

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

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JANUARY 3, 2017 TO JANUARY 3, 2018
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NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Isakson, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

Also Present: Senators Cornyn, Manchin, and Lee.

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

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

We have an unusual procedure today. As usual, we will defer to the outstanding Senators who are here to introduce others. And we thank them for being here. It is an honor to have you here in our committee. But we will let them go first, so that they can go on to their other business.

We will then adjourn and convene the business meeting for just a moment, and hopefully pass some nominees out and pass some bills out. Then we will resume with the great testimony that we know we will hear from our nominees.

So with that, again, we welcome you. If I remember the seniority order, I know that Senator Cornyn is first in seniority. We thank you for being back here again with another great Texan. I do not know whether it is Senator Lee or Senator Manchin who came next. I think I will let you guys arm wrestle over that while Senator Cornyn gives his comments.

But, again, thank you so much for being willing to come and make good comments about outstanding nominees. We thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CORNYN, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin. Thanks for holding this hearing.

I am here primarily to introduce Wess Mitchell, but I have to comment on the great willingness of Jon Huntsman to serve his country once again, this time in another peaceful, placid sort of setting, in Moscow this time. [Laughter.]

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOE MANCHIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA**

Senator MANCHIN. I have 1-month seniority on Senator Lee. [Laughter.]

Senator MANCHIN. Let me just say what a pleasure it is to be here before you, Mr. Chairman, allowing me to come and truly in a bipartisan way, because the person that we are here to speak on behalf of is truly a bipartisan person wanting to get things done. So I want to thank Senator Lee for being here also, because I know they have been great friends. But Governor Huntsman is a dear friend of mine, a personal friend of mine.

And Governors have a bond unlike most other bonds in political life. We all have the same problems. We have the same concerns for our constituents. And we try to share our successes that we have, and help each other not to repeat the same mistakes that we have made. So it is a really unusual bond.

But Mary Kaye, his wife, and Gayle and I and Jon have done things together, and we have enjoyed being with each other and have become fast friends.

They have six of their seven children here with them today. They have two grandchildren and many more on the way, I am sure, as we talk.

But with that being said, Jon has a resume that is unbelievable. And when you think about what Jon has done in the past—Ambassador to both China and Singapore, Deputy United States Trade Representative, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for trade development. But Jon is known most for his two terms as Governor for Utah. And the people overwhelmingly have supported Jon and voted for him.

But Jon left the State in such great shape financially. And we had a lot in common during the difficult times when the crash happened in 2007–2008.

What I know about Jon Huntsman is this, the compassion he has. And I have said this before. We have both gone through mining tragedies. The mining tragedies we had in our States were devastating to not just the families involved but to all of us. And I watched Jon rise up. And the compassion he had for each and every one of them, making sure it never repeated itself again, I have seen that.

I have worked with Jon in a group called No Labels. He and I were the first cochairs of No Labels, trying to bring people together in a bipartisan way, looking for a solution, not trying to exacerbate the problems and identify the weaknesses of both sides. I have watched Jon.

We have a troubled world that we live in. And at this time, we are the greatest superpower, the only superpower in the world. But superpower means more than having super-military might. It means having super-diplomatic might also. That is going to take a person with skills unlike anything we have ever seen before.

for the world's most populous Nation, China, and, if confirmed to this position, the Nation bearing the world's largest footprint. I think that is significant.

In addition to this, he has served in a variety of capacities in corporate America as an executive in the Huntsman Corporation. He serves on the board of Ford Motor Corporation.

Then there is, of course, his most cherished and important position, that of being chairman of the board, I believe it is, or perhaps chief operating officer, with Mary Kaye serving as the chief executive officer, of the Huntsman family. Jon and his lovely wife Mary Kaye have seven amazing children. That is no exaggeration here. I would encourage each of you to get to know them.

In short, this is someone who will represent the interests of the United States in every moment and in every circumstance. Regardless of where you fall on the ideological spectrum, you will be pleased with the service this man will perform, if he is confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Russia.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Lee.

Thank you all for your comments and for taking the time to be here. We appreciate that very much.

You all are welcome to leave. We are going to move into a very boring business meeting. It would indicate that you do not have anything else to do, if you stayed. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So the committee hearing is adjourned briefly, and we will move to the business meeting. [Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. We will reconvene our hearing.

I want to thank everybody for their cooperation in moving through that. It is very much appreciated.

I will give a very brief opening statement. I am sure Senator Cardin will do the same.

Europe and Eurasia are home to some of the closest partners, and also some of our greatest challenges. Formed in 1949 to defend the free people of the West from Soviet threat, NATO remains vital to the security of Europe and the United States. The European Union is also a critical partner in trade, politics, and global humanitarian efforts. Additionally, the United States' oldest and best allies, France and the United Kingdom, are European countries.

