

**NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE
115TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION**

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—
JANUARY 3, 2017 TO JANUARY 3, 2018
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

S. HRG. 115-413

**NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE
115TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION**

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—
JANUARY 3, 2017 TO JANUARY 3, 2018
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

33-623 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2018

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

BOB CORKER, Tennessee, *Chairman*

JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho

MARCO RUBIO, Florida

RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin

JEFF FLAKE, Arizona

CORY GARDNER, Colorado

TODD YOUNG, Indiana

JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming

JOHNNY ISAKSON, Georgia

ROB PORTMAN, Ohio

RAND PAUL, Kentucky

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland

ROBERT MENENDEZ, New Jersey

JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire

CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, Delaware

TOM UDALL, New Mexico

CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut

TIM KAINE, Virginia

EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts

JEFF MERKLEY, Oregon

CORY A. BOOKER, New Jersey

TODD WOMACK, *Staff Director*

JESSICA LEWIS, *Democratic Staff Director*

JOHN DUTTON, *Chief Clerk*

CONTENTS

The nominees' responses to additional questions and any other additional material submitted for the record are located at the end of each hearing transcript.

	Page
Wednesday, January 11, 2017	na
Tillerson, Rex, to be Secretary of State, transcript printed under separate cover, S. Hrg. 115-4.	na
Wednesday, January 18, 2017	na
Halcy, Gov. Nimrata "Nikki," to be Ambassador to the United Nations, transcript printed under separate cover, S. Hrg. 115-345.	na
Thursday, February 16, 2017	1
Friedman, David, of New York, to be Ambassador to Israel	9
Wednesday, April 26, 2017	71
Mushingi, Hon. Tulinabo Salama, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau	73
Haskell, Todd Philip, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo	75
Tuesday, May 2, 2017	93
Branstad, Hon. Terry, of Iowa, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of China	98
Tuesday, May 9, 2017	145
Sullivan, Hon. John J., of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State	149
Wednesday, May 17, 2017	207
Brown, Scott P., of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador to New Zealand, and to the Independent State of Samoa	211
Thursday, May 18, 2017	227
Hagerty, William Francis IV, of Tennessee, to be Ambassador to Japan	231
Thursday, June 15, 2017	259
Green, Mark Andrew, of Wisconsin, to be Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development	266
Tuesday, July 11, 2017	303
Bohigian, Hon. David Steele, of Missouri, to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation	307
Washburne, Ray, of Texas, to be President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation	309
Currie, Kelley Eckels, of Georgia, to be U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations	312
Murray, Jay Patrick, of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations	315

IV

	Page
Tuesday, July 18, 2017	345
Gingrich, Callista L., of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Holy See	349
Sales, Nathan Alexander, of Ohio, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State	352
Glass, George Edward, of Oregon, to be Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic	355
Risch, Carl C., of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of State, Consular Affairs	358
Wednesday, July 19, 2017	389
Arreaga, Hon. Luis E., of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala	389
Day, Sharon, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica	391
Urs, Krishna R., of Connecticut, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Peru	393
Thursday, July 20, 2017	415
Hutchison, Hon. Kay Bailey, of Texas, to be U.S. Permanent Representative on The Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization	425
Craft, Kelly Knight, of Kentucky, to be Ambassador to Canada	429
Johnson, Robert Wood IV, of New York, to be Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	432
Eisenberg, Lewis M., of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Italian Republic and to the Republic of San Marino	434
McFarland, Kathleen Troia, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore	437
Wednesday, July 26, 2017	491
Raynor, Hon. Michael Arthur, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	492
Brewer, Maria E., of Indiana, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone	494
Desrocher, John P., of New York, to be Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	496
Tuesday, August 1, 2017	517
King, Stephen B., of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador to the Czech Republic ..	518
Tuesday, September 12, 2017	531
Ueland, Eric M., of Oregon, to be an Under Secretary of State (Management)	536
Bass, Hon. John R., of New York, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	556
Siberell, Justin Hicks, of Maryland, Nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain	560
Dowd, J. Steven, of Florida, to be U.S. Director of the African Development Bank for a Term of 5 Years	563
Tuesday, September 19, 2017	617
Huntsman, Hon. Jon M. Jr., of Utah, to be Ambassador to the Russian Federation State	624
Mitchell, A. Wess, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (European and Eurasian Affairs)	640
Wednesday, September 27, 2017, (a.m.)	693
Kritenbrink, Daniel J., of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam	695
Fitzpatrick, Kathleen M., of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste	698
Wednesday, September 27, 2017 (p.m.)	715
Hoekstra, Hon. Peter, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands	718
Buchan, Richard Duke, III, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain	721

