

NOMINATIONS OF THE 110TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 30 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
110TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

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JIM WEBB, Virginia	DAVID VITTER, Louisiana

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

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

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
110TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr., Delaware, *Chairman*

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ROBERT P. CASEY, Pennsylvania	DAVID VITTER, Louisiana
JIM WEBB, Virginia	JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming*

ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

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

*Note: Appointed February 12, 2008.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2008, AFTERNOON

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

Gfoeller-Volkoff, Tatiana C., to be Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan
Olson, Richard G., Jr., to be Ambassador to the United Arab
Emirates
Pearce, David D., to be Ambassador to the People's Democratic Re-
public of Algeria
Sison, Hon. Michele J., to be U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:32 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry and Coleman.

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

Senator KERRY. This hearing will come to order.

Thank you all very much for taking the time to be here. I think Senator Coleman is going to be here, but I thought we would just start and get going anyway.

Each of your testimonies will be submitted to the record in full as if delivered in full, and I assume you are prepared to deliver summary comments.

We want to thank each of you for your willingness to serve, for your distinguished records in various parts of the world, not all of them which are all that glamorous. And we certainly are exceedingly pleased to have such a professional group of ambassador-designees before the committee. I think a lot of members of the committee, because we deal with these issues, have particular respect for the careers you have chosen and for the sacrifices that go with it, both your own personally and those of your families. So I think this is a particularly qualified group, and we are very grateful for your willingness to serve yet further at a difficult time. Service abroad nowadays is, in most places, not what it used to be and, in many places, can be both a risky and demanding undertaking.

Let me just ask, if I can, do each of you have family members who are here? When you are called on, if you would introduce your support structure, we would appreciate it. That would be very nice.

Yesterday Ambassador Sison and I had the opportunity to be able to chat a little bit. Our nominee to be Ambassador to Leb-

anon—and we are fortunate to have someone who has already served in the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, India, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Benin, Togo, and Haiti. Ambassador Sison has already been serving as our Charge d'Affaires in Lebanon, and so comes to this posting with a real understanding of the situation there that will more than serve her well.

Mr. Richard Olson, the nominee to be Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, has also had a very impressive career, currently serving as the deputy chief of mission to the United States mission to NATO in Brussels. He has had previous postings to the UAE, as well as assignments in Mexico, Uganda, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia.

I will also note we had the pleasure of confirming Mr. Olson's wife, Deborah Jones, as Ambassador to Kuwait in February. So the committee has confidence that you know where to go to get advice if needed. [Laughter.]

Mr. David Pearce, the nominee to be Ambassador to Algeria, has received a number of commendations for his exemplary service over the past 25 years. He comes to us now from Iraq where he has been serving as senior advisor to the ambassador. He brings extensive previous experience in the Middle East, having also served in Israel, Syria, the UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Tatiana Gfoeller-Volkoff, the nominee to be Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, has also had a distinguished career of over 20 years that includes postings in Russia, Poland, Bahrain, and NATO headquarters, and brings significant experience in the region, having served as the deputy chief of mission in Turkmenistan. Most recently she served as the consul general in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

As she knows, I was in Jeddah a few weeks ago and had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff's husband, Michael, who is doing an outstanding job as the deputy chief of mission and who I learned is a legend in the region. And I enjoyed enormously my conversations with him, I might add. He is a very intelligent fellow.

All of you have very challenging posts and challenging jobs ahead of you, needless to say. Our relationships with Lebanon, the UAE, Algeria, Kyrgyz Republic—all offer significant opportunities but also real challenges.

In Lebanon, the mounting tensions and the political stalemate between Hezbollah and the March 14 coalition that began in December of 2006 exploded this May for all of us to see on television, and the violence left over 80 people dead and hundreds more wounded. A full-blown civil war was averted by a Qatari-mediated accord in May that resulted in the election of Michel Sleiman as a consensus choice for President, and, in effect, gave Hezbollah some of the political power that they had been seeking.

On July 11, a new cabinet was finally announced, but this fragile coalition government will only last until the new elections are held early in 2009.

By all accounts, Syria continues to interfere in Lebanon's domestic affairs, supplying Hezbollah with weapons and support that have enabled it to act as a "state within a state." I was recently there and met with many of the various factions, parties, with obviously the exception of Hezbollah, though I met with their straw

people in the parliament and elsewhere. It is safe to say that Hezbollah has become more powerful than ever and has shown a greater efficiency in many cases than the government itself in its ability to deliver services funded, of course, by Iran and Syria.

Simply put, we need to do more to help the Siniora government to demonstrate it can deliver for the people, but obviously in a way that does not make it look like it is just doing so at our behest and sort of as our surrogate, which it is not. So there will be a requirement for significant economic assistance and continuing efforts to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and the civil society. And I was struck in traveling around Lebanon how palpable the danger is. It is felt by every leader and by all those who are visitors. And no society should live under such danger in conducting its daily affairs.

There is much cause for concern about Hezbollah, but its continuing refusal to lay down its arms and recent developments may bring about new opportunities. The historic announcement that Syria and Lebanon intend to establish diplomatic relations may allow for meaningful movement on the vital issue of respect for Lebanon's sovereignty.

The Hariri Tribunal can also provide an opportunity to bring some closure to tragic political violence that has plagued Lebanon for generations now.

And Israel's offer to negotiate with Lebanon on all outstanding issues could be an opening for welcomed progress and improving relations after years of tensions.

In the Gulf, the UAE has been a very important strategic ally, hosting a significant United States Air Force presence at Al Dhafra Air Base and allowing us to use naval facilities that support United States operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have strengthened this partnership through the sale of major weapons systems, with significant new arms sales currently developing. I look forward to hearing from Mr. Olson about how the United States is enhancing its security and cooperation with the UAE.

At the same time, concerns remain, as they do in many parts of that region, on issues of human rights and human trafficking. And despite limited improvement on democratic reforms, including strictly controlled elections in 2006 by the Federal National Council, the State Department found that numerous restrictions remain on freedoms of speech and assembly. We're aware that the State Department has upgraded UAE's designation on human trafficking. We look forward to hearing how we can encourage continued improvement on this and other areas of concern.

U.S. relations with Algeria have improved in recent years, and we now enjoy a significant level of cooperation on several counterterrorism and security efforts, including information-sharing and participation in the NATO Mediterranean dialog and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. This is especially important given the emergence of terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb which claimed responsibility for a string of horrific attacks in Algeria and a number of foreign fighters in Iraq, who regrettably come from Algeria.

Human rights concerns are of concern in that area. Many people question the need for Algeria to maintain its decades-old state of

emergency, which has reportedly allowed for human rights abuses by state security forces.

The challenge is to continue to strengthen our security cooperation while encouraging Algeria to take significant steps to improve its record on many issues, such as cracking down on human trafficking, easing restrictions on freedoms of speech, assembly, press, and association.

The Kyrgyz Republic is an important United States ally in a very troubled part of the world. It provided essential assistance following 9/11 particularly in letting us use the Manas Air Base, and this base still serves as a vital logistics hub for our operations in Afghanistan. In fact, nearly 100 percent of our supplies to Afghanistan transit through it.

While this partnership and United States efforts to assist Kyrgyzstan on security and economic improvements are key areas of our relationship, we also have a duty to stress the importance of fair governance in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, we are concerned that the 2007 constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections, which were not deemed to have met international standards, represented a missed opportunity to sustain democratic progress of the 2005 Presidential election.

So I will ask each of you, if you would, to limit your comments to about 10 minutes opening, maybe less even, and then we will have an opportunity to have a dialog on these issues. Thank you.

Ambassador Sison, do you want to start? Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON**

Ambassador SISON. Mr. Chairman, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Lebanon. I would like to introduce my sister, Vicki Sison Morimoto, just behind me with her husband, Miles, and daughters, Emiko and Michiko, who have come up from North Carolina today.

Senator KERRY. Thank you. Welcome. We are glad to have you here today.

Ambassador SISON. I have served in Beirut as Charge d'Affaires ad interim since February of this year, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the extraordinary decision made by Chairman Biden to agree to Secretary Rice's request that I be sent to Lebanon to serve as Charge in February, pending agreement and ahead of these Senate confirmation hearings. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, interested Members of Congress, and other Americans to represent the American people and to continue to advance United States goals in Lebanon.

I have served our country as a Foreign Service officer since 1982. Over the past 26 years, I have done my very best to represent the United States in a series of challenging assignments. As a first-generation American, I am especially proud to represent our country abroad. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunities and the many, many privileges that our great Nation offers its citizens.

Mr. Chairman, the United States, indeed, has important interests in Lebanon. If confirmed, I will work hard to advance these interests. Lebanon is at the forefront of our efforts to promote de-

mocracy, promote human rights and freedoms, and to combat extremism in the Middle East. Lebanon, as you note, has undergone seismic changes over the past several years, from the assassination of former Prime Minister of Rafiq Hariri and subsequent Cedar Revolution of 2005, to the devastating July 2006 war and the ensuing political stalemate that ended only this May 2008 with the Doha Agreement and the election of President Michel Sleiman, and then the subsequent formation of a national unity government on July 11, headed by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora.

Now, we should remember that it was the Lebanese citizens themselves who took to the streets in 2005 to end Syria's occupation and demanded a sovereign, democratic state free from foreign interference. The Lebanese people also called at that time on the international community to investigate Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri's assassination and related crimes through the U.N. International Independent Investigation Commission and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

One concrete measure of United States support for the Lebanese people's aspirations for a democratic, sovereign, stable, and prosperous Lebanon is our robust United States bilateral assistance program. Since 2006, the United States has committed over \$1 billion to help Lebanon strengthen its state institutions and to rebuild, reform, and realize its economic potential. With these funds, the United States is training and equipping the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces, the police, to support their deployment throughout Lebanon to provide security for the Lebanese people. As we saw in May of this year, Hezbollah and other armed groups continue to threaten the peace and security of the Lebanese people and their neighbors in contravention of U.N. Security Council resolutions. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Lebanese Government to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces to ensure that Lebanon and thereby the region is more stable and more secure.

U.S. bilateral assistance programs also include judicial reform, education, entrepreneurial skill-building, support for civil society, and electoral law reform initiatives. Such United States engagement can do much to help the Lebanese people realize their dreams of a sovereign, prosperous and democratic state.

While the United States has a number of critical interests in Lebanon, my highest priority, if confirmed, will be the safety of the dedicated men and women serving under my leadership, both American and locally engaged Lebanese staff, as well as the safety of all Americans living, working, and traveling in Lebanon. Each day at Embassy Beirut, my staff and I pass the embassy's memorial to the 337 American and Lebanese colleagues who have lost their lives serving the United States Government at United States Embassy Beirut. We all serve in their memory and in their honor.

Mr. Chairman, I want once again to express my sincere appreciation for this opportunity to address you. I look forward, if confirmed, to seeing you and your staff in Beirut. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Sison follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MICHELE J. SISON,
NOMINEE TO BE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Lebanon. I have served in Beirut as charge d'affaires ad interim since February of this year.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the extraordinary decision made by Chairman Biden to agree to Secretary Rice's request that I be sent to Lebanon to serve as charge d'affaires pending agreement and ahead of these Senate confirmation hearings. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, interested members of Congress, and other Americans to represent the American people and to continue to advance United States goals in Lebanon.

