

# NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

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## HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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FIRST SESSION—MARCH 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2015

SECOND SESSION—FEBRUARY 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

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Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

21-581 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2017

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## NOMINATIONS

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015

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

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G. Kathleen Hill, of Colorado, to be Ambassador the Republic of  
Malta  
Eric Seth Rubin, of New York, to be Ambassador the Republic of  
Bulgaria  
Kyle R. Scott, of Arizona, to be Ambassador the Republic of Serbia  
David McKean, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to Luxem-  
bourg  
Carlos J. Torres, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Peace  
Corps

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, presiding.  
Present: Senators Johnson, Risch, Gardner, Shaheen, Murphy, and Markey.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RON JOHNSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing will come to order.

I want to welcome our witnesses, our nominees. First of all, I want to thank you for your past service, and I certainly want to thank you for your willingness to serve your Nation again.

These nomination hearings are always pretty interesting. We have a wide range of different organizations and sometimes countries that we are talking about. So we learn an awful lot here. I hope you will have a good and enjoyable experience here.

The position of Ambassador I think is just extremely important. I know Senator Gardner was talking ahead of time how important it is and how valued it is when we travel overseas. I am sure Senators Risch and Shaheen will agree with this. First of all, the professional Foreign Service people are just extraordinary individuals, I mean almost without exception. And the ambassadors are just so important at setting those trips up for us and making them so valuable.

But, obviously, from my standpoint, it is just like a salesperson in a business. You, obviously, are representing the company to the customer but also the customer back to the company. Same thing here. You will be representing the United States of America, a

country I think is the greatest in the history of mankind, a phenomenal force for good in the world, and it is your responsibility to represent us well, at the same time represent the country that you are ambassador to back to Congress, back to the people of the United States. It is a serious responsibility, and again I really do appreciate the fact you are willing to take that on.

So without further ado, because I do not have a whole lot of voice left, I will turn it over to our ranking member, Senator Shaheen.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have a statement but I would just like to echo the thanks to each of you for your willingness to take on these very important positions and to point out that several of you are really at the center of what has focused the world's attention right now in terms of what is happening in Europe with refugees, what is happening in Europe with Putin's aggression into eastern Europe. And so you will be on the front lines of some very challenging issues for your tenure as ambassador. And so thank you very much for your willingness to be in these very important positions at this very difficult time.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

We do have Senator Markey who would like to introduce Mr. David McKean. I would like to ask Senator Markey if you are prepared.

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

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

And it is my honor to introduce again to this committee David McKean. David was the staff director. David has dedicated his life to this committee and the issues that are central to the well-being of our Nation going forward.

And I know he is here with his wife, Kathleen, and their three children, Shaw and Christian and Kay. And I know that everybody who knows him is proud to say that they believe that somebody is as qualified as a human being can be to have a position like this.

He is a Massachusetts native. He proves once again that Massachusetts is not just the Bay State, that we are the "Brain State," and if you googled it, David's picture would come up. He has done this kind of work for his entire life.

He is currently Director of Policy and Planning at the State Department. He joined the State Department in April 2012 as a Senior Advisor to Secretary of State Clinton, and he directed the Policy Planning staff to lay the foundation for expanding global development cooperation with China in the areas of food security and nutrition and humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness. He played an instrumental role in shaping the U.S. policy in support of a lasting and just peace in Colombia. He was central in focusing Secretary Kerry's focus on nationwide elections in Nigeria, which were held in March 2015 and were followed by Nigeria's first-ever peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another. He worked to maintain focus on international support for Ukraine as it moves along its path of reform, on support for transatlantic sanc-

tions against Russia, and an end of military intervention there, and to ensure that we remain steadfast in our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. He held the policy planning talks with more than 15 other countries, and most notably, he held the first-ever U.S.-India policy planning talks with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. His work in the State Department brings him full circle from the beginning of his career in 1981 when he taught in Swaziland.

It is just an amazing career. He began his career up here working for John Kerry, and it has moved through all of these years in an unbroken path of service to our Nation. He served on just about every issue discussion that we have had from A to Z, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe on this committee. He was in the room. He was helping to shape the way in which those issues would be shaped. And I can tell you that no one will ever a higher endorsement from John Kerry to serve in our Foreign Service, to serve the United States in such an important position as David will receive from the Secretary.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to be able to tout this great American's history. But rest assured that we are well served no matter where he is in the world. And I thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. So you are supporting the nomination. [Laughter.]

By the way—and I think Senator Risch would probably agree with me on this, being a former Wisconsinite. We just refer to Wisconsin as God's country. But we appreciate the fact that you like your State as well.

Senator MARKEY. We think of cheese when we think of Wisconsin.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, that is a good thing. [Laughter.]

Well, based on that excellent introduction, we might as well go a little out of order here, and we will start with Mr. David McKean, who is being nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, with my colleague also pointing out that is a pretty nice post. But, Mr. McKean, why do you not start your testimony?

**STATEMENT OF DAVID MCKEAN, NOMINATED  
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LUXEMBOURG**

Mr. MCKEAN. Thanks very much.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, good afternoon.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to Luxembourg. I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

I would also like to thank Senator Markey for his generous introduction.

As Senator Markey has noted, I spent many years working as a staff member and chief of staff for Senator Kerry, and I am particularly honored to be testifying in front of a committee for which I served as staff director.

My journey to this point would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my family, my children, Shaw, Chris-

tian, and Kay, who are not here, and most especially my wife of 27 years, Kathleen, who is here today.

During my lifetime, I have traveled to over 65 countries, having visited more than 30 in my current capacity as Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was the very first country I ever visited in 1972.

Luxembourg is at the heart of Europe, both geographically and politically. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time and efforts to enhancing the already strong relationship between our two countries, one that is based on both historically ties and Luxembourgers' positive views of America.

Luxembourg citizens are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices American troops made during World War II to defeat the Nazis and liberate their country. The over 5,000 graves in the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery serve as a reminder of the sacrifice borne by so many for the liberties that Luxembourgers enjoy today. One of those graves is that of Gen. George Patton, whose wife was from my hometown of Hamilton, MA. The General and Mrs. Patton had planned to retire there, but it was not to be. His simple grave in Luxembourg is a reflection of his desire to be laid to rest alongside the men of the 3rd Army and perhaps serves as his final lesson in leadership.

Leadership is important to me, and over the last 3 years at the State Department, I visited many of our embassies around the world. I have developed an admiration for the Foreign Service officers and locally employed staff who serve with dedication and determination to advance United States foreign policy goals worldwide. It will be an honor for me to lead them at our mission in Luxembourg during a critical time in Europe.

Luxembourg is concluding its 6-month presidency of the Council of the European Union during which the agenda has been dominated by the refugee crisis affecting Europe. The unprecedented levels of new arrivals have posed considerable challenges to the Union, and Luxembourg has used the council presidency to help foster dialogue and forge consensus.

Luxembourg has also stepped up recently in other areas, especially in the area of humanitarian assistance. Overall, Luxembourg commits over 1 percent of its GNP to assistance.

Commercial ties between Luxembourg and the United States have been historically strong. The United States exports over \$1.5 billion worth of goods to Luxembourg, and if confirmed, I will make trade promotion and Luxembourg direct investment into the United States a priority so that we can increase the market for U.S. goods and services and help create jobs and value here at home. A major component of that effort will be to advance discussions on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Another issue that we will be addressing in 2016 is Russia's involvement in Ukraine and the sanctions that are in place against Russia. Russia's violations of Ukrainian sovereignty cannot stand, and if confirmed, I will work with the Luxembourg Government to ensure their continued support of EU sanctions until the Minsk accords are fully implemented.

The recent events in Paris have shown that no nation in Europe can take its liberties and freedoms for granted. If confirmed, I will



do all I can, working with the Government of Luxembourg, to advance our shared vision of a Europe that is whole, free, safe, and at peace.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKean follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID MCKEAN

Mister Chairman and distinguished members of the committee: Good afternoon.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

As Senator Markey has noted, I spent many years working as a staff member and Chief of Staff for Senator Kerry and I am particularly honored to be testifying in front of a committee for which I was staff director in 2009.

My journey to this point would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my family, most especially my wife, Kathleen, who is here today.

During my lifetime I have travelled to over 65 countries, having visited more than 30 in my current capacity as Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was the very first country I ever visited in 1972.

Luxembourg is at the heart of Europe, both geographically and politically. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time and efforts to enhancing the already strong relationship between our two countries that is based on both historical ties and Luxembourgers' positive views of America.

Luxembourg citizens are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices American troops made during World War II to defeat the Nazi occupation and liberate their country. The over 5,000 graves in the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery serve as reminders of the sacrifice borne by so many for the liberties that Luxembourgers enjoy today. One of those graves is that of Gen. George Patton, whose wife was from my hometown of Hamilton, MA. The General and Mrs. Patton had planned to retire there, but it was not to be. His simple grave in Luxembourg is a reflection of his desire to be laid to rest alongside his men and perhaps serves as his final lesson in leadership.

Leadership is important to me. Great work is done when people are motivated, inspired, and empowered. That is the spirit in which I intend to approach the job of Chief of Mission, if confirmed.

Over the last 3 years at the State Department, I have developed an admiration for the Foreign Service officers and specialists, and Locally Employed Staff, who serve with dedication and determination to advance U.S. foreign policy worldwide. It would be an honor for me to lead them at our mission in Luxembourg during a critical time in Europe.

Luxembourg is concluding its 6-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during which the agenda was dominated by the refugee crisis affecting Europe. The unprecedented levels of new arrivals have posed considerable challenges to the Union, and Luxembourg has used the council presidency to help foster dialogue and forge consensus. Luxembourg was among the first EU countries to receive refugees as part of the EU plan to distribute 160,000 refugees among member states.

Luxembourg has also stepped up recently in other areas of humanitarian assistance, and overall commits over 1 percent of GNP to assistance. In 2014 alone, Luxembourg made contributions of over \$24 million to support refugees, internally displaced persons, and other victims of conflict in Syria, Mali, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

United States and Luxembourg commercial ties have been historically strong. The United States exports over \$1.5 billion worth of goods to Luxembourg. If confirmed I will make trade promotion and direct investment from Luxembourg into the United States a priority, so that we can increase the market for U.S. goods and services and help create jobs and value here at home. A major component of that effort will be to advance discussions on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to build public support for a comprehensive TTIP agreement that boosts economic growth and creates jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another issue that we will be addressing in 2016 is Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and the sanctions that are in place against Russia. Russia's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty cannot stand, and if confirmed I will work with the Luxem-

bourg Government to ensure their continued support of EU sanctions, until Minsk is fully implemented.

Recent events have shown that no nation in Europe can take its liberties and freedoms for granted. If confirmed, I will do all I can, working with Luxembourg, to advance our shared vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. McKean.

Now we will go back to our previously scheduled order. Our next witness will be Ms. Kathleen Hill. Ms. Hill is nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malta.

Ms. Hill is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as Senior Advisor in the Office of the Executive Secretary at the Department of State. Previously Ms. Hill has held positions within the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs and the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs. Ms. Hill also has served at multiple overseas posts, including Canada, Italy, and Serbia.

