

# NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

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BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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FIRST SESSION—MARCH 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2015

SECOND SESSION—FEBRUARY 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

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## NOMINATION

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2015

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

Susan Coppedge, of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Gardner, Perdue, Isakson, Cardin, Menendez, and Murphy.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

The CHAIRMAN. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today we have before us Susan Coppedge to head the TIP Office for State. And I am thrilled that she is here.

I just came from a meeting this morning. I was over at a church here on the Hill. There were people here from all over the country to push the legislation that we unanimously passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee under your leadership as chairman, the End Modern Slavery Initiative Act. And it was pretty overwhelming. I know I try to stay out of pulpits. [Laughter.]

This was the only place from which I could speak today that had a microphone. But it was pretty overwhelming to see the numbers of people up here who care so deeply about this issue from all over the country.

And you know, the issue of trafficking in persons and slavery is something that is not a Democrat issue. It is not a Republican issue. It is not an independent issue. It is just a moral issue, and it does not take major decision memos that sit on Presidents' desks. It just takes all of us vigilantly fighting to make sure that we deal with this most abhorrent thing, and that is trafficking in persons but also the whole issue of slavery in general.

So I just want to say to our committee I am so thrilled with today's hearing. I am so appreciative and proud of our committee for what we have begun to do, and I think we have some momentum around this issue.

But Susan Coppedge's nomination could not come at a better time. I do not think there is anybody that was a part of the briefing last week that does not believe there is at least some degree of integrity that we need to challenge relative to the 2015 TIP Report. I am sorry. Something is amiss there.

I want to thank Senator Cardin and Senator Menendez and Senator Perdue and others who were there.

I am sorry. I do not think we have had an advocate at the State—I know we have not had an advocate. We have not had anybody in the position since November 2014. So to have somebody of this caliber who is absolutely first rate, who has lived a life around this issue and has been so committed just makes this a great day for our country. And I hope, after her testimony today, we will move quickly to have her confirmed. I am thrilled that she is here. And I think with her and her breeding some integrity but also some advocacy, that has been missing in this program will do a lot not just to restore, if you will, our preeminence in the world around this issue. I am sorry. I think we have lost a degree of that. That has nothing to do with our nominee.

I actually believe we are on the verge of doing something relative to slavery that is going to show real U.S. leadership. And so for that reason, I am very pleased that Susan has agreed to be nominated and to go through the process of this hearing and hopefully to assume this role, which is so important to people around the world that live in poverty and basically—let us face it—they have no access to the criminal justice system because they just do not have the ability, unlike people like us that are U.S. Senators and people in the audience that have status in the world. So many people in poverty just do not and therefore are trafficked, are abused, and live lives of complete misery. And our Nation can do something about it, and with Susan's leadership in the TIP Office to me is one of the essential building blocks to make that happen.

So I am sorry my comments were so long. I will turn it over to our esteemed ranking member and thank him for his lifelong commitment to human rights.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I concur in everything you said.

Ms. Coppedge, thank you very much for your willingness to step forward at this very important time. This is an extremely important position. It will take a great deal of your energy and time. And we thank you for your willingness to serve our country.

I also want to thank your family because this is not easy on family. We know that. And we thank them for their willingness to share you with our country in carrying out one of our most important functions.

Senator Corker is absolutely right. Modern day slavery is something that has to end. The number of people who are victims of trafficking is staggering. It is in the tens of millions. The profit to illegal entities from trafficking is in the hundreds of billions of dollars. So we are talking about a huge area of profit for criminal ac-

tivities and an incredible human rights violation. It is modern day slavery. And we need to continue to be in the forefront.

I first got engaged in this under the Helsinki Commission where we made this a U.S. priority in the OSCE. And we were successful in establishing a trafficking commitment within the OSCE. There is now a representative on trafficking in the parliamentary assembly. That person is Chris Smith, our colleague from the House of Representatives, who has been one of the great leaders on trafficking legislation. It was, I guess, about 15 years ago that we passed the trafficking in persons statute here, which set up the TIP Report, which is the gold standard for judging all countries' commitments to universal standards to end trafficking.

I have visited victim assistance centers around the world and seen firsthand those who have been victimized by traffickers. I have seen the consequences of it to families. I have seen the labor abuses that have taken place through trafficking. And it has to be our top priority.

So the position that we are looking at today, Ambassador at Large and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the person who will head our TIP Office, has a critical mission to play because the United States is the global leader on this issue and the world watches what we do and how we respond. And our key person on this issue is the person we confirm for the position of Ambassador at Large and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. It is critically important that that person be effective in dealing with the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and our regional secretaries, particularly as they review progress being made in each around the world so that when the decision is made by the Secretary of State on the TIP Report, it is the Ambassador at Large who has been effective in ensuring objectivity when it comes to countries' rankings on the TIP Report.

So I very much look forward, Ms. Coppedge, to your testimony but also to quick confirmation. You have Senator Isakson at your side. You could not have a person who we are more impressed with his opinions on other people, than Senator Isakson. So we look forward to your testimony and, more importantly, we hope that we can move this quickly and get a confirmed position as head of the office.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

We will now turn to our witness, and as Senator Cardin mentioned, Johnny Isakson, our great friend and esteemed colleague, is going to introduce her, which makes it almost a unanimous assent on the floor when he does so. Senator Isakson, I know you are on the committee, but you know the drill. If you in fact have another meeting you need to go to, there is certainly no reason for you to stay during her testimony if there is something else you need to attend to. But we thank you very much for being the kind of person you are. We are glad someone from your State, which—let us face it—embodies all those values that you do here, is willing to ascend to this job. We certainly look forward to your introduction, and thank you so much for your service.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA**

Senator ISAKSON. Well, thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin and all the members of the committee with whom I have been honored to serve for a number of years.

I appreciate the privilege of doing it. This is a twofer for me. About a year ago, I had the privilege of introducing Sally Yates to the Judiciary Committee, upon her confirmation as Deputy United States Attorney. Today in front of this committee, I am getting to introduce Susan Coppedge who studied under Sally Yates to be the Ambassador at Large for Trafficking in Persons, and I am honored and privileged to be able to do so.

There are lots of things I could say about this lady, but the best thing is she has been there and she has done that. In the Northern District of Georgia in the last 15 years, she has prosecuted 21 high profile human trafficking cases. A couple of them I would like to mention.

The Cortez-Mesa case, which resulted in the conviction of 10 pimps and profiteers from the trafficking of young girls, six of them juveniles. Not only did she obtain long sentences, but she got restitution for those that were injured and trafficked, which was a great credit to her ability.