I have served our country as a Foreign Service officer since 1982. Over the past 26 years, I have done my very best to represent the United States in a series of challenging assignments in Haiti, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Pakistan, and most recently, as the United States Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

As a first-generation American, I am especially proud to represent our country abroad. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunities and the many privileges that our great Nation offers its citizens. Also, I'm pleased today to introduce my sister, Vicki Sison Morimoto, and her family—Miles, Michiko, Andy, and Emiko—who drove up from North Carolina to be here this afternoon. I also want to recognize my two daughters, Alexandra and Jessica. The girls are college students and out in Flagstaff, AZ this summer, but are real Foreign Service troopers, having been raised in West Africa, India, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has important interests in Lebanon—interests that I will work hard to advance, if confirmed. Lebanon is at the forefront of United States efforts to promote democracy, protect human rights and freedoms, and to combat extremism in the Middle East. Lebanon has undergone seismic changes over the past several years, from the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and subsequent Cedar Revolution of 2005, to the devastating July 2006 war and the ensuing political stalemate that ended only this May 2008 with the Doha Agreement, election of President Michel Sleiman, and subsequent formation of a national unity government headed by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora on July 11.

We should remember that it was the Lebanese themselves who took to the streets in 2005 to end Syria's occupation and demand a sovereign, democratic state free from foreign interference. The Lebanese people also called on the international community at that time to investigate Prime Minister Hariri's assassination and related crimes through the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

One concrete measure of United States support for the Lebanese people's aspirations for a democratic, sovereign, prosperous, and stable Lebanon is our robust United States bilateral assistance program. Since 2006, the United States has committed over \$1 billion to help Lebanon strengthen its state institutions and to rebuild, reform, and realize its economic potential. With these funds, the United States is training and equipping the Lebanese Army and the Internal Security Forces to support their deployment throughout Lebanon to provide security for the Lebanese people. As we saw in May of this year, Hezbollah and other illegal armed groups continue to threaten the peace and security of the Lebanese people and their neighbors in contravention of U.N. Security Council resolutions. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Lebanese Government to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces to ensure that Lebanon, and thereby the region, is more stable and secure.

The United States must continue to strengthen the forces of the Lebanese state—the Lebanese Army and the police (the Internal Security Forces)—so that Lebanese citizens may enjoy prosperity, peace, and security. Both of these institutions had languished under Syrian occupation, receiving very little in the way of training and equipment. When the Lebanese Government took the momentous decision in 2006 to deploy its army to southern Lebanon for the first time in 40 years and displace Hezbollah from the Israeli border, troops traveled in civilian vehicles because they lacked trucks, communicated via cell phone because they lacked radios, and slept in tents because they lacked permanent shelter. When LAF troops battled Fatah al-Islam militants in the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp in 2007, they faced the difficult challenge of modifying aging helicopters to drop bombs because they lacked proper close air support assets. Our assistance to the LAF is helping to address these needs for basic and more advanced equipment as well as training. Meanwhile, our assistance to the ISF is helping to create a credible police force capable of taking on new

missions including security inside Lebanon's refugee camps. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Lebanese Government to further strengthen these institutions to ensure that Lebanon—and thereby the region—is more stable and secure.

U.S. bilateral assistance also funds a variety of programs, ranging from judicial reform to education to entrepreneurial skill-building and support for civil society and electoral law reform. Such United States engagement can do much to help the Lebanese people realize their dreams of a sovereign, prosperous, and democratic state. While the United States has a number of critical interests in Lebanon, my highest priority, if confirmed, will be the safety of the dedicated men and women serving under my leadership, both American and locally engaged Lebanese staff, as well as the safety of all Americans living, working, or traveling in Lebanon. Each day at U.S. Embassy Beirut, my staff and I pass the embassy's memorial to the 337 American and Lebanese colleagues who have lost their lives working on behalf of the United States Government in Lebanon since 1976. We all serve in their memory and in their honor.

If confirmed, I will do my best to be worthy of the trust placed in me by the President, Secretary Rice, and the U.S. Congress to advance American interests and to protect American citizens. I fully understand that I will be answerable to you and to the American people in this regard.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want once again to express my sincere appreciation for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing you and your staff members in Beirut. I would welcome any questions you might have for me today. Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Ambassador.
Mr. Pearce.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID D. PEARCE, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am deeply honored to appear before you as President Bush's nominee to be the Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. I appreciate the trust and confidence the President and the Secretary have shown in nominating me.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my family. My wife, Leyla, is my best friend, teacher, and instructor on the Middle East, born and raised in Lebanon, for over 30 years. She speaks fluent Arabic, English, and French. My daughter, Jenny, former Peace Corps volunteer, just received her masters degree in community and regional planning at the University of Oregon. And Joey has taught disadvantaged students in Beirut English and is now working on his masters in Arabic studies at Georgetown. I am very proud of them all and, frankly, Mr. Chairman, if it were not for their support and sacrifice through an awful lot of moves and separations over 26 years, I probably would not be sitting here today.

Mr. Chairman, Algeria is the keystone of North Africa, the third most populous country in the Arab world. It is the largest producer of oil and gas on the African continent and an important supplier of energy to both Europe and the United States. In fact, I believe a good part of it goes to New England, sir. Our own two-way trade with Algeria is worth about \$20 billion. But even if Algeria were not our second-largest trading partner in the Arab world, we would have a great stake in this relationship. Algeria's stability and prosperity are important for the stability of both Africa and the Middle East.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, tens of thousands of Algerians died in the indiscriminate violence of the 1990s. While that internal violence has declined substantially from previous levels, as you noted,

the threat of extremism, nevertheless, remains. And Algeria has been an essential partner in fighting the instability created by the increasingly regional terrorist threat.

Mr. Chairman, the Algerian Government has confronted the challenge of extremism squarely and courageously. It has taken a leading role in international cooperation on counterterrorism, especially in pursuing and breaking up al-Qaeda-based networks. And our bilateral cooperation, again as you noted in this area, is strong.

Mr. Chairman, through the Middle East Partnership Initiative and other programs, we are also supporting Algeria's reform agenda. If confirmed, I will do my best to encourage continued reform and development and further Algeria's efforts to stabilize and modernize, consistent with the rule of law, transparency, and the importance we attach to human rights and other basic freedoms.

Mr. Chairman, Algeria has long had a significant role in Middle Eastern and African affairs. It is a key player in conflict resolution throughout the wider region. It facilitated an end to the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war in the late 1900s and more recently provided airlift support to peacekeepers going to Somalia and Darfur. Its mediating role in the Sahel has been vital to finding peaceful solutions there. The frozen conflict over Western Sahara cannot be resolved without Algerian participation. And Algeria is at the center of the Algerian is at the center of the Arab Maghreb Union, and here too, its willingness to lead is going to be a critical factor in greater regional integration.

Mr. Chairman, regarding the embassy itself, we have now moved into a new, more secure facility, which I look forward to seeing, if confirmed. There are still significant security restrictions, and I assure you that, if confirmed, I will have no higher priority than the safety and security of our staff and all Americans in Algeria.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to address you and Senator Coleman. If confirmed, I hope I will have many opportunities to host you, as I had the honor to do with both of you in Jerusalem when I was Consul General there, in Algiers. And I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

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

[The prepared statement of David D. Pearce follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID D. PEARCE, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. I appreciate the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Rice have shown in nominating me.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my wife, Leyla, my daughter, Jennifer, and my son, Joey. For over 30 years now, Leyla, who was born and raised in Lebanon and speaks fluent Arabic and French, has been my first and best teacher on the Middle East. Jenny recently received her master's degree in community and regional planning at the University of Oregon. And Joey is working on his master's in Arabic studies at Georgetown. I am immensely proud of them all, and grateful for their constant support and sacrifice through many moves and separations during our 26 years in the Foreign Service.

Mr. Chairman, Algeria is the keystone of North Africa and the third-most populous country in the Arab world. It is the largest producer of oil and gas on the African continent, and an important supplier of energy to both Europe and the United States. Our own two-way trade with Algeria is worth about \$20 billion. But even if Algeria were not our second-largest trading partner in the Arab world, we would have a great stake in this relationship. It is a country of real promise, where hun-

dreds of thousands of educated youth could drive a knowledge-based economy that would bring growth to the entire region. Its stability and prosperity are important for the stability of both Africa and the Middle East.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, tens of thousands of Algerians died in the indiscriminate violence of the 1990s. While that internal violence has declined substantially from previous levels, the threat of extremism nevertheless remains. And Algeria has been an essential partner in fighting the instability created by the increasingly regional terrorist threat. Nearly 2 years ago, a local Algerian extremist group sought a new lease on life by declaring a link to al-Qaeda. Since then, that group has carried out a number of atrocities against innocent men, women, and children in Algeria and elsewhere. It has attacked U.N. offices, engaged in kidnappings and bombings, and has extended its reach into surrounding countries.

Mr. Chairman, the Algerian Government has confronted the challenge of extremism squarely and courageously. It has taken a leading role in international cooperation on counterterrorism, especially in pursuing and breaking up al-Qaeda-linked terrorist networks. And our bilateral cooperation in this area is strong. We recognize that a comprehensive effort against terrorism must go beyond direct security assistance to incorporate cooperation in fields such as forensics, English-language instruction, and university training. So we are working to build our relationship in those areas.

Mr. Chairman, through the Middle East Partnership Initiative and other programs we are also supporting Algeria's reform agenda. Our programs promote the professional development of lawyers and judges. They assist Algeria's press in building journalistic expertise and business acumen. They help the Ministry of Finance to improve tax administration and reduce corruption. They aim to assist the Bank of Algeria in updating its system of bank supervision—just to name a few areas. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will look forward to joining this important work with the Algerian Government and people. I will do my best to encourage continued reform and development, and further Algeria's efforts to stabilize and modernize, consistent with the rule of law, transparency, and the importance we attach to human rights and other basic freedoms.

Mr. Chairman, Algeria has long had a significant role in Middle Eastern and African affairs. It is a key player in conflict resolution throughout the wider region. It is a leading member state of the Arab League, the African Union, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is a longstanding member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and a founding member of the New Economic Partnership for African Development. It facilitated an end to the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war in the late 1990s and, more recently, provided airlift support to peacekeepers going to Somalia and Darfur. Its mediating role in conflicts in the Sahel has been and will remain vital to finding peaceful solutions there. The "frozen conflict" over Western Sahara cannot be resolved without Algerian participation. Not least, Algeria is literally at the center of the Arab Maghreb Union. It would gain from increasing trade within that grouping, and its willingness to lead in this area will be critical to realizing long-held dreams of regional integration.

Mr. Chairman, regarding the embassy itself, we have now moved to a new, more secure facility, which I look forward to seeing. There are still significant security restrictions, and I assure you that if confirmed, I will have no higher priority than the safety and security of our staff and all Americans in Algeria.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, I hope I will have many occasions to host members of this committee in Algiers. For now, I would be pleased to address any questions that you may have.

Let me welcome my ranking member, Senator Coleman, and ask at this point, if you will excuse us for interrupting the conversation's flow, and if he has any opening.

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

Senator COLEMAN. Mr. Chairman, what I will do is just simply ask that my opening statement be placed in the record. I will listen to the nominees. These are highly strategic areas and of great importance. So I look forward to an opportunity to ask some questions and then work with these nominees. So with that, I would ask consent that my statement—

Senator KERRY. Absolutely. Without objection, the full statement will be placed in the record.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Coleman follows:]

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

Thank you, Senator Kerry. Today we are considering a very important set of nominations, as these nominees are to represent the United States in countries located in some of the most critical regions in the world. The countries for which we are considering nominees today are located in a highly strategic region and play critical roles in achieving U.S. objectives for the region—including bringing peace between Israel and its neighbors, fighting terrorism, partnering on energy security, combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—among other important areas. I look forward to hearing from our guests on how their experience has prepared them for the important tasks that have been placed before them in being nominated to serve as our Ambassadors in Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, and Kyrgyzstan.