Ms. Hill.

**STATEMENT OF G. KATHLEEN HILL, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA**

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee.

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Malta. I look forward to working with Congress and this committee to advance U.S. interests in Malta.

I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position, especially at a time when we face some of the most daunting security challenges. Our hearts are with all those who have lost loved ones in recent weeks in France, Turkey, Lebanon, and over the Sinai en route home to Russia. Such events make me even more thankful for the support of my family, my mother, Mary Ann, who is here today, along with my brother-in-law, Neil, and my niece, Maura, as well as my sister, Renea, and other nieces, Grace and Colleen, who could not be with us today. As with all Foreign Service families, it is their encouragement that helps sustain us as we serve our country in the farthest reaches of the world.

For two and a half years, I managed Secretary Kerry's travel, visiting more than 60 countries and witnessing the incredible value of diplomacy and how every country can be a partner to reach our common goals, such as security, prosperity, and promoting democratic values. I hope to incorporate what I have learned in strengthening our partnership with Malta in these areas. I have served three tours in southern and southeastern Europe, and more recently, I led the Arab Spring evacuations of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, which gave me extensive experience working two of the key issues of the Mediterranean countries, regional security, and refugees. In every position I have held, I have encouraged teamwork, empowerment, and staff development to achieve success. If confirmed, I plan to implement that same formula for success at our mission in Malta.

Ties between the United States and Malta date back to the early 19th century when Valletta, one of the finest natural harbors in the Mediterranean, was the base for the U.S. Navy's actions against the Barbary pirates. Malta's location continues to position the country as a significant actor in maintaining security in the Mediterranean. As a member of the European Union and the Schengen Treaty, Malta is responsible for enforcing the Schengen zone's common border and EU customs control. It also sits in the middle of the world's busiest shipping lanes, with over a third of the world's shipping transiting the waters between Malta and Italy.

Malta is a close ally to the United States and supports us on regional issues. During the period of unrest in Libya that began in February 2011, I witnessed firsthand the important role Malta played supporting the evacuation of more than 20,000 foreign nationals, including 200 American citizens; coordinating humanitarian aid to the people of Libya; and providing assistance to international forces. Shortly thereafter, Embassy Valletta hosted the Department's Libya External Office before it moved to Tunisia, and the Government of Malta supported the External Office's presence by accrediting our increased staffing.

A participant in the NATO Partnership for Peace since 2008, Malta remains a steadfast partner in defense. U.S. Navy ships visit on a semiregular basis while the Maltese military actively participate in regional exercises on search and rescue, regional maritime awareness, and security.

We also work closely with Malta to address irregular migration. The U.S. Coast Guard has trained the Armed Forces of Malta to operate and navigate fast response boats and patrol vessels in order to provide assistance to refugees and support to law enforcement operations.

On our bilateral defense cooperation, the United States and Malta do not have a status of forces agreement, which limits the parameters of further engagement. If confirmed, I will continue to highlight the strategic defense and economic benefits of a SOFA with senior Maltese political leaders and influential business and commercial leaders. A SOFA would facilitate more regular ship visits and further enhance security cooperation between our two countries.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of my predecessor in supporting and encouraging increased bilateral trade currently valued at more than \$1 billion. It is estimated that one of every 30 jobs in Malta is linked to a U.S. business. Our mission will continue to support the SelectUSA initiative to encourage Maltese investment in the United States and work to advance and expand the ability of U.S. businesses to invest in Malta, a conduit for markets in Europe and North Africa.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to representing the best of the United States in Malta and working with this valued and historic partner to advance U.S. foreign policy. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hill follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN HILL

Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Malta. I look forward to working with Congress and this committee to advance U.S. interests in Malta.

I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. As a career Foreign Service officer, I am truly humbled by the opportunity to serve my country as Ambassador. I also am very thankful for the support of my family, my mother, Mary Ann, my sister, Renea and her family, including her husband, Neil, and daughters, Maura and Colleen, who are all here today and my other niece, Grace, in California. As with all Foreign Service families, both immediate and extended, it is their encouragement that helps sustain us as we serve our country in the farthest reaches of the world.

For two and half years, I managed Secretary Kerry's travel, visiting more than 60 countries and witnessed the incredible value of diplomacy and how every country can be a partner to reach our common goals, such as security, prosperity, and promoting democratic values. I hope to incorporate what I have learned in strengthening our partnership with Malta in these areas. During my 20-year career I have served three tours in southern and southeastern Europe. More recently, I led the Arab Spring evacuations of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, which gave me extensive experience working on the key issues of Mediterranean countries—regional security and refugees. In every position I have held, I have encouraged teamwork, empowerment, and staff development to achieve success. If confirmed, I plan to implement that same formula for success at our mission in Malta.

Ties between the United States and Malta date back to the early 19th century when Valletta, one of the finest natural harbors in the Mediterranean, was the base for the U.S. Navy's action against the Barbary pirates. Malta's location continues to position the country as a significant actor in maintaining security in the Mediterranean. As a member of the European Union and the Schengen Treaty, Malta is responsible for enforcing the Schengen zone's common border and EU customs control. It also sits in the middle of the world's busiest shipping lanes, with over a third of the world's shipping transiting the waters between Malta and Italy.

Malta is a close ally to the United States and supports us on regional issues in North Africa and Europe. During the period of unrest in Libya that began in February 2011, I witnessed firsthand the important role Malta played in supporting the evacuation of more than 20,000 foreign nationals, including 200 American citizens; coordinating humanitarian aid to the people of Libya; and providing assistance to international forces. Shortly thereafter, Embassy Valletta hosted the State Department's Libya External Office before it moved to Tunisia; the Government of Malta supported the External Office's presence by accrediting our increased staffing.

A participant in the NATO Partnership for Peace since 2008, Malta remains a steadfast partner in defense. U.S. Navy ships visit on a semiregular basis while the Maltese military actively participate in regional exercises on search and rescue, regional maritime awareness, and security.

We also work closely with Malta to address irregular migration. The U.S. Coast Guard has trained the Armed Forces of Malta to operate and navigate fast response boats and patrol vessels, in order to provide assistance to refugees and support to law enforcement operations.

On our bilateral defense cooperation, the United States and Malta do not have a status of forces agreement (SOFA), which limits the parameters of further engagement. If confirmed, I will continue to highlight the strategic defense and economic benefits of a SOFA with senior Maltese political leaders, and influential business and commercial leaders. A SOFA would facilitate more regular ship visits and further enhance security cooperation between our two countries.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of my predecessor in supporting and encouraging further bilateral trade, currently valued at more than \$1 billion. It is estimated that one out of every 30 jobs in Malta is linked to a U.S. business. Our mission will continue to support the SelectUSA initiative and work to advance and expand the ability of U.S. businesses to invest in Malta, a conduit for markets in Europe and North Africa. I believe U.S. foreign direct investment should be encouraged in Malta's thriving service-based industries, as well as its manufacturing and transshipment sectors. I also intend to continue raising awareness on the mutual benefits of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP).

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to representing the best of the United States in Malta and working with a valued and

historic partner to advance U.S. foreign policy. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Hill.

Our next witness is Mr. Eric Rubin. Mr. Rubin is nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Rubin is a career member of the Foreign Service and most recently served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs from 2011 until August of 2015. Mr. Rubin previously served at the U.S. Embassies in Moscow and Ukraine and U.S. consulate in Thailand.

Mr. Rubin.

**STATEMENT OF ERIC SETH RUBIN, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee.

It is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be United States Ambassador to Bulgaria. I am humbled and honored by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and I thank you for your time and your willingness to consider my nomination.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for over 30 years, I have cherished my association with the United States Foreign Service. On four continents, I have done my utmost to advance the national interests of our country and the values and priorities that we share as Americans. For me, appearing before you to ask you to consider my nomination is also a chance to express my gratitude for the opportunity I have had to serve our country and to advocate for our shared vision of a world based on peace, prosperity, and liberty.

Before I go further, please allow me to acknowledge some of my family members, both those who are here with me today and those who are not. I am forever grateful to my parents, who introduced me to the wider world and taught me not to accept things as they are, but to try to change them for the better. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Nicole Simmons, who is here with me today, for her love and support over these past 32 years. She has been my constant advisor, best friend, and advocate. Together with our two beautiful daughters, Rachel, who is here with me today, and Liana, she has also been my constant partner in the work we have done to represent the United States and the American people.

I first visited Bulgaria in 1991 when I went to organize the first security dialogue and military-to-military exchanges between our two countries at the end of the cold war. Those were heady but difficult days. Bulgarians set a course for the future toward European integration and the Atlantic alliance.

Bulgarians have achieved much in the years since. Bulgaria today is a staunch NATO ally that lies in a strategic location at the southeastern edge of the European Union. But there is much more that we can and should do together. When Secretary Kerry visited Bulgaria in January, he recognized the important collaboration between our countries and announced jointly with Bulgaria the formation of bilateral working groups on national security and defense, energy security, education and people-to-people ties, and

the rule of law. These working groups have been so well received that we recently added a counterterrorism working group which first met last week.

Bulgaria is among the newer NATO members and has the second lowest GDP per capita in the alliance. Nonetheless, it has been a stalwart ally since becoming a member of the alliance. It sent troops to and took casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been a tireless participant in training exercises and hosts one of NATO's force integration units on the eastern flank. It is prudently setting aside more resources toward modernizing its military and preparing for tomorrow's missions.

Our newest bilateral working group, as I mentioned, focuses on counterterrorism. Bulgaria takes counterterrorism seriously, and the recent attacks in Paris underscore the importance of this work. Bulgaria is part of the Counter-ISIL Coalition and plays an important role in helping to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters due to its critical location at the crossroads between the Near East and western Europe.

Of course, national security is not limited to defense. Bulgaria relies almost entirely on Russia for natural gas and nuclear fuel. We are supporting Bulgaria's efforts to diversify its sources of energy in line with European Union goals. Gas from the Caspian Sea could be an important part of the solution.

The rule of law affects almost every line of effort we share with Bulgaria. The corruption is still common in Bulgaria. We are encouraged to see positive technical and legislative steps, and if confirmed, I commit myself to working to help Bulgaria tackle these difficult challenges and make further progress.

On a very positive note, our trade relationship has just about doubled over the past 6 years. Hewlett-Packard, which already employs more than 6,000 Bulgarians, in April opened Europe's only HP Technology Lab, which will simulate technology and business processes and train the company's experts in Bulgaria. If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's advocacy for our commercial interests and American business.

Finally, my highest priority, if I am confirmed, will be to ensure the safety and security of the men and women working at our Embassy and their family members, as well as the safety and well-being of all American citizens in Bulgaria.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, if given the opportunity, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on these and other important issues. I hope to be able to welcome you back to Sofia to witness the work of our dedicated embassy staff on behalf of American taxpayers, cultivating this important bilateral relationship and advancing our national interests.

I thank you again for your willingness to consider my nomination. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rubin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC RUBIN

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It is a privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Bulgaria. I am humbled and honored by the trust that

President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and I thank you for your time and your willingness to consider my nomination.