	Page
Wednesday, September 27, 2017 (p.m.) —Continued	
Grenell, Richard, of California, to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany	725
McCourt, Jamie, of California, to be Ambassador to the French Republic, and to the Principality of Monaco	728
McMullen, Edward T. Jr., of South Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation, and to the Principality of Liechtenstein	732
Tuesday, October 3, 2017 (a.m.)	763
Juster, Hon. Kenneth Ian, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of India	767
Tuesday, October 3, 2017 (p.m.)	789
Andre, Hon. Larry Edward, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti	792
Barlerin, Peter Henry, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to Republic of Cameroon	794
Whitaker, Eric P., of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Niger ..	796
Dodman, Michael James, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania	807
Fite, Nina Maria, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Angola	810
Foote, Daniel L., of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia	813
Reimer, David Dale, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles	815
Wednesday, October 4, 2017	849
Sison, Michele Jeanne, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti	851
Brownback, Hon. Samuel Dale, of Kansas, to be Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom	855
Thursday, October 5, 2017	883
Sands, Carla, of California, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark	884
Kohorst, W. Robert, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia	887
Wednesday, October 18, 2017	903
Carter, Thomas, of South Carolina, to be U.S. Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization	905
Newstead, Jennifer Gillian, of New York, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State	907
Singh, Manisha, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs)	910
Evanoff, Michael T., of Arkansas, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Diplomatic Security)	911
Wednesday, November 1, 2017	955
Goldstein, Irwin Steven, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State (Public Diplomacy)	957
Lawler, Sean P., of Maryland, to be Chief of Protocol of the Department of State	960
Johnson, Lisa A., of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia	962
Gonzales, Rebecca Eliza, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho	964
Evans, James Randolph, of Georgia, to be Ambassador To Luxembourg	966
Tuesday, November 28, 2017	1013
Poblete, Yleem D.S., Ph.D., of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Verification and Compliance)	1019
Ford, Christopher Ashley, D.Phil., of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation)	1022

VI

	Page
Thursday, November 30, 2017	1071
Bierman, Hon. Brock D., of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency For International Development	1076
Braithwaite, Rear Admiral Kenneth J., USN (Ret), of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway	1080
Trujillo, Hon. Carlos, of Florida, to be the Permanent U.S. Representative to the Organization of American States	1083
McClenny, M. Lee, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay	1086
Tuesday, December 19, 2017	1123
Vrooman, Peter Hendrick, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda	1125
Danies, Joel, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe	1128

APPENDIX

Alphabetical listing of nominees considered by the committee, including im- portant dates	1151
--	------

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:03 a.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson [presiding], Gardner, Murphy, Shaheen, and Kaine.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We are holding this hearing today to consider the nomination of Stephen B. King of Wisconsin to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

I certainly want to welcome Steve and his family. I want to congratulate you on your selection by the President and thank you for your willingness to serve this Nation. I want to thank your family for the sacrifice they will be making as well, because you will be pretty busy.

Although I am chairing this hearing because Steve is a fellow Wisconsinite who I have come to know over the last 6 or 7 years, I would like to offer a few words on his behalf.

Steve is a prominent public servant and businessman, a natural leader, and a patriot. Steve was born in Indianapolis and raised in Chicago. He eventually settled in Janesville, Wisconsin—we have heard of that city before now with Speaker Ryan, also his hometown—and his wife, Karen, and their three children.

Early in his career, Steve investigated civil rights violations in Jackson, Mississippi, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and then served as an investigator for the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. He later became special assistant to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, serving as liaison between the USDA and the Agriculture Committees of the House and the Senate.

Steve left Washington in 1976 to become the director of alumni and development at his alma mater, Western Illinois University. In 1979, he entered the business world and led a management buyout of Tomah Products, and later founded King Capital, a successful private investment firm.

Active in the Boy Scouts of America his entire life, Steve is a recipient of the Silver Buffalo award, the organization's highest volunteer award for work at the national level.

Steve's success in public and private sectors is a reflection of his strong interpersonal skills, a key understanding of governance and leadership, and his personal integrity.

His extensive experience and willingness to serve causes greater than himself make him ideally suited to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. I support Steve's nomination and urge my colleagues to support him as well.

With that, I would like to recognize our ranking member, Senator Murphy.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS MURPHY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator MURPHY. Welcome, Mr. King. I look forward to hearing your testimony. Congratulations on your nomination.

This is an important hearing, given the fact that the Czech Republic is a crucial ally, one that has supported U.S. policy of making sure that Russia understands the consequences that come with invading a neighboring country and trying to influence elections in and around the region, but also a country that has strong economic ties to Russia, also pulls and tugs that come from the business community to find a different way.

We have had a very, very strong bilateral relationship, a history of very strong Ambassadors in that post, and I know you come with a strong endorsement of the chairman of the committee. I look forward to hearing your testimony and engaging in some dialogue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Now we will turn to the nominee's opening statement.

