
NOMINATIONS

[Ruggles, Krol, Mustard, Pressman, Bernicat]

Thursday, July 17, 2014

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

113TH Congress Second Session

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

WITNESSES

ERICA J. BARKS RUGGLES, of Minnesota, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda

HON. GEORGE ALBERT KROL, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of
Kazakhstan

ALLAN P. MUSTARD, of Washington, to be Ambassador to Turkmenistan

DAVID PRESSMAN, of New York, to be Alternate for Special Political Affairs in the United
Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; alternate to the sessions of the General
Assembly of the United Nations

HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the People's
Republic of Bangladesh

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[Ruggles, Krol, Mustard, Pressman, Bernicat]

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U.S. SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:00 p.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen
2 Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine, presiding.

3 **PRESENT.** Senators Kaine [presiding] and Risch.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FOR VIRGINIA

4 **SENATOR KAINE.** This meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will
5 come to order.

6 We have five nominees to consider today and forward to the full committee for
7 their consideration. I appreciate that we have a little bit of a — some kind of a
8 demonstration is blocking a couple of the nominees from being here right at the minute,
9 but we will get started, nevertheless. I will do some opening statements.

10 And I think I will just go ahead and tell you about all five of the nominees in my
11 opening statements, and then we will begin with testimony from Ms. Ruggles and Mr.
12 Pressman, and we will allow the other three nominees to do their testimony when they
13 arrive.

14 First, congratulations to you, and to all five of the nominees. It is an honor to be
15 nominated to represent the United States in the capacities for which you are nominated.
16 As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, it is — it has been a privilege to work
17 on the committee, and one of the things that is so exciting is the opportunity to meet
18 Foreign Service officers of every grade and every capacity, both in Washington and

1 around the world. We are served very, very well by some dedicated public servants,
2 and many of them live in Virginia. So, I want to make sure I say that right up front.

3 The five nominees that we have today for a variety of positions are as follows:
4 Marcia Bernicat to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh; George Krol
5 to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan; Allan Mustard to be Ambassador to
6 Turkmenistan; and then two witnesses who are here, David Pressman, who is the
7 Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs to the U.N., with the rank of
8 Ambassador, and an Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly
9 of the U.N.; and Erica Barks-Ruggles to be Ambassador to Rwanda.

10 I am chairing this hearing, as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Near East, South,
11 and Central Asia, where a number of these positions are in that real estate.

12 A few words about each of our five nominees:

13 Ambassador George Krol is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class
14 of Minister Counselor, currently serving as the U.S. Ambassador for the Republic of
15 Uzbekistan, previously the Ambassador in Belarus, with many other assignments in
16 Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

17 Welcome, to all of you. You came in quicker than I thought you were going to
18 come in. I am very glad to have you here. Just starting the introductions.

19 Ambassador Krol has served much of his career in the former Soviet Union,
20 developing deep knowledge of the region, and we are very, very pleased to welcome
21 him here.

22 Ambassador Krol, welcome.

23 Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, who served previously as the Ambassador to
24 Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and she was confirmed by the Senate for those positions in
25 2008. Ambassador Bernicat is a Senior Foreign Service officer who has 27 years of
26 experience. She most recently served as Office Director for India, Nepal, Sri Lanka,

1 Maldives, and Bhutan at State, and previously has — she has served in many capacities,
2 including overseas postings in Barbados, Malawi, India, Mali, France, and other
3 positions.

4 Welcome. We are very, very glad to welcome you here.

5 Allan Philip Mustard is the most Senior Foreign Service officer in the Foreign
6 Agricultural Service at U.S. Department of Agriculture, currently serves as Agricultural
7 Minister and Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India. He has broad
8 experience in guiding economic reform assistance throughout Eastern Europe and the
9 former Soviet Union. An expert leader and manager, he served twice in Russia and
10 speaks excellent Russian. He will be bringing essential skills to the task of furthering
11 bilateral relations with the Government of Turkmenistan as it transitions to a market
12 economy.

13 David Pressman is an American human rights attorney and former aid to U.N.
14 Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. He currently serves as Samantha Powers'
15 counsel at the United Nation. David served as an advisor to Secretary Janet Napolitano
16 and chief of staff to the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, also served as Assistant
17 Secretary of Homeland Security responsible for policy development on global criminal
18 justice issues. He was appointed by President Obama to serve as the director for the
19 War Crimes and Atrocities on the National Security Council.

20 And finally, Erica Jean Ruggles is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service,
21 currently serves as Consul General at the U.N. — U.S. Consulate in Capetown, South
22 Africa, a position she has held since 2011. During her career, she has served as Deputy
23 to the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., on detail as Director of the National Security
24 Council, and Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,
25 and Labor. She has also had postings abroad in Norway, India, and elsewhere.

1 These five public servants have already demonstrated their mettle in difficult
2 positions and are well qualified for the positions for which they have been nominated.

3 We are pleased to welcome you today. And what I would like to do is just begin
4 with opening statements from each of the witnesses. I know you have submitted
5 testimony for the record. It will be accepted in the record, but please take the time that
6 you need.

7 We will begin with Ms. Ruggles, and we will work our way across the dais, and
8 then we will then prepare for my withering cross-examination.

9 [Laughter.]

10 **SENATOR KAINE.** Ms. Ruggles.

**STATEMENT OF ERICA J. BARKS RUGGLES, OF MINNESOTA, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

11 **MS. BARKS-RUGGLES.** Thank you, Chairman Kaine. And thank you, to the
12 members and staff who are here today.

13 It is, as you said, an honor and a privilege to be — appear before you today and
14 to have been nominated as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I am
15 humbled by the trust that has been placed in me by the President and the Secretary of
16 State, and I hope that you will also find me worthy of your trust. If confirmed, I will
17 work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance
18 U.S. interests in Rwanda.

19 I would like to start, if you would not mind, by acknowledging the presence of
20 — behind me, of my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Taylor Ruggles.
21 Without him and without our family's love and support, I would not be here today.

22 Mr. Chairman, I sit before your committee today in embodiment of what so
23 many people in so many countries admire about the United States, the fact that, through
24 hard work and a good education, anyone in America can become anything they want to

1 be. In my 22-year career, I have seen people just like me, from modest backgrounds,
2 with hardworking families, who have not had the opportunities I did simply because
3 they were of a different race, tribe, ethnic group, religion, or gender. And, because of
4 that, I have become a committed advocate for ensuring that every individuals has —
5 have the opportunities they need to succeed.

6 Rwanda is a country that has been deeply riven by cycles of conflict, tragedy, and
7 survival. Although Rwanda is still recovering from the 1994 genocide that killed more
8 than 800,000 innocent people, Rwandans have shown that recovery, reconciliation, and
9 healing are possible, even in the aftermath of a genocide that no one believed possible in
10 our time.

11 More, however, needs to be done to secure peace and democracy and further
12 expand prosperity in Rwanda for the next generation of its citizens. Since 1994, Rwanda
13 has made enormous progress in rebuilding itself by investing in the health and
14 education of its people, laying the needed foundation for economic prosperity and
15 sustainable growth. In the past 10 years alone, it has pulled over 1 million of its 11
16 million citizens out of poverty, doubled GDP, and had economic growth that has
17 averaged over 6 percent.

18 Rwanda is not — is working not only to create immediate short-term jobs and
19 employment, but to develop a vibrant economy by meeting the basic needs of its
20 population through building roads, providing safe water, transportation, and
21 healthcare. Rwandan children have the highest primary enrollment rates in all of
22 Africa. For both boys and girls, Rwanda is on track to achieve universal access to
23 primary education by 2015, with a primary net enrollment rate of over 95 percent since
24 19- — since 2012. And, unlike many countries in the developing world in which girls
25 have limited access to education, Rwanda's young girls are enrolling in primary rates at
26 above 98 percent.

1 To strengthen its economy, Rwanda has aggressively pursued a privatization
2 policy that encourages foreign and local investment. It has diversified trade outflows
3 and has worked strategically to achieve its goal of developing into a middle-income
4 country by 2020 and becoming an important hub within the East African community for
5 regional financial services, aviation, information technology, and tourism.

6 In addition to its economic progress, Rwanda has drawn on its own tragic history
7 to try to alleviate conflicts elsewhere in the region. Rwandan police and troops are
8 serving with distinction in U.N. and regional peacekeeping forces in Darfur, South
9 Sudan, Mali, and Central African Republic. The United States has worked closely with
10 Rwanda since 2006 in this regard, providing over \$60 million in training, nonlethal
11 equipment, and logistics support to enable Rwandan deployments in these missions.