And then the *U.S. v. Pipkin* case, where she put away for 40 and 35 years, respectively, two of the most notorious criminals in terms of human trafficking that were coming out of Mexico into the United States of America.

The Northern District of Georgia is probably the gatepost and the center post for transited people from Latin America and Central America and Mexico, up the eastern seaboard to New York City and New England in terms of drugs, organized crime, human trafficking, and illicit activity. She has been the lead prosecutor and has prosecuted a number of high profile cases, all of which resulted not only in convictions but in recognition from the U.S. Attorney for her outstanding service.

She graduated from Stanford University with a juris doctorate, and got a magna cum laude, which I cannot even pronounce or spell, much less ever obtain, from Duke University in her undergraduate degree. And she is a very articulate, educated individual.

But I have to tell you an irony. The day that Secretary Kerry interviewed her for this job was the day that Duke won the national championship in basketball. She says that is a good omen for today and hopefully it will be a good omen for her.

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to introduce to the committee one of Georgia's outstanding attorneys, one who studied under one of Georgia's outstanding leaders in Sally Yates, and one of which I am very proud to introduce to this committee and one who understands the sensitivity of the chairman and the ranking member on the manipulation of numbers in terms of the TIP and is going to be committed to seeing to it we have unvetted, unvarnished information and we do the right thing when it comes to those rankings every single time.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, an outstanding Georgian, Susan Coppedge.



The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you so much. As usual, an outstanding job.

Our witness is Susan Coppedge, who has been nominated to serve as Director of the Office of Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large. And we look forward to your testimony. Thank you for being here.

**STATEMENT OF SUSAN COPPEDGE, NOMINATED TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING**

Ms. COPPEDGE. Mr. Chairman and Senator Cardin, thank you so much for the hearing today to consider the nomination for Ambassador at Large to monitor and combat trafficking in persons.

Senator Isakson, thank you so much for that generous introduction.

I am honored by the opportunity to appear before you, as I am honored and humbled by the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me to serve our Nation in continuing the global fight against human trafficking.

I want to thank the individuals from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons: Kari Johnstone and Carl Fox. They truly have their hearts in this fight and they stand ready to help me settle into the State Department.

I also want to thank my husband, Lorenzo Amato, who is here today. Without his support and love for me and our children, I could not do this job.

My father is here. My sister, my cousin, my brother-in-law, many of my friends from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta are here. Colleagues and friends and fellow classmates from Duke and from Stanford are also here.

Over my career, I have worked on cases that have assisted more than 90 individuals in leaving their victimization, and in many cases, those individuals participated in the process of bringing their exploiters to justice. I have worked with and trained Federal, State, and local law enforcement. I have partnered with NGOs, nongovernmental organizations, faith groups, and concerned citizens in Georgia who provide services to victims.

Finally, I have educated jurors and judges that modern slavery often does not involve locks on the doors or victims who are willing to come forward. Human trafficking involves more subtle forms of exploitation and coercion.

Our goal, everyone in this room who cares about this fight, is to ensure the dignity of all individuals. Human trafficking in all its forms, whether forced labor or sex trafficking, is modern slavery, and it is one of the greatest human rights causes of our time. We must assume our responsibility to stop this heinous crime and to address the conditions such as violent conflict, poverty, and discrimination that contribute to making individuals vulnerable.

With the leadership of President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Under Secretary Sewall, as well as the members of this committee who I know are dedicated to this fight, I know we can raise the priority of human trafficking and strengthen the U.S. leadership on this important issue.

If confirmed, I commit to using this position passionately to advocate for the rights of individuals to be free from forced labor or sex trafficking, for victims to have access to comprehensive services, for survivors to be empowered to have a voice in policy, and for an end to the trafficking in human beings.

If confirmed, I will seek to engage every segment of the U.S. Government to integrate antitrafficking policies into our Nation's foreign policy goals.

If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to uphold the integrity of the annual Trafficking in Persons Report and its tier rankings, including by ensuring that facts from the field are accurately presented in the report. The report is respected around the world and used in countless countries to increase prosecutions, enhance protections, and increase prevention of the crime.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the many nongovernmental organizations and stakeholders doing critical work in this arena and partner with those in the business community who seek strong policies that ensure humane labor practices.

I would like to close with the story of Carolina, a survivor I had the chance to know while I prosecuted her trafficker. Carolina was 16 when Juan Cortes Meza romanced her in Mexico, promising her a better life here in the United States. Instead, Cortes Meza smuggled Carolina across the border and gave her the most shocking news of her life. He expected her to sleep with 20 to 30 men a night in his high-volume, low-cost prostitution business. At first, he told her it would only last until her smuggling debt could be paid. Then he told her it was the only way she could make money. Then when his deception and coercion were insufficient, he beat her to force her to continue.

I had the privilege of being with Carolina as she bravely spoke to the Federal judge who heard her case, sharing her pain and describing how she cried every night. Only the walls could hear my cries is what Carolina told him. That day at trial, Atlanta heard Carolina, and today sharing the story with you, the United States hears Carolina. The indelible memory of her and of survivors like her fuels my commitment to antitrafficking work. There are many people in this room and listening today who are as passionate as I am. Each of us plays a part in this connected fight in helping survivors worldwide and in supporting governments, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens to end modern slavery. I so look forward to working with the members of this committee and others in our shared fight.

Thank you again for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Coppedge follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUSAN COPPEDGE

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for this hearing to consider my nomination as Ambassador at Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I am honored by this opportunity to appear before you, as I am honored and humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me to serve our Nation in continuing the fight against human trafficking in the world.

I want to thank Kari Johnstone, Carl Fox, and the team at the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Kari has been Acting Director since Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, my former DOJ colleague, departed the office, and she has done a

wonderful job. The entire TIP Office has their hearts in the fight against human trafficking and stands ready to help me settle into the State Department.

I want to acknowledge my husband, Lorenzo Amato, who has been so wonderfully supportive of me and whose love for me and our children enables me to undertake the awesome responsibility of the position for which I have been nominated. My father Warren Coppedge is also here; unfortunately my mother and brother could not be here and we thought it best if my daughter, Lilliana who is seven, and my son Sebastian, who is three, stayed home today. I could spend days telling you of the love, support and guidance my parents have given me and the innumerable ways that they have made me the person I am. I certainly inherited the gift of gab from both of them and also an understanding of how important it is to serve. This lesson is summarized by a bumper sticker my father has on his car: "whatever you do to the least of these, you also do to me."

