom of religion or belief and strongly supports the Sri Lankan Government's recent steps to foster reconciliation between Sri Lanka's religious communities. In a welcome departure from the politics of the recent past, President Sirisena and his administration have exhibited in word and deed a genuine desire to achieve the pluralistic society voters demanded in January.

It is for the people of Sri Lanka to determine their politics, but the international community and the U.S. can, and should, help the Sri Lankan people strengthen civil society and human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Congress, the Sri Lankan Government, civil society, religious leaders and others to promote respect for freedom of religion or belief and religious diversity, and would work to further U.S. Embassy programs aimed at bringing religious communities together.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS

*Question.* Reconciliation Efforts.—The government of President Sirisena, elected in January 2015, has made reconciliation one of its primary goals. What concrete steps has the government taken toward reconciliation and what more do you think needs to be done? For instance, the Tamil National Alliance said right after the election that the release of political prisoners, return of land, and demilitarization were immediately actionable to show steps toward reconciliation. Have these been accomplished? Will Tamils, Muslims, and other minority groups be given equal opportunities under this new government?

*Answer.* The Sirisena government has made a public commitment to take credible steps to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation in relation to human rights violations and abuses. Such processes are always challenging, but the United States will continue to support credible efforts to address these important and difficult issues in a way that facilitates reconciliation as well as a durable and lasting peace for the Sri Lankan people. We have welcomed important steps taken by the Sirisena administration, including releasing political prisoners on bail and returning some land in the North and East, as well as gestures of conciliation, such as allowing the singing of the National Anthem in Tamil.

The Sri Lanka voters turned out in record numbers to send a clear signal that they want to return their country to its roots of democracy, inclusiveness, and rule of law. While it is for the people of Sri Lanka to determine their politics, the administration wants to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and respect for human rights and to pursue an inclusive government that allows for meaningful participation by all Sri Lankans of all ethnic and religious groups. If confirmed, that will be my goal as well.

*Question.* UNHRC Role.—Since the United States joined the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2012, we have led three resolutions on Sri Lanka regarding accountability for crimes committed during and after the war, and on ongoing human rights abuses. Should Sri Lanka stay on the agenda of the UNHRC? Does the United States plan to lead a fourth resolution on Sri Lanka before the end of our term in December 2015? What are the dangers inherent in allowing Sri Lanka to slip from international attention, such that accountability is pursued unchecked by international actors through domestic efforts on the island?

*Answer.* We welcome the new government's professed desire to partner more closely with the United States, the United Nations, and the international commu-

nity. We are heartened by the new government's engagement with the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner in Geneva.

Over the past 5 years, the United States has been steadfast in pursuit of justice, accountability, and reconciliation. The new government in Sri Lanka presents an opportunity for a more collaborative approach. Our focus is on urging a credible process. It is too early at this juncture to determine what our position will be later this year. If confirmed, I will work to encourage Sri Lankan engagement with the U.N. on these vitally important issues, consistent with the attention and focus we have dedicated in recent years.

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