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Ambassador-designate to the United Arab Emirates
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Subcommittee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply humbled and grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my best to live up to their trust and to work as closely as possible with this Committee to carry out my responsibilities on behalf of the U.S. government and the American people.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would like to submit my full statement for the record and begin by expressing my enormous appreciation for the support of my family, who are here today with me: my husband, Chris, and our two wonderful girls. Suffice to say that that my family's loving support and willingness to bear sacrifice in their own right have been indispensable to my ability to carry out my responsibilities as a Foreign Service officer. I would also like to thank my mother, Madonna, and sister, Mary Beth, who have joined us today.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in or on the Middle East, including in assignments in Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jerusalem. Most recently I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula, where the growing importance of the UAE in the region, as well as its critical value as a foreign policy partner for the U.S., were driven home almost daily.

The UAE is a young nation gifted with extraordinary resources and ambitions to match. It is a country that benefitted early on

from the region's oil wealth, but one which took a longer view of what success would look like, committing to economic diversification, education of its people, moderate government, and global engagement. In the last decade in particular, the UAE's role on the world stage has evolved accordingly, as it has increasingly demonstrated leadership in grappling with global issues such as violent extremism, illicit trade and proliferation, and poverty. If confirmed, I pledge to broaden and deepen our cooperation with the UAE on these and the many other issues of direct national security interest to the US.

The UAE shares many of the same goals and interests that animate our policy in the region and internationally, and our two governments work closely and collaboratively on these shared priorities. As a member of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan since 2003, the UAE has sent troops to Afghanistan, and, in the last five years alone, has contributed nearly \$1 billion for humanitarian aid and reconstruction in that country. On Iraq, the UAE has provided substantial diplomatic, humanitarian and other support to U.S.-led efforts, and I believe we are about to see that reach new levels; in 2008 the UAE forgave over \$7 billion in Iraqi debt, and it has contributed over \$60 million in aid to Iraq since 2009. On Syria, the UAE remains engaged with the United States in supporting the Syrian Opposition, is an active member of the Friends of the Syrian People (FoSP) Core Group known as the London 11, and has pledged \$360 million in humanitarian assistance for Syria and the region. On Iran, the UAE supports international efforts to implement sanctions on Iran and the P5+1's efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution on Iran's nuclear program. In Egypt, the UAE has pledged over \$7 billion in loans, grants and in-kind goods while working with the government of Egypt and the U.S. to foster economic reform there. On Libya, we share with the UAE a goal of a stable, democratic end state. We are consulting closely with the UAE on Libya, and we are continuing to make clear to all countries with an interest in Libya that we believe unilateral foreign intervention undermines the process of

achieving a stable government. The UAE, along with other Arab League states, has played a key supporting role in the Middle East peace process, urging both sides to remain committed to achieving a durable peace. The UAE has also been a major provider of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian Authority and in Gaza. It has been a supporter of the post-conflict reconstruction process in Somalia, providing extensive aid (\$213 million since 2009) and establishing formal diplomatic ties with Somalia in 2013. As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which brokered the historic political transition in Yemen in 2011, the UAE supports the Yemeni government's efforts to achieve peace and stability. The UAE is also a valued member of the multilateral Friends of Yemen group, and has contributed over \$1.3 billion in aid to Yemen since 2009.

The UAE is a strong military partner and a reliable contributor to coalition operations, participating in five major such efforts with the U.S. since Operation Desert Storm. This cooperation is only amplified on a bilateral basis. The port of Jebel Ali in Dubai is the U.S. Navy's busiest overseas port-of-call, hosting more Navy liberty ship visits than any other port outside of Norfolk. The UAE plays host to some three thousand U.S. military personnel and key U.S. military assets. The UAE is one of our largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers, with over 90 implemented FMS cases valued at approximately \$19.2 billion. The UAE has actively participated in international operations to police the Gulf and has supported U.S. forces in our various military operations in the region. The UAE's security partnership with the U.S. and the international community is not new; in 1999, the UAE was among the first non-NATO states to publicly support NATO's bombing campaign in Kosovo, and the UAE sent almost 1,500 peacekeeping and special operations troops to participate in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission there, the single largest contribution to the mission by a predominantly Muslim state. During Operation Desert Storm, UAE troops took part in the

Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsula Shield Force, participating in the liberation of Kuwait in March 1991; UAE forces also participated in international coalitions in Somalia and Libya.

Our trade relationship with the UAE is an especially vital part of the bilateral relationship. The UAE is the largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East. Our bilateral trade surplus in 2013 was \$22.3 billion, the third largest surplus in the world for the United States. The United States continues to be a premier destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) from the UAE, with the Emirates now among the top twenty sources of FDI into the United States. Just as significantly, the UAE is a great place for American business. With its infrastructure and business and logistical services, the UAE has become the regional headquarters for over 1,000 American companies active in the petroleum, defense, services, education, and health care sectors. It has developed a leading role in business services, including finance and logistics, and has emerged as the preeminent business hub between Asia and Europe. Dubai's Emirates Airlines is the single largest customer for Boeing's 777 aircraft.