12 The United States, in partnership with the international community, has also
13 supported real developmental change in Rwanda. We remain Rwanda's largest
14 bilateral donor, providing more than 200 million in foreign assistance in fiscal year 2013,
15 including 90 million through the PEPFAR program.

16 Although Rwanda has made much progress over the last 20 years, there is still
17 much we can do to encourage and support its development, particularly in the area of
18 respect for human rights and the rule of law, ensuring freedom of expression for
19 political activities and the media, and deepening Rwanda's democracy.

20 If confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda, I will continue to urge the Rwandan
21 government to abide by its international human rights commitments, including respect
22 for the freedoms of assembly and expression, which are crucial to the success of any
23 democratic system of governance.

24 If confirmed, I will also continue to encourage Rwanda to play a constructive role
25 in restoring peace and stability in eastern Congo, including the full implementation of
26 its commitments to the peace, security, and cooperation framework, the Regional Peace

1 Process, signed in February 2013. One of the core objectives of that framework is the
2 eradication of all armed groups, including increased international regional efforts to
3 neutralize the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or the FDLR, as they are
4 commonly known, a group whose members include individuals responsible for the
5 genocide in Rwanda.

6 Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will commit all of my energy and experience
7 toward strengthening the relationship between our two countries and advancing, to the
8 best of my abilities, the U.S. goals of a democratic, prosperous Rwanda that is at peace
9 with its neighbors.

10 Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you
11 today, and I will welcome your questions at the end.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barks-Ruggles follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

12 **SENATOR KAINE.** Great. Thank you, Ms. Ruggles.

13 Ambassador Krol.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE ALBERT KROL, OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINEE TO BE
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

14 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for this
15 opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the
16 next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan. And I am honored by
17 the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in me
18 with this nomination. And, if confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill their, and your, high
19 expectations of me to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan.

20 And I am also honored to be sitting here before you today with my colleagues,
21 with whom I have served and whom I greatly admire for their professionalism and
22 their dedication to our country.

1 As a 32-year career officer of the United States Foreign Service, I can think of no
2 greater honor and privilege to serve our country and represent the American people as
3 Ambassador of the United States. And I am grateful for the support and inspiration my
4 family members and friends have provided me through the years. And I count on their
5 love and support in the future.

6 Encompassing the size — or, the territory the size of Europe, Kazakhstan
7 possesses immense natural resources and is located at the crossroads of east and west
8 and north and south, and its population is young and increasingly connected with the
9 world around them. And, for the United States, our strategic goals in Kazakhstan are to
10 facilitate and strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and independence, its stability, its
11 prosperity, and its democracy.

12 Our strategic partnership with Kazakhstan has become increasingly important as
13 Kazakhstan assumes its rightful place in — on the world stage as a country of
14 consequence. From the earliest days of its independence 22 years ago, Kazakhstan has
15 made numerous wise decisions. It gave up its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal, which, at
16 the time, was the fourth largest in the world, and has become a leader in
17 nonproliferation efforts around the world. And, from the beginning, Kazakhstan has
18 pursued economic reform, and, as a result, is now a middle-income nation with the
19 most advanced economy in the region. Kazakhstan has also actively promoted trade
20 links east and west and north and south, and shares our vision of developing a New
21 Silk Road to connect Central and South Asia.

22 Another wise early decision was to send many of its young citizens abroad for
23 education, which is an investment that should pay off handsomely in both the public
24 and private sectors of Kazakhstan.

25 Long a provider of humanitarian and development assistance in Afghanistan, as
26 well as being an integral part of the northern distribution network into Afghanistan,

1 Kazakhstan is now standing up, in collaboration with our own USAID, its own
2 international development body, called KazAID.

3 And, in short, Mr. Chairman, Kazakhstan is a country with which the United
4 States can work. United States investment in Kazakhstan has grown to roughly \$31
5 billion, making Kazakhstan our most important economic partner in the region. We
6 have expanded our ties in the security sphere and in the areas of economic reform,
7 education, and growth of Kazakhstan's civil society. And, if confirmed, I would use my
8 diplomatic experience in the Central Asian region, where I now serve as Ambassador to
9 Uzbekistan, and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, to lead our mission
10 in advancing our growing engagement with Kazakhstan in pursuit of our broad
11 national interests, which are: strengthening long-term stability in Central Asia and the
12 world, promoting American business, encouraging respect for universal human rights,
13 and preventing any threats to our national security from emerging in this region.

14 Mr. Chairman, mutual interests and mutual respect underlie our relations with
15 Kazakhstan, and only the people of Kazakhstan can, and should, freely determine their
16 future development without outside interference or pressure. Respecting Kazakhstan's
17 traditions and transition from its Soviet past, our approach is not to dictate to
18 Kazakhstan its path of development, but to provide the people of Kazakhstan a strong
19 example of a prosperous, rule-based democracy on which to build durable economic,
20 social, and political stability. The choice will be Kazakhstan's to make, but the United
21 States will always be a reliable, principled influence and partner for Kazakhstan's efforts
22 to advance market reform and to develop into a free democratic society respectful of the
23 rights and choices of its citizens.

24 As a current Ambassador and a U.S. taxpayer, I also understand the importance
25 of being a responsible steward of the public trust, of public funds, property, programs,
26 and personnel. And I recognize that security of my — of the mission and its personnel

1 is one of the highest priorities of any Ambassador, as is ensuring that the mission is a
2 place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment, or exploitation
3 of any sort. If confirmed, I would maintain these high standards of ethical conduct,
4 fiscal responsibility, and security for our mission in Kazakhstan.

5 Mr. Chairman, I have spent most of my adult life in the diplomatic profession,
6 and I have learned that the key to successful diplomacy is establishing and maintaining
7 effective relationships. Clear communication is essential. At the end of the day, it is all
8 about trust. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and
9 societies, but also to engagement with Congress. And, if confirmed, I will always be
10 available to this committee, its members and its staff, to discuss and work with you in
11 pursuit of our national interests in Kazakhstan.

12 Again, I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Krol follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

13 **SENATOR KAINE.** Thank you, Ambassador Krol.

14 Mr. Mustard.

**STATEMENT OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD, OF WASHINGTON, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO TURKMENISTAN**

15 **MR. MUSTARD.** Chairman Kaine, it is a great honor to appear before you today, sir,
16 as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan. I am humbled
17 by the confidence and the solemn trust bestowed upon me by President Obama and
18 Secretary Kerry by this nomination. And, if confirmed, I look forward to working
19 closely with you and your committee to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

20 The United States and Turkmenistan have a growing relationship that spans a
21 broader range of issues, from regional security to energy cooperation to expanding
22 economic engagement. Our nations share an abiding interest in Afghanistan's future,

1 and Turkmenistan has been a strong partner in contributing to Afghanistan's
2 stabilization and economic development, including by permitting humanitarian
3 overflights for our military.

4 Boeing and GE are just two examples of American companies that have
5 experienced great success in the Turkmen market, and I believe there are many more
6 opportunities to expand our commercial relations. However, our bilateral relationship
7 is constrained by significant human rights concerns, because the government seeks to
8 exert control over the lives of its citizens. If confirmed, I will work actively with the
9 government to address the full range of human rights issues, including limitations on
10 freedom of movement, freedom of expression, undue restrictions on religious practice,
11 reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, and torture of prisoners. I believe that the
12 sign of a mature bilateral relationship is one where we can have frank, open discussion
13 with our counterparts on issues where we disagree. And, if confirmed, I will ensure
14 that we maintain a constructive dialogue with the Government of Turkmenistan across
15 the full spectrum of issues, even these tough ones.

16 The United States has made clear to Turkmenistan our enduring support for its
17 sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the administration has also emphasized that
18 U.S. interest in the region is long-term. Turkmenistan has been an important
19 contributor to Afghanistan's rebirth, providing discounted electricity, housing,
20 hospitals, and other forms of humanitarian aid to its neighbor. Turkmenistan is also
21 making major investments in infrastructure that will connect Afghanistan to the region
22 and open its economy to Western markets. If confirmed, I will encourage Turkmenistan
23 to continue to provide all possible support to Afghanistan.

24 As Turkmenistan seeks to diversify distribution of its significant natural gas
25 reserves, the administration continues to encourage Turkmenistan to move forward
26 with the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, or TAPI, Pipeline, which could

1 strengthen economic ties between Central and South Asia. U.S. firms have the
2 experience needed to put the Galkynysh gasfield, which would supply the TAPI
3 Pipeline, into production. If confirmed, I would use my decades of experience in
4 overseas commercial advocacy to support American companies in their efforts to invest
5 in energy projects in Turkmenistan and, likewise, work with the top levels of
6 government in Ashgabat to ensure their clear understanding of international energy
7 projects and markets.