We look to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to manage these relationships as the United States reasserts itself all the world stage. Yet Russia's bad acts complicate much of the good that the United States tries to do.

The Russian Federation possesses not only the second most powerful military in the world but also a seat on the United Nations Security Council, where its veto protects war criminals, such as Bashar Assad.

In the last several years, Russia has twice invaded Ukraine, where it continues to illegally occupy Crimea and aggravate the war in Donbass.

Vladimir Putin entered the Syrian war on the side of the regime and has repeatedly used chemical weapons on civilians. Last year, Russian efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. election fundamentally damaged our bilateral relationship.

sion. I appreciate your commitment to continue that tradition, and I hope there will be regular dialogues sponsored by the United States on human rights.

Boris Nemtsov, the slain opposition leader, called the Magnitsky Act the most pro-Russian legislation ever enacted. So we will be looking to you to help us implement that pro-Russian people legislation known as the Magnitsky Act.

So we look forward to a good discussion today. Again, we thank you for your willingness to serve.

To Mr. Mitchell, thank you for your willingness to serve.

I also acknowledge your family. It is a family sacrifice.

I cannot think of a more important region of the world. The transatlantic partnership is critically important to the United States and our security. And the defense of our democratic values are stronger when we are United with Europe.

We saw that with Iran. When the sanctions were applied with Europe's support, we were able to get Iran's attention. Before that, we really were not able to do that.

The same thing is going to be true with Russia. We had been any unity with Europe on Russia. We now believe we have to take it to the next plateau. Your responsibility will be to meet with our European partners to maintain that unity.

We need to build resiliency in our democratic institutions across Europe. Russia's aggression is not, obviously, aimed just at the United States. Its principal targets are in Europe. We welcome working with our European partners to strengthen that resiliency and to work with regional organizations, such as the OSCE. Another hat I wear is the ranking Democrat on the OSCE Helsinki Commission.

There are many challenges. In addition to Russia, you have Brexit. You have Turkey and how we are dealing with Turkey. You have the migration issues. You have unity against ISIL. You have concerns of erosion in the democratic process of some of our European countries that are members of EU and NATO.

So you have a full plate, and we look forward to that discussion. And we thank you for your willingness to be here and to take on this responsibility.

The CHAIRMAN. Governor, we thank you so much for being here. I want to join in with Senator Cardin in thanking you for many years of service, both in your State but on behalf of us here in our country, but in China and in other places also.

I had a great meeting with you yesterday and strongly support your nomination. I am glad that your family is willing to do this. We had some conversations about your wonderful spouse and why she would do this. Maybe you will speak to that in a moment.

But we do hope you will introduce them. We thank you for bringing them with you. We know that it is a partnership.

We are anxious to hear your testimony. If you could summarize in about 5 minutes any other materials that you want to enter into the record, we are glad to do so. But again, thank you for your distinguished past service, and thank you for your willingness to serve our country in this way.

With that, if you would begin, we would appreciate it.

bringing individuals together from different backgrounds and different points of view.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with colleagues from the State Department and all other U.S. Government agencies to advance the interests of the American people.

While I am confident that my previous experiences does prepare me for this sensitive diplomatic mission, I am under no illusion that serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation will be easy or simple.

Our relationship with Russia is among the most consequential and complex foreign policy challenges we face. As a nuclear superpower, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, we have no choice but to deal with Russia on a range of issues touching on global stability and security.

Yet we also need to recognize that today, contrary to Helsinki Final Act principles and international law, Russia continues to threaten stability in Europe, including by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors. Russia also restricts the human rights of its own people.

There is no question—underline “no question”—that the Russian Government interfered in the U.S. election last year, and Moscow continues to meddle in the democratic processes of our friends and allies.

Finally, Russia is disregarding its arms-control obligations and commitments. As we work to balance these multiple challenges, I appreciate the leadership and insight that this committee has demonstrated on Russia. And, if confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with all of you in the months and years ahead.

In short, if confirmed, I will focus on four primary approaches.

First, I will engage Russian Government officials, from the highest tiers to the local level, to advance American interests. Key among our goals are defeating ISIS, countering terrorism, upholding arms control and non-proliferation obligations and commitments, finding a political solution to the conflict in Syria, and resolving the crisis in Ukraine in a way that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and restores its territorial integrity.

I will also not hesitate to remind Government officials that they are accountable for their actions. Exhibit A is the fact that interference in the U.S. election has led directly to the current low level of trust in the relationship.