My parents instilled faith and a call to service in all of their children including my sister, Elizabeth Coppedge Henley, who is a Methodist minister and who is here today with her family, as are friends and colleagues from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, as well as friends and fellow classmates from both my undergraduate alma mater, Duke University, and my law school, Stanford University. There is also a large group back in Atlanta and my hometown of Dalton, GA, saying prayers for me and the work I hope to undertake, with the support and confirmation of the United States Senate.

I want to thank Senator Isakson for being here to introduce me to the committee today and to Senator Max Cleland who could not be here but has been a vocal supporter of mine. I hope the bipartisan support will continue through this Senate confirmation process and, hopefully, as we work together in the future.

As a federal prosecutor in the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia, I have been dedicated to the fight against human trafficking for 14 years. In 2002, I tried my first human trafficking case, serving as second chair to my wonderful colleague, Janis Gordon. This first case is an example of how a community can drive action on behalf of government officials. It started in 2000 with a juvenile court judge who wrote an editorial in the Atlanta Journal Constitution decrying the "alarming increase" of the commercial sexual exploitation of girls based on her experience with 14, 15, and 16 year olds coming into her court on prostitution charges. These children's bonds to get them out of jail were paid repeatedly by the same group of men, and those men did not face any criminal repercussions themselves. The judge's editorial ignited a group of citizens to take up this issue and galvanized then-U.S. Attorney Richard Deane and other dedicated law enforcement officials with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Atlanta Police Department. Thirteen human traffickers were indicted under federal charges; 11 pled guilty and 2 went to trial and were convicted by a jury. That was my first time meeting victims of modern slavery: teenagers who at 16 had been punished in juvenile court with a fine for prostitution and then released to the very traffickers who exploited them. I am so proud to have been a part of that first federal case in Atlanta and an advocate for justice for those young girls. This case earned the two most culpable traffickers prison sentences of 30 and 40 years and set me on the path to be here in front of you today.

Since then I have indicted 49 traffickers in cases involving both American and foreign-born children and young women, victims of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Over my career, I have worked on cases that have assisted more than 90 people in leaving their victimization and, in many cases, those individuals participated in the process of bringing their exploiters to justice. I have worked with federal, state, and local law enforcement in the fight against human trafficking. This meant, in the early days, conducting training for law enforcement as to what human trafficking was and the warning signs they might see. It also meant partnering with nongovernmental organizations, faith groups, and concerned citizens in Georgia who provided services to victims of trafficking by helping them find safe housing, finish school or obtain their GEDs, and apply for visas provided by the U.S. Government to foreign-born victims of trafficking. Finally, it has meant educating jurors and judges that modern slavery often does not involve locks on the doors or victims who come forward, but more subtle forms of exploitation and coercion that cause victims to be deprived of their freedom, their ability to say "no, I don't want to do this work."

Even though I may sound a bit regional to those Senators not from Tennessee or Georgia, I have been engaged on the frontlines in the very antitrafficking efforts the State Department encourages foreign governments to pursue. Based on my extensive experience combating trafficking here in the United States, I have trained foreign law enforcement in Argentina, New Zealand, and Thailand. I have also worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a database for track-

ing human trafficking prosecutions. The message I always seek to deliver, whether to foreign governments or to the Rotary Club, is that human trafficking cases are some of the most important cases that governments can undertake; these cases restore the individuals to the freedom and liberty to which all are entitled.

The U.S. goal, which I know this committee is so dedicated to supporting, is to ensure the internationally recognized right of individual freedom and the dignity of all persons. Human trafficking in all its forms—whether forced labor or sex trafficking—is modern slavery, and it is one of the greatest human rights causes of our time. We must undertake our responsibility as modern day abolitionists with energy and commitment to stop this heinous crime and to address the conditions such as conflict, poverty, and discrimination that contribute to making individuals vulnerable to enslavement.

With President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Under Secretary Sewall, we have leaders in the executive branch deeply committed to this agenda. We also have strong leadership on this committee from Senator Corker and Senators Menendez, Cardin, Rubio, and others who have kept the fight against human trafficking a priority for the Senate. I am well aware that the strong leadership of an Ambassador at Large is more important now than ever, and we should continue our efforts to combat human trafficking and lift up those who have suffered in its grip. Not only is it simply the right thing to do, it will also enable the United States to continue to lead on this important issue.

Thus—

If confirmed, I commit to using this position passionately to advocate for the rights of individuals to be free from forced labor or sex trafficking, for victims of human trafficking to have access to comprehensive services, for survivors to be empowered to have a voice in policy, and for an end to the trafficking of human beings.

If confirmed, I will seek to engage every segment of the State Department and the rest of the U.S. Government to integrate antitrafficking policies into our Nation's foreign policy goals: promoting open, resilient, and democratic societies, advancing inclusive economic growth, and preventing and mitigating conflict and violent extremism. Fighting human trafficking should be an integral part of all our engagements with other governments to further our nation's values of freedom and liberty.

If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to uphold the integrity of the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report and its tier rankings, including by ensuring the facts from the field are accurately presented in the report.

The annual TIP Report is respected around the world and used in countless countries to try to increase prosecutions of the exploiters, enhance protections for the survivors, and encourage prevention of this crime. Thanks to the hearing held by this committee in August, foreign governments will know that the United States Senate and U.S. citizens are deeply concerned about human trafficking. This will only help to encourage countries to make real progress in fighting human trafficking, as I hope to do.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the many nongovernmental organizations and stakeholders already in this arena who successfully raise awareness, support prosecutions, and offer services to survivors.

If confirmed, I will partner with those in the business community who are deeply concerned with the treatment of workers in their supply chains and who seek strong legal regimes and policies that ensure humane labor practices and facilitate fair markets.

Lastly, if confirmed, I will do everything within my abilities to maintain a close working relationship with Congress and with those federal agencies engaged in the fight against human trafficking.

I would like to close with the story of Carolina. Carolina is a survivor I had the chance to know while I prosecuted her trafficker. She was 16 when Juan Cortes Meza romanced her in Mexico. He promised her that a better life awaited her in the United States, a life where he would marry her and they could make a living cleaning houses or selling clothes. Instead, Cortes Meza smuggled Carolina across the border and then gave her the most shocking news of her life—that he expected her to sleep with 20–30 men a night. He forced her into his high-volume, low-cost prostitution business. At first, Cortes Meza said it would only last until she paid back the smuggling debt. Then he told her it was the only way she could earn money in a country where law enforcement would not help her and she would end up in jail. Then, when his deception and coercion were not sufficient, he beat her to force her to continue.