Mr. King?

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN B. KING OF WISCONSIN, TO BE AM-
BASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Mr. KING. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, thank you for taking the time to meet with me this morning, and for considering my nomination to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Let me also thank you, Chairman, for your kind introduction, your service to the country, your leadership of the European Subcommittee, and your shared devotion to the Green Bay Packers.

I appear before you today humbled by President Trump's nomination of me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, an unwavering ally in the heart of the European continent.

Prague may be far from my own upbringing in the heart of America's Midwest in Indiana, where I was born on the Fourth of July, and in Wisconsin, where I lived and worked for most of life. But in many ways, it is that not much different.

International affairs and government service have been both trademarks of my professional life. I began my career as a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and then investigated public corruption on behalf of this institution, the United States

Senate. I eventually used my skills and expertise to create innovative businesses that provide many good jobs to many people in southern Wisconsin.

As Karen, my wife of 54 years, and I found success in Wisconsin, I now had the opportunity to give back to that community. Our shared belief in the American Dream continues to grow.

Our three grown children, Kristen, Steve Jr., and Russ, have been our greatest source of pride, along with our seven grandchildren.

It was not that long ago that the Velvet Revolution ended the Soviet occupation of then-Czechoslovakia, and the first democratic elections in over 40 years were held in 1990. I will never forget the awe-inspiring moment when the philosopher poet Vaclav Havel was finally elected President after fighting against tyranny his entire life.

If confirmed, I would view my Ambassador role as a facilitator of the natural alliance that has grown between our citizens and the fiercely independent Czech people. As an indispensable NATO partner and ally, the Czechs have gone the distance in our strategy to defeat ISIS and have supported sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

In line with President Trump's expectation, the Czech Republic should endeavor to increase the percent of its GDP devoted to defense, strengthening the NATO alliance and our bilateral military and intelligence cooperation.

The Czech Republic is to be commended for its sacrifices for the good of the alliance, and I look forward to working with them on behalf of Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis.

However, as I suspect the committee knows, the once-resolute and indelible imprint of democracy spreading across Central Europe in the 1990s has given way in some quarters to current skepticism and self-doubt, where longtime opponents of freedom deliberately seek to undermine and devolve democratic values and economic freedoms into question marks.

Today, we need to reaffirm our commitment to allies like the Czech Republic and make clear that the United States is dedicated to the democratic values we espouse here at home.

The United States and the Czech Republic share a unique and lasting bond of history, from the vision of an independent Czechoslovakia spelled out in Pittsburgh in the Pittsburgh Agreement almost 100 years ago—their celebration will be in the year 2018 of 100 years of independence in Czechoslovakia—to the post-communist vision and leadership of Vaclav Havel, whose bust now stands in the U.S. Capitol.

If confirmed, I will work to sustain our countries' historic ties and expand the people-to-people connections that are crucial to that relationship. Like us, the Czechs have proven they know democracy and economic freedom require daily attention and renewal. Soon, I hope to meet a Czech deputy or even a senior minister who has spent his or her entire life free of the bonds of tyranny that still haunt their parents and grandparents in the Czech Republic.

The foundation beneath our bond between our countries is cast in steel, this steel of shared values: hard, honest work; independent thinking; and fidelity to the commitments that we make.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I pledge to this committee and the American people that I will work hard, stay honest, speak my mind, but always uphold the promises of our Nation.

At the end of our service, if I am confirmed, when Karen and I get ready to fly home, I will measure my performance against a few yardsticks. First, did I break anything in the residence? Secondly, have we upgraded our partnership across-the-board? And, thirdly, did I serve the hardworking, patriotic team at Embassy Prague well as a leader, a manager, and a supervisor, and did I equip them to better serve our country?

I pledge to each of you to keep these questions at the forefront of my mind, particularly the last two, to strengthen our partnership with the Czech people to advance our shared values and our strategic interests in Europe and around the world.

Thank you, Senators, for your consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Mr. King's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHEN B. KING

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy and members of the committee—thank you for taking the time to meet with me this morning, and for considering my nomination to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

I appear before you today humbled by President Trump's nomination of me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, an unwavering American ally in the heart of the European continent. Prague may be far from my own upbringing in the heart of America's Midwest, in Indiana where I was born on the Fourth of July, and Wisconsin, where I lived and worked for most of life. But it is my mind, and in the hearts of many Americans and Czechs, both are part of the same common cultural foundation upon which many of our shared values are based.

International affairs and government service have both been trademarks of my professional life. I began my career as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, investigating public corruption on behalf of this institution—the United States Senate. I eventually used my skills and expertise to create innovative businesses that provided good jobs to many of the hardworking people in southern Wisconsin. As Karen, my wife of 54 years, and I found success there and had the opportunity to give back to that community, our shared belief in the American Dream continued to grow.