The views of Congress were heard loud and clear on this point with the near-unanimous passage, as Senator Cardin mentioned, of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

Second, I will work to protect the interests of the American people, to include U.S. business, scholars, tourists, and other American visitors who spend time in Russia and engage its good citizens. I believe people-to-people exchanges and private interactions are an important way to show that our disagreements are with the Government of Russia, not with its people.

Third, I will seek out Russian people from across all walks of life to share perspectives, to relay American values, and to deepen my long-held appreciation for Russia's rich and fascinating history and culture. As I have done in previous assignments, I look forward to

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Third, I will seek out Russian people from across all walks of life to share perspectives, to relay American values, and to deepen my already growing appreciation for Russia's rich and fascinating history and culture. As I have done in previous assignments, I look forward to meeting with civil society leaders, including those in the religious and human rights community.

While the Russian Government has sought to limit U.S. public diplomacy, our diplomatic mission in Russia continues to engage ordinary Russians and thought leaders and maintains a diverse outreach program. I plan to take part in that effort, as I strongly believe cultural understanding is enriched by an open and respectful exchange of thoughts and ideas. I look forward to meeting as many Russian citizens as possible during my travels throughout the country.

Fourth, but certainly not last in importance, I will work to ensure the safety and security of my team, who work tirelessly on behalf of the American people.

Despite Russia's actions against U.S. mission diplomatic staffing, the team—both the American and the Russian staff—continues to serve with professionalism and an unwavering commitment under difficult conditions.

I will be honored to work side by side with the mission team to ensure the continued stellar work of the U.S. diplomatic and consular mission. I also want to extend my personal appreciation for those Americans and Russians whose service at the U.S. Mission in Russia have been cut short by the Russian Government's unfortunate decision.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your comments and questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Governor Huntsman, I must tell you, I have listened to a lot of statements made by nominees. I thought your statement was as clear and as direct on the major issues, and I applaud you for that. And I appreciate your candor with the committee, and the manner in which you have presented the challenges that you would have, if confirmed as Ambassador.

I will tell you, our staffs always give us a series of areas that they want us to question on, to make sure that there is clarity. In each of those cases, you have already provided clarity in your opening statement. But that will not prevent me from asking a couple questions anyway.

people who do not have that kind of support locally. And it meant the world.

It is reflections like that that I carry with me every day of my life. And I am reminded of the values that we stand for, whether Republican or Democrat. And I will ensure that our Embassy and our missions shine that light in a way that is aspirational, that is positive, and that does represent the best of the United States.

Senator CARDIN. And I can assure you have this committee that stands with you in these struggles. Please feel comfortable in working directly with us on advancing those issues.

I want to raise just one more issue to let you know that we are deeply concerned about the security of our mission in Russia. We know that there have been efforts made to deal with the safety of our personnel in an appropriate way. There have been, of course, incursions and listening devices in different places to try to compromise the U.S. mission.

So we invite your assessment. You mentioned the safety of your personnel. We want you to know that we hope that you will be very candid with Congress as to needs, so that we can work together to make sure those who are on the frontline of diplomacy have the protections that they need.

Governor HUNTSMAN. Thank you, Senator. The unfortunate decision by the Russian Government to cut our staff significantly will impact our ability to carry on anything representing a normal relationship. Although I have every confidence that those who remain, the 455, now that we have met what the Russians have demanded to be a sense of parity, that they, being among the best and brightest in the Foreign Service and other departments and agencies, will carry out the mission in a flawless way. I have no doubt about that. I have seen it happen before.

For me, as chief of mission, mission security and mission integrity will be top of the list. With your support and endorsement, once I arrive at mission, the first order of business really is to assess what the cutbacks in personnel have meant in terms of overall security, because security has an impact on our ability to do the work, which has an impact on overall operating morale of any Embassy.

And I have seen, over the years, when missions can operate at a high level of morale, things get done, and the work of the American people gets accomplished.

So mission safety will be top of mind for me. It always has been. I know we have some challenges, particularly as it relates to the harassment of some of our diplomats, which, unfortunately, continues.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Senator FLAKE.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador Huntsman, for being here. And thank you to the family as well. We have had the privilege to know the Huntsmans for quite a while. We lived near them in Vienna, Virginia, back in 1992, or 1990 to 1992, I believe. My wife, Cheryl, even taught one of the girls piano.

Chinese really understood in new and profoundly important ways. And it left a lasting impression on both sides.

I would say that maybe if we could organize some such mission, bipartisan, we have some very important messages to send and to receive. I would very much welcome that opportunity as well.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. [Presiding.] Thank you so much.

Nobody has to convince me of your ability to serve. You and I worked together when you were in China, and you helped us in Idaho considerably.