8 As noted earlier, the United States has a growing commercial relationship with
9 Turkmenistan, and American companies are active across a growing range of sectors of
10 the Turkmen economy, including energy, agriculture, and civil aviation. If confirmed, I
11 will apply my more than 30 years of analytical, marketing, and trade policy expertise to
12 advancing the interests of U.S. firms. I will also use my experience with Russia's
13 accession to the World Trade Organization to encourage Turkmenistan also to join the
14 WTO.

15 Mr. Chairman, I have spent 20 of my 29 years in the Foreign Service at U.S.
16 missions overseas. Through my experiences abroad, I have come to believe that we
17 make our greatest impact on a country through direct engagement with its people. My
18 first job for the U.S. Government was as a Russian-speaking exhibition guide in the
19 U.S.S.R., explaining American culture and our way of life to citizens of a one-party state
20 with state-controlled media and a command economy. Later, as an agricultural officer,
21 I was privileged to have opportunities to drive deep into the hinterlands of Russia,
22 Mexico, Syria, and other countries, both to observe local crop conditions and to talk to
23 local residents about America and our democratic form of government. These
24 experiences proved to me the value of outreach at the grassroots level. Public
25 diplomacy programs, educational exchanges, cultural programming, and engagement
26 through American corner libraries embody and convey our most cherished values and

1 build enduring people-to-people ties that are the foundation for so much of what we do.
2 In a country like Turkmenistan, which remains one of the most closed societies in the
3 world, public diplomacy efforts can have an outsized impact. I will make these
4 programs a priority, if confirmed as Ambassador.

5 Finally, Mr. Chairman, I know that, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will ultimately
6 be responsible for the safety and welfare of my Embassy colleagues and their families in
7 a remote part of the world. Their safety and the safety of all Americans in
8 Turkmenistan will be my top priority.

9 Thank you. I look forward to your questions, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mustard follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

10 **SENATOR KAINE.** Mr. Pressman.

STATEMENT OF DAVID PRESSMAN, OF NEW YORK, NOMINEE TO BE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR; ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

11 **MR. PRESSMAN.** Chairman Kaine, distinguished members of the committee, I am
12 honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate
13 Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to
14 President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for
15 their confidence in me.

16 I would like, if I could, to briefly acknowledge the members of my family, who
17 are spread out across the country from San Diego to New York watching this hearing.
18 In particular, my twin boys, Conrad and Ezra, who are 18 months old, who are at home
19 in New York with my partner, Daniel. They are the lights of my lives. And when you

1 have twins, you are constantly exercising your multilateral diplomacy muscles at all
2 times.

3 [Laughter.]

4 **MR. PRESSMAN.** Mr. Chairman, I have dedicated my professional life to public
5 service at the State Department under two Presidents, as a human rights advocate and
6 attorney, and as an Assistant Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security. I
7 served in the Multilateral Affairs Directorate of the National Security Council, and,
8 since last fall, have served as the counselor to Ambassador Power at the U.S. Mission to
9 the United Nations. I have had the chance to work with, around, and for the U.N. I
10 have seen both its promise and its success, as well as its failures and its shortcomings. I
11 have looked into the eyes of displaced and desperate people who counted on protection
12 from nearby U.N. peacekeepers, but who were instead left to fend for themselves. I
13 have also seen, however, the U.N. accomplish the seemingly impossible; deliver
14 vaccines, despite government obstruction, to those who would otherwise perish;
15 families evacuated from aerial bombardments that would otherwise have killed them.

16 From its founding almost 70 years ago, the U.N.'s record has been a mixed one.
17 It — the organization is far from the panacea that some of its most fervent backers
18 hoped it would become, nor is it the failure its most ardent opponents feared. Its record
19 is truly mixed. It is both indispensable and it is flawed. But, it can advance our
20 interests; and, as such, we must lead it, and we must reform it.

21 As our lives and our world become increasingly interconnected, so, too, do the
22 threats to our security and liberty. Terrorists, proliferators, aggressors, cyber warriors,
23 criminals, traffickers, and peddlers of repression do not respect borders. In responding
24 to them, our efforts must transcend borders, as well. And, while no country can lead as
25 effectively as ours can, it is not America's job to police every problem, to solve every
26 crisis. That burden must be shared. And the United Nations, with strong and assertive

1 American leadership, can help us protect our interests and promote international peace
2 and security while more equitably distributing the burden for doing so.

3 If confirmed, I would be honored to join
4 Ambassador Power in her determined work to make the U.N. more responsible,
5 effective, and efficient. That means ensuring U.N. peacekeeping missions are well
6 designed, properly resourced, and responsibly led. It means ensuring that
7 peacekeepers who are supposed to be out patrolling and protecting civilians are not
8 instead hunkering down on their bases. It means ensuring budget discipline, increasing
9 transparency, and making sure that those who seek to report abuse in the U.N. system
10 can do so without fear of retribution. It means ensuring that we live up to the spirit of
11 the U.N.'s own charter by putting an end to the campaign of bigotry and discrimination
12 directed against the state of Israel at the U.N. It means ensuring that voices of liberty
13 and freedom are not muffled by noises of repression and extremism at the U.N. We
14 can, and we should, make the U.N. work to advance our interests and security.

15 Because of U.S. leadership today, U.N.-backed and African Union-led
16 peacekeepers are playing important roles in repelling terrorist organizations operating
17 in Somalia while U.N. peacekeepers are helping stabilize northern Mali against the
18 threat posed by al-Qaeda-affiliated and other extremist groups. Because of U.S.
19 leadership, the U.N. is on the front lines of preventing regional instability by trying to
20 end conflict and curb suffering in Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic,
21 and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Because of U.S. leadership, the United Nations
22 helped lift Cote d'Ivoire out of the arms of a strongman intent on defying the
23 democratic will of Ivoirians.

24 Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me just say that I believe we can, and we should,
25 use the United Nations to advance our security, protect our interests, and promote our

1 values, and that, by so doing, we can make the world a safer, more just, and more
2 humane place.

3 It is to those ends that I pledge my best efforts, if confirmed. And it is with
4 gratitude that I thank you and the members of this committee for the opportunity to
5 appear before you today. And, of course, I would be pleased to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pressman follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

6 **SENATOR KAINE.** Thank you, Mr. Pressman.

7 Ambassador Bernicat.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT, OF NEW JERSEY,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

8 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Mr. Chairman and members of the staff, I am honored to
9 appear before you today. I would like to sincerely thank the President and the
10 Secretary of State for the trust and the confidence they have placed in me as their
11 nominee for Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

12 Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Kathryn Bloom White and Luther
13 White, my sister and brother-in-law, and Thomas Darby, a dear friend with whom my
14 sister and I share a proud Jersey Shore upbringing. Not here today, my sons, Sumit
15 Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, hail from the subcontinent, and, like their father,
16 Olivier, and me, have enthusiastically called the world our classroom.

17 It is an honor to be nominated to serve the United States in such a strategically
18 important country at such a critical time for our bilateral relationship. As the world's
19 eighth-largest country by population and third-largest Muslim majority nation,
20 Bangladesh is known for its moderate, secular, pluralistic traditions.

1 With a consistent annual economic growth rate of roughly 6 percent, Bangladesh
2 aspires to become a middle-income country and is an increasingly important trading
3 partner and destination for U.S. investment. Strategically situated between a growing
4 India and a newly opening Burma, it is well positioned to play a key role in linking
5 South and Southeast Asia.

6 Labor rights and workplace safety remain a top U.S. priority. We need
7 Bangladeshis to ensure there will be no more heartrending tragedies like the Rana Plaza
8 building collapse or the Tazreen Fashions factory fire. With support from the United
9 States and other international partners, Bangladesh has begun to make progress in
10 transforming its garment sector. If confirmed, I pledge to you that I will actively further
11 our efforts to strengthen respect for labor rights and to improve workplace safety.

12 Bangladesh is on pace to meet many key U.N. Millennium Development goals.
13 Its development success story spans the past two and a half decades, and the United
14 States has been proud to assist in achieving those successes. Bangladesh is the largest
15 recipient of U.S. assistance in Asia, outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a focus
16 country for three of the President's key development efforts: global health, global
17 climate change, and Feed the Future. The United States also works closely with
18 Bangladesh to combat trafficking in persons, mitigate the threat of natural disasters,
19 strengthen counterterrorism, maritime security, and peacekeeping efforts, and combat
20 trafficking in drugs and arms. I look forward, if confirmed, to continuing robust
21 support for these important partnership efforts.