One of the countries for which we are considering a nominee is Lebanon, which today stands at a critical juncture. I believe the complexity of the situation was highlighted dramatically last week when we observed a deeply saddening exchange of the bodies of two Israeli soldiers for the release of Hezbollah terrorists. In May of this year we watched as Lebanon faced a grave political crisis, which was overcome through the mediation of the Arab league. While the Doha Agreement that was agreed to in May prevented additional bloodshed at the time and restored some stability, it also gave Hezbollah a significant stronghold within the government. So it is unclear that this arrangement will serve as a stable basis on which Lebanon can advance its political process. Furthermore, the tentacles of both Syria and Iran continue to undermine the moderate elements in the country and to subject the future of the people of Lebanon to the whims of the theocrats in Tehran. Yet there are elements in Lebanon who are fighting for freedom and for democracy, and it is in the interests of the United States to ensure that these forces of moderation succeed. The situation therefore remains extremely complex and fragile, and the confirmation of a representative to represent the United States in Lebanon is vital at this time. I look forward to hearing the nominee's perspective on her views of the situation in Lebanon and how she will work to pursue our key interests.

Moving toward the Gulf region, we see that an unprecedented increase in the price of oil has allowed the Emirates of Dubai and Abu-Dabi to undergo a surge of acquisitions of United States properties and interests, orchestrated by their sovereign wealth funds. While some of these deals, such as the Dubai Ports World case, have raised concerns in this chamber, others received support since they brought a much needed life-line to some of our troubled financial institutions. What is certain is that we need to know more about these funds, about who is behind them, and especially about their objectives and implications.

The UAE, as well as Algeria, enjoy vast reserves of natural gas and other energy resources. In light of these circumstances, and the fact that Algeria is currently chairing OPEC, it is important that our nominees work closely with both these countries as we seek to resolve the significant energy challenges facing the United States. I believe that U.S. representation in both of these countries is important in this work to pave the way for more stable sources of energy supply, as well as to arrive at a mutual understanding on the most productive forms of economic and security cooperation with our country.

Kyrgyzstan also is a country with a very strategic geography, bordering with China and with the oil-rich Kazakhstan, and closely allied with Russia. It has also been of great support to coalition efforts in Afghanistan, allowing large forces to pass through its airports. For these reasons, the country embodies key U.S. security interests and should therefore be engaged in a close, cooperative, and mutually beneficial dialog, ensuring that this cooperation remains strong.

I thank each of the nominees for offering themselves to represent their country at an important time and in very important countries. I look forward to hearing the testimonies from our nominees and discussing how the United States can best pursue its objectives through our relationships with the countries we will be discussing today. Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Olson.

Let me just say also to the families that just got introduced. We really appreciate your being here. As a Foreign Service brat I have a lot of respect for the journey, so to speak. Mr. Pearce, your wife, it appears, ought to be going to Lebanon with Ms. Sison. We will work that out later.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD G. OLSON, JR., NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Chairman and Senator Coleman, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply grateful to President Bush and Secretary Rice for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the American people, to advancing United States goals in the United Arab Emirates, and to working with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance the United States agenda.

I have been privileged to serve the American people as a Foreign Service officer since 1982, having represented them at a series of assignments mostly in the Middle East and Africa. I have been lucky to have shared my life in the Foreign Service with my wife, Deborah Jones, currently serving as the United States Ambassador to Kuwait, and with our two wonderful daughters, two Foreign Service brats, Ana and Isabella.

Mr. Chairman and Senator Coleman, I would also like to acknowledge the presence of representatives of the United Arab Emirates embassy who are with us here today at this hearing and thank them for coming.

Mr. Chairman and Senator Coleman, the United Arab Emirates plays an influential and growing role in the Middle East and is an important partner for the United States. The United States and the United Arab Emirates enjoy strong bilateral cooperation on a full range of issues, including defense, law enforcement, countering terrorist finance, and nonproliferation. Within the region, the UAE has shown leadership by its recent decision to send an ambassador to Baghdad and to cancel \$7 billion worth of Iraqi debt. The UAE has also contributed generously to international efforts to rebuild Afghanistan and given substantial assistance to the people of Lebanon and to the Palestinian Authority.

Our strategic partnership extends to cooperation on political-military issues. We conduct regular bilateral strategic security discussions through the Gulf Security Dialogue and continue to expand our robust military-to-military partnership.

The UAE is committed to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative in early 2006. In August 2007, the UAE passed a comprehensive export control law empowering the federal authorities to take action against companies or shipments threatening UAE national security. The United States has actively engaged Emirati authorities via the bilateral Counter Proliferation Task Force.

UAE remains one of the largest export markets for U.S. goods in the Middle East. A diverse array of American companies active in the petroleum, defense, services, education, and health care sectors have found the UAE not only an attractive place to work but also

an excellent location for regional hubs doing business across the Gulf. By investing heavily in its own infrastructure and in attractive opportunities overseas, the UAE is planning for a future in which hydrocarbons will not be the dominant source of wealth for its citizens.

If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, I plan to build on our already solid base of partnership, focusing on cooperation in the Middle East region and on security issues. I will work with Emirati authorities on our common goal of seeing that the UAE's legitimate interest in trade with its neighbors is not put to inappropriate uses, especially with regard to Iran. I will be an active partner with the American private sector to encourage the further growth of our trade relationship.

And I plan to devote personal attention to the overarching issue of America's image in Emirati society. As a first step, I will listen to Emiratis' concerns, because I do believe that when Americans engage with Emiratis on the things that matter to them—good jobs for their children, a peaceful future, sustainable economic growth, then our image improves. And I know from personal experience that Emiratis who come to the United States, especially to study, got back to the UAE with a greater appreciation for our society. We can make no sounder investment to advance our long-term relationship than in the area of educational and cultural exchanges.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, in closing, if confirmed, I would welcome seeing you and your staff members in the UAE. I would also welcome any questions you might have today. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Olson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD G. OLSON, JR.,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply grateful to President Bush and to Secretary Rice for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the American people, advancing United States goals in the United Arab Emirates, and to working with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance the United States agenda.

I have been privileged to serve the American people as a Foreign Service officer since 1982, having represented them at a series of assignments mostly in the Middle East and Africa. I have been lucky to have shared my life in the Foreign Service with my wife, Deborah Jones, who is currently serving as the United States Ambassador to Kuwait, and with our two wonderful daughters, Ana and Isabella.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the United Arab Emirates plays an influential and growing role in the Middle East, and is an important partner for the United States. The United States and the UAE enjoy strong bilateral cooperation on a full range of issues including defense, law enforcement, countering terrorist finance, and nonproliferation. Within the region, the UAE has shown leadership by its recent decision to send an Ambassador to Baghdad, and to cancel \$7 billion worth of Iraqi debt. The UAE has also contributed generously to international efforts to rebuild Afghanistan and given substantial assistance to the people of Lebanon and to the Palestinian Authority.

Our strategic partnership extends to cooperation on political-military issues. We conduct regular bilateral strategic security discussions through the Gulf Security Dialog and continue to expand our robust military-to-military partnership. For example, the port of Jebel Ali in Dubai is the United States Navy's busiest overseas port-of-call.

The UAE is committed to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; it endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative in early 2006. In August 2007, the UAE passed a comprehensive export control law empowering the Federal au-

thorities to take action against companies or shipments threatening UAE national security. The United States has actively engaged Emirati authorities via the Export Control and Related Border Security program to provide training and discussed ongoing issues of bilateral concern via the bilateral Counter Proliferation Task Force.

In April 2008, the UAE issued its white paper on nuclear energy. Noting that peaceful nuclear power is an environmentally promising and commercially competitive approach to meeting its future electricity needs, the paper announced a program to thoroughly evaluate a nuclear power option for the UAE. From a non-proliferation perspective, the paper included several important policy decisions by the UAE, including renouncing any intention to develop domestic enrichment or reprocessing capability in favor of long-term external fuel supply arrangements and meeting the highest international standards for nonproliferation, safety, and security.

The United States has engaged the UAE with the goal of helping to develop the infrastructure necessary to meet the highest standards for nonproliferation, safety, and security in a nuclear energy program. On April 21, 2008, the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on peaceful nuclear cooperation with the UAE. Simultaneously, the UAE endorsed the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

The UAE remains one of the largest export markets for United States goods in the Middle East. A diverse array of American companies active in the petroleum, defense, services, education, and health care sectors have found the UAE not only an attractive place to work, but also an excellent location for regional hubs doing business across the gulf. By investing heavily in its own infrastructure and in attractive opportunities overseas, the UAE is planning for a future in which hydrocarbons will not be the dominant source of wealth for its citizens.

Since 2006, the UAE has voluntarily submitted proposed investments to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States numerous times—in all cases with a successful resolution. Investors from the UAE have put billions of dollars into the American economy. Whether purchasing shares in well known institutions or making investments that garner less attention in the media but are equally important in generating new jobs for Americans, the UAE is a long-term strategic investor in the U.S. market. To ensure that the international community remains open to investment the UAE and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority have worked in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the International Monetary Fund to establish a set of voluntary best practices for Sovereign Wealth Funds.

If confirmed as U.S. ambassador, I plan to build on our already solid base of partnership, focusing on our cooperation in the Middle East region, and our partnership on security issues. I will work with Emirati authorities on our common goal of seeing that the UAE's legitimate interest in trade with its neighbors is not put to inappropriate uses, especially with regard to Iran. I will be an active partner with the American private sector to encourage the further growth of our trade relationship. And I plan to devote personal attention to the overarching issue of America's image in Emirati society. As a first step I will listen to Emiratis concerns, because I do believe that when Americans engage with Emiratis on the things that matter to them—good jobs for their children, a peaceful future, and a sustainable economic future—then our image improves. And I know from personal experience that Emiratis who come to the United States, especially to study, go back to the UAE with a greater appreciation for our society. We can make no sounder investment to advance our long-term relationship than in the area of educational and cultural exchanges.

As head of the U.S. mission comprising employees of more than 12 different U.S. Government agencies and departments, my first priority will remain at all times the safety and security of the dedicated men and women, American and foreign nationals, at my mission as well as all Americans living and working or traveling to the United Arab Emirates. I will strive to be worthy of the confidence placed in me by the President, Secretary Rice, and the U.S. Congress because ultimately I will be answerable to you and to the American people.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, in closing, if confirmed, I would welcome your insights and views on the UAE and the region, and would look forward to seeing you and your staff members in the UAE. I would also welcome any questions you might have for me today. Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Mr. Olson.
Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff.

**STATEMENT OF TATIANA C. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. Mr. Chairman and Senator Coleman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Bush and Secretary Rice have demonstrated the confidence in me to put forward my nomination as United States Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan.

During my almost quarter century in the Foreign Service, my family and I have been grateful for this opportunity to make a unique contribution to our country. Indeed, I would like to acknowledge here my family's culture of service. A number of family members have served or are serving now in Afghanistan and Iraq. My husband, Michael, whom you were kind enough to mention, and son, Emmanuel, are unfortunately unable to be present here today with me because Michael, as you said, Mr. Chairman, is serving as our deputy chief of mission at our embassy in Riyadh, and Emmanuel is busy training fellow cadets at West Point.

Kyrgyzstan is an important partner of the United States and a positive bilateral relationship is critical to United States interests in the region. Two months after September 11, Kyrgyzstan agreed to host the United States Air Force at Manas Air Base, a crucial supply link in our ongoing efforts to fight terrorism and to lay the foundations for a peaceful and prosperous future in Afghanistan and the entire Central Asia region. President Bakiyev publicly reaffirmed his country's continued commitment to the base in December of last year.

In March, we jointly reaffirmed our cooperation on a range of issues, from the fight against terrorism and other transnational threats like narcotics trafficking, to economic engagement, to democratic development, and promotion of the rule of law. If confirmed, I will be honored to do my part to deepen that cooperation.