Let me say that probably one of the most confounding things for the American people to understand is that, in the position that you are in with Russia, we have some issues with Russia, which would be an understatement, to say the least. Having said that, we also have to deal with Russia.

I think probably the biggest challenge that you are going to be facing, that we are all going to be facing, is to muster them to assist with the North Korean situation. The world has to turn against North Korea in a very united fashion, and it is going to take both Russia and China. They have already indicated at least willingness to help. But there are a lot of people who think this cannot end well on the trajectory it is on, so we are going to need everybody together.

Do you have some thoughts on that, as you move into this position?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Specific to DPRK?

Senator RISCH. Specifically to DPRK.

Governor HUNTSMAN. This falls into the side of the balance sheet that represents issues where we have some overlapping and common interests, and I think we should always take the time to explore where we have overlapping and common interests.

I think one is DPRK. We take different approaches, and we have different attitudes about denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, but I think, ultimately, we want greater safety in that region. And I think both countries share real concerns around proliferation. So that brings us together with Russia for purposes of addressing DPRK.

I think the last round of sanctions was an expression of the United Nations Security Council coming together with the most aggressive approach to North Korea I think in history, and that included Russia and it included China. It is targeting areas of North Korea's economy that I think are most lucrative for them. And if the sanctions are actually implemented, and that will be part of our work once we are on the ground, it will take a toll on things like trade in textiles, which is maybe an \$800 million category for North Korea; trade in raw materials of gas and oil, which is a large money category as well; and the remittances from workers, in the case of Russia maybe 50,000 or 60,000, which is another large cash flow item for North Korea.

So I am heartened by the support on the last round of sanctions just September 11th, just a few weeks ago. We will see if that is not a start where we can really come together more and more in addressing this significant threat not just in Northeast Asia but, indeed, to the world.

whose sovereignty we stand behind, from a security standpoint. And I think we have to live up and respect those commitments, which I think is the case.

So we have that going on. At the same time, we have areas of overlapping and common interests. I think, as with any challenging relationship—and I would say that, in the case of Russia, it is a challenging but necessary relationship. We have to be at the table together. We have to find common ground. We have to solve problems. We have to move to a higher altitude. No question about it.

But part of that effort is to show that we can succeed in what we do together. And there may be some early signs of success, for example, in Syria with the attempt to disarm and quiet the southwestern region just south of Damascus. It is still early days, but there may be some successes from there.

I think DPRK is another area where we can find that there are successes.

In the case of Ukraine, we are nowhere. And I would have to say that the main highway that leads to an improvement in U.S.-Russia relations I think goes right through Ukraine, and that is living up and respecting the Minsk accord through the Normandy process that right now is being actively worked by Ambassador Volker, our Special Representative for Ukraine Affairs.

It is a critically important issue not just for Ukraine, for the region, but for people here in the United States. So that will be an important area.

Then we have issues such as space, which, for example, it must be the level of oxygen when you are at that level, maybe no oxygen at all, that keeps us together in a collaborative fashion. That has been a great success between the United States and Russia.

The Arctic, for example, lies out there as another issue that I think we are going to have to come together on, and maybe in ways that are positive.

So I see the balance sheet. I see the need to come up with a very clear and crisp list of priorities that we can meet on, we can hopefully make some progress on, and I can return to you and report on.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ambassador, can you talk about whether you are going to be willing to continue to meet with opposition figures in Russia and dissidents who may not agree with the Putin reign?

Governor HUNTSMAN. That has always been my practice at every other post I have managed, and it will continue to be my practice. Yes, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Jeanne.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Ambassador, Governor, I really just wanted to come back to this restarted hearing to compliment you as one of the very highest quality nominees for an ambassadorial post I have seen in my 7 years on the Foreign Relations Committee.

In our personal meeting and then in your opening statement, I think you represent the very best of public service and of leader-

Then I think we have to say, what are the options in terms of the tools that one might have? There may be some options on the technology side with the private sector that would be worth looking at, and I think that we always ought to be exploring private-sector technology approaches.

But then I think the work that you are doing with others, including Senator Murphy, on really funding some efforts that would maybe produce a counternarrative is really important. And I know it may seem to be a drop in the bucket or a start as compared to what we are up against, but it is a start. And I think that is important, to begin to work our way through what ultimately a longer term solution might look like.

Senator COONS. I appreciate in your written statement, in your opening statement, and in our private conversation, the clarity and forcefulness of your view about Russia's malign actions in our election, in the region against our alliances in Western Europe, the ongoing threat they pose to human rights both at home and around the world, and your commitment to join with us in working to advance American values in this context.

So I very much look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I always appreciate my name being name-dropped in answer to another Senator's question. I appreciate that.

Senator RISCH. That is called pandering in politics. It will get you everywhere. [Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Governor, for taking on this responsibility. I really enjoyed the conversation that we had.