I had the privilege of being with Carolina as she bravely spoke to the federal judge who heard her case. I listened as she shared her pain and described how she cried every night. "Only the walls heard my cries," she said. That day at trial, At-

lanta heard Carolina. Today, I share her story in the U.S. Senate and the United States hears Carolina. Every victim's pain is our Nation's pain as well. The indelible memory of Carolina's cries—and of survivors like her—fuels my commitment to antitrafficking work. A commitment to human dignity is a commitment to a just world. There are many people in this room and listening today who are as passionate as I am. Each of us plays a part in this connected fight in helping survivors worldwide, and in supporting governments, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens to end modern slavery. I look forward to working with the members of this committee and others in our shared fight.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your testimony and again for your commitment to this issue. I think you are aware we had a meeting last week off the Senate floor. We talked a little bit about some of our concerns with the current TIP Office. And I realize there is no one there in your position and there has not been anyone there since November 2014. But the TIP Report tier rankings are reviewed and differences adjudicated at the Under Secretary level, as we understand it, and ultimately by the Secretary of State. What is your understanding of the TIP Office Director in that process?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, my understanding is that the TIP Office Director, the position that I am being considered for, is the person who first marshals with the office staff all of the facts from the field, who spends the year engaging our missions, the State Department's bureaus, citizens, and nongovernmental organizations, all report in facts to that office. Then the Ambassador, the Director of the office, advocates for the role that the TIP Office believes and the rankings the TIP Office believes those facts dictate.

The CHAIRMAN. And you will commit to assuring that the integrity of that process is there. I will just put it that way.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. What are some of the kind of things that you think can sometimes come into play to keep those TIP rankings from being what they should be?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, I have not been part of the process yet. So I am kind of watching from the sidelines. I do not want to be a Monday morning quarterback and critique the team on Sunday. But I can certainly can commit to you that I will do my best to ensure the integrity of the report and to let people higher up at the Department know that that report needs to be based on facts to uphold its integrity.

The CHAIRMAN. It is our understanding that over time there has been a good deal of attrition in the office, I guess possibly due to lack of focus and lack of leadership. Obviously, you will change that hugely when you assume that role. Can you tell us a little bit about what your commitment is internally in the office in assuming this position?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, as part of the nomination process, I have met with the individuals who work in that office, and I am very impressed by their dedication to the fight against human trafficking. They work hard and they care deeply about the issue. And I hope to be a good leader to them and a good champion for their report, and I look forward to working with the individuals who are there.

The CHAIRMAN. One of the things we all do—I had dinner with Senator Perdue last week, and we were talking about the fact that just the experience of being in other countries over a period of time ends up creating a body of knowledge that is second to none. I mean, it is amazing I think what all of us have learned by going to other parts of the world, understanding culture, seeing what is happening there.

It is my understanding that the TIP Office has had a limited travel budget and because of constraints, many of their officers are not out doing those things. Obviously, that affects things in a big way. I just wonder what your take on that is and what your commitment to people getting out and seeing on the ground firsthand what is happening.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, I do think it is very important to get into countries, particularly ones that are in a position to make a difference if they have a visit from U.S. officials. And I am committed to going to countries and doing that. And I do believe that meeting people face-to-face and building those relationships, working not just with governments but with citizens and nongovernmental organizations in the country, who frequently supply information to the TIP Office, meeting those individuals so that they know they have an avenue of communication to reporting facts in the field as well is very important.

And I think I am well situated, having been on the front lines in prosecuting these cases myself, to talk to people about the hurdles and the obstacles and suggest ways that we have overcome them here in the United States. And I look forward to doing that in the field.

The CHAIRMAN. And what is your understanding of how the action plans for each country is developed?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, my understanding is with the recommendations that are in the TIP Report that everyone can read, that those recommendations form the basis of the action plans for the countries. And the United States is certainly encouraging other countries to meet those goals and those suggestions in the TIP Report to increase their rankings.

The CHAIRMAN. Will you commit to working closely with us on the committee and making us aware, if at any time you feel other forces are at work which are keeping your voice from being heard and the primary reason that you are assuming this job is being mitigated because of other forces? Will you work with us in that regard and ensure that that is not the case?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator Corker, I look forward to working with this committee because there are so many members on it who are passionate and dedicated to the fight against trafficking. I look forward to open communications with this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, listen, before I turn to Senator Cardin, I just want to say again to have someone who, like most of us here know individuals, have met individuals, have defended individuals, have caused justice to come about for individuals, assuming this role certainly is something that is good for our country and great for those who, again, do not have today access to justice. And I hope you will take the same commitment—I think you will—relative to what you did in the case you described earlier. I hope you

will maintain that and carry that with you to the State Department as you assume this position. And I want to thank you for your willingness. I want to thank your family for their willingness. I understand they may actually move to Washington if you assume this role. We thank them in particular for that.

And with that, I will turn to Ranking Member Cardin.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator Corker.

Senator CARDIN. Did Senator Isakson know he might be losing some Georgians? [Laughter.]

Senator ISAKSON. We know how to deal with that. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. Well, let me again welcome you.

I just really want to underscore the point that Chairman Corker made. As I understand the process on the rankings, the work that you do in your office working with missions around the world and working with NGOs and gathering the facts from every country—the initial work is done and accumulated by your office. That then works its way to determinations as to whether there is any disagreement as to the ranking for the coming year on the TIP Report. My understanding is that normally for about 80 or more percent of the countries there is no disagreement, and those rankings just routinely are accepted by the Secretary and included in the annual TIP Report.

But there are a number of countries where there are some disagreements, and the disagreements usually occur between your office and the regional Secretaries working through the various missions. That then is elevated to the Under Secretaries, and the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights is advocating on behalf of your position, and the regional secretaries will usually advocate on behalf of the mission.

Your role is to take a look at the human rights issue of trafficking. The regional Secretaries may have other areas of concern and relationships with countries that they must take into consideration. Trafficking is just one of the agenda items.

So the point I just really wanted to underscore, as that process moves forward, it is critically important that the Director have input into the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights so that the principal objective used in determining the rankings is progress made in trafficking. And that is where we need a strong advocate and an effective advocate.

In order to achieve that, you need to build support for the trafficking agenda. And I could not help but think as you were talking about Carolina that that is exactly what you need to do. You got to put a face on this. When I talk about tens of millions of victims, people say, okay, what else is new? But when you talk about an individual who has gone through the tragedy of being trafficked, that helps people to understand why this is important.