Our three grown children, Kristen, Steve Jr. and Russ have been our greatest source of pride, along with our seven grandchildren.

It was not that long ago that the Velvet Revolution ended Soviet occupation of then-Czechoslovakia, and the first democratic elections in over 40 years were held in 1990. I will never forget the awe-inspiring moment when the philosopher-poet Vaclav Havel was finally elected President after fighting against tyranny his entire life.

If confirmed, I would view my role as Ambassador as a facilitator of the natural alliance that has grown between our citizens and the fiercely independent Czech people.

As an indispensable NATO partner and ally, the Czechs have gone the distance in our strategy to defeat ISIS and have supported sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. In line with President Trump's expectation, the Czech Republic should endeavor to increase the percent of its GDP devoted to defense, strengthening the NATO alliance and our bilateral military and intelligence cooperation. The Czech Republic is to be commended for its sacrifices for the good of the Alliance, and I look forward to working with them on behalf of the President and Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis.

As the committee knows, the once-resolute and indelible imprint of democracy spreading across central Europe in the 1990s has given way in some quarters to a current of skepticism and self-doubt, where longtime opponents of freedom deliberately seek to undermine and devolve democratic values and economic freedoms into question-marks. Today, we need to reaffirm our commitment to allies like the Czech Republic, and make clear that the United States is dedicated to the democratic values we espouse at home.

Fortunately, our partnership with our Czech allies is a great asset in opposing this trend. If there is one thing I instantly understood learning from (former) Amb. Richard Graber about America's relationship with the Czech Republic, it is that we have both invested our reputations and resources in the idea that freedom and free markets will create the most just and prosperous societies ever imagined.

The United States and the Czech Republic share a unique and lasting bond of history—from the vision of an independent Czechoslovakia spelled out in the Pittsburgh Agreement almost 100 years ago, to the post-communist vision and leadership of Vaclav Havel whose bust stands in the U.S. Capitol. If confirmed, I will work to sustain our countries' historic ties and expand the people-to-people connections that are crucial to our relationship.

Like us, the Czechs have proven they know democracy and economic freedom require daily attention and renewal. Soon I expect to meet a Czech deputy—or even a senior minister who has spent his or her entire life free of the bonds of tyranny that still haunt their parents' memories. As a younger cadre of leaders rise in the Czech Republic, we will embrace our longstanding responsibility to recognize and assist them, whether through sponsored exchanges or merely by making introductions to their American counterparts.

The foundation beneath our bond is cast in the steel of shared values: Hard, honest work, independent thinking, and fidelity to the commitments we make. If confirmed as Ambassador, I pledge to this committee and the American people that I will work hard, stay honest, speak my mind, but always uphold our promises as a nation.

At the end of our service if I am confirmed, when Karen and I get ready to fly home, I will measure my performance against a few yardsticks. Have we upgraded our partnership across the board? And, did I serve the hardworking, patriotic team at Embassy Prague well as a leader, manager, and supervisor, and did I equip them to better serve our country? I pledge to each of you to keep these questions at the forefront of my mind to strengthen our partnership with the Czech people, to advance our shared values and our strategic interests in Europe and around the world.

Thank you, Senators, for your consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. King. I would remind you that being a Green Bay Packer fan will get you a few votes in the Senate—more than two. We have quite a few fans. It is everybody's second team.

Mr. KING. As long as Aaron Rodgers stays healthy.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you just, for me, lay out your top priorities. If confirmed and you assume the ambassadorship, what are the top two or three things you are really going to be focusing on?

Mr. KING. I think the first and foremost thing, Mr. Chairman, is obviously the security of any and all American personnel in the country, starting, of course, with our Embassy staff, any ex-pats residing in the country, and then certainly, of course, any citizen of our country that is visiting in the country.

Secondly, I view myself as a business person, and I would like to be an ambassador that is somewhat business-centric, if you will. So my hope is to build on what is already a pretty good economic relationship with the Czech Republic.

And thirdly would just be to leave the Embassy and leave the country in better shape in terms of the relationship between the two countries, better than I found it.

Senator JOHNSON. You mentioned security. When we met in our office, you talked about, within your class of future Ambassadors, there is a fair amount of concern that, yes, you have security for the Ambassador, but not necessarily for the Ambassador's spouse. Can you share those thoughts here? I kind of would like my colleagues to hear what was being talked about within that class.

Mr. KING. There was some concern on the part of several of my classmates, who are very important and good people, that the secu-

rity that the State Department provides only extends to the Ambassador, not necessarily to the spouse, in terms of outside the Embassy or outside the residence. And a number of those classmates decided that they were going to fund some private security for their spouse.

Senator JOHNSON. I think that is an important issue that has been raised. I think it is something that Congress really ought to take a look at, based on the very dangerous world we are living in today, so I appreciate you raising that.