And I do appreciate your commitment to the Global Engagement Center. Senator Portman and I are very pleased that the administration, after some question, has now transferred \$40 million to help set up that capacity to help young nations build independent and objective media. I think that you will be instrumental in helping figure out how that plays out going forward.

With that being said, let me ask a little thornier question here.

I really appreciated your clear statement regarding Russian interference in the U.S. election, but I want to put the sort of elephant out on the table here. You are going to be working for a President who has done the opposite, who has very intentionally over and over again cast doubt on whether the Russians interfered in this election. He said, "It's all a big Dem hoax." "It's all a big Dem scam."

When he was in Poland earlier this year, he said it could have been Russia, but it could have been a lot of other people.

And the results are real. The latest poll suggests that 43 percent of Americans do not believe that Russia interfered in the U.S. election. Importantly, only about 9 percent of Republicans believe that Russia interfered.

So just let me ask you that, because everybody is wondering, how do you represent to the Russians your belief, and all of our belief, that they unquestionably interfered in the U.S. election when your boss, the President of the United States, is engaged in a fairly in-

Governor HUNTSMAN. You have my commitment, Senator. The Balkans is an example of what we have described earlier, specifically when you point to Serbia and Kosovo.

When we leave a vacuum behind, things happen. And I think this is an example of what has happened in that vacuum. I will watch it. I have taken note of it, and it will certainly be part of my discussions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Governor, welcome. You are superbly qualified for this position. I look forward to supporting your nomination. It is a very tough job. I am glad the President asked you to do it.

So I was involved in some of the circumstances that Senator Murphy was asking you about. I will switch and tell you an interesting irony.

While I was a candidate in an election that has been much discussed for these reasons, my son was deployed in the European Reassurance Initiative. His entire Marine battalion was deployed between the Black and the Baltic to try to help reassure our allies on the border with Russia that the United States was still there for them and would help protect them against Russia. I want to ask you about that, because I am going to be following up with the next nominee on similar questions.

In your capacity as Ambassador to Russia, should you be confirmed, you will also have the opportunity to dialogue with other European nations' ambassadors in Russia. And I think an important part of your job is going to be working as you can with the Russian Government to make sure that we advance and protect nations on their border that are currently under serious assault in many domains by Russia.

I wonder if you could just address that aspect, how you might approach that aspect of your job.

Governor HUNTSMAN. My approach, Senator, will be to work with our friends and allies in Europe, specifically the G5, who I think are very dedicated to the issues that are prominently on our security agenda.

We all know the vulnerable states. They are right on the periphery. And they need the help and support that NATO and, specifically, the United States can provide.

I think we are better and stronger when we are coordinating with those who are regionally focused and on the ground and maybe have a slightly different perspective. And I learned this while serving in China and working with the G5 in other contexts, including North Korea, including the South China Sea.

And I would fully expect to consult on a regular basis with my G5 colleagues to make sure that we are plugged into the work of the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Scaparrotti, along with NATO command as well. I very much want to make visits to both those areas to ensure that we are all of one mind as it relates to, for example, understanding the last training exercise that is playing out in Belarus even as we sit here that will go on through September 20th.

Having acknowledged that China and Russia would be critical, if there was an ability to find a nuclear deal of some kind with North Korea, you would also agree, would you not, that their belief about whether or not the U.S. would follow a deal, if we reached it, that could be important to them in determining how much they wanted to work with us to press for a deal?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Well, obviously, there are trust issues all around.

Senator KAINE. Right.

Governor HUNTSMAN. And they constantly have to be worked on to shore up that trust deficit. The deployment of THAAD, for example, most recently, among other things, is causing consternation with both China and Russia.

But we have worked together successfully in the six-party context, so I have seen examples of where three of us can, in fact, take on an issue, share information, work from a common sheet, a common playbook, and try to get things done.

Senator KAINE. Right. Thanks for your continued willingness to serve.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Governor, Ambassador, thank you so much for taking this big responsibility on.

Thank you to your family, who is also willing to undertake those sacrifices.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the Governor also.

On one thing that Senator Kaine said, enforcement of the sanctions on North Korea, very important; enforcement of the sanctions against Russia, very important. So we are going to need your help in enforcing the sanctions. We are already seeing, in regard to a sale with Turkey, that the sanctions may be, in fact, being violated.

So we are going to need your attention, if we are going to be effective in the messaging and action against Russia.

Senator RISCH. Tough balancing act.

For members of the committee, we will keep the record open until the close of business on Thursday. That includes members' ability to submit questions for the record.

So again, thank you so much. You and your family are free to go. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell, would you care to join us?