Since independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has made impressive progress toward the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one and from a command structure to a market-based economy. Early on, Kyrgyzstan recognized the value of the free exchange of ideas, establishing an open environment that fostered a vibrant civil society. It became the first former Soviet state to join the World Trade Organization.

Over the years, however, the momentum of reform stalled. The December 2007 parliamentary elections did not meet international standards, and the government has sought legislation that would restrict important freedoms, such as the freedom of the press and assembly. The United States, in close collaboration with other international partners, has made clear to the Kyrgyz Government that such steps do not reflect Kyrgyzstan's international commitments.

Through all this upheaval, however, Kyrgyzstan has maintained an active and vocal political culture, tolerating often contentious confrontations but avoiding serious political violence. Some say this country is learning about democracy by doing democracy. It has shown a capacity for reform. We can help the Kyrgyz foster that reform and, in so doing, demonstrate throughout the region the ultimate benefits of including all people in the political process.

One challenge that has beleaguered Kyrgyzstan throughout independence is corruption. All segments of society have sought our help in addressing this problem. If confirmed, I look forward to overseeing the implementation of a brand new threshold program focused on fighting corruption that the Millennium Challenge Corporation recently approved for Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan is keenly interested in American commercial engagement, but the challenges for United States companies are daunting. The economy has shown stability in recent years, but renewed inflationary pressures and other conditions make for a bleaker picture in 2008. If confirmed, I will look for ways to assist and encourage the Kyrgyz leadership to keep focused on improving the investment climate.

One of the key lessons we have learned over the years of transition is the interconnectedness of reform efforts. Kyrgyzstan itself recognizes the importance of economic revitalization. One of the requirements for true economic reform is the rule of law. Ensuring the primacy of the rule of law requires a fully functioning democracy. We continue to emphasize this interconnectedness.

If we consider where the country started 17 years ago, Kyrgyzstan has made remarkable progress, and the United States can take considerable pride in supporting that transformation. We can also take comfort in the contributions Kyrgyzstan makes to regional and global security. Our relationship still has room to grow, however. If confirmed, I will be honored to represent President Bush and work with Members of Congress to engage with the Kyrgyz Government and all elements of Kyrgyz society to facilitate that process.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TATIANA C. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO KYRGYZSTAN

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Bush and Secretary Rice have demonstrated the confidence in me to put forward my nomination as United States Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan.

During my almost quarter-century in the Foreign Service, my family and I have been grateful for this opportunity to make a unique contribution to our country. Indeed, I would like to acknowledge here my family's culture of service. A number of family members have served or are serving now in Afghanistan and Iraq. My husband, Michael, and son, Emmanuel, are unfortunately unable to be present here today with me, because Michael is serving as our deputy chief of mission at our embassy in Riyadh, and Emmanuel is busy training fellow cadets at West Point.

Kyrgyzstan is an important partner of the United States, and a positive bilateral relationship is critical to United States interests in the region. Two months after September 11, Kyrgyzstan agreed to host the United States Air Force at Manas Air Base, a crucial supply link in our ongoing efforts to fight terrorism and to lay the foundations for a peaceful and prosperous future in Afghanistan and the entire Central Asia region. President Bakiyev publicly reaffirmed his country's continued commitment to the base in December of last year.

In March, we jointly reaffirmed our cooperation on a range of issues, from the fight against terrorism and other transnational threats like narcotics trafficking to economic engagement to democratic development and promotion of the rule of law. If confirmed, I will be honored to do my part to deepen that cooperation and promote our own interests—which include the secure, prosperous, and democratic development of Kyrgyzstan.

Since independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has made impressive progress toward the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one and from a command structure to a market-based economy. Its progress has been uneven, however, and it still faces considerable challenges.

Early on, Kyrgyzstan recognized the value of the free exchange of ideas, establishing an open environment that fostered a vibrant civil society. It undertook necessary economic reforms, becoming the first former Soviet country to join the World Trade Organization. It is still the only WTO member in Central Asia. Over the years, however, the momentum of reform stalled. The government imposed new restrictions on the media, and political opponents found themselves in jail.

Then, the people of Kyrgyzstan demanded change. A series of protests culminated in the fall of the Akayev government in March 2005. The so-called Tulip Revolution led to presidential elections in July of that year that were widely recognized by international observers as free and fair. President Bakiyev was elected on a platform of continued reform, and we had high hopes for his efforts. Since then, however, Kyrgyzstan has faced protracted political turmoil, and the December 2007 parliamentary elections did not meet international standards.

Through all this upheaval, Kyrgyzstan has maintained an active and vocal political culture, tolerating often contentious confrontations across the political spectrum, but keeping them on the political level and avoiding serious political violence. Some say this country is learning about democracy by doing democracy. It has shown a capacity for reform. We can help the Kyrgyz foster that reform and, in so doing, demonstrate throughout the region the ultimate benefits of including all people in the political process and extending to them the freedom to build their own economic future.

President Bakiyev has declared he is ready to proceed with needed economic reforms. While we hope that he will soon get the country back on the reform path, progress has been limited so far.

One challenge that has beleaguered Kyrgyzstan throughout independence is corruption. Representatives of the government, the opposition, and civil society alike have all sought our help in addressing this problem. If confirmed, I look forward to overseeing the implementation of a brand new assistance program that the Millennium Challenge Corporation recently approved for Kyrgyzstan.

This threshold program will focus on helping Kyrgyzstan confront the scourge of corruption by reforming the judicial and law enforcement sectors. It has the potential not only to land a solid blow against the corruption that impedes Kyrgyzstan's progress toward prosperity, but to reassert the primacy of the rule of law and get the country back on the course of reform.

Kyrgyzstan cooperates with us on a host of security issues. In addition to hosting Manas Air Base, the government has expressed interest in providing more direct assistance to our coalition efforts in Afghanistan. We helped establish the Drug Control Agency of Kyrgyzstan in 2003, and we are working together to improve its capacity to intercept and reduce the flow of narcotics through Kyrgyzstan. Our military and other officials collaborate with Kyrgyz officials here, at the Marshall Center in Europe, and in Kyrgyzstan on workshops to improve individual officers' capacity to combat terrorism.

Kyrgyzstan is keenly interested in American commercial engagement, but the challenges for United States companies of operating far away in a relatively small market with pervasive corruption are daunting. The economy has shown stability in recent years, with over 8 percent growth in 2007, inflation under reasonable limits, and an improving fiscal picture. Renewed inflationary pressures and other conditions make for a bleaker picture in 2008. The World Bank and IMF have both approved additional assistance to help Kyrgyzstan through these recent difficulties. If confirmed, I will look for ways the United States Government can assist in the short term, but will also encourage the Kyrgyz leadership to keep focused on the longer-term goal of improving the investment climate, to increase opportunities for both the local population and American firms.

This past year has also seen disruptions in Kyrgyzstan's progress toward a fully functioning democracy. Since December's elections, the government has sought legislation that would restrict important freedoms, such as the freedom of the press and assembly. The United States, in close collaboration with other international partners, has made clear to the Kyrgyz Government that such steps do not reflect Kyrgyzstan's international commitments.

One of the key lessons we have learned over the years of transition is the interconnectedness of reform efforts. Kyrgyzstan itself recognizes the importance of economic revitalization and has committed to reform in that area. One of the requirements for true economic reform is the rule of law. Ensuring the primacy of the rule of law requires a fully functioning democracy, in which the population understands

and supports the system behind the law. Although Kyrgyzstan would prefer to focus its engagement with the United States on economic concerns, we continue to explain that our emphasis on the rule of law and good governance is as much about the economy as it is about democracy.

If we consider where the country started 17 years ago, Kyrgyzstan has made remarkable progress, and the United States—in particular through the generosity of the American people—can take considerable pride in supporting that transformation. We also can take comfort in the contributions Kyrgyzstan makes to regional and global security.

Our relationship still has room to grow, however. If confirmed, I will be honored to represent President Bush and work with members of Congress to engage with the Kyrgyz Government and all elements of Kyrgyz society to facilitate that process.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much. Thank you, all of you.

Since you were patient and waited till the end, Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff, I will just start with you. I will pick up where you left off.

You mentioned, appropriately, the slowdown in the reform effort. What do you attribute that to?

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. There has been a lot of instability. After the 2005 elections, which were free and fair, there was opposition to the President in the parliament. There were a lot of demonstrations. Unfortunately, the opposition is very fragmented. A lot of the parties—and there are many, many of them—are basically formed around one person as opposed to around an idea.

And so I think the President began to feel very beleaguered and started thinking that maybe he needed to consolidate power in some way. We certainly keep urging him to keep on the road to reform and that actually stability comes from democracy. But I think that as a result of certain demonstrations, which never got really violent but were somewhat of concern to him, he started feeling that maybe he needs to look at stability ahead of it continuing on the road to democracy.

Senator KERRY. How would you describe the competing forces on the ground particularly the play between China, Russia, and the United States presence?

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. Kyrgyzstan enjoys good relations with all three, Mr. Chairman. With Russia, of course, there are special ties that bind. Kyrgyzstan and Russia were part of the USSR, the same state. Many, especially of the elite, the educated people, speak excellent Russian. They have gone to Russian schools and universities. Many members of the government and even the opposition have been educated in Russia. So I expect that these ties will continue.

Also, they are both members of the Shanghai Corporation Organization, and there is a lot of Russian investment. There is a lot of Russian trade with Kyrgyzstan going on, and something between half a million to a million Kyrgyz citizens—and that is out of a population of only 5 million—are presently working in Russia and sending remittances to Kyrgyzstan, which are a very important part of the Kyrgyz economy. So I consider that probably Russia will continue to be a very important partner for Kyrgyzstan for the foreseeable future.

They are also both members of the CIS, the Commonwealth of Independent States.

China has recently become a more important partner for the Kyrgyz. Of course, when Kyrgyzstan was part of the USSR, Kyrgyzstan was a place of actual tension because the USSR and China sometimes did not have the best relations. So now the Kyrgyz are discovering kind of the opportunity of interacting with the Chinese and the Chinese discovering that they are able to interact with the Kyrgyz.

The Chinese have also invested a lot of money in Kyrgyzstan. There is cross-border trade which is flourishing. They are also both members of the Shanghai Corporation Organization. Again, I think that their good relations will probably continue.

We have no problems with the Kyrgyz having good relations with these two countries in the region. In fact, we welcome Kyrgyz good relations with the entire region.

What we would like, however, to see is greater opportunities for the Kyrgyz to branch out, and we are particularly looking at the south. For example, Kyrgyzstan on a seasonal basis produces more hydroelectricity than it really needs, whereas countries to the south, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, are in desperate need of energy. So we are looking right now and providing some technical support to the Kyrgyz and possibly creating a regional electricity grid where the Kyrgyz could sell some of their surplus electricity to the Afghans and the Pakistanis. And my understanding is that the Afghans and Pakistanis would be willing to pay a much higher price for the electricity than Kyrgyzstan is able to get domestically. So that is something that we are urging the Kyrgyz to look into, again not to try to impede in any way their relations with Russia and China, but to provide them with more opportunities, more chances, and therefore more independence.

Senator KERRY. How would you describe their relations with their neighbors? You mentioned the neighborhood. Besides, obviously, the relationships you just talked about with the larger powers, how would you describe them, particularly since the Tulip Revolution?

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Kyrgyzstan has three other neighbors. Tajikistan to the south is actually very similar to Kyrgyzstan. It is a very poor country. It also, though, has some hydroelectricity surplus on a seasonal basis, again, and has some potential in that regard. Relations between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are friendly and stable. There are a couple of issues about demarcation of borders, but basically things are going well. And we would be looking to have cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in building this grid because Tajikistan is between Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan and would also benefit very much from selling its own electricity. So I think that here things are looking good.