The UAE is also a partner on energy policy and environmental responsibility. While it holds nearly eight percent of the world's proven oil reserves and nearly five percent of proven gas reserves, the UAE has also sought to expand to renewable energy and is home to the newly-established International Renewable Energy Agency. The UAE early on made a commitment to diversify its economy beyond fossil fuels, adopting long-term plans to develop its manufacturing base, services sector, and non-oil trade. In 2012, the UAE launched a long-term Green Economy Initiative, which aims to make the UAE a world leader in energy efficiency and environmental safety. As part of its effort to diversify its energy sources, the UAE is constructing four civil nuclear power plants, the first of which is expected to start operating in 2017, and is reported to

be considering the construction of additional plants after that. U.S. companies including Westinghouse Electric and Bechtel are providing equipment, fuel, and design and project management services for the Baraka project. The vision of the UAE on sustainability can also be seen with the establishment of the Masdar Institute, which was created in cooperation with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a cutting edge institution looking at ways to meet the energy challenges of the future.

In the area of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the UAE takes its international obligations seriously. In my own time working on Middle East issues, I have seen a significant evolution of the UAE's approach to proliferation – from a country with many informal and unregulated trade routes, to a global trade leader and regional transshipment hub that is taking meaningful steps to ensure its trade links are not exploited by illicit actors. Not only has the UAE cooperated vigorously with U.S. law enforcement on interdiction, but it has also helped conduct interdiction training for other Gulf countries.

In another sign of the UAE's forward-thinking support for international standards, in 2009 the UAE signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S. This 30-year agreement, which allows the UAE to partner with the U.S. on civil nuclear technology, includes a voluntary obligation by the UAE to forgo domestic uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel reprocessing and instead rely on existing international markets for nuclear fuel.

One of the UAE's most noteworthy efforts in human capital terms is its effort to involve women in all levels of government and business. In 2012, the UAE adopted a requirement that the boards of directors of all UAE government agencies and corporations must include women. Emirati women make up 70 percent of the UAE's university graduates today. Four UAE cabinet ministers are women—including international

cooperation and development minister Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, who was on Forbes magazine's 2007 list of the 100 most powerful women in the world, along with UAE businesswoman Fatima Al Jaber. The UAE stands out in its recognition that it cannot realize its economic, political and cultural potential without the full participation of half of its citizens. It goes without saying that, if confirmed, I will look for opportunities to encourage just this kind of forward-thinking among Emirati leaders at all levels of society, to increase opportunities for women to participate fully in business, government, and society.

The U.S. also works closely with the UAE on human rights and countering trafficking in persons. The UAE is working to improve its response to the scourge of forced labor and forced prostitution, particularly among the substantial foreign migrant worker population the country hosts. The Department's most recent Congressionally-mandated Trafficking in Persons report found that the UAE does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but that it is making significant efforts to do so. During the past year, the UAE continued to prosecute sex trafficking cases, fund shelters for sex trafficking victims, and implement public awareness campaigns.

That said, there is more work to be done on these and other human rights issues. While the UAE government provides some avenues for migrant workers' complaints, some forced labor victims remain unidentified, unprotected, and are vulnerable to being punished for offenses committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. Over the last several years, in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, we have also seen the UAE act against certain civil society organizations, shutting down offices of organizations such as the National Democratic Institute and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and curtailing certain activities of

individuals. The UAE views the forces of extremism which stalk the region today as the preeminent threat to the modern, moderate, forward-looking country built with breathtaking speed and success over the last forty years, by the country's founding father, Shaikh Zayed al-Nayahn. But in defense of that project, the UAE government has periodically encroached on its citizens' freedoms of expression and association. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to the UAE, I pledge to engage in a productive and candid dialogue on these issues, working from the core values and democratic principles that define America.

As the UAE's political and economic prominence only continues to grow, so too must our engagement. With Abu Dhabi's growing engagement in some of our top foreign policy priorities including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, there is no question that the United States has a serious and committed partner in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to work with the UAE government to promote our foreign policy objectives and a more stable and prosperous Middle East.

The UAE is ripe for increased U.S. business as Abu Dhabi invests to diversify beyond oil production and Dubai continues its expansion as a regional and global commercial hub. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, I will advocate aggressively for U.S. companies and work to find new export opportunities for American goods and services in the UAE.

It goes without saying that paramount among my priorities, if confirmed, will be the welfare, security, and interests of all American citizens in the UAE. More than 50,000 American citizens make the UAE their home; add to that the staff in the U.S. diplomatic mission and US military personnel in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to do everything possible to protect the safety and security of the dedicated men and women at our mission, as well as that of all Americans living and working or traveling in the United Arab Emirates.

I appreciate and value this Committee's oversight of our mission in United Arab Emirates. If confirmed, I look forward to welcoming the Committee's members and staff to the UAE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

Thank you.