22 The strong U.S.-Bangladesh relationship allows us to discuss our differences in a
23 spirit of candor and openness. The United States remains concerned about recent trends
24 in democracy and human rights in Bangladesh. The parliamentary elections of January
25 5th were undeniably flawed, and Bangladesh's main political parties urgently need to
26 engage in constructive dialogue that leads to a more representative government. We

1 remain gravely concerned, as well, about a tax on religious and ethnic minorities,
2 political violence, and extrajudicial killings. If confirmed, I will work hard to support
3 efforts to promote accountability and strengthen human rights and democracy in
4 Bangladesh. We will work with the government, civil society, and Bangladeshis of all
5 walks of life to ensure an environment that encourages the broadest and fairest
6 participation. I will, if confirmed, passionately advocate policies that enshrine respect
7 for human rights and diversity, room for civil society to flourish, space for the free and
8 peaceful discussion of political differences, and adherence to the rule of law by an
9 independent judiciary.

10 The United States supports bringing justice to those who committed atrocities in
11 the 1971 war with fair and transparent trials held in accordance with international
12 standards. I will, if confirmed, continue to support the right of civil society
13 organizations to operate independently and to express their views openly. We also
14 encourage the government to ensure the continued effectiveness of Grameen Bank and
15 protect its unique governance structure.

16 The most serious responsibility of any Chief of Mission is to ensure the safety
17 and security of our staff abroad. Our Embassy in Dhaka works closely with
18 Bangladeshi counterparts to ensure protection of personnel and facilities, which will
19 remain a top priority of mine, if confirmed.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your strong interest in South Asia and the positive
21 role that the United States can play. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work
22 with you, your committee, and other Members of Congress to advance America's
23 interests in Bangladesh and throughout the region. It would be a great privilege to
24 serve the American people.

25 I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bernicat follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 **SENATOR KAINE.** Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

2 And two prefatory comments and then I will ask questions. And I am actually
3 going to move in a different order than the opening statements. But, I know, first, that
4 all of us are — probably have half of our mind on this Malaysian Air downing in the
5 Ukraine, and it is just — there is unreported — there is unconfirmed reports that there
6 may have been Americans onboard. Under any circumstance, whether or not, this is a
7 very, very dangerous event, and our prayers are with the victims. But, also, it points
8 out the high stakes of the work that you all are doing. The world is a very, very
9 challenging place right now.

10 And, second, on a happier note, I want you to each know I was your agent this
11 morning. I was at a nomination hearing for General Dunford to be the next
12 Commandant of the Marine Corps, and I stressed upon the General the importance of
13 the Marine Security Guard Program. The Marine Security Guards who police our
14 Embassies are trained at Quantico, in Virginia, and that program is a very important
15 one. It is been growing, in the aftermath of the Accountability Review Board report that
16 came out following the Benghazi tragedy. You each mentioned the security of your
17 people and the safety of your people in your statements, those of you who are assuming
18 mission command, and I know that that Marine Security Guard component is a — is
19 going to be a critical ally as you go forward. And so, I wanted to make sure that
20 General Dunford knew that, of the many issues that we care about with respect to the
21 Corps, the Security Guard Program is an important one. And I think he certainly,
22 himself, understands that importance.

23 Ambassador Bernicat, if I could begin with you. You mentioned the flaws in the
24 January 2014 election. And there was a boycott of the election by the BNP, and other

1 flaws. How have these flaws, including that boycott, affected the, sort of, legitimacy of
2 the elections as it is perceived by the Bangladeshi population? And, you know, what
3 can or is being done to try to resolve concerns and, hopefully, plan for better elections in
4 the future?

5 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Thank you, Mr. Senator.

6 We are very concerned that the current legislature contains the majority of
7 members who ran unopposed because of that boycott. That cannot be a representative
8 body of governance. And so, we have pressed, we continue to press, from the day after
9 the election, for the establishment of an all-inclusive political process that is free and
10 fair, and free especially of violence, because that has been, unfortunately, a hallmark of
11 the last year and a half, as well, in Bangladeshi politics, to have Bangladeshis come to
12 resolution and develop a government that is more representative.

13 That said, at the meantime, we — in the — at the same time, we have been able to
14 work effectively — continue to work effectively with Bangladesh on a whole host of
15 bilateral issues of concern to both our governments and the broader region.

16 **SENATOR KAINE.** Madam Ambassador, how long — how concerned are you about
17 Islamist militancy in Bangladesh today? Is it a major concern or is it a — is it an issue
18 that is not too, sort of, imminent and urgent?

19 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Sir, I have spent the majority of my career serving in
20 countries with either Muslim majority populations or significant Muslim populations,
21 and I would simply say, Muslim population or not, absent a free — a freely associated
22 and representative government and economic — and an economic system that allows
23 for broad participation, the risk for terrorism and the growth of extremism remains
24 high. And so, we can do no more good, I think, in Bangladesh, than to continue the
25 programs we have to counter those trends or make sure — Bangladesh is on an — very
26 impressive trajectory. Our job should be to ensure that that trajectory continues, in

1 terms of economic growth and reinforcing what is a deep pluralistic tradition within the
2 Bangladeshi people to make sure that extremism does not grow.

3 **SENATOR KAINE.** Let me ask you about a couple of issues of this kind of inclusion.
4 There is a history of inclusion. We want to make sure it continues. Is — you mentioned
5 the Grameen Bank in your testimony — is Dr. Yunis still the subject of government
6 harassment, or not?

7 **Ambassador Bernicat.** Unclear to me if, today — of course, he is no longer
8 associated with —

9 **SENATOR KAINE.** Right.

10 **Ambassador Bernicat.** — Grameen Bank.

11 **SENATOR RISCH.** Right.

12 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** And we have made strong representations, and will
13 continue to do so, that a proposed law and any other actions do not undermine a
14 governance board that is run by the members, specifically women, in that regard. We
15 want to make sure that the legacy that Profession Yunis has given the world is not
16 undermined, because, of course, we have all benefited from the microfinance model he
17 began there.

18 **SENATOR KAINE.** The Senate has acted recently to pass legislation — we passed a
19 resolution last week, we have passed another resolution this week — dealing with
20 increasing complaints about oppression of religious minorities in different regions of the
21 world. What is — what are we currently doing to protect religious minorities in
22 Bangladesh? And are recent incidents of violence against Hindus part of a larger trend
23 or seen as sort of, you know, unfortunate, but not necessarily a trend?

24 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Well, there has been a general trend of increasing violence
25 — political violence, extrajudicial killings — over the last year and a half. And religious
26 minorities have been among those targeted, but certainly not exclusively targeted.

1 First and foremost, we have shown a light on this behavior. We bring to the
2 government's attention reports of these acts. We publish them in our reports on human
3 rights and on religious freedom. And we are working with the government, as well as
4 asking the government, to be accountable for these actions, to investigate them, to —
5 and then to bring the perpetrators to justice; again, within the full framework of
6 international standards of justice.

7 **SENATOR KAINE.** I would encourage you, and all of you, in this way. You know,
8 there are — people ask about the influence that America has in the world. And one of
9 the ways we best influence is by being exemplary. And there are a number of areas
10 where we are exemplary. And the religious pluralism of American society, the fact that
11 people can live next door to each other, work together, you know, go to school together
12 — that if they had been in, maybe, original countries of origin, they would be at odds.
13 Instead, in the United States, it works so well. Not that we are without flaws. We have
14 flaws in every area. But, this is really a great example. Journalistic freedom is another
15 example. We often think of these as sort of, you know, kind of soft skills. But, they
16 really need to be held up as beacons in the world, because they are things we should be
17 proud of. And I think we can help other nations embrace religious pluralism, as well.
18 And I would encourage all of you in that.

19 In the past, the military has played an active role in Bangladeshi politics, kind of
20 depending upon perceived threats either to them or the threats they perceive in the
21 country. What are the prospects for — that the military will sort of be intervening in to
22 the political process in the future, as you see it today?

23 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Right. Of course, the Bangladeshi military has a long and
24 proud tradition. We have a very active security assistance program. Bangladeshis have
25 — in fact, 88 Bangladeshis have lost their lives around the world in peacekeeping
26 operations in 25 different — well, they have served in 25 different countries. We

1 continue to work and train with the Bangladeshis to reinforce human rights, to impress
2 upon the government that the government intervening — excuse me — the military
3 intervening undermines the democratic process, that a true and republican military is
4 the best defense, if you will, for a democracy. And we will continue to do that. There
5 have been some troubling trends, as you are aware, of military involvement in efforts to
6 address counterterrorism and other violence, domestically.