We have a fellow Badger, a fellow Wisconsinite that was also a former Ambassador, Ambassador Rick Graber. I know you have spoken with him. Can you talk about some of the words of wisdom he has imparted with you, as you start this next chapter in your life?

Mr. KING. Thank you, Senator.

I am here largely because, without ever having been to the Czech Republic, I kind of bonded with them largely because the folks old Czechoslovakia, even before Czechoslovakia, began to migrate as refugees to this country in the late 1800s, and, for whatever reason, decided to settle in the upper Midwest. So the bulk of the migrants coming over in the late 1800s and the early 1900s settled in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa. Therefore, I grew up with a lot of their descendants. We used to kid each other about our ancestry.

Then, about 15 or 20 years ago, I befriended a fellow by the name of Rick Graber, who was an attorney in Milwaukee who subsequently became Ambassador to the Czech Republic under the George W. Bush administration, and spent the last 10 years or so, when I am with Rick, talking about his experience in the Czech Republic, which he said they are a proud people, they are an independent people, they are a freedom-loving people. It is one of the few countries, especially Prague, that was preserved coming out of the war. He said it was an experience of a lifetime for me.

So when the opportunity for me came to serve this administration overseas, I told them I would like to go to the Czech Republic.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate that.

In my last minute, just talk about some of the economic ties. What are some of the best opportunities that we have, in terms of economic cooperation between the Czech Republic and the U.S.?

Mr. KING. The T-TIP, obviously, is probably a good start. I think we also, as a country, need to work and develop an economic relationship with the EU. That will benefit not only us and the EU but I think, in particular, the Czech Republic.

We, the United States, are probably the 13th biggest investor, if you will, in the Czech Republic and the third outside of the EU. We have wonderful opportunities.

There are wonderful opportunities for business interests in the Czech Republic to invest in the United States. And for that reason, I am going to work with the Department of Commerce, the Department of State, OPIC, and the Trade Representative to try to encourage and enhance and build on the business relationship, because, as we all know, a strong economic relationship is really kind of a key to any relationship between any two countries.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. King.

I will turn it over to Senator Murphy.

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

I neglected to thank you for your service to the Boy Scouts. I know you have been a great regional leader. Speaking as a Scout leader myself, I know the organization has been getting a little bit of a rough time lately, but I thank you for your great service there.

I think you mentioned this in answer to a previous question from Senator Johnson, but as this question was asked of Obama nominees for the record, I think it is important just to ask it of President Trump's nominees as well. You mentioned you have not traveled to Czechoslovakia before. Can I just ask, you do not speak the language?

Mr. KING. I do not speak the language. I am looking forward to taking some classes, beginning upon my service, should I be confirmed. In the morning, I am told, you can have a half-hour to 45 minutes of classes every morning. Probably not in my time there, assuming I am confirmed, that I become conversational, but I take solace in the fact that most every diplomatic official discussion usually takes place in English.

Senator MURPHY. Great. So you mentioned your ability to have a strong relationship with the business community there. Let me ask the question about sanctions through that prism.

I mentioned in my opening remarks that there are elements of the business community in the Czech Republic who are nervous about the long-term continuation of sanctions on Russia, given the fact that there are historic business ties. And yet, we believe that it is in both U.S. national security interests and European national security interests to send a strong, unequivocal message to Russia that territorial integrity matters.

As the Czechs have seen themselves, Russian interference in elections continue. They have set up their own counter-propaganda center because of their discovery of dozens of Web sites inside the Czech Republic that were potentially influenced and funded through Russian propaganda efforts.

So how are you prepared to talk to the business community in the Czech Republic about the importance of sanctions? And how do you address their concerns about the potential impact on the economy and the way that you weigh that effect on the important message that we need to send to the Russians?

Mr. KING. I recognize, Senator, that there are some concerns within the business community in the Czech Republic over some of the sanctions and the impact it may have on them, but I think they also step back and realize that the 40 years of Russian and Soviet tyranny ruling their country prohibited them from practicing the very things—the private enterprise in a free economic society.

So my job, I think, is to continue to engage the business community in the Czech Republic, as well as the leadership.

The leadership of the Czech Republic, the Government, actually, has been very supportive of the actions of the EU and the United States with regard to sanctions, not only in Ukraine but other parts, and they are very concerned about the upcoming Russian military training exercises. So I am confident that the opportunity will give me, being Ambassador, to work with the business community to recognize that sanctions are what they are.

Senator MURPHY. U.S. democracy promotion infrastructure at the State Department was an important partner during the Czech Republic's transformation process. Indeed, the Czechs have helped export the lessons that they went through to other neighboring countries. They sent transition teams to Ukraine, for instance, to help Ukraine make a transfer to democratic norms in the way that they did.

There is an ongoing review at the State Department now about the future core mission, and there is a worry that the core mission will become all about economic development and security, and that a focus on democracy promotion will be scrubbed from the State Department's mission.