Mr. Mitchell, thank you so much for joining us. The position that you have been nominated for is certainly an important position. I apologize for our time today. We are going to be on a bit of a short string, since we have a vote that starts shortly this afternoon.

So instead of making an opening statement—I do not want to preach on about Europe and how important it is to us. I am going to pass on that and get to your opening statement.

Senator CARDIN. I have already commented a little bit earlier, so we can get right to the witness.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

So, Mr. Mitchell, the floor is yours.

If confirmed, I will view as my central task the preservation and strengthening of the Western alliance to ensure that my young children are able to enjoy the benefits of peace and abundance that we have known in our lifetimes.

If confirmed, my first priority will be to give weight and substance to the administration's affirmation of America's commitment to Article 5 of NATO. Our allies, especially frontline states between the Baltic and Black Seas, must know that the defense of the West rests on an unwavering commitment and covenant.

To be credible, it requires a strong forward posture and a willingness by all allies, including the largest and wealthiest European states, to bear their full share in defense spending.

The fight against ISIS must also be an urgent priority. We need all allies to assist robustly in defeating ISIS, to share information on terrorist threats, and address the sources of migration and extremism in North Africa. We must work closely with Europe on Syria, Iran, and North Korea, and rally support for the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan.

And we must work to keep Turkey, long the linchpin of NATO's southern flank, firmly anchored in the transatlantic community.

In both the east and south, we must be sober-minded about Russia. It is in the interests of the American and Russian peoples to lower tensions between the world's two largest nuclear powers. At the same time, the Russian Government must understand that a return to normal relations will be impossible as long as it attacks its neighbors, abuses its people, and attempts to undermine confidence in America's institutions and those of our allies.

If confirmed, I will urge Moscow to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine, and to end its support for hostile regimes in Syria and Iran.

America is greatest when our alliances are strong and our trade is vibrant. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the trillion-dollar transatlantic economy that gives jobs to millions of Americans. I will build on the administration's efforts to help Europe enhance its energy security through diversification of energy sources and routes, and highlight the viability of American LNG as an option for these efforts.

In all of these areas, we must be clear about what we stand for as an alliance. The glue that holds us together is greater than a treaty or a set of institutional rules. It is the glue of a common civilization, the West, grounded in freedom, democracy, and rule-of-law, and united by bonds of culture and shared sacrifice.

As Secretary Tillerson said, "American leadership requires moral clarity." We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home.

If confirmed, I will use the relationships I have forged in Europe, among the talented staff of the State Department and here on the Hill to advance U.S. interests, values, and prosperity in Europe. And I will use the leadership skills gained at CEPA to help realize Secretary Tillerson's vision of making every State Department dollar count for the American taxpayer.

I am humbled to be considered for this position. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you

must work to keep Turkey, long the linchpin of NATO's southern flank, firmly anchored in the transatlantic community.

In both the east and south, we must be sober-minded about Russia. It is in the interests of the American and Russian peoples to lower tensions between the world's two largest nuclear powers. At the same time, the Russian government must understand that a return to normal relations will be impossible as long as it attacks its neighbors, abuses its people and attempts to undermine confidence in America's institutions and those of our allies. If confirmed, I will urge Moscow to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and the Balkans and to end its support for hostile regimes in Syria and Iran. I will also support efforts to reduce the vulnerabilities of our allies and partners to corruption, disinformation, and other forms of malign influence that Russia uses to weaken their institutions and civil societies.

America is greatest when our alliances are strong and our trade is vibrant. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the trillion-dollar transatlantic economy that gives jobs to millions of Americans. I will build on the administration's efforts to help Europe enhance its energy security through diversification of energy sources and routes. And I will highlight the viability of American LNG as an option for these diversification efforts.

In all of these areas, we must be clear about what we stand for as an alliance. The glue that holds us together is greater than a treaty or set of institutional "rules." It is the glue of a common civilization—the West—grounded in freedom, democracy, and rule-of-law, and united by bonds of memory, culture and shared sacrifice. As Secretary Tillerson has said, "American leadership requires moral clarity." We are open and free societies, and we welcome those who wish to join our alliance. We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home.

Whatever America seeks to do in the world, we are more apt to succeed when the West acts together. If confirmed, I will use the relationships I have forged over the past decade throughout Europe, among the talented staff of the State Department and here on the Hill to advance U.S. interests, values and prosperity in Europe. And I will use the executive leadership skills I have gained at CEPA to help realize Secretary Tillerson's vision of making every State Department dollar count for the American taxpayer.

I am humbled to be considered for this position. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I welcome your comments and questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Mitchell.
Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Mitchell, welcome. Again, as I told you, I very much appreciate your willingness to serve our country.