7 **SENATOR KAINE.** Madam Ambassador, we had a hearing yesterday in the
8 committee about the U.S.-India relationship, and the timing was really to coincide with
9 the beginning of Prime Minister Modi's tenure. There was a lot of discussion in the
10 hearing about the India-Pakistan relationship, but not questions, really, about the India-
11 Bangladesh relationship. Could you talk a little bit about that relationship, especially in
12 light of the new government in India?

13 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Yes, thank you for that question. I have worked in or on
14 India, dating back to the — to, oh, 1988, actually. And it is refreshing to see that Prime
15 Minister Modi has reached out to all of India's neighbors as his first acts. And I think
16 that those are very positive signs.

17 We share with India a desire for a region that is better and more interconnected,
18 because it is the least interconnected region, particularly from an economic standpoint.
19 And we share, also, with India a desire to see Bangladesh be a strong pluralistic
20 democracy that is free of political violence and that, of course, is stable. And so, we
21 work constantly with India, as well as our other diplomatic partners, to that end. And I
22 think Prime Minister Modi's early actions are very encouraging in that regard.

23 **SENATOR KAINE.** They certainly are encouraging, in terms of his own actions; and
24 they were received that way in Bangladesh, as well.

25 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Yes. Yes, absolutely.

1 **SENATOR KAINE.** The last question I would like to ask you is — you mention in
2 your testimony the really significant and — tragedy in Rana Plaza last year, and the
3 other factory, as well. What has the — and we had a hearing on this topic, probably
4 about a year ago on this committee, at Senator Menendez's instance. What progress has
5 been made in the last year toward addressing some of these workplace safety, building
6 standard, and labor rights issues?

7 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Out of the most horrific garment-industry tragedy ever in
8 history has arisen an extraordinary interagency and international program, or set of
9 programs, to address both worker safety and worker rights, in terms of the ability to
10 form unions and to have their grievances heard. In the last year, we have come
11 together as an interagency to support these efforts within Bangladesh, and especially —
12 I think we have to give a nod to the private sector — there have over 150 unions that
13 have been registered with the government, there have been over 20 factories that have
14 been closed due to imminent danger of physical safety. The government has opened a
15 public Web site, although it has not yet uploaded the data, regarding the inspection of
16 factories, which is ongoing. We are supporting efforts, as are — as is the private sector,
17 to hire and train more inspectors. And we will continue to press in all of these areas.

18 **SENATOR KAINE.** And, Ambassador Bernicat, when you mention the private sector,
19 that includes a — U.S. companies have been actively engaged in this effort?

20 **AMBASSADOR BERNICAT.** Yes, absolutely, and have worked together with the
21 International Labor Organization, as well.

22 **SENATOR KAINE.** Great. Thank you very much.

23 I will now move to Ambassador Krol.

24 I have had a number of meetings, both in the Foreign Relations context — I
25 recently met with the Kazak Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Umarov,
26 and I have also met with Kazakhstan military officials as they have visited us in our

1 Armed Services portfolio. If you would — your background and work in this region is
2 pretty important — talk about, to the extent that you have — you know, you are sort of
3 aware of this — how have Russian-Kazak relationships been affected by all the
4 controversy recently in the Ukraine?

5 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I believe that, like all countries that had been all part of the one country, the
7 Soviet Union, they are all looking and watching as — what is going on with Russia and
8 Ukraine very intently. And Kazakhstan is one of them. Kazakhstan has a particular
9 relationship with Russia, a long border, about 20 percent of its population are Russian-
10 speaking up in the north. They are members of a Eurasian Economic Union, Customs
11 Union, as well as the Collective Security Treaty Organization that they have. And so,
12 they are very intimately concerned about developments in that region. And I believe
13 they — they do believe that there should be a peaceful resolution with full respect for
14 the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. And that is
15 something that, I think, throughout its own independent existence, Kazakhstan has
16 been particularly concerned about maintaining for itself. It is — exists in a very
17 important geostrategic place, between Russia, China, and then, to the south, the rest of
18 Central Asia, as well, and it wants to maintain very constructive economic and political
19 security relationships with its neighbors, but based on the principle of respect for its
20 territorial integrity and its independence. And that is something that, as an American
21 policy, that we have been supporting ever since we recognized the independence of
22 these former republics of the Soviet Union. And we were the first to recognize
23 Kazakhstan's independence.

24 So, yes, they are very concerned, and hope that this will resolve itself in a
25 peaceful way before their own reasons of their own population, but for the entire
26 region.

1 **SENATOR KAINE.** What is the current state of the Kazak-Russian relationship?

2 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Well, as I said, that they are — have a strategic partnership,
3 and they —

4 **SENATOR KAINE.** In these organizations that you mentioned.

5 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** That is right, that most recently they joined a — created a
6 Customs Union with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, and which has been turned into
7 a — an Economic Union that will — basically, it creates a — one customs space and —
8 with tariffs, and allowing, basically, a one market of the three countries that are
9 members of this union. So, they are very much entwined with that. And, as I said, they
10 are also members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization that — of the former
11 states of the Soviet Union, and Kazakhstan is a member of that, and they are engaged in
12 maneuvers and have a close security relationship, as well as in the air defense of the —
13 this space is also included in the Russia-Kazakhstan airspace area, as well. So, it is a
14 very close relationship and one, however, that is — they feel has to be based upon
15 respect for their independence — political independence and territorial integrity.

16 **SENATOR KAINE.** Kazakhstan has been a very strong partner of the United States in
17 all the work that we have done in Afghanistan — military partner; it is been of
18 significant assistance in a northern route to retrograde personnel and material.
19 Kazakhstan has done a significant job in the education of Afghani students, college
20 students, and has done that pretty significantly.

21 What — do the Kazak government have concerns about the post-2014 transition
22 of the U.S. role in Afghanistan? And how could we work to allay concerns, if they have
23 them?

24 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Yes, Mr. Chairman, that — even though Kazakhstan does not
25 have a border with Afghanistan, nevertheless, they and other countries in the Central
26 Asian region are quite concerned about developments in Afghanistan, because it can

1 affect their security. They would not like to see Afghanistan fail, and they would not
2 like to see it to become a platform for extremism or terrorism that can affect their
3 populations and their security. And that is why Kazakhstan and other countries in the
4 region have been particularly supportive of efforts to stabilize Afghanistan politically as
5 well as economically, and that will continue.

6 They — I — we keep a very close consultative relationship with Kazakhstan and
7 other countries in the region to keep them abreast of our policies and what we are doing
8 in Afghanistan, and in emphasizing the point that we are not abandoning Afghanistan,
9 that we are transitioning to another relationship with Afghanistan that is equally
10 important and that will be even more engaged with Afghanistan in order to see it
11 succeed and stabilize as a unitary state. And that is what countries like Kazakhstan are
12 interested in hearing from us, and not just hearing from us, but seeing that that is the
13 case, but also partnering with the United States and other countries to ensure that
14 Afghanistan will become and remain a stable state that can be integrated into the larger
15 economy.

16 **SENATOR KAINE.** What role is the United States playing in any current efforts to try
17 to encourage Kazakhstan to supply energy to Europe via the Caspian pipeline system?

18 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Well, the — most of Kazakhstan's energy resources go out
19 through a pipeline that goes through — mostly through Russia, and then there is
20 another line that goes through China, but they have also established a line that does go
21 to — through to Turkmenistan and also to build up the port of the — of Aktau on the
22 Caspian Sea, which could be used for sending liquified natural gas across the Caspian in
23 order to reach into the pipeline that is — that goes through the Caucasus. There are —
24 they can also do tankers and things of that nature, as well, as they are developing the
25 fields that are in the northern Caspian region. So, that is another part of their own
26 desire to diversify their — as it were, their exports of their energy resources to —

1 through the Caucasus, across the Caspian, as well as in the more traditional directions
2 that they have had.

3 **SENATOR KAINE.** I think you mentioned in your testimony the bid of Kazakhstan
4 for membership in the WTO. Could you talk a little bit about the current status of that
5 bid?

6 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

7 Kazakhstan does wish to become a member of the WTO. The United States
8 wishes to assist it to become a member of the WTO. And there have been very intensive
9 technical discussions between the United States and Kazakhstan on their WTO
10 accession. The fact that Kazakhstan is a member of the Customs Union and the
11 Eurasian Economic Union has added some technical issues that have to be resolved,
12 particularly on tariffs and on sanitary — phytosanitary, that is — international
13 standards that we are working on with Kazakhstan. And so, it is a very active issue that
14 we are working on with the Kazakhstani authorities. And we hope that this can be
15 concluded relatively soon.