Mr. Chairman, for over 30 years I have cherished my association with the U.S. Foreign Service. On four continents, I have done my utmost to advance the national interests of our country, and the values and priorities that we share as Americans. For me, appearing before you to ask you to consider my nomination is also a chance to express my gratitude for the opportunity I have had to serve our country and to advocate for our shared vision of a world based on peace, prosperity, and liberty.

Before I go further, allow me to acknowledge some of my family members, both those who are here with me today and those unable to attend. I am forever thankful to my parents, who introduced me to the wider world and taught me not to accept things as they are, but to try to change them for the better. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Nicole Simmons, for her love and support over these many decades. She has been my constant adviser, best friend and advocate. Together with our two beautiful daughters, Rachel and Liana, she has also been my constant partner in the work we have done to represent the United States and the American people.

I first visited Bulgaria in 1991, when I helped to organize the first security dialogue and military-to-military exchanges between our two countries at the end of the cold war. Those were heady yet difficult days, but Bulgarians set a course for the future, toward European integration and the Atlantic Alliance. Bulgarians have achieved much in the years since—Bulgaria today is a staunch NATO ally that lies in a strategic location at the southeastern edge of the European Union. But there is much more that we can and should do together. When Secretary Kerry visited Bulgaria in January, he recognized the important collaboration between our countries, and announced jointly with Bulgaria the formation of bilateral working groups on National Security and Defense, Energy Security, Education and People-to-People Ties, and the Rule of Law. These working groups have been so well received that we recently added a Counterterrorism working group, which first met last week.

Bulgaria is among the newer NATO members and has the second-lowest GDP per capita in the alliance. Nonetheless, it has been a stalwart ally. It sent troops to—and took casualties in—Iraq and Afghanistan. It is a tireless participant in training exercises and hosts one of the NATO Force Integration Units on NATO's eastern flank. It is prudently setting aside more resources toward modernizing its military and preparing for tomorrow's missions.

Our newest bilateral working group, as I mentioned, focuses on counterterrorism. Bulgaria takes counterterrorism seriously, and the recent attacks in Paris underscore the importance of this work. Bulgaria is a part of the Counter-ISIL Coalition and plays an important role in helping stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters due to its location at the crossroads between the Near East and western Europe.

Of course, national security is not limited to defense. Bulgaria relies almost entirely on Russia for natural gas and nuclear fuel. We are supporting Bulgaria's efforts to diversify its sources and routes of energy, in line with EU goals. Gas from the Caspian Sea could be an important part of the solution.

Bulgaria's potential lies in its ability to overcome a past associated with corruption and crime. The state of rule of law affects almost every line of effort we share with Bulgaria. Though corruption is still common in Bulgaria, we are encouraged to see some positive technical and legislative steps, and, if confirmed, I commit myself to working to help Bulgarians tackle these difficult challenges.

Our trade relationship has just about doubled over the last 6 years. Hewlett-Packard, which already employs more than 6,000 Bulgarians, in April opened Europe's only HP Technology Lab, which will simulate technology and business processes and train the company's experts in Bulgaria. If confirmed, I would continue the Embassy's advocacy for our commercial interests, leading to similar success stories.

Person-to-person exchanges are sometimes the most effective form of diplomacy, particularly in light of efforts by some in the region to undermine the strong U.S.-Bulgarian relationship. Bulgarians participate in public and private sector exchanges, and the Embassy is expanding its engagement with alumni of these programs.

We have many agencies represented at Embassy Sofia. Beside the Department of State, there are the Departments of Defense, Energy, Commerce, and Agriculture. We have law enforcement colleagues from the FBI, Secret Service, and DEA. If confirmed, I would do everything in my power to ensure the Embassy's efficient operation.

If given the opportunity, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on these and other important issues. I would welcome you to Sofia to witness the good work of our dedicated Embassy staff on behalf of the American taxpayers, cultivating this important bilateral relationship. I thank you again for your willingness to consider my nomination. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Rubin.

Our next nominee is Mr. Kyle Scott. He is the nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. Mr. Scott is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as the Department of State's senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund.

Previously Mr. Scott served as counsel general at the U.S. consulate in Milan and as Director of the Office of Russian Affairs at the State Department. Additionally, Mr. Scott has held positions representing the United States to the OSCE and the European Union and at embassies in Hungary and Russia.

Mr. Scott.

**STATEMENT OF KYLE R. SCOTT, NOMINATED TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

Mr. SCOTT. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. I hope the committee and the Senate will share the confidence entrusted in me by the President and Secretary Kerry.

I am accompanied today by my two sons, Mark and Kristian, and by my wife, Nena. They have stood by me through more than three decades in the Foreign Service, including 16 moves and eight overseas postings. The family members of the Foreign Service often bear the brunt of personal sacrifice and hardship. My family are a living testimony to public service on behalf of the American people, and I could not be prouder of them than I am today.

In 35 years as a member of the Foreign Service, I have dedicated my career to improving America's security and our position in the world. Much of that time has been focused on transatlantic relations, including multiple assignments in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. During this period, we have made great strides in forging a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace. But that vision is not yet complete.

Allow me to focus a few key points regarding Serbia's role in this broader vision.

Serbia is a linchpin for stability and progress in the Western Balkans. In recent years, it has made considerable progress on its path toward Euro-Atlantic integration, and now it stands at a critical inflection point, facing difficult decisions that will forge Serbia's future and shape relations with its neighbors in ways that can contribute to broader peace and stability. It is in the interest of the United States that Serbia develops as a modern, prosperous European nation at peace with itself and its neighbors, demonstrating full respect for the rule of law and the rights of all its citizens.

Over the past several years, with our strong support, Serbia has taken a strategic decision toward a Euro-Atlantic future rooted in EU membership. If confirmed, I would strive to continue this progress. This includes enacting legislative, fiscal, and regulatory reforms. It means strengthening ties among the countries of the western Balkans. And in this regard, sustained progress toward a comprehensive normalization of the Serbia-Kosovo relationship is a fundamental requirement for the long-term regional stability of the western Balkans.



Progress also requires reinforcing and defending shared democratic values, supporting human rights and protecting fundamental freedoms.

A key to continued progress is more dynamic economic growth and reform, streamlining bureaucracy, improving competitiveness and innovation, and combating the corrosive consequences of corruption will all help Serbia become a more attractive destination for investment from American companies and a more dynamic market for U.S. exports.

More recently Serbia is also bearing a major brunt of the recent migration crisis afflicting Europe. Serbia's leaders and its people deserve to be commended for their humanitarian approach but can also use everyone's help in managing the added burdens associated with this challenge.

And finally, if confirmed, I am committed to continue to seek resolution of two important challenges to our bilateral relationship. Those responsible for the 1999 murder of three American citizens, the Bytyqi brothers, have never been brought to justice. The same holds true for those who allowed the mob attacks on the U.S. Embassy in 2008. I pledge unwavering efforts, if confirmed, to press the Serbian Government to ensure that all who were involved in these crimes are brought to justice regardless of their rank or position. This is a challenging agenda.

I look forward to building on the leadership and dedication shown by the current U.S. Ambassador, Michael Kirby, and know I can count on the experience of a talented team of Americans and locally employed staff at Embassy Belgrade, as well as the support from multiple agencies in Washington and the legislative branch. If confirmed, I am committed to doing my utmost to promote our shared goal, a democratic Serbia providing growth and security for its citizens at peace with all its neighbors and firmly set on a path of European integration.

Thank you for granting me this opportunity to appear before the committee today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Scott follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KYLE SCOTT

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me through this nomination. I hope the committee and the Senate will share that confidence and confirm me.

I am accompanied today by my two sons, Mark and Kristian, and by my wife, Nena, who have been my rock and inspiration throughout my career as a U.S. diplomat. They have stood by me through more than three decades in the Foreign Service, including 16 moves and eight overseas postings. The family members of the Foreign Service often bear the brunt of personal sacrifice and hardship. They are living testimony to public service on behalf of the American people, and I could not be prouder of them than I am today.

In 35 years as a member of the Foreign Service, I have dedicated my career to improving America's security and our position in the world. Much of that time has been focused on transatlantic relations, including seven overseas assignments spanning Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. During this period, we have made great strides in forging a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace, but that vision is not yet complete. As Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, I witnessed firsthand the struggles of countries seeking to transform their societies and the role that outside actors and multilateral organizations can play in helping

them better adhere to the values and principles that underpin the transatlantic relationship. As Principal Officer in the U.S. consulate in Milan, I have seen the invaluable role of our allies in addressing shared challenges in the region. I have also seen the immense benefit that investment by American firms contributes to reaching our goal in forging a prosperous Europe. My recent position as a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. has offered me an invaluable opportunity to participate in debates on U.S. foreign policy in Europe, the crisis in Ukraine, the EU's financial difficulties, and the latest challenges posed by the unprecedented migration crisis. As a former Director of the Office of Russian Affairs, I am fully aware of the regional challenges posed by Russian attempts to influence its European neighbors and by Russian aggression in Europe, including Russia's recent actions that have violated Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and sought to destabilize Ukraine. I believe the confluence of these experiences has prepared me well to serve as Chief of Mission in Serbia.

#### *Euro-Atlantic integration*

Serbia is a linchpin for stability and progress in the Western Balkans. In recent years, it has made considerable progress on its path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. Now it stands at a critical inflection point. Political leaders in Belgrade face difficult decisions that will indelibly forge Serbia's domestic development, will help shape relations with its neighbors for generations to come, and can contribute to broader peace and stability in the region. It is in the interest of the United States that Serbia develops as a modern, prosperous European nation at peace with itself and its neighbors, demonstrating full respect for the rule of law and the rights of all of its citizens.

Over the past several years, with our strong support, Serbia has made concrete steps toward defining its Euro-Atlantic future. Serbian leaders are pursuing a broad agenda aimed at acceding to the European Union. This includes enacting legislative, fiscal, and regulatory reforms that can stimulate the transformation that we strongly support. Reforms such as cutting public wages and pensions and privatizing state-owned businesses are difficult. With U.S. technical assistance, the Government of Serbia is pursuing business-enabling environment reforms that should help better align Serbia's fiscal practices with EU and international standards. More important, making the right choices, tough as they may be, will place the country on a path toward more sustainable growth and development.

#### *Regional relations*

Mr. Chairman, the challenge of strengthening ties among the countries of the Western Balkans remains a significant hurdle in pursuit of our Euro-Atlantic vision. Normalization of the Kosovo-Serbia relationship is a fundamental requirement for long-term regional stability and progress. In line with its EU accession process, Serbia has made significant progress in the EU-facilitated Dialogue with Kosovo over the past year. We have strongly supported the Dialogue and encouraged both parties to fully implement all elements of the April 2013 "Brussels Agreement" on normalization of relations, a landmark diplomatic achievement in the Balkans. This August, we saw significant progress on implementing remaining elements of the Brussels Agreement—a major step toward opening Serbia's first chapters of the EU acquis. Credit for these successes goes to the political leaders of Serbia and Kosovo, who have reaffirmed their commitment to the process, and to the principled mediators of the EU. The U.S. Embassies in Serbia and Kosovo also played an important role as behind-the-scenes mediators and impartial advisors on the process. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work Ambassador Michael Kirby has shown to facilitating relations between the two countries. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing this work in support of the Dialogue. Together with our European partners, I will work to help ensure that the parties remain at the table in good faith, implement all Dialogue agreements through timely and concrete results, and sustain progress toward a comprehensive normalization of relations.