The Obama administration takes pride that they were able to get Europe to have consistent sanctions against Iran that the United States initially brought forward. And they have a right to have that pride, because that was the effective leverage on Iran to get them to sit down and negotiate. No question about it.

But I want to take you back a little bit in history in this committee, when Congress passed the enhanced sanctions against Iran. The administration was not quite as excited as we were taking up that sanction legislation, because it took away some of the flexibility that any administration likes to have.

After it passed, they recognized that it gave them additional strength in dealing with our European partners to get tough sections against Iran that ultimately led to negotiations.

My point is, with Russia, we are in a very similar situation. This Congress has spoken with a very, very strong voice, 98-2 in the United States Senate.

These are tough sanctions. And it gives the President a much stronger hand. But he has to play the hand.

You are going to be the key person in the administration working with our European partners to get consistency in the sanctions im-

were in our office, Senator Corker's and my office, asking for modifications, which we put into the bill to take care of their concerns. They may very well be saying something differently to a different audience, but there was clearly an effort made for that to happen.

In reviewing the legislation, we found areas where Europe, in some cases, had stronger sanctions than the United States. We have toughened our sanctions to equal what Europe has done.

I still tell you that you are going to hear accounts that, "We cannot do this. We cannot do this." And then after we all do it, they take credit for saying that we finally got unity and we are making a difference.

It takes leadership. It takes leadership to make this work. The stakes could never be higher, in what Russia is doing today.

You are going to be the key person, because you are going to be the conduit through to all of the different embassies in Europe. And you are going to have ambassadors who are not going to want to be bothered with another thing on their plate. And yet, I do not know of a higher priority than what Russia is doing against our interests and getting an effective way for sanctions to work.

My last point would be, we expect you to work very closely with this committee on this issue. This is not a partisan issue. As you know, this is clearly and overwhelming support.

We need your commitment that you will work with us and keep us informed as to the progress that we are making with Europe and the sanctions against Russia.

The last point I would ask is that you mentioned the Helsinki Commission. On behalf of Senator Wicker, it is the regional commission that is directly involved in your portfolio. We would ask that you cooperate with the Helsinki Commission, you actually have representation there, but that you would work with the Helsinki Commission on these issues.

I would ask, in both of those cases, that you would work with our committee and work with the Helsinki Commission.

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, I take that to heart. Let me say that I have worked a lot with folks on this committee in the past and their staff. I have also spent time with some of my predecessors in this post, understanding how they have approached Congress. And you can expect to see, if I am confirmed, my full engagement.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mitchell, congratulations on your nomination. And thank you for your willingness to consider service in this post.

And I appreciate the time that you spent with me talking about the challenges facing our international diplomatic efforts, and the State Department itself.

You will have a large public diplomacy shop, and the office is charged with implementing Russian policies, as you have testified to, including our efforts to counter Russian disinformation.

How do you expect the European Bureau to work with the newly constituted Global Engagement Center to address the disinformation that is coming from Russia?

And we talked about the issue of who is in charge. And the consensus of the people who testified there is that we do not currently have someone in charge of heading up these efforts.

So not only do we not have a whole-of-government approach, we do not have somebody charged with doing this, and we do not have somebody currently named to do that.

So I guess I would ask, do you agree with that? And who should take that role?

I have had a chance to ask in the Armed Services Committee members of our military whether this is something that they should have a hand in. They used to. Russia has just set up a new unit in their military that is responsible for information and cyber information. So what I was told is that that is not the role of the military.

As you know, after the Cold War, we disbanded the U.S. Information Agency and so much of the apparatus that was designed to counter disinformation.

So from your perspective, what is the role of the State Department? Who should lead this effort? And how do we get to that whole-of-government approach?

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, I think that is a very important question. I think we have allies both at the NATO level, at the nation-state level, and at the EU level, who are grappling with similar questions, in part because, as pluralistic societies who value an open media discussion, we have to balance security and privacy. So I do not think that we are unique or alone in realizing the magnitude of this problem and seeking to understand how we use our tools.

Even before the new direction and legislation on GEC, the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs has been active on this issue, providing resources for media training in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, working to increase cyber defenses in the period since the interference in the elections.

I would say that, moving forward, what is important is that, now that it has been made clear that the Global Engagement Center will have this as an invigorated mandate, that as the resources come into place and leadership comes into place for GEC, I think coordination within the department, obviously with the bureau because of the vast reservoir of expertise on the situation on the ground—which I think will be indispensable for the GEC to be able to do its job will, but also in the interagency process.

Beyond that, not being privy to where the administration wants to take that specific set of issues, I would not want to speculate further. But I will say that I strongly support the new direction of the GEC and would be committed, if I am confirmed, to ensuring its close coordination with the Bureau.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Mitchell, for your willingness to serve.