You are going to go to a country that has had a long, productive history with the U.S. State Department's democracy mission. Do you believe that the pursuit of democracy for people around the world should be a priority for the United States and for the State Department?

Mr. KING. I know it is important to the Czech Republic. They are now going to celebrate, next year, about 25 years as a new nation. They held their first democratic direct election of a President just 4 or 5 years ago and will hold another one in 2018.

So I absolutely agree, Senator, that proposing and encouraging democratic values that both countries share is probably one of the highest priorities that I have.

Senator MURPHY. I appreciate your answer with respect to the specific relationship between the United States and the Czech Republic. I will not press you on this, except to say that there is going to be a very important internal discussion happening at the State Department while you will be there. You will be a prominent Ambassador inside that department. You will be in a country that can tell a very important story about the good that comes from the United States promoting democracy abroad. You mentioned in your opening comments, rightly, that there is a slide away from participatory democracy happening in countries that are very close to the Czech Republic.

I would hope, upon getting your feet on the ground, that you would participate in the internal debate happening within the State Department and tell the story of the success of U.S. democracy promotion in the Czech Republic.

You may not want to testify as to the reorganization here in front of us, but it is a debate that will be happening.

Mr. KING. I understand.

Senator MURPHY. And we look forward to you participating in it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. King, congratulations on the nomination.

This is a great committee, because we sort of segregate a little bit into regions of the world, and these are three Europe experts here. My assignment has been Latin America and the Middle East, but that is why I like to come to these hearings, because it gives me a chance to learn about areas where I am not so fluent.

Let me just tell you a thing that is puzzling me about the Czech Republic right now and just get your thoughts about it.

In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, the popularly elected President of the republic called for a referendum about whether the republic should stay in NATO and the EU. The Prime Minister and Cabinet sort of scotched that idea, so there was not a referendum.

But when a President who is popularly elected who probably has a pretty good sense of the will of the people thinks this is a good thing to do, then that tells me something is going on. Polling in the Czech Republic has shown pretty low approval for the EU, even though the Czech Republic economy is deeply integrated in the EU. I think 80 percent of the exports of the Czech Republic go into the EU.

So just talk to me a little bit about that. What is going on? Should we read the reticence about the EU or NATO as anything with respect to the Czech-U.S. relationship? Or is this just an internal European dynamic right now?

Mr. KING. Good question, Senator, and I think you captured the mood somewhat correctly.

I think it is really important for the United States and its representation overseas, specifically to the Czech Republic, to continue to encourage the Czech Republic collaboration and involvement, both economically as well as in NATO, with its allies in Western Europe. It is our job, I think, to take a lead in that. It is beneficial, despite Brexit, enjoying a good economic relationship between the Czech Republic and its EU partners, as well as the United States. It is critical, I think, to the continued blooming of democracy in that country.

Senator Kaine. I am just curious, do you read that as—should we be concerned at all about the Czech-U.S. bilateral relationship, when the President calls for a referendum that deals not just with EU membership but NATO membership? Or to your interpretation, is it really more kind of internal European?

Mr. KING. I think it is more internal. The bilateral relationship between the Czech Republic and the United States is excellent. It is very, very strong.

Senator Kaine. I think some of attribution that I have seen about this suggests that this anti-EU thing is scuffling about the migration issue.

I think the Czech economy is really integrated into the EU economy, especially into the German economy. There are great economic ties there.

So do you have a sense—are there upcoming elections in the Czech Republic? And as far as you know, is this migration issue playing a significant part in the upcoming elections?

Mr. KING. Another good question, Senator.

I am not sure how important the refugee issue is playing in the elections, but they adopted a parliamentary form of democracy in 1990, and the parliamentary elections for both the upper and lower houses will be in October. It remains to be seen what is going to happen there.

In terms of the migration and refugees, the EU mandated that each member country take so many refugees. It was a kind of quota. The Czech Republic has not met that quota. For that reason, Brussels, I think, is looking at taking some action against not only the Czech Republic but the so-called Visegrad Four countries—

Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic—all who have not met their quotas for taking refugees.

The refugee problem is a global problem, and I think that is an issue that the Czech Republic needs to work out with its leaders in Brussels.

Senator Kaine. Just to conclude, and then to hand it back to the chair, we are always so sensitive. We cannot be involved in dictating any decision about internal politics of another country. They have to work that out for themselves.

But we had a hearing last week with the proposed Ambassador to the EU. I think one of the things that our Ambassadors can often do is not only working within their portfolio but working with other U.S. Ambassadors in the region to try to build up some of the ties. I think that it sounds like that could be a significant portion of what you might do in a productive way, should you be confirmed.

Mr. KING. I would agree.