Kazakhstan to the north of Kyrgyzstan is a very important trading and investment partner. It has a muscular economy. It has invested a lot in Kyrgyzstan. There are some Kazakh banks in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. It also produces wheat and is a very important supplier of wheat to Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan supplies Kazakhstan with water. I believe that relations with them will continue to be friendly and stable.

With Uzbekistan, the last of the neighbors of Kyrgyzstan, there are—it is a friendly relationship. There are a bit more tensions. There are some areas of the border regions that are not demarcated properly. One thing that is happening is that they are both in the same natural water system, and Kyrgyzstan supplies Uzbekistan with water but is not charging for it, whereas it buys energy, especially coal, from Uzbekistan and gas and is being charged for it. I believe there is a bit of tension over that imbalance. But still, overall relations are friendly.

Senator KERRY. I will come back perhaps afterwards.

Mr. Olson, there have been some concerns that Dubai has been a transit point for the A.Q. Khan nuclear proliferation network. I wonder if you could share with us your perception of UAE's and Dubai's, in particular, efforts to try to curb the smuggling and your perception of it at this point or the administration's description of it at this point.

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that, indeed, for the Emiratis the revelations about the A.Q. Khan network were something of a wake-up call for them, and they recognized the importance of this issue. And the action that they have taken so far is to pass an export control law that was passed in 2007. Our assessment is that this is actually a good law and covers what is necessary to make sure that there is not reexport of dual-use or sensitive technologies to Iran.

We have been working with the Emiratis, with the Emirati authorities, the federal authorities, since that time on the implementation. There is a domestic implementation aspect. There are some regulations that are required to bring about the implementation of the law. But there has been very good cooperation with the Emiratis on certain specific instances which we discuss with them in the context of the Counter Proliferation Task Force. This is a bilateral initiative that has been going for several years, meets frequently at a senior level, United States and Emirati. In the course of those discussions, we have raised our concerns, both general and also specific cases, and we have received, in our view, considerable cooperation from the Emirati authorities.

This will continue to be a high priority. It will be a personal priority for me to make sure that Iran—there are interests in legitimate trade. They do have a very large volume of trade with Iran, and most of that is legitimate. But we want to make sure that Dubai is not a source of anything that can threaten what we both consider to be—I would say that both the Emirates and the United States share a strategic assessment about the danger that a nuclear-capable Iran would represent to the region.

Senator KERRY. What is your understanding of what we, the United States, are doing or helping lead the UAE to in an effort to prevent the flow of weapons-capable technology going through the UAE?

Mr. OLSON. Well, Senator, it would be difficult for me to answer in terms of specific cases in an open session. I would be happy to offer a briefing by myself or other persons on specific cases where we have had cooperation.

Senator KERRY. Let me frame the question this way for this session. Are you satisfied that we are doing enough, and if not, is your portfolio specifically designed to increase our efforts in that regard?

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Chairman, I think there is work still to be done in this area. I think there needs to be further domestic implementation legislation and regulatory framework in the United Arab Emirates. And I will work closely with the Emirati authorities to see that that is put in place. But I also think that it is an issue that needs continual vigilance, and I can assure you that I will be doing that on the specific cases. And we will work not just with the federal government but also with the authorities in Dubai at the emirate level to make sure that they understand our concerns and that it is fully internalized on their side.

Senator KERRY. Thank you.

Let me turn to Senator Coleman and then we will come back for another round.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will turn to Lebanon, Ms. Sison, if I can.

Hezbollah and its allies have a veto in the Lebanese cabinet. Obviously of great concern. The March 14 movement offered some hope. And the question of whether they can even live and work in Lebanon, whether they are able to do that. Can you give me an assessment of where the March 14 movement is doing a better job of reaching out to the—I am trying to get your sense of where things are at.

Ambassador SISON. The March 14 moderates came together in recent weeks, Senator, and with the other political parties, hammered together the 30-person cabinet on July 11. And I note that although, as you say, the opposition has a blocking third of the cabinet—it is 16 majority, 11 opposition, 3 cabinet members named by the president—Hezbollah only has one minister in the cabinet, which is interesting. The moderates, the March 14, put forward and appointed an independent Shia minister, Ibrahim Shamsudeen. This is interesting because it will make it more difficult, I think, for Hezbollah and their allies to assert that they are the sole voice of the Lebanese Shia in the government.

The Doha Agreement in May, yes, designed this 16/11/3 split in the makeup of the cabinet. It is important to note that the president, Michel Sleiman, retained control for the nomination of the defense minister and the interior minister, two key ministries with which we, the United States, work as we seek to strengthen key institutions of the state, the Lebanese Armed Forces, and the Internal Security Forces, the police. Of course, the interior ministry will also have the key role in organizing free and fair parliamentary elections in the spring of 2009. The new interior minister is a constitutional lawyer who had served on the Boutros Commission looking at electoral law reform.

On the blocking one-third on the so-called veto, I think, Senator, that this concession may actually have less significance on the ground since the Lebanese cabinet has typically operated on a consensus basis.

Senator COLEMAN. My concern sitting here is the question of our ability to strengthen those institutions if you have the fox in the

chicken coop. Talk to me a little bit about where Hezbollah gets its support. How much support does Iran supply to Hezbollah?

Ambassador SISON. As I have been in Washington over the last few days, Senator, I have consulted with several of my colleagues, and of course, our colleagues at the U.S. Department of the Treasury have been particularly active in bringing the interagency together to look at ways to approach the challenge of Hezbollah. As we saw last month, the U.S. Government—well, this month actually—this summer, the United States designated two Venezuela-based supporters of Hezbollah along with two travel agencies owned by one of the gentlemen.

So the United States has actually targeted Hezbollah's funding sources by taking action against Iran's bank, Saderat, which had been used by the Government of Iran to channel funds to terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, as well as the Iran-based Marchers Foundation, part of Hezbollah's support network. So Hezbollah has received financial assistance through Iranian entities. The U.S. Government this year and in 2007 and in earlier years has targeted through designations and executive orders that process.

Senator COLEMAN. This is not a question here, but the hope would be that you would have a moderate government. It would take the reins and enforce its sovereignty over territories and not get into a position where Hezbollah can drag a country into war with grave consequences for the entire region. So it is a very delicate situation there and one of great concern.

Mr. OLSON, if you can move over then in terms of the same issue with Iran and the UAE. Can you talk to me a little bit about the relationship between—when I was in Dubai, I think the language of commerce is Farsi. And Dubai, let me just say, is just one of the most incredible, vibrant centers in the world today. But talk to me a little bit about UAE's policy toward Iran. How does that impact our relationships with the emirate?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Senator Coleman.

Yes, indeed, the UAE and especially Dubai have a long history of a relationship with Iran. It is estimated that up to 400,000 Iranians live in the emirates, mostly in Dubai, and many Emiratis trace their family roots back to Iran. And there is a considerable volume of trade. There always has been between Dubai and Iran.

What I would say is that at the federal level, that is to say, at the level of the national government, it much shares our strategic assessment of the threat that Iran represents, and I think this is, in part, fundamentally a matter of demographics. The Emirates is composed of probably about 3 million people, of which fewer than a million are actually Emirati citizens, and they are looking 80 miles across the water at a population of 80 million. So they have some fundamental concerns, and I think this is one of the reasons why we do have such a strong relationship in defense cooperation. It is one of the, I think, fundamental motivations from the Emirati side for the interest in purchasing defensive weapons systems.

I think that we have made a lot of progress, as I already mentioned in response to the chairman's question, about export controls. I think an area that will also be of increasing focus for myself, if confirmed, is in the area of finances. As Ambassador Sison

mentioned, in Lebanon I think we have similar situation. There are Iranian banks in the United Arab Emirates. The UAE has complied with Security Council resolutions, especially 1747 and 1803, but if confirmed, it will certainly be my intention to continue to press the Emiratis to maintain vigilance over the Iranian banks that are present in the UAE and, where possible, to close down their operations.

Senator COLEMAN. The concern is—it appears to me when you look at the situation in Lebanon, when you look at the UAE, we have forces of stability, hopefully, moderation taking hold in Lebanon, that the battle or the concern is the forces of moderation and those forces that support extremism which are threat to forces of moderation. Obviously, it is their neighborhood, but we certainly have an interest there.

I talked about the incredible wealth and vitality that you are seeing in Dubai, sovereign wealth funds, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, close to a trillion dollars. Talk to me a little bit about pros and cons of the authority investing in American companies, what our role is in facilitating that, and how that impacts the relationship between us and the UAE.

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Senator Coleman.

The sovereign wealth funds is an issue that we have had some intense engagement with the Government of the United Arab Emirates on. They have been working with us in the context of the IMF and also in the OECD to identify best practices for sovereign wealth funds.

You mentioned the trillion dollar figure. One of the issues, I suppose, that surrounds sovereign wealth funds—I think your reference was probably to the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, which is widely believed to be the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world. But no one really knows the answer, aside from people who work in ADIA and a few others as to what the actual size of the fund is. And I think that highlights one of the issues that we would probably want to work with the Emirati Government on in terms of best practices, working towards the idea of transparency, the idea that investments are made on a commercial basis and not on any other basis.

As I say, I think the Emirati Government has been very cooperative on these matters.

I also think it is worth pointing out that the sovereign wealth fund in the United States—the sovereign wealth funds in the States, especially the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, have been long-term investors and I think have made some significant investments that have been useful in terms of preserving American jobs here in the United States.

Senator COLEMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I may, just a note of thanks to these nominees and to their families, the level of commitment and sacrifice that they will make in the Foreign Service. Certainly every time I visit an embassy and talk to the staff—I do not know if we can thank them enough for their service to this country. So I just want to take this opportunity to thank the nominees here for their continued commitment to service and to their families.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Senator Coleman.

Let me pick up, Mr. Olson, if I can on that. When I was out of the room, you mentioned the numbers of Iranians that are in the Emirates. You put it at how many hundreds of thousands?

Mr. OLSON. Well, the number that we understand is about 400,000.

Senator KERRY. I'd like to have us speak for a moment with respect to Iran's financial institutions. We seem to be rattling the saber and talking very openly and repeatedly about military options without a lot of intermediary steps, which I find puzzling. The sanctions that exist today are frankly pretty lame mostly because they are not truly multilateral, but even those that are are not that creative in my judgment. It seems to me that some Iranian's have enormous sums of money that move across state lines and access the benefits of the western world's wealth-creating machinery.

It confounds me that when I go back to the debates we have had right here in this room on South Africa and then we did what we did partly because it was multilateral, that here we have leaders of countries proclaiming as a matter of policy that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, but leaping from point A to point Z without any of the intermediary steps. And I find that dangerous and even stupid in some cases.

Are there not many tools available in your judgment that could really tighten the noose economically with respect to flights, visas, access to banking systems, freezing of assets, and other steps which would put a very serious financial crimp on Iran's options?

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, in terms of overall United States policy, of course, I think our objective has been, as you know, to pursue a diplomatic option with regard to Iran while keeping all options on the table. But I think we actually, in the last few months, have been very successful in increasing the pressure on Iran, and I would cite two particular examples, first of all, on the Geneva talks that took place over the weekend in which, as you know, Under Secretary Burns participated for the first time. This was a tactical shift, not a policy shift for the United States. But the purpose that it served was to reinforce the unity of the P5 plus 1. And I think that that was a very solid outcome, and I think the ball is very squarely now in the Iranians' court to respond within 2 weeks to the offer that was put on the table.

The second area is one that has been in development over the longer term is the action at the U.N. Security Council and especially U.N. Security Council resolution 1747 and 1803, which have, indeed, tightened a bit the financial noose around the Iranians. And I think it is having an impact.