Serbia's relations with its other neighbors generally have improved over the past 3 years, but they, too, require continued focus. This will remain an important aspect of our diplomacy in the region. If confirmed, I will work to build strong channels of communication between Serbia and its neighbors—including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia—so that outstanding issues can be resolved and the region as a whole can move toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

Finally, Serbia is bearing a major brunt of the recent migration crisis afflicting much of Europe. Serbia deserves to be commended for its humanitarian approach, but can also use everyone's help in managing the added burdens associated with this wave of migrants.

*Democracy and Rule of Law*

An important element in Serbia's European integration will be strengthening its ability to promote and defend shared democratic values, support human rights, and protect fundamental freedoms. If I am confirmed for this position, I am committed to continuing America's support for strengthening institutions and procedures that support the rights of individuals from minority communities, help combat corruption, and foster a democratic society. A vibrant civil society, free media environment, and empowered independent institutions are critical to achieving these goals. Strengthening our long-standing support for these components of democracy will be a crucial part of my mission. Only by creating an environment underpinned by rule of law—one that allows each individual the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential—will Serbia succeed in attracting more investment, combat the debilitating outflow of its youngest and brightest, and strengthen the public's faith in government institutions. The lead in these efforts must come from Serbian political leaders and the Serbian people, but our programs to strengthen the administration of criminal justice, advance judicial reform, improve investigation and prosecution of crimes, and train judges, prosecutors, and police can be an important part of this effort. Working closely with U.S. technical experts, civil society, and international organizations, the Serbian Government is taking measures to implement serious reforms—such as putting the recently passed whistleblower law to the test and bringing due process to those accused of corruption through transparent, thorough court trials.

*Economic development*

Alongside rule of law measures, more dynamic economic development and reform will be vital to Serbia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Although there are initial signs that Serbia is finally emerging from a decade of anemic economic performance that has eroded national confidence, more needs to be done. I am committed to supporting American businesses as part of an effort to help Serbia embark on the road toward greater prosperity. Our economic ties continue to grow, with U.S. investment since 2002 exceeding \$3.6 billion dollars. American companies employ more than 15,500 people in Serbia. Serbia has enormous economic potential, including an educated and talented workforce and a geography that positions the country in an important trading crossroads for Europe. All this makes Serbia an attractive destination for investment from U.S. companies. To make the most of its potential, however, much work remains to be done to streamline the process of doing business, reduce bureaucratic impediments, improve small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) competitiveness and innovation, and combat the corrosive consequences of corruption.

*Peacekeeping and military relations*

Last November, Serbia signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO reflecting the country's increasing aspiration to be a source for stability and security not only in the Western Balkans, but in the broader region as well.

Over the last 5 years, Serbia has become an increasingly important contributor to regional and international stability through peacekeeping operations. Serbian soldiers today are deployed as peacekeepers on six U.N. missions on three continents and as observers on two EU missions. The once confrontational military-to-military relationship between Serbia and the United States has evolved into a full and comprehensive partnership, and, as mentioned before, Serbia has committed to a pragmatic partnership with NATO. Through our Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the United States is supporting the development of South Base, a Serbian military facility that offers state-of-the-art training opportunities for units preparing to deploy overseas in support of U.N. and EU peacekeeping missions. The Serbian military's partnership program with the Ohio National Guard is among the most successful in Europe. Both the civilian leadership and senior ranks of the uniformed military have embraced these and other programs as part of a comprehensive program for building skills and promoting interoperability.

*Bilateral concerns*

If confirmed, I will continue to seek resolution of two important challenges to our bilateral relationship. Those responsible for the murder of the three American citizens Bytyqi brothers, New York residents executed by Serbian security forces in 1999, have never been prosecuted. The American people cannot allow the murderers of three of our citizens to escape justice. Likewise, those who allowed the mob attacks on the U.S. and other Western embassies in February 2008 to take place have never been brought to justice. While we welcome the fact that six current and former police officials are under investigation for ordering the police to stand aside

while our Embassy was under attack, we are dismayed that the rioters who were convicted were only given light, suspended sentences. For these cases—the murder of the Bytyqi brothers and the attack on our Embassy—I am committed to unwavering efforts to press the Serbian Government to complete thorough investigations and ensure that all who were involved in these crimes are brought to justice, regardless of their rank or position.

*Closing*

This is a challenging agenda, but it is also achievable. From my experience in the Foreign Service, I know I will not have to pursue it alone. Drawing on the experience of the talented team of Americans and locally employed staff at Embassy Belgrade, our partners from multiple agencies in Washington, and continued support from the legislative branch, I am committed to doing my utmost to promote our shared goal—a democratic Serbia providing growth and security for its citizens, at peace with all of its neighbors, and firmly set on a path of European integration.

Thank you once again for granting me the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

Our final nominee is Mr. Carlos Torres. Mr. Torres is nominated to be the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps. Mr. Torres is currently the Associate Director for Global Operations at the Peace Corps, a position he has held since 2013.

Previously Mr. Torres served as Regional Director for the Inter-America and Pacific Region at the Peace Corps and has served as an independent consultant on international projects from 2000 until 2010. Mr. Torres also founded—is it CARANA?

Mr. TORRES. CARANA.

Senator JOHNSON. Corporation in 1984 and served as its president and CEO until the year 2000.

Mr. Torres.

**STATEMENT OF CARLOS J. TORRES, NOMINATED TO BE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS**

Mr. TORRES. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, other members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to testify before you. It is a privilege to be here as you consider my nomination to serve as the next Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me. I am honored by this opportunity to serve my country in this role.

I want to thank my family. I am accompanied today by my wife of 33 years, Anita Capizzi, and my mother, Anne Roper. Our three sons could not be with us today. They are spread out throughout the country.

I would also like to thank Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet for her leadership trust and counsel over the past years.

I am also very proud to have with me today three recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers: Clara Reyes, Daniel Hinkle, and Soletia Christie. I have asked them to join us today because they are examples of how Volunteers are at the center of my decision-making process every day as we work toward a more important goal, ensuring that every Volunteer has a safe and productive volunteer experience.

From the beginning of my career in the private sector, I have spent my life's work in the field of economic development. This is the reason why I created CARANA Corporation in 1984, which provides private sector-led solutions to problems in economic develop-

ment. I believe my real-world business experience has positively informed my decision-making process in my current role at Peace Corps, and if confirmed as the Deputy Director, I plan to continue to draw from this time as an entrepreneur and businessman.

In December of 2009, several years after having stepped down as the chairman and CEO of CARANA Corporation, I was honored when Peace Corps asked me to put my management and international economic development skills to work by leading a comprehensive agency assessment team, which took a critical look at a wide range of Peace Corps operations and procedures. I am extremely proud of that assessment which focused on how Peace Corps could improve its operations, better utilize its resources, and increase its impact. The comprehensive agency assessment has served as a blueprint for the agency over the past 5 years and has guided many of our reforms, leading to vast improvements in the way we train and support our Volunteers, how we allocate resources, and overall management and operations within the agency. These reforms, among others, have positioned the Peace Corps to make an even greater impact into the future.

I was sworn in as the regional director for the Inter-America and Pacific region in June 2010 and served in that capacity for 3 years. In November 2013, I was sworn in as the associate director for the Office of Global Operations. In both of these positions, I have been able to combine my private sector experience with the knowledge gained in carrying out the comprehensive agency assessment. The result has always been a sharp focus on improving our operations, particularly on how the agency supports its Volunteers in the field.

I believe that it is moral obligation to provide all of our Volunteers with the best possible experience, one that is both safe and productive. I want to ensure the members of this subcommittee that these are not just words. Every decision I have made during my time at the agency is based on the foundation that as a manager at the Peace Corps, I have an obligation to do everything I can so that every Volunteer has that safe and productive experience.

It has been an honor to shape both the direction and the agency's significant reforms over the past 5 years, and I am committed both personally and professionally to seeing them through and continuing to provide world-class support to our Peace Corps Volunteers who are changing the world every day.

Thank you again for having me here today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Torres follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLOS J. TORRES

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, I thank you for inviting me to testify before you today, as you consider my nomination to be the next Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me; I am humbled by the opportunity to serve my country in this role. I also want to thank my family. I am accompanied today by my wife of 33 years—Anita Capizzi; and my mother—Anne Roper. I would also like to recognize my sons; Cristian, who is studying at the University of Maryland; Miguel, who is working in Costa Mesa, CA; and Andres, who just finished his MBA at Kellogg University in Chicago and is now working in Austin, TX. I would also like to thank Peace Corps Director, Carrie Hessler-Radelet, for her leadership, trust, and counsel over the past several years.

I am also very proud to have with me today three recently returned Volunteers: Clara Reyes, Daniel Hinkle, and Soletia Christie. Clara comes from New Mexico and served in El Salvador from 2009 to 2012; Daniel hails from Montana and also served in El Salvador from 2010 to 2012; and Soletia comes from California and served in Mali from 2010 to 2012. I have asked them to join us today to witness my testimony because they are examples of how Volunteers are at the center of Peace Corps' and my decisionmaking process every day.

#### *Background*

I would like to take a brief moment to talk about my background and experience, and how it has prepared me for this opportunity. From the beginning of my professional career as a consultant in the financial industries group at the Arthur D. Little Company in Cambridge, MA, through today, I believe I have developed a strong reputation as a manager and as a problem solver. It would be my great honor to be able to continue to apply my skills as the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, if confirmed.

It was during my time at the Arthur D. Little Company that I first began to work in the field of economic development, focusing my efforts since then on reducing global poverty and income inequality.

In 1983, I was a personal services contractor in Costa Rica with the United States Agency for International Development, which was my first job with the United States Government. A year later, I started CARANA Corporation, a consulting company providing private sector-led solutions to problems in economic development. Over the next 16 years, I built CARANA Corporation into the company that it is today—a Virginia-based company that has a strong presence throughout the developing world with dedicated staff working on a variety of innovative development projects.

It was a natural progression that in early 2009—several years after having stepped down as president of CARANA Corporation, and with a strong interest in working overseas again—I applied to be a Country Director with the Peace Corps. However, as fate would have it, in December 2009, the agency's leadership asked me, instead, to lead a Comprehensive Agency Assessment team that was tasked to take a critical look at a wide range of issues concerning Peace Corps' operations and procedures.

I am extremely proud of the Assessment, which focused on how Peace Corps could improve its operations, better utilize its resources, and increase its impact. The Comprehensive Agency Assessment has served as a blueprint for the agency over the past 4 years, and has guided many of our reforms, leading to marked improvements in the way we train and support our Volunteers, how we allocate resources, and overall management and operations within the agency. These reforms, among others, have positioned the Peace Corps to make an even greater impact in the future.

The Comprehensive Agency Assessment was delivered to Congress on June 15, 2010. The next day, I was sworn in as the Regional Director of the Inter-America and Pacific region of the Peace Corps, where I served until March 2013. I then served as the Acting Associate Director for Global Operations until November 2013, when I was sworn into the job. I have been serving as the Associate Director for the Office of Global Operations since then.