Senator Kaine. Great. Thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Senator Johnson. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. King, congratulations on your nomination. You are going to be serving Europe at a very critical time, when I think the future of the EU, of NATO, and of the transatlantic alliance is really at stake.

So I want to follow up a little bit on Senator Kaine's questions about what Czechs are thinking about in terms of the EU and their relationship with the EU, because as I am reading the upcoming elections and the potential for victory by the ANO party, which is center-right, it sounds like their leader has suggested that he does not support the Czechs staying in the euro zone. He talks about it as one of sovereignty.

As Ambassador, recognizing what Senator Kaine said and what we know about our need to stay out of the internal politics of a country, how do you see the ability of an ambassador to try to recognize and highlight the importance of the EU to stability in Western Europe and the potential for Russia to undermine the EU as part of their way of trying to destabilize Western Europe?

Mr. KING. Thank you for the question, Senator.

It is important, obviously, not only for the United States, but I think for the Czech Republic to remain a strong partner in the EU, as well as NATO, and they have been such.

I am not going to speculate as to what party is going to win. Coalitions have to take place, and I am not that familiar with the local politics there.

But I feel pretty confident that, whatever happens coming out of the election, that the freedom-loving people of the Czech Republic and the economic-freedom-loving people of the Czech Republic want to remain, the bulk of them, want to remain part of the EU.

And I think part of my job will be to encourage not only the Czech Republic to continue its engagement with the EU, as well as NATO, to, among other things, as you suggest, prevent some of the disinformation and other such things that the Russian Government is doing not only in Eastern but Central Europe, too.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I agree that is a real threat.

I think I came in on Senator Murphy asking you the question about the new center that they are standing up, did I catch that, in the Czech Republic? That is going to be focused on I guess responding, pushing back against the disinformation from the Russian Government.

Mr. KING. Yes. We support that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Absolutely. One of the things that I would encourage you to do is to visit Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which is headquartered in Prague, because they have been very successful certainly in the past and are looking at how they can ramp up to respond to the Russian disinformation that is going on.

Mr. KING. Indeed, they do. I am starting with that right here in this city, where BBC and Radio Free Europe have some offices, too.

Senator SHAHEEN. That is great. They have made a number of reforms that I think are very important. One of the jobs that we have is to try to figure out how to make them more effective and make sure they have the resources that they need.

Mr. KING. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Let me ask you, because in your statement, you talk about reaffirming our commitment to the Czech Republic and to our allies like the Czech Republic, and making it clear that we are dedicated to the democratic values that we want them to encourage, that we espouse here in America.

So I want to follow up a little bit on Senator Kaine's question about refugees, because, obviously, one of the big challenges that Europe has faced over the last 2 years has been migration of so many refugees from Syria, from North Africa, from Afghanistan, and the challenge of trying to help, in terms of the humanitarian crisis but also looking at resettlement efforts.

To what extent do you think that rhetoric here that marginalizes refugees, that suggests that America is not interested in having immigrants come to this country, to what extent does that undermine our conversations with a country like the Czech Republic, as we look at the challenges they are facing in Europe?

Mr. KING. Thank you, Senator. Good question.

We are all sensitive to terrorism and the issue that kind of open gates with immigration can present. I am just happy that the Czech Republic has bought into the visa waiver program, which we launched, which minimizes and gives them authority, of course, to prevent certain movement of certain people. I think that is important, and I note that the republic is serious about preventing terrorism not only in their country but in the rest of the European Union.

For that reason, I am confident that, once I get there, I can engage the republic to continue to keep a wary eye toward that problem, to that issue, but at the same time, open up their doors for people that have truly opportunities to live in a free—and want an opportunity to live in a free and democratic and economically free country.

The Czech Republic actually has a strong economy and actually has a labor problem, so I know that they, too, would welcome the opportunity to have people that can work in the country.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Mr. King. I look forward, and for the committee, to working with you individually, because, as you point out, the Czech Republic and their continued movement toward democracy and the West is very important, as we look at maintaining the partnerships that are going to be important to the United States, so thank you.

Mr. KING. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Before I close out the hearing, I will offer an opportunity for any further questions.

With that, again, Mr. King, you will, if confirmed, assume a very serious responsibility of not only representing America to the Czech Republic but also representing the viewpoints of the Czech Republic back to the Congress.

Mr. KING. Indeed.

Senator JOHNSON. Very important. Speaking for myself, I will be traveling over to Europe. It is also incredibly important for Ambassadors, when Members of Congress come over to the nations that you are representing, that you really lay out, from my standpoint, a very rigorous schedule, laying it out so we really understand the issues.

Again, I want to congratulate you on your nomination. Thank you for taking on this responsibility. Thank your wife, Karen, and your son, Steve, and your other children.

It is a great opportunity. We have serious challenges and serious responsibilities. So, again, thank you for providing us with your testimony and your responses.

The record will remain open for further questions until close of business on Thursday, August 3rd.