16 **SENATOR KAINE.** Could you offer kind of a current status of human rights or
17 democratization issues in Kazakhstan? Particularly, I asked Ambassador Bernicat about
18 religious freedom. I would like your thoughts on that, as well.

19 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

20 That the issues of human rights and religious freedom and the like are issues that
21 have been of concern of the United States in Kazakhstan, not that they — that this is an
22 area that is an area of religious violence and the like; it is just the matter of encouraging
23 greater openness in — and space in their society and in their laws in order to recognize
24 that people could have choices in their religious beliefs and not to be so repressed in
25 being able to express their religious beliefs, as well as their political beliefs, as well as

1 their — as well as any of the beliefs and choices that people would have in a free and
2 democratic society.

3 I mean, coming out of this 70-some years of being part of the Soviet system, it is a
4 very difficult transition of the mindset that the people can be trusted to exercise
5 responsibility along with the freedoms that they would have. And this is an area that
6 we, the United States Government and our agencies, as well as American civil society,
7 wish to work very constructively with Kazakhstan in developing this atmosphere of
8 greater space for civil society and respect for religious diversity, as well as diversity
9 across the board.

10 And, you know, if I am confirmed, this would be certainly a very important
11 element of our — my work in Kazakhstan, and it is, again, a matter of trying to develop
12 a constructive relationship on these issues, and to move from concern — expressing of
13 concern to really seeing developments that are effective, you know, on the ground and
14 affecting people's lives and opening up this space for civil society, for political pluralism
15 and religious pluralism.

16 **SENATOR KAINE.** I know, in 2011, Kazakhstan passed a religious registration law
17 requiring the registration of religious organizations if they have certain membership at a
18 local level or at a national level. And the justification asserted was a concern about
19 religious extremism. Is there a significant challenge of religious extremism as
20 destabilizing to the Kazak government, in your view?

21 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Well, right now I would say no, because it is not an area that
22 there has been a great deal of religiously based violence. I think they are looking at a
23 preventative strategy of trying to prevent influences that could lead to religious
24 extremism. There have been some unfortunate examples of suicide bombings and
25 related events in Kazakhstan in the recent past, and I think that has caused them to look
26 at ways how they can deal with this issue so it does not become a greater issue in their

1 society. And our encouragement is — is not to repress, but it is basically to — how to
2 deal with the issue of preventing violent extremism by basically allowing greater
3 openness for people to express themselves peacefully in their religious beliefs, as well as
4 in their secular beliefs. And so, that is an ongoing dialogue and activity that we have
5 with Uzbekistan — with Kazakhstan because of the importance of this for the future to
6 prevent this situation of developing, where there would be more homegrown religious
7 extremism and violence in their own society.

8 **SENATOR KAINE.** We see this same, you know, delicate balancing everywhere in the
9 world. The concerns about terrorism and extremism, you know, often — and often in a
10 legitimate way — create a need to try to control, a bit. But, if you do that too much,
11 then you may actually create the self-fulfilling prophecy that a feeling of repression by
12 the government can actually make these problems worse. And, you know, trying to
13 assist in challenging circumstances in this is not an easy balance to strike.

14 But, thank you for your testimony.

15 **AMBASSADOR KROL.** Absolutely.

16 **SENATOR KAINE.** I will now move to Mr. Mustard, with respect to Turkmenistan.

17 The administration has been pretty positive in its description of Turkmenistan as
18 I — the quote that I saw was "an enabler for regional stability," acknowledging the
19 importance of economic and humanitarian support, and also support, as you testified,
20 of the overflights to Afghanistan. How do you see Turkmenistan's role changing in the
21 region as we enter into a new phase of our involvement in Afghanistan?

22 **MR. MUSTARD.** Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman.

23 I see Turkmenistan becoming somewhat more important than it already has been
24 because of the role that it has in linking Afghanistan to Europe and to other parts of
25 Asia, looking at what Turkmenistan is doing, in terms of developing a railroad that will
26 establish links between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Afghanistan connecting to the main

1 line going up into Kazakhstan, also the gas pipelines that will allow Central Asia to link
2 to Europe as well as to other parts of Asia, particularly South Asia. And then the New
3 Silk Road Initiative that would — really the biggest manifestation of that, Mr.
4 Chairman, is the TAPI Pipeline that would have with it not only a gas pipeline, but
5 potentially also a road network — railroad network that would really open up Central
6 Asia, including Afghanistan, to new markets in South Asia.

7 So, I think Turkmenistan will become more important, not less important.

8 **SENATOR KAINE.** Can you talk a little bit about the progress either — on both the
9 TAPI Pipeline, but also on any efforts to look at more delivery of energy to Europe?

10 **MR. MUSTARD.** On TAPI, the good news is that we do have the intergovernmental
11 agreement in place. The bad news is that it seems to have stalled, at this point. So, one
12 of my priorities, if I am confirmed as Ambassador, will be to sit down with the
13 Turkmenistan Government and get TAPI moving again.

14 On the Trans-Caspian Pipeline, that is also a priority to try to get the connection
15 between Turkmenbashi Port and Baku Port so that we can start delivering gas through
16 that pipeline, as well. These will all be priorities.

17 **SENATOR KAINE.** I will ask you the same question I asked Ambassador Krol, which
18 is, the events in Ukraine, for a country that has been part of the Soviet Union in the past
19 — I know that they — that — you know, that that has to be a huge factor right now in
20 Turkmen politics — what is the current status of the relationship between Turkmenistan
21 and Russia? And how is the Government of Turkmenistan looking at these unfortunate
22 events?

23 **MR. MUSTARD.** The Turkmen Ambassador to Moscow made a statement, 2 days
24 ago, to the effect that Turkmenistan considers Russia to be a strategic partner, but does
25 not intend to join the Eurasian Union. So, it will maintain its policy of positive

1 neutrality and will not join into security agreements or multilateral economic
2 agreements.

3 In terms of the events in Ukraine, the United States Government has made it
4 clear to Turkmenistan that we support Turkmenistan's sovereignty and territorial
5 integrity, as a matter of policy, and that will not change.

6 **SENATOR KAINE.** And talk a little bit about the current relationship between
7 Turkmenistan and China, if you would.

8 **MR. MUSTARD.** China is now Turkmenistan's largest trading partner and is the
9 largest consumer of Turkmenistan's natural gas. And, conversely, China is a very large
10 investor in infrastructure in Turkmenistan, not only in natural gas and in other fossil
11 energy, but in other infrastructure, as well. So, it is a very large and growing
12 relationship.

13 **SENATOR KAINE.** And, finally, the relationship with Iran. That is also one of the
14 largest markets for Turkmenistan. Has Turkmenistan generally abided by the Iran
15 sanctions regime that we have put in place?

16 **MR. MUSTARD.** Yes, sir.

17 **SENATOR KAINE.** That is — thank you for that.

18 Talk about current human rights, kind of, status issues in Turkmenistan, any that
19 you — will cause you concern or would be areas of priority as you begin this position.

20 **MR. MUSTARD.** The United States Government is very deeply concerned about the
21 status of human rights in Turkmenistan. And, as I said in my opening statement, we
22 believe that a mature relationship allows for a dialogue about these human rights
23 issues.

24 Turkmenistan is a party to international conventions, including the International
25 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture. And we
26 will continue to call upon Turkmenistan to observe the conditions of these agreements

1 and to ensure that all persons on its territory enjoy the civil rights that are under these
2 conventions.

3 **SENATOR KAINE.** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mustard, I appreciate it.

4 Mr. Pressman, I — your testimony about the U.N. being both necessary and
5 always vexing was very true. It is an organization that would not exist, had the United
6 States not shown leadership in creating it, even in the mid-1930s, as the League of
7 Nations was collapsing. President Roosevelt realized there would need to be a
8 successor and started to lay the plans for it before World War II delayed the plans. But, I
9 still consider it a real mark of pride that it was America that recognized that we really
10 needed to create such an institution.

11 That said, for reasons that you have described, and others, we often scratch our
12 head about things that the U.N. does. And so, I appreciate your willingness to serve in
13 this capacity.

14 Maybe just a couple of questions about it. One of the things that is been the most
15 discouraging, in this committee, has been the repeated votes by China and Russia in the
16 Security Council to block what we consider as necessary action in Syria. Last week was
17 a good week. After a resolution promoting cross-border humanitarian aid that was
18 passed in February generally had not produced significant result, because the aid was
19 only to be allowed at the approval of the Syrian government, the Security Council, last
20 week, did a resolution that called for the cross-border delivery of aid whether or not the
21 Syrian government allowed it. That was a positive step. And the fact that Russia and
22 China voted for that after blocking similar resolutions in the past was important.