As the Regional Director of the Inter-America and Pacific region, I oversaw Peace Corps' operations in 23 countries, which in turn supported approximately 2,800 Volunteers. In this position, I was able to combine my private sector experience with the knowledge gained in carrying out the Comprehensive Agency Assessment. The result was a sharp focus on improving Volunteer operations, and particularly, on how the agency supports Volunteers in the field.

When I say we are committed to "a safe and productive Volunteer experience," I want to assure the members of this committee that these are not just words. I believe very strongly that as an agency, it is Peace Corps' moral obligation to provide Volunteers with the best possible experience: a safe and productive experience. Every decision I have made during my time with the agency is based on the foundation that, as a manager at the Peace Corps, I have an obligation to do everything I can so that every Volunteer has a safe and productive experience.

It was this focus on the Volunteer that in 2010 led me to take a hard look at Peace Corps' operations in the Northern Triangle of Central America and in other parts of the region where crime rates against Volunteers were high. We asked ourselves some hard questions regarding our Volunteer operations in these countries and focused on how we looked at risk, with a fresh eye on how we could improve our overall risk mitigation strategies. The result was a comprehensive package of reforms that were implemented in early 2011. The reforms we made resulted in a

dramatic decrease in serious crimes against our Volunteers. While these difficult decisions were not always popular, I am proud of the results that we have delivered.

As the Associate Director of the Office of Global Operations, I continued to focus my attention on further strengthening Volunteer operations. I work every day to implement the vision of our Director, born out of the Comprehensive Agency Assessment, and predicated on our goal that every Volunteer have a safe and productive experience.

During my time at Peace Corps, I have worked with Peace Corps staff to better define our core operations and develop a framework that we can use to make better decisions. I have worked to ensure that our overseas staff has a greater say in the decisionmaking process at the agency, which in turn keeps the agency's focus on the core operations in the field. I have also worked to introduce new budgeting and planning methodologies that have resulted in improved funding and staffing for our overseas posts, so they can better support our Volunteers.

In her testimony before this committee in November, 2013, Director Hessler-Radelet described her vision for the agency as a dynamic, forward-leaning champion for international service. I embrace this vision where the Peace Corps is defined by its energy, innovation, and impact, and as the place where Americans who are drawn to service abroad can make a real difference in the lives of the world's poor.

To implement our Director's vision, the agency is concentrating its resources in three key areas: a bold communications and outreach strategy, a competitive recruitment strategy, and continued enhancements to Volunteer support to deliver results. At the center of these three elements is the work that we do to recruit and support the best staff possible, and to ensure that we are providing the right level of resources where they are needed. I am happy to say that we continue to make excellent progress in each of these areas.

#### *Conclusion*

If confirmed as Deputy Director, I hope to be able to continue to implement the vision that our Director has articulated so well by focusing on our core operations with the Volunteer at the center.

In my professional career, I have been fortunate to come across many Peace Corps Volunteers in the many countries where I have worked. I developed an admiration for these dedicated Americans who live in tough conditions, working every day to bring new skills, knowledge, and hope to the communities they serve. In many cases, these Volunteers are the first Americans that the residents in these communities have ever interacted with, and as a result, today there are millions of people around the world with a positive opinion of America and its people, and a greater understanding of what we as a country stand for.

At the beginning of my testimony I introduced three recently returned Volunteers: Clara, Soletia, and Daniel. I am blessed to work with them, and all of the other returned Peace Corps Volunteers at the agency, every day. These returned Volunteers, as well as all of our currently serving Volunteers, inspire me every day to work my hardest so that each and every one of them has a safe and productive Volunteer experience. I welcome the opportunity to serve President Obama, Director Hessler-Radelet, my country and our Volunteers in this capacity.

Thank you again for having me here today, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Torres. Again, I want to welcome all your family and friends that have come here to the hearing.

A number of you mentioned the refugee crisis, and I guess I would kind of like to go right down the line. Either through your current experience, previous experience, or your new position, give me your latest insight. I would like to be brought up to speed with your knowledge of how the refugee crisis—what you are aware of. I will start with you, Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

From the perspective that I have been tracking the refugee crisis from Malta's perspective, it has been a bit different this year than years past. In years past, the refugee flow has gone straight through Malta. It has been a south to north flow coming up from North Africa. This year the refugee crisis has changed. It has gone to an east to west flow. So this year, Malta has not seen as many

refugees entering the country as they have last year. As a matter of fact, this year they have had maybe a little bit over 100 refugees and that is it. In years past, they have been in the thousands, and for a small country, that has been a heavy burden.

Senator JOHNSON. They just stop in Malta and transit down through?

Ms. HILL. What is going on right now is some have made it to the shores, but the Europeans now have Operation Trident going on in the Mediterranean, which is intercepting the boats and taking them to larger intake facilities in Italy. So the refugees are being shuttled around Malta to the larger intake facilities in Italy. But Malta has still been at the forefront of the burden-sharing plan the European Union has just put in place. In years past, Malta has been a country that has tried to get rid of its refugees. This year, they have agreed to take refugees from Turkey and Greece in small numbers, but according to the formula that the European Union has based on burden-sharing for all the states. So they are taking about 180 refugees this year from Turkey and Greece.

Senator JOHNSON. So with Operation Trident, how quickly are refugees picked up? How soon are they intercepted and taken on board? Within how many miles approximately?

Ms. HILL. You know, Senator, I do not have the answers to that question specifically. I can get those for you. I think it is fairly quickly when they enter international waters if they are discovered. Sometimes the ships make it directly to Italy without even going through any interception.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

At the end of the cold war, Bulgaria had a fully militarized border with Turkey, which was the border between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. And at the time of the end of the cold war, those fortifications and fencing and walls and other physical barriers were torn down. At the beginning of this refugee crisis, Bulgaria faced a situation in which much of its physical border was unprotected, undefended, unfenced. And at the beginning of the crisis, Bulgaria was faced with a very large inflow of migrants from Turkey crossing areas that were not patrolled, and in the initial phases, about 90,000 illegal entry attempts and about 30,000 arrests were made.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Bulgaria, with help from the European Union and other partners, including the United States, has done much to erect physical controls on the border, which is the external border of the European Union now, as well as control the areas that are not fenced. And there has been a dramatic improvement in the number of refugees/migrants trying to cross illegally. Bulgaria faces less of a challenge than some of the other EU members because it is not yet a member of Schengen, and therefore, entering Bulgaria does not give migrants automatic entry to the rest of the EU. So for that reason, it has not been as popular a destination.

That said, these numbers are very significant and we have generally assessed that the Bulgarian Government and the Bulgarian border police and other agencies have done a good job both in handling this tremendous influx, but also treating the migrants with



full respect for their rights and ensuring that all procedures are followed.

Senator JOHNSON. So you used the figure 90,000; 30,000 were apprehended. Can you just tell me what is the disposition of the 60,000 that were not apprehended versus the 30,000 who were?

Mr. RUBIN. Yes. The ones who were apprehended but not taken into custody essentially were turned away, and I would not be able to tell you what happened after they returned to Turkey, but that is obviously a subject that is an important question.

On the question of those in Bulgaria, there are temporary detention centers. The Bulgarians have complied with all procedures in terms of registering the migrants who they detained, ensuring that they have full biometrics on them, sharing that with European Union agencies and international agencies tracking the flow. And we have been very, very pleased with the cooperation we have had in following this influx.

Senator JOHNSON. So you are saying that about 60,000 are being detained now within Bulgaria?

Mr. RUBIN. I do not have exact numbers, Mr. Chairman. It is under 30,000 and falling, and I think the peak of the crisis, it would appear, for Bulgaria has passed.

Senator JOHNSON. Now, they are moving around Bulgaria then.

Mr. RUBIN. Correct.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Chairman.

I think as we have all seen from the news, Serbia is a key transit point for many of the flows of the refugees coming out of Turkey through Greece, Macedonia, through Serbia on their way toward northern Europe.

To put that in some bit of perspective, in 2014, Serbia had about 17,000 registered refugees. This year, especially this fall, they are registering numbers like that on a weekly basis, some days as many as 3,000 and as high as 10,000 per day have been crossing their border.

Serbia's approach has been very much based upon meeting their humanitarian needs. These people are not seeking to stay in Serbia. They are moving onward, and Serbia is taking the approach of trying to make sure that their humanitarian needs are met, but also frankly to help them on their way northward. So what that means in Serbia's case is ensuring that they have adequate protections at their southern border so that they can process these people through in a humanitarian way. That means providing shelter for them, medical treatment for those who need it, food, and transit aid as well to move further north.

They have also been very cognizant of the security concerns and security needs by trying to channel these refugees into reception centers. They are then able to process those who present themselves to the Serbian Government. That means ensuring proper documentation, taking biometrics, and then moving them on.

Senator JOHNSON. My time has expired.

Senator SHAHEEN.

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

I would like to begin with Mr. Torres. I am a big supporter of the Peace Corps. I think it does amazing work around the world. But I am very troubled by the recent report from the Office of the Inspector General that found that nearly 1 in 5 American Peace Corps Volunteers serving around the world is sexually assaulted at some point during their service. And equally troubling was the finding in the report that about half of these victims did not report their attacks because they felt that it would negatively impact their standing as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Now, given that you have served for the last couple of years as assistant director for Global Operations and that you were a consultant for 10 years before that, can you talk about what is going on in the culture of the Peace Corps that allows this to continue to happen and that makes Volunteers feel like they cannot report or get help for the situation that they have been in when they have been sexually assaulted?

Mr. TORRES. Yes, Senator, I can address that.

The Peace Corps's primary concern is the safety and security of our Volunteers. We work tirelessly to create that safe and productive Volunteer experience.

In 2011, after the passage of the Kate Puzey Act, we created what we refer to as our sexual assault risk reduction and response program. This is a comprehensive program with over 30 components that are designed not only to better train our Volunteers to avoid the risks but also to respond in a better way to our Volunteers. It has been advised by an independent council of individuals that are both from the public sector, Justice, Defense, as well as in the private sector, that are experts in the field of sexual assault.

I believe that the agency has made tremendous strides in this area. We have created, among other things, and specifically to address the issue of nonreporting, a system of restricted reporting. The system of restricted reporting is one that allows a Volunteer to come forward, receive the services that they require with a limited number of people knowing about it. We know that a lot of victims of sexual assault do not come forward because they do not want it to be known or they do not want to file charges or have it turn into a criminal case. The system of restricted reporting does that.

We have seen an increase in the reporting. We believe that this is not an increase in the number of sexual assaults but rather that it is achieving our goal of increased reporting in sexual assaults. And as I stated earlier, I do believe that our agency has made significant progress. There is always more that we can do and we continue to work for them.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you talk a little bit more about the kind of preparation that is provided to Peace Corps Volunteers and the training that they get that would help them both in terms of addressing potential dangerous situations as well as how they are instructed if they are sexually assaulted?

Mr. TORRES. Yes.