So I guess I would urge you to look at creative ways where you can build stronger support so that your recommendations will have stronger weight with the Under Secretaries as they make their recommendation to the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary of State. And you need to find, I hope, creative ways, working with the NGO community, to be able to personalize this. It affects all of our communities. And we can do something about it. And it starts with an

objective evaluation of every countries' efforts and what they can do to improve their efforts.

So I guess my point is that—I know you are committed to this, but I want you to understand you are going to reach some barriers in getting the results that you want because we have complicated relations with countries around the world, and there are not just human rights issues, there are other issues.

We have a meeting with the Chinese head of state coming on Friday, and I would hope that human rights would be top on the agenda. But somehow I got a feeling that cybersecurity and maritime security and all those other issues are going to be talked about at greater length than some of the human rights issues that I would like to see elevated in that discussion. It is your responsibility in this position to be able to elevate the trafficking issues as these debates takes place well before the decisions on the rankings.

Just get your reaction as to how you will try to carry that out.

Ms. COPPEDGE. That was a great pep talk for me going into the job on things I need to consider and work diligently at. I know that relationships are not built just at the time the TIP Report comes out and that I want to build those relationships throughout the year at the State Department. And I want to integrate human trafficking along with those other issues that you mentioned because there are multiple parts to U.S. diplomacy, and human trafficking needs to be an integral part and one of those parts that is considered.

Senator CARDIN. And as Senator Corker said, look, you have a lot of friends on this issue. You have friends in the United States Senate. You have friends in the NGO community. Just utilize the strength we have. I am proud that this issue has gained a great deal of strength through advocacy groups around America and around the world. And you need to be the leader to focus us on where we can be the most effective in helping you. If we know where problems exist in the political structure to make progress, then we can help you in doing that. On the other hand, if you feel, well, that is not your role, we may miss an opportunity. Your independent, objective information to us becomes critically important.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin. I think what he is saying—I will say it in a little different way. Look, we are going through a period of time where this issue is—I am sorry—not a focus. In Syria, we have not done what we said we would do, and people are dead and people are leaving. In Malaysia, I do not exactly know what has happened, but I do not think the TIP Office was heard at all. I do not think the issue of trafficking in persons has even been on the radar screen in modern times. I am sorry. It is a blight on our country. And you are entering at a time when all of us want to see that change. I think that is what he just said. [Laughter.]

But with that, Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, let me follow up on that, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and tell you in preparing to introduce Susan, I was reading some of her history in terms of cases, and the Cortes Meza case and the face she put on that case, which you



bragged about—one thing I did not say in the introduction, which I should have—and she probably would not volunteer on her own. But in her 15 years at the Northern District of Georgia, she has spent a lot of time advocating on behalf of people who are victims of trafficking. In fact, the Rotary Club of Roswell, which is the second-largest Rotary Club in Georgia, where David McCleary has heard her speech at that Rotary Club about 5 or 6 years ago I think—they adopted human trafficking as their number one issue. That Rotary Club has raised money, has traveled across the country, has worked to try and raise the awareness of that. And I think that is what you both are saying. It is out of sight and it is out of mind.

And, Susan, you have a tremendous responsibility. We are politicians and we make a lot of speeches and we can talk about these things, but sometimes they heard, sometimes they are not. But if you can tell those stories of those 21 cases you prosecuted in the Northern District of Georgia, like Pipkin and like Cortes Meza, and tell the stories about really what happens to these people, it would do a world of good to help us raise that visibility as well.

Secondly, in reading background material, you have taught, as I understand it, in New Zealand, Australia, and other countries with regard to human trafficking. Have you worked with their judiciaries or their legislatures or their prosecutors? Tell us about that.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, Senator. I have worked training law enforcement both locally in Georgia, federally in the United States, and internationally in New Zealand, Thailand, and Argentina. And I was sent there probably with State Department money to talk to law enforcement about the difficulties of investigating and prosecuting these cases. Law enforcement everywhere is overwhelmed with people coming forward to them to report crimes, where human trafficking victims do not always come forward. So there is a lot more work on law enforcement's part to uncover the crime. And then the victims are often afraid of law enforcement or ashamed of what has been happening to them. And so they are fearful of coming forward and working with law enforcement.

So when I was in those countries, I was talking to law enforcement about how you move through some of the obstacles in prosecuting those cases. I was also stressing a victim-centered approach in the investigations and prosecutions. We never had a case where a victim was not willing to cooperate in the Atlanta U.S. Attorney's Office, but if a victim did not want to pursue a case, it is the victim's rights that should prevail in that instance.

Senator ISAKSON. You know, sanctuary cities have gotten a lot of publicity in the United States over the incident that took place in San Francisco. But am I correct or incorrect? There are some sanctuary countries for human traffickers that exist today on the face of the earth.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, I am not aware of that. I know there are some countries that do not comply with the minimum standards, and they are reported in the Trafficking in Persons Report.

Senator ISAKSON. And that is the kind of information we want to make sure we have the very best information possible in the TIP Report so we do not mask what might be somebody actually harboring human trafficking elements.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, Senator.

Senator ISAKSON. We are proud of you.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Isakson.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Coppedge, congratulations on your nomination. And I must underscore that if Senator Isakson comes and vouches for you, it has an enormous weight, at least with this Senator, and I think that is true for many others. I do not think he has just done that because you come from Georgia. So that is very meaningful.

You and I had a good conversation. I just want to follow up on a couple of the things that we talked about.

First of all, while I know you were not there, I hope you have an understanding of why many members of this committee have a concern about the 2015 TIP Report as it relates to Malaysia, from my perspective as it relates to Cuba and other countries where the narrative of why a country was upgraded from a Tier 3 worst standard to a Tier 2 just does not fit the upgrade. So without commenting on whether it is right or wrong, you have an understanding as to why members have a concern about the 2015 TIP Report. Is that fair to say?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, it is, Senator. I have been following all of your hearings on this matter and reading the articles as well.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Hopefully it is not in the reruns at night on C-SPAN where you are—you know.

Let me ask you. Knowing that, knowing what the concerns are as it relates to the upgrade, how do you plan to appropriately but nonetheless push back?

I am looking for someone who is going to be a staunch advocate for the work that the people from the TIP Office do. They do an incredible job. I think it is difficult, when your work gets crushed from up above, to still have the passion and the commitment. It has to be diminished somewhat. And so this office needs a leader who will not only lead in the work and make sure that the information is as full and as transparent and as powerful to reflect the realities of a given country, but it also needs a leader at the table inside of the Department where, as has been said by Senator Cardin, there are competing interests. And personally, as much as I might disagree, I would be more respectful of the competing interests being said that, look, we need, for example, Malaysia in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We think that is important to our pivot to Asia. I might disagree with that, but at least I respect that. We need this country because we have a security objective. So I can understand those. I cannot understand when we are told *carte blanche* that in fact there are upgrades because they did the right thing. I find that really hard to believe.