Senator KERRY. It is voluntary.

Mr. OLSON. Yes, sir. And we absolutely have to work with a number of allies, including the United Arab Emirates, to bring about that compliance. But for certain countries—for example, for the United Arab Emirates—and it is an important point because Dubai is in the process of establishing itself as an international financial center, with some degree of success. As the blue chip banks move away from dealings with Iran and increasingly do not want to deal in any way with Iranian assets, that makes it all the more

likely that the UAE will, in fact, adopt stronger measures for implementation of 1747 and 1803.

So I think there is an incentive for our allies and partners around the world to take the steps that we want them to take. And I think that these steps do impose real costs on the Iranian economy just because of the simple costs of the transactions, but also because it forces them to work harder to do business in a variety of other ways.

I would not want to speculate, Mr. Chairman, on what full range of options might be available otherwise, but I will certainly convey back your points on flights, on visas, on freezing assets to my betters at the State Department.

Senator KERRY. Well, you do not need to leap across boundaries here except to the degree you feel it affects what you are doing with respect to the UAE. But we will certainly be in communication with the administration. I think the clock is ticking actually on what they may or may not have even time to do here.

But it strikes me that the voluntariness of that situation and the laxity of it is such that it has not created the kind of consensus that I think is necessary to really have an impact. And I think to create a consensus, you cannot start with the most rigid targets, obviously. You have got to work up to them. China and Russia have their own attitudes about what that pace ought to be, but that is another topic.

Let me just ask you quickly—within OPEC, what is the UAE's attitude with respect to oil pricing and levels at this time?

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Chairman, the UAE, of course, is a longtime member, I believe, and a founding member of OPEC, but they have signaled that they are prepared to expand production to meet demand. I am afraid I do not have exact numbers with me here today, but I can certainly get back to you in a statement for the record.

Senator KERRY. So you understand they are not pumping all the oil they could be at this point in time?

Mr. OLSON. I understand that they are prepared to increase their pumping. If I may, Mr. Chairman, I think that they have had some concerns about the long-term impact on their fields with increased production so that somewhat limits their surge capacity, but I think that they are looking at ways to increase the amount that they produce.

Senator KERRY. What do you understand the goals of the current arms sales with the UAE to be? What capacity will that give them in your judgment?

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Chairman, the basic approach that we take with regard to the UAE is, of course, the Gulf Security Dialog which the administration launched in 2006. It has got six pillars, which I do not need to probably review here today, but one of them includes defensive capabilities and cooperation.

My understanding is that the weapons systems—and of course, we have a long history of weapons sales to the United Arab Emirates. We sold them 80 F-16 aircraft in the mid-1990s. I actually participated in that in my previous assignment there.

They are currently looking at a series of defensive systems that would enhance their air defense capability, so in other words, the

threat from the air, that is to say, whether by air-breathing aircraft or by missiles. Again, I think the basic strategic assessment where they would come from—they see this very much in terms of the Iranian threat.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Pearce, how would you describe the current al-Qaeda presence in Algeria?

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman, as you noted in your own remarks, the violence—and the antiterrorism cooperation is important for us. What happened was the violence went down substantially after a 12-year period. However, there were small groups of extremists that did not sign on to the idea of a ceasefire, and among them was one small extremist group which affiliated itself 2 years ago with al-Qaeda. This group is not small in numbers but they have been active in undertaking a number of attacks. They attacked and bombed the United Nations, as you recall, recently. And it is a serious threat that we take seriously. I do not think it is the strategic threat to the existence of the state that there was, say, 10 years ago.

Senator KERRY. Do you know whether or not they are receiving operational guidance from al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan?

Mr. PEARCE. I believe that the leader of al-Qaeda in the Maghreb recently gave an interview in which he stated that, yes. He stated that they were in touch with them.

Senator KERRY. I have just been handed a note reminding me that we have another hearing that is going to start here at 3 o'clock. Therefore, you all may be saved by the overscheduling here.

So let me turn to Senator Coleman again for another round. Then we will come back and see where we are.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a question both to Mr. Pearce and Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff regarding an investment climate. Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff, in your statement, you talked about the interconnectedness of reform elements, primacy of rule of law, and I think the corruption piece is all tied into that. Companies are not going to invest if they do not believe that there is rule of law, if they are worried about corruption.

Can you talk to me a little bit more about what we can do to assist developing a more stable rule of law and a better investment climate?

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. Thank you, Senator Coleman.

Yes, you are absolutely right. And in fact, right now there is very little American investment in Kyrgyzstan. It is no accident that the main investors, as I mentioned, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, are from sort of the same region, have some of the same issues, for example, corruption.

We are moving forward, though, as I mentioned with the MCC Threshold Program. I think that is a really extremely important program for Kyrgyzstan. What is particularly gratifying is that unlike many other countries in the region, the Kyrgyz actually openly admit that they have a problem with corruption. They are not trying to cover this up, and they openly say that they realize the negative impact corruption has, for example, on investment reform, a host of other issues. This is a belief held throughout Kyrgyz society. The president has said this openly, publicly. Opposition figures have said it. The man in the street, I understand, says it. So this,

I think, is encouraging. Once you know you have a problem, you are some way ahead of the game.

The MCC program, the Threshold Program, is going to focus on 3 areas of combating corruption—reform of the judicial system, reform of the criminal justice system, and reform of law enforcement. If, as I hope, this program is successful and the Kyrgyz are able to increase some of their indicators, particularly in the area of ruling justly, and if they are able to pass the corruption indicator, I believe that this will, in turn, bring about a much increased level of investment from the West, hopefully from the United States as well, because as you said, Senator Coleman, people will have confidence that if they invest, they will actually get their money back.

Senator COLEMAN. Mr. Pearce, in regard to Algeria, questions about what it takes to become part of the WTO. Are there issues there? Are they corruption? Is it bureaucratic? Can you talk to me a little bit about the investment climate there?

Mr. PEARCE. Senator, I think that is a hugely important question. This is a country where more than half of the population is under the age of 30, and there is a great deal of underemployment and unemployment. So the ability to have a better investment climate to help create jobs and achieve development to my mind is the other side of the coin of counterterrorism cooperation.

I think we have a lot of very good programs underway, and I will be looking hard, when I get there, to find more ways that we can help. Some of them include, for example, assistance in banking sector reform, judiciary reform, helping train young lawyers and judges. We have a very good program of English language instruction to disadvantaged youth. We have a new science and technology agreement, which I believe could be a vehicle for a lot of different things.

So I believe that the Algerian Government wants to move forward on WTO accession. They have had a process in place for quite a long time. So we will be looking to see if we can help move that along because the investment climate and improving it I think is a very important thing.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Pearce.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Looking at Algeria as a whole, there are tensions, obviously, over oil production, tensions over al-Qaeda in the Maghreb. There are human rights issues, and then these other tensions—rights of press, assembly, democracy, and so forth. We found a *modus operandi* to have some cooperation, obviously, on the antiterrorism efforts. Partly it is existential to Algerians and they have an interest in doing that.

How would you describe the relationship overall in terms of some of these other issues? Do we have any leverage? Is this just a way of getting along because there is neutral interest, or is there something more connective here that we can build on?

Mr. PEARCE. Senator, I think there is. I will not pretend. We do not see eye to eye with Algeria on everything. There are a lot of things we do not agree on. However, I think the quality and extent of the engagement has improved a lot in a number of ways, whether it is more military-to-military exchanges or all of the programs that I just discussed on the development side. So I think that it is a

growing partnership, but not a particularly easy one. But I do think that there is a lot of opportunity there.

And I would just say, to make my pitch to you, when you are trying to move ahead, as we saw in Jerusalem, hard, hard issues, it really does help to have high level visits. And these can often be the driver for access, for making a point. So I really hope that I will have a chance to see you in Algeria and other high level officials as well because these visits are pure gold in terms of having the kind of high quality discussion that can lead to a qualitative turn for the better in many, many ways.

Senator KERRY. I appreciate that and I have seen firsthand, obviously, the difference that some of those interrogatories and those visits can make, and the effects of some of the dialogs. I know they can be productive, and I have seen it in a number of countries. We try to get the Majority Leader and the President and others to give us a schedule that lets us do that. If Senator McCain is elected, then I may be over there a lot. If Obama is elected, he may be over there a lot. We will see what happens. [Laughter.]

Mr. PEARCE. We benefit either way.

Senator KERRY. Ambassador Sison, let me sort of wrap up with you, if I may. Again, we are barely scratching the surface, and we all understand that. You do and we do up here. That is the nature of these hearings, particularly when you have four nominees, but it is an opportunity to at least lay down some markers of what we think is important. And I regret the time constraints, though I am sure you are delighted by them. [Laughter.]

Ms. Sison, let me ask you. Was the Doha Agreement a victory for Hezbollah? And is the current structure and the Israeli agreement recently on the exchange a victory for Hezbollah? Does that complicate matters for Siniora?

Ambassador SISON. Mr. Chairman, let us look at what the Lebanese people got out of Doha. The moderates retained control in the cabinet with the 16/11/3 makeup of the cabinet despite the so-called blocking third. Lebanon was able to inaugurate a consensus president, Michel Sleiman. The Lebanese people received an agreement for the issue of Hezbollah arms to be raised in the context of a renewed national dialog, but most importantly, as we discussed yesterday, the fighting stopped. The actions of Lebanese killing Lebanese during the month of May—that violence stopped. So the Lebanese people benefitted from the Doha Agreement.

Now, Hezbollah lost something in May I believe. Hezbollah turned its weapons against the Lebanese people. That is remembered in many quarters.

Now, I have to say that Hezbollah's efforts to establish its own telecom network and its decision to conduct its own airport surveillance in Beirut, the two issues that triggered partially the violence in May, remain areas of concern.

You noted the Hezbollah/Government of Israel agreement for the prisoner exchange, the recent prisoner exchange. I have to say that the return of Kuntar to Lebanon I found personally difficult to watch in the media, even though I was sitting here. He is not a hero. He killed a father, killed a 4-year-old, was responsible for the death of the 2-year-old sibling. Having said that, for the Lebanese people the issue of the Lebanese prisoners in the neighboring state

in Lebanon—this is also an issue in Syria because there are Lebanese detainees in Syria as well—is an issue that is of great interest, of great import to the Lebanese people, which is why you saw the welcome that Kuntar and the others received back in Lebanon.

If confirmed, I will continue to make the point in Beirut and elsewhere in Lebanon that Kuntar is not a hero. I understand from the media that he may be looking to run for a seat in the parliament in 2009.

Senator KERRY. Well, would it be your judgment that Lebanon's sovereignty can gain a publicly and diplomatically arrived at agreement as to sovereignty without our resolution with respect to Iran and Syria's resolution with respect to the Golan and the Shebaa Farms, or are they integrated, all three?

Ambassador SISON. Mr. Chairman, Senator Coleman, Lebanon is a relatively small country in a very complex and complicated region. So these regional issues that you cite obviously have great impact on Lebanon.

Senator KERRY. And the Hariri tribunal?

Ambassador SISON. The special tribunal—of course, we at the embassy in Beirut and, of course, the Washington watchers as well were struck when President Sleiman on May 25 took his oath of office in the parliament the day he was elected President. He specifically mentioned his intention to pursue those investigations through the special tribunal on the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and the others who had been assassinated because there is a long list, sadly, of those whose lives have been taken.

During her June 16 visit to Beirut, Secretary Rice stated that the time had come to resolve the Shebaa Farms issue in the context of U.N. Security Council resolution 1701, which also calls, of course, for disarmament of the militias such as Hezbollah. So we do believe that a diplomatic resolution to the Shebaa dispute would have the effect of undermining Hezbollah's so-called credentials, so-called resistance credentials and complicate Hezbollah's efforts to maintain an armed state within a state. Ideally that Shebaa Farms dispute would be resolved by a bilateral border delineation between Syria and Lebanon.