So on the risk reduction side, we carry out trainings on culture, hidden messages that translate through culture. We talk to them about bystander intervention. We inform them about confidentiality and reporting confidentiality options that they have avail-

able to them. A lot of work goes into their site development and the site where they are placed. We know that Volunteers are safest in their sites. So that would be another area.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you explain that a little bit more? When you say "safest in their sites," what do you mean?

Mr. TORRES. So as you know, Peace Corps places their Volunteers in sites in a community. The whole Peace Corps rationale behind safety and security is that by placing them in a community and having them be accepted by that community, they are safest. It is the community that protects them. So our work that we do in site development really is critical to ensuring the safety of the Volunteer over their 2 years of service, and that is what we focus on.

In addition, on the training, we also provide them training on how they can report, whether it be restricted or a standard report. We also inform them as to the role of the Office of the Inspector General. They always have the option to go directly to the Inspector General. We supply them with a hotline number, as well as an email address. So they are receiving information from a lot of different angles.

On the response side, they know what their options are. We remind them constantly. Our staff has undergone training in all of our posts on how to respond to a standard report or how to respond to a restricted report.

Senator SHAHEEN. And yet, according to the Inspector General, the hope for outcome from all of those measures has not improved significantly, as I read it. Do you feel like those measures have improved the situation, and if not, what other kinds of efforts do you think can be undertaken to address this issue? Because clearly when that is on the nightly news, it discourages people who we want to come and join the Peace Corps.

Mr. TORRES. Yes, Senator.

Right now, the Office of the Inspector General is beginning a study, which would be the 5-year study on the implementation of the Kate Puzey Act. This study was called for under the legislation, and I look forward to that study. I believe that they will be a tough critic but I also believe that they will be fair. I believe that this report, when it is submitted to Congress, will show that the agency has made these significant improvements.

I mentioned that we have an independent advisory board. This is also created under the Kate Puzey Act. They have advised us every step of the way. They have just finished their fourth annual report, and with your permission, I would just like to read two sentences from it—

Senator SHAHEEN. Sure, please.

Mr. TORRES [continuing]. Which I believe does tell a different story.

The council continues to be impressed with the Peace Corps for its dedication to fulfill the mandates of the Kate Puzey Act and for the development of a wide range of programs and services for its Volunteers. Whether implementing new policies, introducing new staff in Volunteer training, or working to monitor and evaluate programs and services, the Peace Corps has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to its Volunteers. This is dated October 28.

Our commitment to sexual assault and the risk reduction and response aspects of it really start with our director. You may be aware that our director herself was assaulted when she was a Peace Corps Volunteer. She is driven to change the culture of Peace Corps. We follow her drive. I believe that she has done an excellent job, and we continue to improve the Peace Corps every day.

Senator SHAHEEN. My time is up but, Mr. Chairman, if you do not mind, let me ask a final question because as the Deputy Director, will this issue be part of your portfolio at the Peace Corps.

Mr. TORRES. This issue is part of everybody's portfolio at the Peace Corps. We have all received training. We are all a part of it. When I travel overseas and I visit a post, I attend the trainings that are related to our SARP program. It is everybody's job at the Peace Corps. As the Deputy Director, it will be my job and it is my job to make sure that we continue to make the progress that we need to make.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I very much appreciate that and that response. And I look forward to getting reports as part of this committee on the progress that is being made on this issue because it is obviously a critical challenge that needs to be overcome for the Peace Corps to continue to do the kind of work that has made it such an icon for America.

Mr. TORRES. Thank you, Senator. And I would be happy to offer a visit from our experts at the Peace Corps that could meet with you or other members of the subcommittee. Then I could brief you on everything we are doing and all of the changes that we have made.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. We will take you up on that.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Let me go back to refugees with Mr. Scott. So they transit through Serbia through where? Hungary has pretty well closed their border I believe. So it is through Croatia then?

Mr. SCOTT. Yes, sir. At the beginning, they were going mainly through Hungary, but after Hungary built up its wall, they began to transit mainly through Croatia. There was a brief period when that border was shut down as well, but now the cooperation between the Croatian Government and the Government of Serbia has managed to regularize the flow.

Senator JOHNSON. I see that Senator Murphy has just arrived. So Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to all of you. Congratulations on your nominations. Hopefully we will move you quickly through the process.

Mr. Rubin, I wanted to ask you a broad question that would also apply to the other members of the panel that are going to go to visa waiver countries, but we are having a debate here about the security of this country and the extent to which we can work with the administration to lighten up the visa waiver program to make sure we know who is coming into the United States. I know that the administration just announced some reforms to that program. But I want to draw on your experience at the Europe and Eurasia desk over the course of the last several years, and if there are comments from others, I welcome them.

It strikes me that the backstop to the visa waiver program is the no-fly list, is our ability to determine who should and who should not be on these flights. Our no-fly list is only as good as the information that we have about people that pose a risk to the United States. And our information about how poses a risk to the United States is only so good as we have agile and robust lines of communication with European governments that are doing a lot of the law enforcement actions. Now, our intelligence services communicate regularly, but sometimes, as we know, there are silos between intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies in the United States and in European capitals.

Talk to me just a little bit about, to the extent that this is in your portfolio, ways in which we should be thinking about strengthening the visa waiver program. And then what role does an ambassador play in a visa waiver country in trying to force the host country to get serious about populating these shared databases with all of the information necessary to have a complete list of prohibited individuals?

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy.

During my time in the European Bureau over the past 4 years, this subject was one of our absolute top priorities, and I will say I think enormous progress was made directly with the European Union and its agencies with all the member states with a few other countries that are not European Union members but are in the visa waiver program. The issues you cite, Senator, are the absolute critical issues, having good information early enough and having ample enough information to ensure that we are protecting our borders and ensuring that we are not admitting anyone who should not be admitted. We are ongoing.

Next, if this committee and the whole Senate confirms me, Bulgaria is not yet a member of the visa waiver program. The Bulgarians would very much like to join, but I can say that in the case of Bulgaria, the cooperation has been absolutely superb on all the various forms of data sharing and information sharing that we need to ensure that travelers to the United States are screened adequately. We do not have any direct flights from Bulgaria, so we do not have to deal with any direct entry problems. But we do have the information on travelers coming from Bulgaria and the cooperation between our agencies on the ground, DHS, the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau, the Drug Enforcement Agency, all of our other agencies, the FBI, has been superb. It is obviously a regional issue. It is obviously an issue that affects all of these countries. I can tell you that if I am confirmed, as Bulgaria seeks to join the visa waiver program, this will be an absolute top priority ensuring that that is the most important question addressed.

Senator MURPHY. But given your—and this is more going backward rather than forward in your career. Has State been satisfied with the level of input into the databases that we have access to that come from our European partners regarding law enforcement or national security investigations of suspected terrorists or extremists?

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Senator.

During my time in the European Bureau, I did not actually oversee any relations with countries that were in the visa waiver program. So I will confess to not having the fullest picture. I can tell you, though, as part of my time as Deputy Assistant Secretary, as part of the team, it was a very high priority effort from the beginning and I do know in all of our biannual discussions with the EU, with the agencies of the member states, a lot was accomplished. I would defer to colleagues who were more directly involved in that and would also be glad to get you more information on that trajectory as well during that time.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Scott, about a year ago, I was in Serbia, spent some time with Prime Minister Vucic. I was there at a fascinating moment. I happened to be there the day before Putin arrived with a military parade overflowed by MIG jets. And it was pretty remarkable that on a day when he was showing off the sort of robust potential military and economic commitment that Russia was prepared to make to Serbia, our Ambassador was at the time begging me to come back to the United States to ask for \$20,000 or \$30,000 more to keep open an exchange program that was really, really important.

And it just struck me as an example of the extreme imbalance between the amount of attention that we pay to the Balkans and the amount of attention that the Russians pay. A country like Serbia desperately wants—I think Vucic generally wants an alliance with Europe and an alliance with the West. But they are getting a lot more love and a lot more attention from Moscow than they are from Washington today.

Now, we cannot expect that a country like Serbia is going to make a choice. We should not. They have to have good relations with Russia. It is deeply engrained in their history. But we have got to find some ways, potentially in the absence of major new appropriations for programs like that from the Congress, to create some tighter connections.

This is a long way of asking about what you know about Serbia's orientation between the EU and Russia. What are some things that we can do to show them that we are serious about tightening that connection between us and them? Because they are going to continue to get offers as they do almost every month from Moscow to create security partnerships, to create economic partnerships to draw them away. And they are not the only ones. The Montenegrins are getting those offers. Certainly the offers are always out there for the Bosnians, and we do not often have satisfactory counters to those offers.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for your question, and I share the basic thrust of your concerns about a more assertive Russian presence in the western Balkans and in Serbia in particular.

I agree with you very much that it should not be American policy to try to drive a wedge between the Serbian people and the Russian people. There are centuries' long historical, cultural, linguistic, religious ties between the peoples.

But the real concern is whether Russian Government policy today is influencing Serbia or other countries of the western Balkans in ways that would be detrimental to our interests. And in this regard—and I know that you met with Prime Minister Vucic,

and I also had the opportunity to hear you speaking of your general impressions at the German Marshall Fund after that trip. You know that he and his government have made a commitment, a strategic commitment, toward the direction that he would like to see his country go, towards the West, toward European Union membership. And I think that we should be doing everything possible that we can to encourage them and to help them along that path, to strengthen their institutional interweaving with Euro-Atlantic institutions. And that means first and foremost for them at this point the European Union. They are not interested in joining NATO at this moment. But also in relationships with the United States. I think that our embassy can play a big role in that process.

Part of it is in order to have a counternarrative to the narrative which the Russians are trying to put forward, and that means the Ambassador and other members of the mission need to be out there in the public speaking to the press, speaking to the Serbian population, traveling around the country. We need to use the American centers that we have in Serbia as platforms to allow the Serbian people to get to better know what Western and in particular American policies are all about because there is a lot of false messages that are being presented by the Russians. And we need to help support the basic institutions which can get out alternate messages to the one which the Russians are trying to send out. That means strengthening an independent press. It means working with civil society organizations. It means basic programs that embassies run such as English language teaching so that Serbian youth have greater access to other sources of information as Russia itself is seeking to penetrate through the use of Serbian language radio programs providing the Russian message. And it means using our exchange programs. It means using our student visa programs to make sure that Serbian youth are aware of where America is, the values that we stand for, and the policies that we are putting forward.

Senator MURPHY. Well said.

One just last piece of commentary, Mr. Chairman. Spending time in the Balkans is just an advertisement for how poorly resourced we are when it comes to our foreign aid budget. USAID I think has already pulled out or in the process of pulling out of Serbia, and so we have less tools than ever before to try to counter all of these resources and all of this money that Russia is flowing into these regions. And as we talk about a strategy to try to rebut their growing influence, it has got to involve giving more tools to our ambassadors in the region to try to do all of the things that you are saying because you are going to get there and you are going to realize that for as spot-on as you were about the things you need to do, you are just not going to have the resources that you need or that you want, and we have got to give it to you.

Thank you for allowing me a little extra time, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. We have got to prioritize spending.

Let us go back to refugees. Mr. McKean, can you add anything to what you have already heard from the other nominees?