23 But, it does raise the question about Security Council reform. And I know there
24 have been a number of, you know, thoughts and ideas thrown around about reforming
25 the Security Council. What is the current status of reform efforts? And what are your
26 thoughts about what our policy should be with respect to reform?

1 **MR. PRESSMAN.** Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question.

2 The United States believes that the Security Council and the United Nations as a
3 whole needs to — as one of the central pillars of the international security architecture,
4 needs to reflect the changing world that we live in. As such, with respect to the Security
5 Council, the administration has articulated the view that we are open, in principle, to a
6 modest expansion of the permanent and nonpermanent membership of the Council.
7 That said, with respect to the permanent members of the Council, it is critical that we
8 consider their capacity to meaningfully contribute to maintenance of international peace
9 and security. We do not think it would be a productive exercise to open up the veto
10 arrangement. And these conversations are sensitive, and they continue in New York,
11 but they are important to have.

12 **SENATOR KAINE.** Let me ask you about one area. I mean, the United States has
13 been a huge financial supporter of the U.N., but one area where we have been falling
14 behind is in some of our peacekeeping dues payments. Is that affecting our ability to
15 pursue, or effectively pursue, our interests at the U.N., or is that issue of the dues for
16 peacekeeping activities not really a factor in the influence that we have?

17 **MR. PRESSMAN.** Mr. Chairman, the ability of the United States to lead at the U.N.
18 is directly tethered to our meeting our bills and our responsibilities. We — by virtue of
19 meeting our — of not going into arrears in areas like peacekeeping, we have managed
20 to sustain and maintain greater leverage over troop contributors, over the way
21 peacekeeping missions are shaped, ensuring that they are responsible and that they are
22 effective. So, it is critical.

23 Now, underlying the question, I recognize, is a concern that many members of
24 the Senate have with respect to how peacekeeping budgets are going up and up and up.
25 And, if I could, Mr. Chairman, is — just reflect for a moment that we were making
26 increasing demands on the U.N. peacekeeping system, just in the last several years,

1 with several new missions that we, the United States, has turned to the United Nations,
2 because we see peacekeeping as an effective and cost-effective way to advance our own
3 national security interests around the world. That said, we also believe that the
4 assessment scales under which these things are calculated — and it is complicated with
5 respect to the regular budget and its relationship to the peacekeeping budget — needs
6 to reflect the changing world in which we live in, as well. And these are negotiated at
7 every — 3-year intervals. And, as we approach the next round of negotiations in 2015,
8 one of the things that Ambassador Power seeks to do — and, if confirmed, I would
9 certainly support her — is try to ensure that the way that we are assessed reflects the
10 realities of a changing economy.

11 **SENATOR KAINE.** How confident are you that the — the peacekeeping mission to
12 the Central African Republic, which I guess will deploy in September, will have the
13 resources that it needs to carry out the stabilization and civilian protection missions of
14 that peacekeeping effort?

15 **MR. PRESSMAN.** Chairman, the situation in the Central African Republic is grave.
16 It is extremely serious. Ambassador Power has now visited the Central African
17 Republic twice. I was honored to travel with her on one occasion there. It is in —
18 because of U.S. leadership, we — and because of a multiplicity of commands that were
19 on the ground — you had a African Union contingent, you had an EU contingent, you
20 had a French contingent — and because of the gravity of the situation and U.S.
21 leadership, we decided to go ahead and authorize a U.N. peacekeeping operation, as
22 your question reflects.

23 Your question also reflects an awareness that it is hard, given the increasing
24 demands on peacekeeping, to find the right enablers and the right troops, particularly
25 in a situation like CAR, where there really is very little infrastructure that preexists to
26 support the deployment of troops. So, everything is having to be built. We are — as

1 recently as this week, the Security Council was briefed on this. This is something we are
2 tracking daily. Ambassador Power has committed that, on September 15th, when
3 MISCA, as it is known, the African Union troop, transitions to MINUSCA, the U.N.
4 peacekeeping operation, that we are in as good a position as possible. I would — it
5 would not be fair to say I have great confidence that we are going to be where we need
6 to be on September 15th, but we are trending in the right direction.

7 **SENATOR KAINE.** And let me ask about another one, in Africa, the importance of
8 U.N. efforts to assist displaced civilians who are seeking refuge in U.N. compounds in
9 South Sudan. Talk a little bit about the current status there.

10 **MR. PRESSMAN.** It is — Senator, thank you — the situation in South Sudan is
11 similarly horrendous and deeply concerning. I mean, at present, we have
12 approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons who are hunkered down on
13 UNMIS, the U.N. peacekeeping operation there, compounds, because they fear for their
14 lives if they leave. In addition to that 100,000, we have approximately a million other
15 IDPs floating about South Sudan, we have a famine warning that was — just went into
16 place, which means that those million IDPs are about to become a million hungry IDPs.

17 So, the — what the U.S. has done with respect to the South — the mission in
18 South Sudan is really important, which is, as the crisis emerged — the most recent crisis
19 emerged, at the end — December of last year — we essentially reformed, almost
20 entirely, giving it — almost doubling its authorized troop ceiling and trimming back its
21 pretty expansive mandate to focus almost exclusively on protection of civilians and
22 monitoring human rights abuses.

23 That said, Senator, I think it is clear, to you and to anyone who looks at the
24 situation, that fundamentally the parties — President Kiir and Riek Machar — need to
25 actually live up to their Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and perform the
26 responsibilities that they have said that they would. And until that happens, we are

1 going to be living in a very dire situation, and the lives of civilians in South Sudan will
2 continue to hang in jeopardy.

3 **SENATOR KAINE.** How important is it, in your view, that the U.S. continue its
4 support for the U.N. mission and also the French forces in northern Mali?

5 **MR. PRESSMAN.** Senator, it is critical. What — the Mali MINUSMA, the U.N.
6 mission in Mali, is an excellent example of the United States using U.N. peacekeeping to
7 help protect our direct national security interests. We have AQIM elements floating
8 around in northern Mali. We have a situation where the Government of Mali needs the
9 international community's help. There is, similarly — somewhat related to CAR, there
10 is a division of labor, so to speak, within Mali, in which you have Operation French —
11 the French Operation Serval, which is taking a more offensive counterterrorism
12 approach; MINUSMA, which is trying to hold the large population centers to ensure
13 that they are — they do not become victims to the prey of al-Qaeda-affiliated extremists.
14 And, similarly, you have an EU contingent on the ground that is working to build up
15 the capacity of the Malian government to deal with this crisis. This is important work, it
16 is hard work, it is dangerous work. We have lost U.N. peacekeepers, including recently,
17 in this effort, but it is one that the United States should — and, if confirmed, I would
18 look forward to the opportunity to continue to — support.

19 **SENATOR KAINE.** Great. Thank you, Mr. Pressman, for your answers.

20 And now, Ms. Ruggles, I will say that Senator Coons really wanted to be here,
21 for you and, to some degree, to pose those last questions to Mr. Pressman, as well. He
22 could not be here today, but, as he waited, he thought, giving you a quicker hearing
23 might be more important to you than waiting until he could come.

24 [Laughter.]

25 **SENATOR KAINE.** So, I just will say that I am speaking with some passion from
26 Senator Coons, obviously, as well.

1 Your post is a very important one. You know, one of the — you know, Rwanda
2 has an iconic place in, sort of, our collective memory and thinking about human rights
3 issues in the world, because of the tragedies that occurred there. Now, that creates
4 pressure to do very well, but it also creates a wonderful opportunity. When there have
5 been tragedies such as Rwandans have been impacted by, then positives can also
6 generate, not only attention, but a sense of hopefulness. Well, there may be other tragic
7 or hard situations, but look what is happening. And I like the fact that, in your
8 testimony, you focused on a number of instances — school attendance and things like
9 that — in Rwanda that are real positive news stories. I think it is important that we
10 point those out, because there are other desperate situations in the world, where people
11 would want to see that situations that were desperate, or more so a number of years
12 ago, are now pointing in the right direction. So, I think part of your task — not that I
13 would advise you how to do your job, but I think part of your task is to shine the
14 spotlight on positives in Rwanda, because I think that has a benefit to the U.S.
15 relationship with Rwanda, but I think it has a broader benefit, as well.

16 Let me begin with political scenarios in Rwanda. President Kagame's term
17 expires in 2017. What are, sort of, likely political scenarios, post the end of his term?