So with that as the basis, I want to get a sense of what you will do internally in the State Department in this process. When your people have come to conclusions and now it is time to advocate, how strong of an advocate will you be, understanding that you will have superiors that may have a different view. I just want to get a sense of that from you.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

I will be a champion for the individuals in the TIP Office and the work that they do, and I will be that champion year round. Part of my job as a Federal prosecutor is to take the facts, present them to a jury of 12 people, and convince them that those facts are a violation of the law. And that is very similar to the work that the TIP Office does. They gather facts from the field. They present those to the State Department individuals who make the decision and convince them where the tier rankings should be. I view my job is to speak to truth to power, and if power does not like to hear it, then I can be outranked clearly in the State Department, but I will speak that truth.

Senator MENENDEZ. So let me ask you. One thing is presenting facts to a jury. The other thing is did you ever in your 15 years of experience at the U.S. Attorney's Office face a set of circumstances—and I do not need the specifics of it, but I just want to get a sense—face a set of circumstances in which something was taking place that you felt that you had to speak out. Look, it could have been something that should have been prosecuted, that there was a judgment maybe not to prosecute, or something that was going to be prosecuted that you felt there was a judgment that it should not be prosecuted, or anything like that that you had to face in those 15 years that was not the easy flow of saying okay, but that you actually faced a moment in which you felt you had to tell your superiors I think this is the wrong judgment.

Ms. COPPEDGE. I have told my superiors that, Senator. I am a squeaky wheel and I present the facts in the way that I see them and I argue from my position very forcefully. Luckily in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, we have had excellent leadership that recognizes that no one case is worth tarnishing the reputation of justice in our community. So the office has been very supportive when I have spoken up and felt strongly about issues.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you. I heard your answer to Senator Corker, but I want to understand. If this committee and members ask for information, will you be willingly disposed to give that information to members of this committee as we are making decisions?

Ms. COPPEDGE. I am committed to open dialogue with this committee throughout the year not just right before the TIP Report is released, and I look forward to working with the committee.

Senator MENENDEZ. And so am I to take away from your answers that underneath that Southern genteelness that I gather from you there is an iron will to do what is right here?

Ms. COPPEDGE. There is an iron will to do what is right because of the individuals that I have met in trafficking cases. They do not have a voice. You Senators are their voice. I will remind you of that just as you have reminded me of my responsibilities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Then with that understanding, I look forward to supporting your nomination.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. I might add behind that New Jersey tough accent—

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. There is a guy that actually cares about people in this type of situation.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I am glad you are an interpreter for the committee. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. You know, in her case, I need to be one.

Let me just say we did have a meeting at the end of the week—a closed meeting. We did that for the benefit of the State Department so that we would not have media there and other things. I have, since that time, asked for three specific pieces of information from them, just for you to know because I know people will be asking you that in the hallway, to really understand what has happened. Instead of it being sweeping, three very specific things that came up actually during Tony Blinken's testimony. I do hope they will provide that like now. We are asking for them to reply immediately. This should not take any time to get to us. And if not, then I would like to talk to the committee about next steps to force that to happen. I just wanted to make you all aware. I think most of us are very unsatisfied with the testimony that occurred last week.

With that, Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Ms. Coppedge. Thank you for the courtesy of our visit last week.

For the record, I want to remind those of us here that this issue could have been swept under. We could have taken that TIP Report, put it on a shelf, and let it sit there. I want to commend the ranking member, Senator Cardin, and our chairman, Senator Corker, for not letting that happen. And I think the fact that you have four of the most distinguished Senators of our time sitting here before you today—I am not one of those. These four gentlemen are very dedicated to this issue I know personally. And they have got other things to do this morning, but they are here because of this nomination and how important it is. And I applaud all of them for that.

I am honored, Mr. Chairman, that our nominee today is from Georgia. I have watched her for the last decade attack this with a vigor. I think your question, Senator Menendez, should have been directed toward her husband to see if she really has the iron will. [Laughter.]

I suspect that she does.

But I applaud the work you have been doing. You are coming on a new level now and a new stage.

And I want to clear a couple things for the record that we talked about last week. In my career in business, I have been very sensitive to this idea of taking advantage of the weak in our societies around the world. Every culture is a little different. This is a major impediment to me for international trade. And one of the things that makes us one world and a peaceful world is the fact that we do not take advantage. We do not stand for people who take advantage of the weak among us. And yet, children, for the last 50 years, have been definitely victims of global issues and power struggles around the world.

Today in this 2015 report—I am not asking for your opinion about the 2015 report, but I do want to talk to you about children soldiers. Child labor has been a topic for the last 50 years as

globalization has taken root, and so a lot of progress has been made. In children soldiers, though, I am not so sure that much progress has been made. There are eight countries in this TIP Report. Countries like Burma, Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen are listed as countries who have forces that openly have children soldiers. I know you have a sensitive spot in your heart about this. This is a little bit different level than what you have been dealing with. And not all of these countries are on this year's report's worst level.

So my question is, as we look forward, will the fact that Tier 3, countries that have children soldiers—is that a major issue with regard to countries being placed on Tier 3?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, Senator, child soldiering is certainly a horrible issue that everyone is against in this room. And I am glad that you brought it up. And the TIP Report does list every year countries that engage children as soldiers or children as workers in their armies or armed forces, and that is required by the Child Soldier Prevention Act, which governs this area. It is listed in the TIP Report, and it is certainly one of the factors that is evaluated in the report when looking at the tier rankings.

Senator PERDUE. Are you hopeful we can eliminate that?

Ms. COPPEDGE. I am hopeful we can do lots of things, Senator. That is on the list. Yes, sir.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Along with that, you have heard discussed here today—and I think one of our concerns looking at this 2015 report is the efficacy of the report. It should be the gold standard that we and others can depend on when we evaluate countries in terms of where we put businesses, how we deal with them in the State Department, and how we think about them here in Congress. But we now learn that in this report in 2015, there are several countries that just do not comply. Several years, Germany has not provided information. Now, we have no reason to suspect they are not a continuing Tier 1 operator, but the fact that they are not providing information gives me pause. The fact that India again has not provided information—they are still solidly a Tier 2 player in the report.