Mr. MCKEAN. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

In Luxembourg, the refugee problem is not as acute as it is with its neighbors. It is a small country. It is actually relatively difficult

to get there. But I think importantly that Luxembourg recognizes what an important issue this is, which is why it has actually contributed \$24 million to Iraq and Syria and refugees in the Middle East at the source. As you know, we have contributed \$4.5 billion, but again this is a significant contribution by Luxembourg.

They have also recently for the least several months been, as I mentioned in my opening statement, President of the EU, and they have managed to forge a consensus on the resettlement of 160,000 refugees. I do not have the details on that, but it is a significant number. Obviously, it is going to require a lot more.

Luxembourg itself has committed to taking 550 refugees over the next 2 years and, in fact, took the first 30 Syrians or those who had landed in Greece and were settled in Luxembourg.

Senator JOHNSON. What is your sense of the current rate of flow of refugees? Increased? Has it tapered off? Is it steady?

Mr. MCKEAN. Well, I think it clearly increased about a month ago and is now steady, but it is significant. It is very significant. And of course, it is significant in a number of the countries that border Iraq and Syria as well. Turkey has a million, a million and a half in Lebanon, a million in Jordan.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Torres, to what extent is the Peace Corps involved with this crisis?

Mr. TORRES. Senator, the Peace Corps does not get involved in refugee issues. So we do not do any work in the area of Syrian refugees.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Murphy mentioned the visa waiver program. We had a hearing in my committee, the Homeland Security and Government Affairs, talking about the Syrian refugee issue and the vetting process there. And I think the witnesses—you know, determined terrorists—the refugee program is probably not the most efficient way to get here, probably a relatively high risk of getting caught. But they expressed a fair amount of concern about the visa waiver program.

Can you describe your concern? Does it present vulnerabilities? I will start with you, Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Senator.

As it relates to Malta, Malta is a visa waiver country. They are a member of the program. As far as refugees in Malta, because of the lengthy time in which it takes to even get declared as an official refugee in Malta, it can take up to a year for the Maltese to even declare an irregular migrant a refugee. Even then you only get refugee travel documents. That does not convey citizenship. Only citizens of visa waiver countries can travel on the visa waiver program. So from Malta, I see the threat as not very high at this point because it is so hard to get the citizenship, to get the actual citizenship passport. But if I am confirmed, I will certainly work with the Maltese Government to ensure that we maintain the security of the program and any enhancements that might be decided on back here in Washington.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Bulgaria is trying to join the visa waiver program. At the moment the numbers for visa refusal rates are sufficiently high that that is not an immediate prospect. But if confirmed, I would make



it a very high priority to ensure that in our discussions with the Bulgarians we made clear that we can only consider going forward under any circumstances if all of the security criteria were met.

Bulgaria has done a very good job in information sharing with us on biometrics. It is difficult to get Bulgarian citizenship. They have done well on passport security and reporting stolen passports and false passports to international agencies, including Interpol. So I think the track record is good if that were to happen and that was something, obviously, I would take very seriously if I am confirmed and we continue to talk to them about this.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Scott, are you aware of any vulnerabilities that concern you?

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Serbia is not a member of the visa waiver program, nor do they have any direct flights to the United States, although they are hopeful to begin direct flights to the United States around the summer of next year. In that sense, all Serbian citizens must receive visas. They must go through the standard name checking process that the visa process requires, and they also must have their biometrics taken during that process.

But I think one of the things, should I be confirmed, that I would certainly be focusing on is ensuring that Serbia is as active as possible in information-sharing with our services on those people who might come to their attention who would be of concern.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, I am asking based on past experience as well. Mr. McKean, are you aware of any vulnerabilities that concern you?

Mr. MCKEAN. Luxembourg is a member of the visa waiver program. There are no direct passenger flights between Luxembourg and the United States, so they must go through a connection hub. As Ms. Hill indicated, only citizens of Luxembourg would be appropriate for the visa waiver program, and there is a 7-year residency requirement in order to become a citizen of Luxembourg. So it is fairly stringent.

Moreover, the Government of Luxembourg has been a very good partner in terms of sharing information. So I again would consider the vulnerability to be quite low. But I know that both Congress and the White House is looking at the program, and if there are any enhancement or changes, I would do everything possible, if confirmed, to make sure that the Government of Luxembourg complies with those changes.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Scott, I want to pursue some of the line of questioning that Senator Murphy was raising with respect to Serbia. And I share his belief that we need to try and be more focused on what is happening in the Balkans. I think we have seen some tremendous progress there since Yugoslavia split up into all of the countries in the Balkans. And I think we need to do more and think about how better we can support them as they continue to look toward the West and certainly with Serbia as it is pursuing its entry into the EU. And I wonder if you could update me briefly on where they are

with that and what concerns they might have before finishing their final process for membership in the EU.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for the question, and I share very much your approach to the importance of the Balkans. The people of the Balkans have a saying that their own region is a barrel of gunpowder, and they recognize its potential for tensions.

In the case of Serbia's ambitions to join the EU, I think that they are moving ahead. They are making significant progress, in fact, across the board. However, the current European Commission, which was brought in, has announced that no countries will be getting in over the next 5 years of this commission. So really, we are talking about serious preparatory work, making sure that they open chapters and close chapters in the—I believe it is 35 chapters that are necessary for admission into the European Union. We are very hopeful and, in fact, expect that in less than 2 weeks' time, they will open their first two chapters formally. They need to continue to make progress in opening and closing chapters over the period of the next coming years so that in fact when the European Union has reached a point where they are ready for new membership, that Serbia will be as ready as possible for that.

As to the difficulties involved, clearly there are rule of law issues that still need to be addressed, but I think most experts would say the most difficult issues are those dealing with their neighbors, regional relations, and in particular their relationship with Kosovo. And one of the first two chapters in fact that will be opened on December 14 is chapter 35, which deals with this very issue of relations with our neighbors and how to move forward. And here we are committed. I think it is unreasonable to expect that there is going to be massive, significant progress in the short term on this issue. What we are really talking about is a slow negotiation toward a comprehensive normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo over time.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right. And I was very excited when I saw that Serbia and Kosovo had reached an initial agreement on how to move forward several years ago. How concerned do you think we should be about the unrest in Kosovo right now with respect to trying to begin implementation of that agreement?

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for the question.

Of course, I will have to defer to Ambassador Delawie in Kosovo on the details of that.

But I think what we have seen over time is the domestic politics in all of the countries of the region can have an impact on the pace of progress, and we have had other periods in which there have been holds as, after elections, countries have tried to put together governments and everything. So it is clear I think that having an authoritative government ready to move forward is a clear necessity for making significant progress. In that regard, all I can say is that in Serbia the Prime Minister and his government seem committed to moving forward on this process, and I look forward, should I be confirmed, to working with them to encourage progress in that direction.

Senator SHAHEEN. I appreciate that.

I was meeting with some officials from the Balkans this summer, and they raised concerns about Russian influence whenever there

was an opportunity, potential unrest to encourage that unrest in subversive kinds of ways. To what extent are we seeing any of that kind of influence, or can you speak to that with what is going on right now in terms of the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo?

Mr. SCOTT. I think that I would agree with your general view of Russian behavior in an attempt to essentially split allies apart and create areas of uncertainty and potential unrest, and we have seen that also in the western Balkans without a doubt. In the case of Serbia, their dependency on Russia, especially in the area of energy, is significant, and that is why I think it is important that the United States and the European Union are moving forward on efforts toward greater diversification of energy resources, toward a broader strategic plan for all of Europe to reduce dependencies upon Russia or any single source of energy. That is clearly the case in Serbia. Serbia imports all of its gas from Russia, and although the gas it imports is not all the gas they have, because they have their own domestic gas, the company which controls the domestic gas is also owned by Russia. But the government is clearly aware of that.

I think working on interconnectors, especially the Bulgarian interconnector through the southern route, will be key, steps forward for the future. Also diversification of resources, and here I think there great opportunities for American companies in new and renewable sources of energy, carbon sequestration, and other issues where I think there are opportunities for cooperation with Serbia both for their benefit but also for our own.

Senator SHAHEEN. I have to say before I leave Serbia that I had the opportunity to be part of the delegation to the memorial remembrance of the Srbenica massacre this summer, and I very much appreciated, despite the incident that happened there, the Serbian Prime Minister for going there, for meeting with the Bosnian officials and for paying his respects at that remembrance. And I certainly hope they will continue those kinds of symbolic gestures because I think they are very important in reducing tensions within the region.

I am about to run out of time. But I want to go to you, Mr. Rubin, on the energy issues because you raised that in your testimony. And it is my understanding that there is a pipeline proposed across Greece that would have a spur that would go into Bulgaria, which if it were open, would be very positive in terms of providing some alternative energy for Bulgaria. It was described to me as a minor approval that is remaining for Greece before construction on that pipeline can begin.

As Ambassador to Bulgaria, how do you see your role in trying to encourage those kinds of projects to get done so that there is energy diversification?

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

If I am confirmed, this will be absolutely one of the top priorities for me as Ambassador both because of the necessity of helping Bulgaria achieve diverse energy supplies but also because of the role that Bulgaria plays in the region as a potential energy hub.

The interconnector pipeline that you described with Greece is close to agreement. I want to knock on the table when I say that. And I would like to believe that if I am confirmed, before I even

get to post, it will have already been signed and agreed and work can start. They are very close. This has required agreements by both governments, as well as the European Union, and with the change of governments in Greece and other things, there have been, I think, some delays in just getting the agreement finalized, but there is an agreement in principal.

It is not a large length of pipeline. It is actually not a very expensive project as these things go, and it would open up a tremendous new set of possibilities. One would be opening up the flow of trans-Caspian gas through Turkey to Bulgaria. The other would be the gas coming through Greece both through the connectors with western Europe but also through the LNG terminals in Greece.

So it is a lot of bang for the buck, and they are close. And this will be a major priority to see this through and then to follow up with all the other priority projects to ensure that there is energy diversification for Bulgaria but also for the wider region.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I think anything we can do to encourage that project and others are very important as we look at the long-term stability for the region.

And that brings me back to Russian influence because, again, when I was meeting with eastern European officials—I did not meet with anyone from Bulgaria, but I certainly heard from some other of our eastern European allies a great concern about Russian influence in eastern Europe particularly. And this committee has had a hearing about what I would call propaganda that Russia is putting into eastern Europe on a daily basis and the amount of money that they are spending on that.

So can you tell me is that something that the Bulgarians are concerned about? Are they seeing that kind of propaganda and the influence that it is bringing into the region? And what can you do as Ambassador to help respond to that?

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Senator.

I think, if I am confirmed, this will be another of my very top priorities to personally get out there and aggressively make the case to Bulgarians across the country, not just in Sofia, but everywhere in the country in every group, whether it is young people or people who may not have traditional connections with the United States, who may not have seen American diplomats before, the importance of the shared values and the shared objectives that we have as NATO allies that we have as members of the Euro-Atlantic community.