Senator KERRY. Well, I will wrap up here by saying to you that I have served now on this committee for 24 years, and this is the first administration that spent almost two-thirds of its administration with an arm's distance policy with respect to the Middle East, and I think we have paid a very high price for it.

I was in the West Bank the day that Mahmoud Abbas was elected President. I was the first person to meet with him the next morning, and I will never forget his question to me with a statement saying, I know what you expect of me. I have to disarm Hamas. Now, you tell me how I am supposed to do it. And he pointed to the absence of police, of radios, of cars, of capacity. And for years we have neglected to build capacity, and Hamas, as well as Hezbollah, practiced politics far more effectively than we have empowered our allies to do it.

I think it has been a tragedy that we have been selectively choosing to spend \$12 billion a month to develop a democracy where there was not one and, frankly, not doing more to help a democracy

where there is one, struggling to hold on, in Lebanon. So I think we really need to think seriously about how we apply these priorities in what we do.

I am convinced that with the right attention and the right set of priorities and particularly putting the Mideast peace process on the table front and center, that we can begin to change our relationships in the region for the better. And I think the rest of those things can conceivably come together.

And what is clear to me, in my discussions in Israel—the efforts by Prime Minister Ohlmert now to find some sort of a pathway and President Abbas, given the difficulties of Gaza, are seriously complicated by that absence of united States presence and engagement over a period of time.

So we all hope we can move forward. It is in everybody's interests to do so. And I wish each of you well in these endeavors which are, obviously, made very complicated by the macro policies that spill downward which affect the choices that you have as ambassadors. It really is important what you are able to do on the ground and the messages that you can convey.

I do need to just ask a pro forma question of each of you, and it takes a yes or a no. Does anyone among you have any potential conflict of interest that would prevent you from doing your jobs? Ms. Sison.

Ambassador SISON. No, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Pearce.

Mr. PEARCE. No.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Olson.

Mr. OLSON. No, but Mr. Chairman, for the record, I should say, as you kindly noted at the beginning, my wife is the United States Ambassador to Kuwait, but of course, we have completely separate chains of command and we share no responsibility for supervision of employees or resources.

Senator KERRY. Thank you.

Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff.

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. No, Mr. Chairman, but just like my colleague, I would like to say for the record my husband is deputy chief of mission in Riyadh, but we do not share a chain of command.

Senator KERRY. What is going on here? We have got this nepotistic Foreign Service now. [Laughter.]

Senator KERRY. A family-friendly Foreign Service. We like it.

And the final question, does anybody have a conflict of interest that would require them to recuse themselves from any particular issue that might appear before you? Ms. Sison.

Ambassador SISON. No, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Pearce.

Mr. PEARCE. No.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Olson.

Mr. OLSON. No, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. And Ms. Gfoeller-Volkoff.

Ms. GFOELLER-VOLKOFF. No, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Thank you all very much. We are going to leave the record open for a 48-hour period until Thursday. We want to move forward rapidly, and hopefully get all of you approved at the

first business meeting and by the Senate next week before we go away so you can all be on your way and get going with the future. So we thank you again for your service and thank you for being here today.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:57 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSE OF RICHARD G. OLSON, JR., TO QUESTION SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY

Question. Within OPEC what is the UAE attitude with respect to oil pricing? Do you understand that the UAE plans to expand production?

Answer. UAE officials have said they are concerned about the impact of rising prices. The UAE currently does not export large volumes of oil to the United States; however United States firms are active in bringing Emirati oil to market. UAE officials have said they want to increase production capacity from the current level of 2.48 million barrels per day (b/d) to about 4 million b/d in the next 2–4 years.

RESPONSES OF RICHARD OLSON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Question. In June 2007, the Senate confirmed J. Adam Ereli to be the Ambassador to Bahrain. After serving there less than a year, Ambassador Ereli is now in Baghdad, serving for a year as the Public Affairs Officer at the United States Embassy. He apparently intends to return to Bahrain to resume his post next summer. In the meantime, there is no United States Ambassador in Bahrain.

When the committee acts on your nomination, it expects that you will serve the usual 3-year tour, unless there are personal or other compelling circumstances that require you to return to Washington. We don't expect that ambassadors will abandon their jobs for a year to take another position.

Recognizing that you serve at the pleasure of the President, will you commit to stay at your position, and not depart your post for any extended assignment, whether in Baghdad or elsewhere? If you do take such an assignment, will you resign your ambassadorial post?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, it is my intention to serve a 3-year tour at Embassy Abu Dhabi, subject to the pleasure of the President and at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

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

Answer. Support for human rights and democracy has been a strong element throughout my career.

In 1985–86, I was the human rights officer at Embassy Kampala, and reported extensively on mass killings in the Luwero triangle during the Ugandan civil war. This reporting was instrumental in supporting the State Department's criticism of the Obote regime for its human rights record.

In 1992–94, as political-economic section chief at Embassy Addis Ababa, I worked intensively with the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, the opposition, and NGOs to promote civil society and a culture of democracy in the aftermath of the Mengistu regime. While not entirely successful, these efforts helped to create a space for the political opposition in Ethiopian politics.

As political director of the Iraq office in 2004–2005, I provided Washington support for the first Iraqi national elections, a milestone in Iraq's democratization.

As director of the office of Iraq in 2006, I led the Near East Bureau's support for the development of an Iraqi Constitution, a document that significantly advanced the rights of women and preserved the principle of religious freedom.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in the United Arab Emirates involve constraints on civil liberties—including freedom of assembly and association—as well as limited public participation in decision-making. A limited group of electors participated in the 2006 elections for the Federal National Council. While the UAE has seen rapid social changes in the past decade, inequality in treatment of woman and noncitizens remains a concern.

If confirmed, I will continue U.S. Government efforts to underscore the importance of human rights and democracy. For example, the recent decision of the UAE Prime Minister to forbid the imprisonment of legitimate journalists for what they write is a major step forward. If confirmed, I plan to encourage further domestic reform efforts such as the development of independent civil society organizations and the empowerment of the Federal National Council to take on a more responsive role in dealing with citizens and residents alike. In so doing, I hope to foster an environment in which a dialog on these issues can flourish. Through such collaborative efforts and engagement, I believe that we can strengthen our bilateral relationship, while improving the quality of life for all living in the UAE.

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 the UAE in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. While the UAE has welcomed constructive feedback and engagement from the United States on the significant human rights concern of trafficking in persons, the UAE has been slower in developing competitive elections and representative government. With no democratically elected legislative institutions or political parties, and no general elections, citizens do not have the right or ability to change their government via democratic means. In addition, the vast majority of UAE residents are not citizens, and thus remain largely outside the political process.

Further progress on human rights and democracy must involve sincere backing by the UAE leadership. To ensure that the current Federal National Council (FNC), an advisory body, is more responsive to the needs of citizens, government ministries need to be charged with listening to and supporting the FNC, increasing its capabilities, and increasing public awareness of the importance of participation in decision making.

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

Answer. In addition to robust annual reporting on important issues such as trafficking in persons, human rights, and religious freedom, I will also actively engage the Emirati leadership throughout the year. If confirmed, I will ensure that human rights reporting and advocacy have a prominent place in the Mission Strategic Plan and other planning documents. I will also encourage my locally employed staff, none of whom currently are Emirati citizens, to share openly with me any issues of concern.

If confirmed, I will ensure that Foreign Service officers working on human rights issues, especially advocacy for human rights, receive appropriate credit for such activities in their annual evaluation reports and by special awards, as appropriate.

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

Answer. Yes, I believe that in order to achieve progress on human rights issues, the U.S. Government must engage both government officials and nongovernmental organizations. If confirmed, I would seek to create dialog between the efforts of citizens groups and the Emirati government. I would also welcome to the embassy, groups from the UAE or abroad who have specific issues they want the U.S. Government to be aware of and to facilitate contact with Emirati institutions.

RESPONSES OF DAVID PEARCE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD

Question. Over the past year the security situation in Algeria has deteriorated significantly with the emergence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). If confirmed, how would you work with the Algerian Government to address this problem? What tools does the embassy have and what tools would you like to see strengthened?

Answer. The Algerian Government is committed to the struggle against terrorism, and we want to support them in that fight to the best of our ability. We maintain a strong and fruitful intelligence relationship, and the United States has significantly increased our capacity-building assistance to the Algerian Government on countering terrorism finance. We would like to see a wider relationship between United States and Algerian law enforcement, and we opened a legal attache office to that end in 2007. We would also like to see the relationship between our militaries continue to expand, as both the United States and Algerian militaries have hard-won counterinsurgency experience and could mutually benefit from sharing expertise. The United States and Algerian militaries are working together to build Algerian counterterrorism capabilities through training and education programs such as International Military Education and Training (IMET) and the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP). We also support commercial and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) of equipment for border and coastal security initiatives.

While these counterterrorism activities are important, the long-term struggle against terrorism must address the underlying issues of economic and political marginalization that feed extremism. It is in this area that I would most like to see a strengthening of the tools available to the United States mission in Algeria. Through the Middle East Partnership Initiative and other associated programs, we have in place promising programs building the capacity and independence of Algeria's judicial system, increasing the skills and professionalism of Algeria's media, fighting corruption, facilitating economic reforms, and, most promisingly, helping to transform Algeria's education system into one geared to producing graduates with the skills needed to succeed in the modern world. The needs in this area are immense, and if confirmed, I hope to be able to secure resources adequate to the task.

Question. Given the strategic location of Algeria—in North Africa but closely linked to the Sahel region—please describe the coordination on counterterrorism and security issues you'll expect to have with your colleagues across both regions, if you are confirmed, and what format this coordination will take. If there is no formal mechanism for such coordination and communication, how will you go about developing one?

Answer. Algeria is indeed in a strategic location vis-a-vis the rest of North and West Africa, and if confirmed, I will do my best to ensure that I maintain close contact with my colleagues across the region to ensure our coordination against an increasingly regional terrorist threat. The primary mechanism for such coordination is the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), which allocates counterterrorism resources to the Maghreb and Sahel countries in a process that includes substantial interaction between United States missions in the TSCTP partner nations, along with relevant agencies in Washington and the United States Africa Command. There is constant interface within TSCTP using twice monthly secure video teleconferences, an annual TSCTP conference, and visits to the region and between Washington and Europe. The Trans Sahara Regional Security Initiative also hosts a semiannual strategic forum with United States ambassadors and Washington; these remain valuable opportunities to exchange views and formulate an overall counterterrorism strategy for the region. If confirmed, I also plan to maintain more informal contacts with my counterparts in our missions to the countries of the Maghreb and the Sahel, to ensure that we are on the same page on cross-cutting issues with counterterrorism implications such as the Tuareg rebellions in northern Mali and Niger.

Question. A recent New York Times article delineated the challenges young Algerians face from a weak educational system vulnerable to religious extremism. What steps is the Algerian Government taking to address this problem and what kind of support is the U.S. Embassy providing?

Answer. While the Algerian educational system has been able to deliver a solid basic education to virtually all Algerian citizens, the demands of the modern world and especially of a modern economy make assistance particularly urgent. Under the Middle East Partnership Initiative and through other funding, we have been able to provide badly-needed assistance to Algeria's primary and secondary education systems in competency based curriculum and teaching instruction, including English-language instruction, and in incorporating technology into the classroom. A promising area we would like to develop further is the partnering of United States and Algerian universities to target increased job-training and instructor-training assistance to Algerian university student populations at risk of radicalization. If confirmed, I hope to be able to secure funding to substantially expand this pilot program.