18 **Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES.** Well, the — as you point out, Mr. Chairman — and I thank
19 you for adding me to this hearing, and please thank Senator Coons on my behalf, as
20 well — the second term for President Kagame expires in 2017, two 2-year term, the term
21 limited in the constitution. And, at this point, it is unclear how that is going to play out.

22 This is the first time that — under this constitution, that they will have had that
23 scenario. And so, one of the things that I will focus on, if confirmed, when I go out
24 there is making sure I am engaging in a broad political dialogue with all the actors, civil
25 society as well as the government, to hear how they are planning for those elections,
26 how they are planning to handle the inevitable contest that happens when you have the

1 — have term limits. And I look forward to having that dialogue, because I think it is an
2 important signal, both for the people of Rwanda, but also for the region.

3 **SENATOR KAINE.** Talk a little bit about how you envision your — division of
4 responsibilities of your working relationship with the U.S. Special Envoy, Russ
5 Feingold, to the DRC in the Great Lakes region. Have you talked about this challenge?
6 It is not a challenge; it is a great opportunity —

7 **MS. BARKS-RUGGLES.** Absolutely.

8 **SENATOR KAINE.** — to have you both working on this mission.

9 **MS. BARKS-RUGGLES.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 I have to say, I have the greatest admiration for former Senator Feingold in his
11 new role as Special Envoy. I think he has taken a very difficult situation, 18 months
12 ago, when he first came onboard, and really dug in and worked with all of the
13 Ambassadors in the region, as well as all the regional actors, to try and tackle some of
14 the very, very tough issues that are really the underpinning for the continued instability
15 in eastern Congo and throughout the region — the refugee flows, the armed groups.
16 And the inability to build those trust bonds have been a real issue since '94, since the
17 genocide. And he has taken that head-on. And the fact that he is now working with all
18 the governments on implementing — truly implementing the Peace, Security, and
19 Cooperation Framework Agreement that was signed in February last year, dealing with
20 the FDLR. They have now agreed to a 6-month timeframe, with a 3-month checkpoint
21 half way through that timeframe, to begin the process of disarmament of the FDLR.
22 Now, that has to be taken seriously by all governments, but, if they are — if we are able,
23 all of us collectively, to implement that, that will go a long way towards getting rid of
24 the instability, the continued distrust between the governments in the region, of each
25 other, and tackling some of those underlying instability issues, much as the defeat of the
26 M-23 last year after the U.N. Intervention Brigade was signed off by the U.N. Security

1 Council, has led to a lessening of the violence and an increase in the trust between the
2 various parties. It is far from a perfect world, but he has been doing a terrific job.

3 I would view my role, if confirmed, out there as being one of supporting his role
4 and working as part of a team, because we are going to need a team approach between
5 myself and all of the colleagues in the region, working with Senator Feingold, if we are
6 going to help the governments of the region build that trust that we need for them to
7 then build the economic prosperity that they should be building across those borders, to
8 be building the cross-border roads and transportation networks that are badly needed
9 to make sure that economic growth actually comes to those regions.

10 **SENATOR KAINE.** One of the themes in all of your testimony, and some of the
11 questions with the four mission chiefs here, proposed mission chiefs, is sort of the space
12 for civil society in the companies — in the countries that you will — where you will
13 serve. There have been some reports that that space has been kind of narrowing in
14 Rwanda. Talk about, kind of, your perspective on that now, and what you believe you
15 can do, as Ambassador, to, you know, in the right pace, a right pace for Rwanda, see
16 that the space opens for civil society participation.

17 **MS. BARKS-RUGGLES.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 The existence of a strong, vibrant civil society, including free media, NGOs,
19 watchdog groups, is important and absolutely critical for any democratic society. It is
20 something that we hold dear here, and it is something I have seen in my most recent
21 posting in South Africa, the huge institutional importance of those groups, as well as
22 strong, vibrant political opposition parties to make sure that there is that political
23 dialogue.

24 And, if I am confirmed, one of the things that I will commit to is working with all
25 the various actors across Rwanda to help encourage that kind of dialogue, because they
26 do have a lot to deal with from their past. A huge amount of distrust from — arising

1 from the genocide, which is still fairly recent, only 20 years — and recognizing that, and
2 helping them think about, "How do you work through that dialogue?" — I would view
3 as part of my role, but also hearing from everybody their concerns and how they can
4 move forward as they are now turning to the next generation. Their youngest — their
5 younger generation was born after the genocide, and they do not come carrying all of
6 that baggage. Maybe some of it, but not all of it. And helping them figure out how to
7 work through that, I view very much as part of our role, as you said, as an exemplar,
8 the United States being the exemplar to others.

9 **SENATOR KAINE.** One of the things that interests me as I travel for Foreign Relations
10 is the degree to which, in countries where there has been significant sectarian schisms —
11 and the genocide in Rwanda would be the most extreme, certainly more extreme than
12 countries I have visited — but, to what degree in a nation's military are they able to
13 integrate throughout the military, at every level, leadership to, you know, the first day
14 enlisted, a real pluralistic and inclusive sense? How cohesive — are you aware of, sort
15 of, this issue within the military in Rwanda, and their capabilities? But, in a way, more
16 — I am just kind of more interested in how cohesive the military is across these schisms
17 that still are fresh with many people.

18 **MS. BARKS-RUGGLES.** Mr. Chairman, I do not have an ethnic breakdown of the
19 military, but what I will tell you is that the Rwandan military and police force have both
20 been very professional, extraordinarily good partners for us. In peacekeeping missions,
21 they have stepped up to the plate in tough places, like CAR, where we were having
22 problems, and come in with the Africa mission to stabilize — help stabilize the situation
23 there; similarly in AMISOM in Somalia. And they have been one of the groups that has
24 been the most flexible in saying, "We will join a regional and then go over to a Blue
25 Hat." And the level of professionalism they have exhibited, and cohesiveness that they
26 have exhibited, has — is really extraordinary.

1 So, as a cohesive military unit, they work very well together. I would have to get
2 back to you on the ethnic breakdown.

3 **SENATOR KAINE.** No, that is good evidence, though, I mean, if they are able to work
4 together in tough circumstances. If there was a lot of internal morale challenges, that
5 would demonstrate itself in performance. And so, I am happy to hear your perception
6 of their effectiveness in these operations.

7 Just one last thing, just kind of educate myself. Main strengths and weaknesses
8 to the current Rwandan economy.

9 **MS. BARKS-RUGGLES.** The main strengths and weaknesses. They have a great
10 record of economic growth, but from a very low base. So, keeping that going, and
11 making sure that they are actually taking what has been extraordinary reforms to make
12 themselves open for business, if you will — they are considered number one by the
13 World Bank now in the sub-Saharan Africa, for the ease of doing business, and building
14 upon that and taking that to the next level. So, from a high level of growth from a low
15 base, and turning that into, now, the middle-income country they aspire to be.

16 One of the areas where they have been really focusing on is Internet technology,
17 renewable energy. We have a \$325 million methane gas investment from a U.S.
18 corporation there, another large renewable energy investment that is going in there.
19 And I think all those are signs that they are taking seriously how to move their
20 economy into the 21st century.

21 However, 70 percent of their population still depends, at least in large part, on
22 subsistence agriculture for their income. And so, learning how to take that and turn
23 that into a much more market-oriented agricultural economy and pushing
24 entrepreneurship so that people can come off the subsistence farming and start growing
25 those small businesses that grow jobs, is going to be their challenge for the coming two
26 decades.

1 **SENATOR KAINE.** Thank you for that testimony.

2 All the — you have all demonstrated great competence and professionalism in
3 your answers, very thoughtful answers. And we would be lucky to have all of you,
4 with your expertise, serving in the capacities for which you have been nominated.

5 Again, I say what I said at the start of the hearing, the opportunity, as a member
6 of the committee, to visit our personnel — Foreign Service personnel abroad, whether it
7 is people on their first tour or whether it is seasoned professionals like you all are, is
8 always — I always walk away from those, very impressed with the work that is done.
9 And I know a lot of Americans probably think of Foreign Service as just — what a
10 super-glamorous profession. And it has its glamour, and it has its unique opportunities
11 to consider the world your classroom. But, there is also a great degree of sacrifice —
12 moving repeatedly, changing jobs — that is not easy for spouses and kids and other
13 family members and friends. But, the more you know about what our Foreign Service
14 professionals do, the more one comes to admire the quality of the work under the
15 circumstances in which it is performed. So, I want to thank you all for your service.

16 If members of the committee choose to file additional questions in writing, I will
17 ask them to do that by noon tomorrow; and I will appreciate your responding
18 promptly, should those be filed. We will try to act promptly in the full committee on
19 these nominations.

20 And again, I thank you.

21 And, with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]