The good news, obviously, for Bulgaria is they have achieved membership in both NATO and the EU. That is hugely important, and the progress that they have made since 1991 is astounding. So there is a lot to celebrate. But there is a constant drumbeat in the background saying you will never get there. You are not going to be accepted. You ought to give up on this Western project and just come back to your natural location. And that is spread through local media. That is spread I think through all sorts of groups that receive subsidies to do that. So I think recognizing that working with our natural friends and allies in Bulgaria, which is a majority of Bulgarian society, a majority of the parliament who are strong supporters of the alliance, who recognize the value of this choice that the country has made, but then obviously as Ambassador, I

and my team need to follow through and do everything we can to make the case ourselves and then to work to get the resources for that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. He is telling me to continue.

So, Mr. McKean, first of all, let me say how nice it is to see you in that position, and having served on this committee when you were the committee staff director, we have missed you but you have gone on to do very important work. And I appreciate your willingness to continue to do that.

Let me ask you about Luxembourg because there is a sense that some multinational corporations have tried to take advantage of the tax system in Luxembourg to avoid paying taxes in the United States. To what extent is that still the case, and have there been regulatory reforms that have made that harder to do?

Mr. MCKEAN. Thank you, Senator, and it is nice to see you again as well.

Luxembourg I think as you know, is known not only as a tax haven but as a bank secrecy haven until fairly recently. And they have come into conformity with EU rules and regulations. I think those labels are now in the past. They have really abolished bank secrecy, and their banking industry has now diversified significantly.

In terms of the tax issues, there are still outstanding tax issues that are focused on American companies operating in Luxembourg. The issue was that Luxembourg had very, very low tax rates that were unfairly impacting the rest of Europe. Those cases are being worked through in Brussels, and so my EU counterpart would be the person that would be focused on that.

But I will say that Luxembourg has signed an agreement to implement the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act which, as I understand it, will go a long way towards rectifying any tax issues that might be of note in this country.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

So just a final question for Ms. Hill. I know this is one panel where you do not mind not getting questions. [Laughter.]

Because Chairman Johnson raised the refugee issue—and this is something that Malta, because of its geographic location, has been dealing with for a very long time, mostly economic migrants who are coming from Africa, as you pointed out. Has Malta been involved in the discussions at the EU about how to develop a policy to address the current refugee crisis? And do you know what kind of recommendations they would have for the current situation?

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Yes, Malta has been very involved in the current refugee crisis and the current discussions. Although they are still focused on that south to north migration, they did host the EU-African Union Summit on migration earlier in November where they discussed various options for dealing with that particular set of irregular migrants going back and forth. They have been a heavy advocate of the burden-sharing plan that now is being inputted by the EU. Malta has been calling for this burden-sharing plan for years, and it is finally being implemented with the current refugee crisis. So Malta has been very involved in the discussions and very much looking for-

ward to a reasonable burden sharing of the migrant issue across the EU.

Senator SHAHEEN. So they have had a very positive voice in the current discussions then.

Ms. HILL. Yes. They have a very positive voice.

Senator SHAHEEN. And are there other ways in which, as Ambassador representing the United States, that you see that the United States can support what Malta is encouraging and where the EU is moving with respect to how to deal with the refugee crisis?

Ms. HILL. Yes, Senator. I think the United States has a lot of lessons learned that we can share with the EU, with Malta specifically. I think that we have been doing that. Our Coast Guard has been doing phenomenal work with the Maltese Armed Forces in how to deal with these overcrowded boats that are coming through the Mediterranean more effectively. We have also done a lot of information sharing and lessons learned sharing with the Maltese themselves about processing refugees more effectively and also providing for support services for refugees to better enhance their ability to live as refugees in a foreign country. So as Ambassador, I certainly plan to continue to encourage these programs and develop these programs particularly in Malta to help the Maltese deal with the refugee crisis.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much. I would agree. I think we have—particularly our Department of Homeland Security has learned a lot because of what we experienced last summer on our southern border. And so some of those lessons that we have learned can be shared with other countries dealing with the current situation.

So thank you all very much. And, again, thank you for your willingness to serve the country, and I look forward to as quick a confirmation process as we can move things in the Senate.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. I think you realize we are pretty well dedicated to moving along as well.

By the way, that crisis has not ended at the southern border. It is on an uptick again.

Again, I just want to thank all the family members here for coming to the hearing and for the support of the nominees in their efforts. I want to thank all the nominees, the witnesses, for your thoughtful testimony, your answers to our questions. And thank you for your service to the Nation and your willingness to serve in the future.

So with that, the hearing record will remain open until December 4 at 5 p.m. for the submission of statements and questions for the record.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:45 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ERIC RUBIN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LUXEMBOURG, TO  
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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

*Question.* Bulgaria has a large and abusive orphanage and psychiatric system. The recent European Court case of *Stanev v. Bulgaria* found inhumane and degrading treatment in Bulgaria's institutions and a lack of due process for people detained.

- ♦ If confirmed, will you advocate for the implementation of the European court's decision? As U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, will you commit to actively advocating for its implementation?

*Answer.* We advocate tirelessly for human rights and the rule of law in Bulgaria. If confirmed, I will commit to continuing this work, which is among our top priorities in Bulgaria and anywhere in the world. In April, Ambassador Ries, along with Kustendil Mayor Paunov and Cedar Foundation Director Lindsay Saltzgeber, inaugurated a Social Rehabilitation and Integration Center that supports and helps integrate people with disabilities and other at-risk adults. The U.S. Government invested \$275,000 in this facility.

In promoting societies that include and empower persons with disabilities, we oppose discrimination against persons with disabilities everywhere and in all its forms. While we are not a party to the European Court of Human Rights, we support the swift implementation of decisions of courts with jurisdiction. This is especially salient when the decision pertains to a vulnerable population.

The *Stanev v. Bulgaria* case does not relate to orphanages, but we have followed closely Bulgaria's concerted effort to reform its institutions for children. Bulgaria has made much progress moving children out of institutions into family-type settings. This year the government closed 13 institutions for parentless children as part of a plan to close all institutions by 2025 and replace them with alternative, community-based care. With the support of European Union funds, Bulgaria has built smaller centers for children, provided better childcare services by partnering with nongovernmental organizations, and stepped up foster care. Bulgaria knows more work needs to be done, and we will support it in those efforts.

Bulgaria ranked third among Hague convention countries in the number of completed adoptions by U.S. families in FY14 (183). I am proud to say that 70 percent of children that Americans adopted in Bulgaria had special needs. The adoption procedure in Bulgaria is transparent and includes various safeguards to ensure greater security and predictability for all those involved in an intercountry adoption process. There is also an expedited procedure for children with special needs so that they may be quickly placed with eligible families as part of Bulgaria's commitment to deinstitutionalization.

We are deeply concerned with any allegations of human rights abuses, and if confirmed, I will share the American values of respecting the judgment of the judiciary and treating all members of society with dignity and care.

*Question.* There are currently 5,000 developmentally disabled children who are institutionalized throughout Bulgaria. What can the United States do to advocate for the reintegration of these children into their communities?

*Answer.* We strongly promote human rights in Bulgaria. Our annual Human Rights Report tracks the progress Bulgaria makes on this front, and we will continue to support and advocate for the reintegration of children with developmental disabilities. Through embassy public diplomacy and exchange programs, we share the American experience of providing community-based services to children with disabilities, and promoting their transition out of institutions and integration into society.

This year, the Bulgarian Government closed 13 institutions for children with disabilities, as part of a plan to close all institutions by 2025 and replace them with alternative, community-based care.

The majority of the children from those institutions were relocated to family-type centers and a smaller number were accommodated in protected housing, reunited with their families, or placed in foster care. In the first 6 months of the year, 106 institutionalized children returned to their families, 326 were adopted, and 2,142 stayed with foster families. More than 1,600 children resided in the newly established centers (family-type homes, protected homes, and transition homes). The

number of institutionalized children declined from over 12,000 when the process of deinstitutionalization commenced to 1,632 as of July.

A comprehensive domestic child welfare system can take decades to develop. We encourage countries to develop robust domestic child welfare systems that support family reunification, where appropriate, and domestic adoption. We also encourage countries to develop practices that are consistent with the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention), understanding that a child's best interests may be served both by intercountry adoption and improved child welfare systems.

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RESPONSES OF KYLE SCOTT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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

*Question.* Serbia is one of the few countries of the region to adopt a no-new-admission policy for placement of children in institutions. As a result, Serbia has one of the lowest rates of institutionalization in the world. Despite this, and an impressive governmental commitment to reform, community services for children with disabilities are still lacking.

- ◆ What could the U.S. Ambassador to Serbia do to share the U.S. experience with community integration of people with disabilities?

*Answer.* There are several resources the U.S. Ambassador to Serbia could draw on to highlight the need for well-funded community services for children with disabilities. Through embassy public diplomacy programs and exchange programs, the Embassy can share the American experience of providing community-based services to children with disabilities. Visits of American officials and experts, such as the recent visit of Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann, allows for senior-level engagement to discuss how the Serbian Government can better provide for persons with disabilities in Serbia. Embassy outreach to civil society activists and NGOs helps build awareness and public support for disability rights, and helps connect them with American activists to enhance their advocacy network.

*Question.* Despite the progress in lowering the institutional population, Serbia has a legal capacity law that deprives individuals with mental disabilities of their right to make legal decisions or access the courts without support of a guardian.

- ◆ What can the United States do to ensure access to justice for people with disabilities?

*Answer.* American officials can share the importance of providing access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. For example, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann stopped in Serbia in early October to highlight the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA), as well as the effective implementation and enforcement of disability rights laws, the international independent living movement, and the importance of governments and disabled people's organizations working together to advance the rights of persons with disabilities.

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AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SCOTT'S RESPONSES  
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR JOHNSON

*Question.* A 2014 U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights Practices in Serbia, and a March 11, 2015, European Parliament resolution highlight the need to strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence in Serbia. The State Department found that although the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, the courts remained susceptible to corruption and political influence.

- ◆ If confirmed, what actions will you take to advance and promote respect for judicial independence and rule of law in Serbia?

*Answer.* If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to continue our efforts to address corruption and political influence in the judiciary. Currently, Embassy Belgrade provides significant assistance through USAID to increase both the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. Programming helps the courts learn how to assume responsibilities over financial and administrative operations, reduce case backlogs and processing times, and improve the enforcement of misdemeanor court decisions. Technical assistance through USAID provides substantive training to



judges and court personnel on laws, procedures and ethics, and on methods for improving efficient case management. In some Misdemeanor Courts, minor renovations at minimal expense have significantly improved efficient use of space, accessibility to court information for the public, and increased safety for the public and court personnel.

Our technical assistance to the High Court Council (HCC), which is charged with the administration and oversight of the judicial branch, helps establish the standards and procedures for measuring the performance of judges, prosecutors, and courtroom staff. In addition, our program is developing new standards for assigning, promoting, and sanctioning judges based on merit rather than on influence or political affiliation. Other areas of U.S. assistance include procurement and budget training that allows the HCC to develop court budgets that are strategic and needs-based. Finally, USAID support to Serbia's Judicial Academy is helping to ensure that judges and prosecutors have the basic skills they need to execute their duties and is establishing a regime of continuous learning so that judges and prosecutors skills are able to evolve with the changing body of law.

If confirmed, I will work to continue and expand these areas of support.

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