How will you in your role help to maintain the efficacy of this report not just to make sure it is not politicized but also to make sure that the participating countries provide the information that is so important for you to make your determination?

Ms. COPPEDGE. So one of the factors that I understand the TIP Report considers is whether the government provides information and data because that is the best source of prosecutions and support being provided to victims. And if no information is forthcoming, then the TIP Report and the office has to assume that they are not making efforts in that area. So I know that that is built into the review of the report.

I also understand that we get information from civil society in a country and NGOs as well, but certainly governments are encouraged and requested to provide information.

Senator PERDUE. You know, there is a reported tension between JTIP and the regional bureaus of State and U.S. missions overseas. They go back to JTIP's creation back in 2001. Some observers contend that while JTIP is praised for raising the policy profile of

human trafficking, its ability to project its antitrafficking message as a priority is hampered by its perceived unequal footing vis-a-vis the regional bureaus at State.

How will you resolve this? I mean, this goes across all the responsibilities at State, it looks like. How will you weigh in to make sure that does not negatively affect our ability to evaluate these countries?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, I will work to build relationships with regional offices and with our missions in the field. They are also a great source of information to the TIP Office about what is going on with respect to trafficking in that country. I want to get the trafficking message clearly out to the regions and the missions and just build those relationships up so that we are on equal footing with other offices there. Obviously, there are competing priorities, as Senator Cardin recognized, but JTIP and the TIP Office needs to have a loud voice at the table and someone that individuals are willing to work with, and I will strive to be that person.

Senator PERDUE. Well, thank you for your answers, and congratulations on your nomination.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to fully supporting this nominee and her impact on this report going forward. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I do not think there are other questions. I think people have had time to meet with you personally and very much appreciate your willingness to do this.

The record will remain open for questions through the close of business Wednesday. If you would answer those promptly, it helps in you ascending to this position. I know you will do that. And again, thank you and your family's willingness to do this.

With that, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SUSAN COPPEDGE, NOMINATED TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

##### DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE COPPEDGE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

*Question.* Of the 20.9 million victims worldwide, the ILO estimates that 68 percent are trapped in labor trafficking. Yet, only 5 percent of the convictions reported worldwide last year were labor cases. Labor traffickers operate with near impunity across the globe, in large part because of the increased resources it takes to recognize, investigate and prosecute these cases.

◆ How can JTIP help build this expertise globally and ensure that more labor cases are identified and prosecuted?

*Answer.* I am deeply concerned with the low rate of prosecutions and convictions for labor trafficking crimes around the world. If confirmed, it will be a key priority for me—including through the dedication of resources—to advocate for increased prosecutions and convictions in these cases.

Labor trafficking takes many forms including bonded labor, domestic servitude, and forced child labor, and it occurs in many industries and work environments—from formal to informal sectors, isolated mines to urban businesses, whether legal or not. One important area that I will prioritize, if confirmed, is government enactment and implementation of laws that encourage prosecution of suspected traffickers and afford sufficient protections for victims. I will also lead robust engage-

ment efforts to press governments to implement fully their own laws and international commitments.

A TIP Office under my direction would continue to work hard to further the U.S. Government's leadership in combating human trafficking in all its forms. In addition to strong diplomacy aimed at pushing governments to increase prosecutions and convictions, I will strategically program resources and forge close relationships with international organizations and NGOs, as well as civil society groups, to address the drivers of human trafficking. If confirmed, I will also encourage business leaders to adopt codes of conduct for employees prohibiting the purchase of commercial sex and the use of unscrupulous labor practices in their supply chains. I will reach out to community leaders to foster the belief that it is everyone's responsibility to do their part to reduce the demand for human trafficking.

I am committed to combating human trafficking in all its forms and, if confirmed, I will push governments around the world to do the same.

*Question.* Worldwide, convictions dropped 23 percent last year from 5,776 to 4,443. With an estimated 21 million victims worldwide, yet fewer than 45,000 victims reported to law enforcement last year and fewer than 4,500 convictions worldwide, it is a crime of very low risk to the traffickers.

- ◆ How can J/TIP leverage its diplomatic power to increase the number of convictions over the coming year?

*Answer.* The low number of trafficking prosecutions and convictions is a problem that I have worked my entire career to change and is one that I am deeply committed to addressing if confirmed as Ambassador. I will also continue the Department's robust and multifaceted efforts to address global shortcomings in protecting trafficking victims and prosecuting and convicting traffickers, and I will use my position to make clear to governments around the world that it is a uniquely governmental responsibility to hold perpetrators accountable for these crimes.

The annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is an important tool to this end. The Department publicly documents government efforts to identify and protect victims and prosecute and convict traffickers. I understand Department officials engage foreign governments year round to identify the root causes of inadequate victim protection and law enforcement efforts, and urge authorities to take appropriate action to address deficiencies. The TIP Report is used by a range of stakeholders around the world to encourage government action. If confirmed, I will ensure the TIP Report continues to be the gold standard in assessing government efforts to combat human trafficking and prompting tangible progress around the world. I will do my utmost to ensure that the report remains an effective tool in pushing governments to address their deficiencies in this regard.

Another tool is the foreign assistance administered by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I know firsthand that such assistance plays an important role in supporting government efforts to address this crime and the needs of victims around the world. If confirmed, I will ensure these resources are used effectively to build the capacity of government law enforcement and victim protection efforts.

Governments are ultimately responsible for holding traffickers accountable and protecting trafficking victims. If confirmed, I will use the tools at my disposal to urge all governments to fulfill this responsibility.

*Question.* For several years, antitrafficking activists have raised concerns about the politicization of the TIP Report—namely that countries are sometimes upgraded undeservedly when it serves other political interests for the U.S. Government. Each time this happens, it sends a strong signal overseas that politics is more important than combating trafficking.

- ◆ Given the widely held perception that several countries were undeservedly upgraded in this year's report for political reasons, what will be done to rebuild the credibility of the report?

*Answer.* I have closely followed the release of this year's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report and the concerns expressed by members of this committee regarding the tier ranking decisions and the integrity of the report.

Congress created the TIP Report and the tier rankings to provide a means for the Secretary both to make objective assessments of government efforts to combat human trafficking and to publish the conclusions of those assessments in an effort to prompt tangible progress around the world. Since 2001, the TIP Report has helped make antitrafficking efforts an essential component of United States foreign policy. It is widely—and rightly—recognized as the “gold standard” in assessing government efforts around the world and urging improvements. I understand the Department strives to make the report as objective and accurate as possible, docu-

menting the successes and shortcomings of government antitrafficking efforts measured against the minimum standards established under U.S. law. The power and influence of the report depends on maintaining the integrity of tier rankings and the accompanying country analyses.