RESPONSES OF MICHELE SISON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Question. In light of recent attacks on United States personnel, what security improvements have been taken to ensure the safety of United States personnel and property in Lebanon?

Answer. For many years, based on the critical threat environment in Beirut, the United States Embassy has operated in a heightened security posture. We have robust countermeasures and a proactive, integrated security program in place to protect our personnel and property. The Emergency Action Committee regularly meets to discuss and adjust our security posture to reflect current threat assessments. Two recent incidents reflect the need for this constant vigilance. On January 15, 2008, one of our embassy vehicles was attacked with a roadside bomb, resulting in injuries to two Foreign Service National employees and the death of three Lebanese bystanders. On June 18, 2008, an incident involving aggression directed toward my motorcade occurred in Nabatiyeh, which slightly injured two embassy bodyguards. Following these incidents, the security units at the embassy and the Emergency Action Committee assessed how to best adjust existing security practices—as we do frequently in the constantly evolving and volatile local security environment—to better protect our people while in vehicles.

Based on our assessments, we determined that we could implement several procedures to augment vehicle security. These vehicle security policies compliment and reinforce the other existing security measures already in place at Embassy Beirut. We determined that the number of Americans allowed in each fully armored vehicle should be lowered from four to three, we diversified the embassy fleet by acquiring new sedans that are not as readily identifiable as being U.S. Embassy vehicles, and we increased manpower for chief of mission movements. We also contracted for rental vehicles that can serve as advance vehicles for motorcades, thus reducing the likelihood that our advance cars will be recognized and tip-off those that might be preparing attacks. In addition, we increased the number of routes in order to avoid using frequently used routes and implemented a "Zone System" in the Greater Beirut area in an effort to make our moves less predictable. The zones where Americans are permitted to travel for unofficial moves change weekly.

Question. Please provide the committee with a brief status report on United States efforts to train and equip the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces, and United States reconstruction assistance for the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp (which was destroyed in fighting against the Fatah al-Islam terrorist group last year).

Answer. Since 2006, the United States has committed over \$400 million in assistance to the Lebanese security forces. The assistance includes equipping the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) with modern body armor, helmets, over 12 million rounds of ammunition of various calibers, front line weapons, spare parts for LAF vehicles and armor, and over 285 all terrain vehicles (HMWWVs). Three hundred more HMWWVs will arrive over the next year.

U.S. military personnel have provided training in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and, in fiscal year 2007, DOD also conducted three Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) courses for LAF Special Forces units. DOD will conduct an additional six JCET courses in fiscal year 2008. Also, starting in October 2008, the United States military will begin its Comprehensive Training Program (CTP) in Lebanon, designed to train the entire LAF.

Through the U.S. Government partnership with DynCorp International, our Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) has implemented a number of demining programs with the LAF. Since summer 2006, these humanitarian assistance programs have cleared 4,092,569 square meters to return productive land for safe use by the Lebanese people. An additional 789,803 square meters have been scheduled for clearance.

Since 2006, the U.S. Government has committed over \$60 million in security assistance to the Internal Security Forces (ISF). This assistance has equipped the ISF with 3,000 sets of civil disorder management equipment, 360 vehicles, 14 armored personnel carriers (APCs), duty gear for 4,000 cadets in various ISF units, and new academy classrooms, offices, and equipment with which to provide training.

In addition to equipment, funding has supported ISF training, which consists of two components—basic cadet training and instructor training. Basic training is a 10-week program taught by United States instructors with the assistance of Lebanese police and legal professionals that instructs recruits in the latest policing and law enforcement techniques, modern police practices, administration, democratic policing, human rights, criminal investigations, and other essential law enforcement

skills. Instructor training is a 1-week class that teaches ISF instructors the essential skills to teach law enforcement courses, which will prepare them to eventually take over the training program from the United States.

To date, we have graduated 343 police cadets in two classes, with an additional 190 cadets currently enrolled at the academy in Beirut. This third class is set to graduate September 12, with the next class starting training 1 week later. Between now and the start of the fourth class, we plan to complete sufficient academy upgrades that will allow us to double our training program from 200 to 400 cadets per class. This expansion will help us reach our goal of training to 8,000 cadets over a 5 year period. In addition, we have graduated two classes of instructors, or a total of 66 ISF instructors. The next class for 45 instructors is scheduled for October.

Also, through the State Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program, U.S. trainers are providing specialized ISF units with training in advanced driving tactics, SWAT tactics, and crises management training. This advanced training for the ISF will continue throughout 2008.

The United States announced in June 2008 a \$22 million pledge for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp to assist Palestinian refugees and Lebanese in surrounding communities. This pledge follows the U.S. Government's \$13.5 million contribution in fiscal year 2007 to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to provide emergency assistance for the Palestinian refugees displaced by the fighting and a separate \$100,000 contribution to nearby Lebanese communities also affected by the fighting.

The \$22 million aid package is divided into three components. First, \$10 million will support UNRWA's reconstruction of the camp, including housing, infrastructure, and utilities, in addition to restoring educational and health services. Second, \$6 million will focus on revitalizing Lebanese communities surrounding the camp, including reconstruction, job creation, improved sanitation services, school rehabilitation, and business development. Third, \$6 million in security assistance will bolster the ISF's community policing program, construct an ISF police station and provide equipment such as patrol vehicles and duty gear.

Question. In June 2007, the Senate confirmed J. Adam Ereli to be the Ambassador to Bahrain. After serving there less than a year, Ambassador Ereli is now in Baghdad, serving for a year as the Public Affairs officer at the United States Embassy. He apparently intends to return to Bahrain to resume his post next summer. In the meantime, there is no United States Ambassador in Bahrain.

When the committee acts on your nomination, it expects that you will serve the usual 3-year tour, unless there are personal or other compelling circumstances that require you to return to Washington. We don't expect that ambassadors will abandon their jobs for a year to take another position.

Recognizing that you serve at the pleasure of the President, will you commit to stay at your position, and not depart your post for any extended assignment, whether in Baghdad or elsewhere? If you do take such an assignment, will you resign your ambassadorial post?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, it is my intention to serve a 3-year tour at Embassy Beirut, subject to the pleasure of the President and at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

RESPONSES OF DAVID PEARCE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Question. In June 2007, the Senate confirmed J. Adam Ereli to be the Ambassador to Bahrain. After serving there less than a year, Ambassador Ereli is now in Baghdad, serving for a year as the public affairs officer at the United States Embassy. He apparently intends to return to Bahrain to resume his post next summer. In the meantime, there is no United States Ambassador in Bahrain.

When the committee acts on your nomination, it expects that you will serve the usual 3-year tour, unless there are personal or other compelling circumstances that require you to return to Washington. We don't expect that ambassadors will abandon their jobs for a year to take another position.

Recognizing that you serve at the pleasure of the President, will you commit to stay at your position, and not depart your post for any extended assignment, whether in Baghdad or elsewhere? If you do take such an assignment, will you resign your ambassadorial post?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I am fully committed to serve a 3-year tour at Embassy Algiers, subject to the pleasure of the President and at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

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

Answer. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, I was head of the political section in Embassy Kuwait. I was caught out of the country with my family at the time of the invasion, and spent most of the war in Taif, Saudi Arabia working with Ambassador Skip Gnehm and the Kuwaiti Government in exile. We knew that there was a great deal of anger among Kuwaitis at the pro-Saddam position of Yasser Arafat and the PLO. Ambassador Gnehm and I repeatedly stressed in our daily interaction with Kuwaiti leaders in Taif the strong United States interest in restoring the rule of law and, in particular, protecting the Palestinian population after liberation. When we returned to Kuwait to reestablish the embassy, we found that there was indeed much anger directed against the remaining Palestinians. We reaffirmed our strong view to the Kuwaiti leadership on the need to protect these civilians repeatedly. To back this up, we also organized—in addition to patrols by U.S. Special Forces—multiple, daily trips by U.S. Embassy officers into neighborhoods and police stations all over the city. I believe this action, which did not get a great deal of attention at the time, was instrumental in saving Palestinian lives.

As director of Northern Gulf Affairs 2003–2005, my office ran the Future of Iraq project, which had more than a dozen working groups. One important group was the Democratic Principles Working Group, which I chaired. Some of our Iraqi colleagues dubbed it the “mother of all working groups.” The work of this group brought together about 30 Iraqis from all strands of society and their discussions foreshadowed many of the important issues that the Iraqi people are still dealing with today. What I particularly valued about this process was that a very heterogeneous group of Iraqis came together, identified and discussed fundamental issues about the future of their country, and put forward their ideas about how best to grapple with those issues. I remember telling them that perfect consensus was not necessary in a democratic process—there was not a Congress or a parliament in the world that agreed on everything all the time. What was important was that there be a representative and accepted process, and that they all recognize each other’s rights in that process. I believe the Iraqis we worked with then demonstrated that, despite their considerable differences, they had the will to work through those differences and find their way to a national political accommodation. That process is now under way in earnest in Iraq and I believe it will ultimately succeed. Many of the people who took part in that initial Democratic Principles Working Group are now serving in the Iraqi Government and parliament and are deeply involved in the political process.

I was consul general in Jerusalem when Yasser Arafat died. There was some inclination among the Palestinian leadership at the time to throw the election for President into the parliament—which Fatah controlled—in order to guarantee the outcome that the Palestinian authority leadership preferred. Some Palestinians, including in leadership positions, thought that both Israel and the United States were also against elections. I countered this strongly, advocating with the Palestinian leadership against any move for a simple parliamentary vote and for a general election that would confer proper legitimacy to any outcome. In the end, this view prevailed, and Abbas was elected President in a vote that was seen as providing legitimacy not only to him but to a negotiated solution to the conflict with Israel. Abbas’ principal rival for the presidency, Mustafa Barghouti, and others in the PA, made a point of thanking me personally for my advocacy on behalf of free and fair elections.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that human rights issues continue to be an important part of our dialog with Algeria. Key outstanding issues include the lack of accounting for many persons who disappeared during the 1990s; restrictions on freedom of assembly and association; a criminal sanction on defamation that leads to self-censorship in the press; and recent limitations on freedom of worship for religious minorities that mar the Algerian tradition of religious tolerance. If confirmed, I will work for progress in these areas, both in our engagements with the government and with other stakeholders in Algeria. I would hope these engagements, together with other embassy programs and training, would not only contribute to progress on specific issues, but also to the public discourse, thereby making clear the importance that the U.S. Government and people attach to fundamental freedoms.

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

Answer. The primary obstacle that I believe that I will face in addressing all of the primary human rights concerns that I noted in my previous response is that the experience of Algeria's 1990s civil war has made the Government of Algeria considerably more cautious about attempting to open its political system and loosen its restrictions on the activities of society, as it attempted to do in the late 1980s. This sensitivity is understandable, but I believe it is misdirected. If confirmed, I will work to convince my interlocutors that Algeria can best fight extremism and the threat it poses to return Algeria to the violence of its "black decade" by laying a foundation for the kind of open, pluralistic society that can give its citizens a stake in the health of the state and hope for the future.

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

Answer. The dialog with Algeria on human rights issues has been and will continue to be an integral part of our mission. This will be reflected in mission contacts, reporting, and programming, including by our continued support for the Middle East Partnership Initiative and other programs. Officers providing superior service in these areas will be recognized the same way superior service in other areas is rewarded—through awards, performance evaluations, and challenging onward assignments.

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

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I anticipate that meetings with nongovernmental organizations will be a regular feature of the mission's engagement on human rights issues.

RESPONSES OF TATIANA GFOELLER-VOLKOFF TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER J. DODD

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

Answer. Yes. I have carefully reviewed this cable.

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

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

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

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

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

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