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO STEPHEN B. KING BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The most important action I have taken in my career to promote human rights and democracy was when I served as a Special Agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. During my tenure with the Bureau, I spent two years in Mississippi during the Civil Rights era investigating violations of federal laws pertaining to matters including human and civil rights.

A number of these investigations resulted in enforcement of federal law and resulted in criminal prosecutions and cessation of human and civil rights violations in the State of Mississippi.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Czech Republic today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Czech Republic? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The Czech Republic is widely respected for maintaining a strong human rights record, both domestically and globally. However, as is the case in all countries, work remains. As noted in the 2016 State Department Human Rights report, the most pressing concern in the Czech Republic is the integration of Roma into so-

ciety. For example, while the Czech Government recently passed a law designed to improve Romani children's access to quality education, press reports indicate that over 25 percent of Romani children attend schools for children with disabilities, where they receive low-quality education that does not prepare them to enter the workforce.

If confirmed, I will work with the Czech Government and non-governmental organizations, to urge the full implementation of the new education law and other measures necessary to facilitate the integration of the Roma people into society. Additionally, I would build upon the Embassy's strong work on behalf of the Roma community, offering U.S. Government support wherever possible.

Question 3. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in the Czech Republic in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The largest obstacle confronting human rights in the Czech Republic is societal attitudes. Although Czech society is generally quite open and tolerant, discrimination against the Roma community remains widespread. While the Czech Government has taken some steps to integrate the Roma, such as helping to foster greater understanding and appreciation of their culture, it can take many years for public opinion to change. If confirmed, I would support an open dialogue between the Roma community and the Czech Government to better address the concerns of the Roma people. I would also engage in personal outreach to the Roma community and continue Embassy Prague's programs to encourage mutual understanding and reduce discrimination.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Czech Republic?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to meeting with all of these organizations and continuing Mission Czech Republic's strong relationship with these groups.

Question 5. Will you engage with the Czechs on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, I will fully engage with Czech officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance, building upon Mission Czech Republic's strong body of work in this area.

Question 6. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Czech Republic?

Answer. No.

Question 9. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a businessman, I have witnessed the positive effects that diversity can have on the productivity of a company. Over the years, the State Department has taken steps to recruit a more diverse diplomatic corps that reflects the various ethnicities and cultures of the American people, ensuring America's diplomats truly represent the face of our diverse country. I believe this emphasis on diversity is critical not only to uphold the values of the American people and the State Department, but also to set an example for other nations.

If confirmed, I will maintain an open dialogue with all members of Mission Prague on the importance of diversity, encouraging maximum communication to ensure everyone's viewpoint is heard and appreciated, and also to make sure that tra-

ditionally underrepresented groups feel fully valued. I will also do my utmost to make sure employees are recognized based on merit, regardless of their gender, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. I believe that fostering an inclusive environment increases the retention of employees, particularly for women and minorities who can sometimes feel marginalized.

Question 10. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I believe that the Chief of Mission plays a critical role in establishing the values and high standards of an embassy. If confirmed, I will work with supervisors within Embassy Prague to create a collaborative and flexible environment that enables individuals to freely contribute their ideas. I will also ensure managers not only fully comply with the Department's EEO regulations, but go a step further by proactively seeking out ways to help identify and counteract any unconscious biases which may exist, particularly with respect to the recruitment process. If confirmed, I will also reach out to the Office of Civil Rights and discuss which additional training sessions may be available for the mission, such as an in-person all-hands EEO training program.

Question 11. How will you specifically work to assist the Government and civil society groups of the Czech Republic in countering the Russian Government's malign influence?

Answer. The Czech Republic has a multifaceted relationship with Russia, but the Government has taken an increasingly active approach toward countering Russian disinformation and malign influence, launching its Center for Terrorism and Hybrid Threats in January 2017 to counter Russian disinformation campaigns. If confirmed, I will work with the Czech Government to hold Russia accountable for its ongoing aggression in Ukraine, to ensure Moscow meets its international obligations, and to deter Russia from actions that undermine international peace and security. In addition, I would build on Embassy Prague's close cooperation with Czech civil society groups on countering the threat of negative Russian influence through public engagement and programming.

Question 12. What specific tools will you use to address this threat?

Answer. Embassy Prague, in collaboration with the Czech Government, has put in place several relevant programs, such as support for conferences on countering disinformation, media literacy courses for Czech university students, training events for Czech and Russian speaking journalists, and inclusion of Czech journalists on reporting tours to Ukraine and NATO.

If confirmed, I will encourage even greater cooperation on these types of proactive efforts by the Czech Government to prevent Russian disinformation and malign influence campaign. I will also seek to increase cyber cooperation and help the Czechs move away from their reliance on Russia through military modernization, and through diversification of energy sources, routes and suppliers, for themselves and for the wider European Union.