If confirmed, I will be a visible and vocal champion of the Report within the Department and I commit to ensuring its impartial standards and using the full range of resources at my disposal to maintain those standards. I will also encourage the Department to continue to use the report to elevate this issue on the global stage, to guide its antitrafficking programming around the world, and to encourage foreign governments to implement recommended improvements in their efforts.

*Question.* In the 2008 reauthorization of the TVPRA, the State Department was authorized to suspend certain categories of U.S. visas (A-3/G-5) used for guest workers at specific diplomatic missions or international organizations that have abused or exploited such workers in the past. Despite several cases, the State Department has yet to suspend any countries A-3/G-5 visa programs for abuse.

◆ If confirmed, will you ensure that this portion of the TVPRA is enforced?

*Answer.* The fair treatment of domestic workers employed by members of foreign missions in the United States is a matter of particular importance to the State Department. If confirmed, I will take allegations of domestic worker abuse very seriously.

It is my understanding that an internal Department working group convenes to review allegations of domestic worker abuse and brings them to the attention of the relevant foreign chief of mission, with a requirement to review the allegations and report back to the Department promptly regarding the findings.

The Department also regularly reminds foreign chiefs of mission of their obligations toward domestic workers, as well as their obligation to comply with U.S. laws and Department requirements relating to the employment of domestic workers, including the suspension provision in the 2008 TVPRA.

If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure the Department continues to review every allegation of domestic worker abuse that is brought to its attention and take appropriate action. I will support Department of State efforts to work with the diplomatic community on matters related to U.S. investigations into alleged abuse and compliance with U.S. requirements relating to the employment of domestic workers. If confirmed, I will take seriously the suspension requirements of the 2008 TVPRA and make recommendations to the Secretary accordingly.

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DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE COPPEDGE'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MARKEY

*Question.* Trafficking in persons is a crime that has a devastating role in the fishing and maritime industry. U.S. companies should bear some responsibility to prevent goods secured through the use of human trafficking victims from accessing U.S. markets.

◆ Please describe how the State Department, in coordination with other relevant U.S. Government agencies, is conducting outreach to U.S. companies and suppliers to identify and mitigate sources of goods supplied with the use of trafficking victims, particularly in the fishing industry.

*Answer.* The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) has long documented the risks of human trafficking in the seafood sector. In recent years, a growing body of reporting has documented forced labor on coastal and deep sea fishing vessels, as well as in shrimp farming and seafood processing. In an industry where a largely migrant workforce faces harsh conditions, isolation at sea, and environmental factors that are forcing boats to travel greater distances for longer periods of time, the risks of trafficking in persons loom large. The 2015 annual Trafficking in Persons Report noted that 54 of 188 country narratives referenced forced labor in the seafood sector.

It is my understanding that the Department is working with the business community to support companies in addressing the problem of forced labor in their supply chains, and also to leverage additional avenues of pressure on governments to establish and enforce clear antitrafficking laws and regulations that ensure respect for human rights and fair trade practices.

I also understand that the Department of State regularly meets and consults with a variety of companies—including from the fishing, electronics, and travel and tourism industries—that have expressed an interest in addressing the potential vulnerability of human trafficking in supply chains. The TIP Office convenes meetings



with industry in coordination with other federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor, the Office of Management and Budget, and USAID. Specifically related to seafood, the TIP Office has convened NGOs, multinational corporations and associations, government officials, and leading academics to discuss the issue of human trafficking in the seafood sector, share model approaches to preventing such forced labor, and forge new partnerships. TIP Office staff members have also given presentations, met with seafood suppliers, and traveled with an industry coalition to Thailand to gain further insight, together with U.S. mission personnel, to examine the risks of human trafficking in the fishing industry as well as consider solutions to address concerns.

Following the release of Executive Order 13627, Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts, the Senior Policy Operating Group's Procurement and Supply Chains Committee and its members participated in a lengthy process for reviewing public comments and developing amendments to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) implementing both the EO and Title XVII (Ending Trafficking in Government Contracting) of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. Committee members also participated in updating training for Federal Acquisitions personnel across the U.S. Government.

I know that to support this work, the TIP Office entered into a cooperative agreement with Verité, an NGO leader in supply chain management, to gather data on the areas of greatest risk of trafficking in global supply chains and produced a report on those sectors and commodities with a history or indications of supporting trafficking or trafficking-related activities. In addition, under the agreement, Verité will develop tools for federal contractors and corporations to analyze the risks of trafficking in their supply chains and implement ethical sourcing guidelines. The initiative included outreach to corporations to solicit expertise and advice to inform the development of the tools to be used by federal contractors and businesses. Finally, the initiative includes a pilot project to engage seafood sector companies and then provide tailored guidance for those companies who wish to adopt promising practices consistent with the principles of the EO.

The State Department also chairs the Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud (IUU Task Force), a practice that has significant overlap with issues of human trafficking.

*Question.* Earlier this year, the State Department named Ghana as the first country in which to implement the Child Protection Compacts, which have a specific focus to prioritize the rescue of children in slave labor conditions and hold perpetrators of child slave labor accountable for these crimes.

- ◆ As the head of the Trafficking in Persons Office, what will you do to ensure that the Ghanaian Government upholds their agreement to focus on the rescue of children enslaved and the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators? Also, how will you ensure that the Child Protection Compacts continue to be implemented in other countries to build successful models for ending child slavery?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that the TIP Office closely monitors activities to implement the first Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership between the United States and the Government of Ghana. I will ask for regular reports noting any progress and obstacles toward achieving the jointly developed objectives of enhanced child protection, more effective prosecution of child traffickers, and prevention of the crime. If the Government of Ghana fails to adhere to its responsibilities under the CPC Partnership, the authorizing legislation permits the Secretary to suspend or terminate the assistance and to reinstate it after corrective action is taken. I also expect to engage the Ghanaian ministries participating in the CPC Partnership in an annual high-level bilateral dialogue to highlight accomplishments and challenges and to chart corrective action, if needed.

I look forward, if confirmed, and should funds become available for this purpose, to implementing this unique model of foreign assistance by identifying additional prospective countries for such a Partnership, conducting appropriate interagency consultations, assessing the feasibility and likelihood of success, and negotiating future CPC Partnerships. In doing so, I would build on the Office's experience and lessons learned through establishing the first CPC Partnership with Ghana.