I thank your family as well for your willingness to support Mr. Mitchell in his service.

Let me ask you two questions, if I might.

strategic equation vis-a-vis Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, the Black Sea littorals, the relationship with Russia.

So at the strategic level, I think it is absolutely critical that we sustain engagement with the Turkish Government. At the same time, in the period since the attempted coup, the department has raised very sincere concerns about the state of rule of law, human rights, and religious minority issues inside Turkey. And there have been developments that are very concerning.

I think we have to balance our approach in continuing to work closely with the Turks as a strategic partner in the region. But I do not think that we should be shy about raising our concerns in these areas. And I think, if I am confirmed, in coordination with the Secretary, my approach would be to emphasize the common interests that we have in expanding our strategic engagement, but in an appropriate manner to continue to raise those concerns, to look for ways to work closely with Turkish civil society, to expand our people-to-people contacts. I think there is a lot more that could be done in those areas.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Mr. Mitchell, I believe that we are safest and strongest when we lead with our values. Our values do not always make our allies happy, because they often do not share them. But I think an analysis of our interests has to include our values, particularly with regards to human rights and open society.

So I thank you for that answer. I look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator Murphy.

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

It is good to see you, Mr. Mitchell. Thank you for stepping up and being willing to serve. I look forward to supporting your nomination when it comes before the United States Senate, and working very closely with you as the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe.

But as I did with Governor Huntsman, I want to just acknowledge some underlying realities with you for a moment, and get your take on them.

This administration has opened up a pretty open war with the idea, concept, and funding for diplomacy. The budget proposed a 40 percent reduction in funding for the State Department. The hiring freeze seems to apply to only one agency today, which is the State Department. There has been a ban or at least a slowdown on promotions and lateral transfers within the agency.

You are going to be asked for your counsel by the Secretary and perhaps by the President as to whether to, once again, reup a request for a 40 percent reduction in funding, whether to continue the hiring freeze, and whether to slow down transfers and promotions.

Can you just share with us what your advice will be when asked whether to continue these policies that many of us see as leading to an evisceration of diplomacy abroad?

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator Murphy. And I also want to express my gratitude for the meeting that we had, and the years of cooperation that we have had with your of-

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, this is obviously a very important issue. I have been on the record in the past strongly in support of robust transatlantic trade agenda, of T-TIP.

The relationship that we have with the United Kingdom is a very old and very special relationship. This is a relationship that, in strategic terms, is vital to us. But also, economically, the United Kingdom is our largest single source of foreign direct investment, a conduit for a major swath of our trade with Europe.

And I think our priority is to ensure an amicable divorce. And our goal is to see that we end the process of Brexit both with a strong strategic and economic relationship with the EU and a strong strategic and economic relationship with the U.K.

President Trump has been clear that he wants to see a vibrant bilateral trade agreement with the United Kingdom. My understanding is that we are in informal talks, the scoping exercises that are underway with the U.S.-U.K. trade and investment working group.

I think we have to strike a balance here between allowing the EU and U.K. to flesh out the substance of their own deal, not least because whatever arrangements we come to the British will be contingent on the deal, but also sending a signal to American businesses and to the British as our allies that there is a process underway for establishing some groundwork or some principles for the deal that will eventually be done between the United States and the U.K.

The lead on this is obviously USTR. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the folks at USTR and other relevant agencies to ensure that we end this process with a strong trade relationship both with the EU and with the U.K.

Senator MURPHY. I just want to go on the record one more time saying I think that would be an enormous strategic mistake. If Europe is to disintegrate, the responsibility for it will lie at the feet of this administration, if it pursues a bilateral trade agreement with Great Britain at the expense of a trade agreement with the European Union. And I would hope that you would counsel against it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Mitchell, thank you, again, for your willingness to serve. And thank you to your family for the sacrifice I know that they are going to undertake with this.

With that, we are going to close the hearing.

I would state for the record that the record will be open until Thursday, to close of business on Thursday. That will include questions for the record.

Senator RISCH. With that, again, thank you, Mr. Mitchell.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

particular, were marked by accusations of government interference and manipulation of the electoral process.

Authorities conduct politically motivated arrests, detentions, and trials of those who dissent from government policies or perspectives. Dozens of Ukrainian citizens have also been targeted for baseless prosecution.

Other grave problems reported in the press include allegations of torture and excessive force by law enforcement officials that sometimes led to deaths; prison overcrowding, substandard/life-threatening prison conditions; executive branch pressure on the judiciary; lack of due process in politically motivated cases; electoral irregularities; extensive official corruption; violence against women; limits on women's rights; trafficking in persons; discrimination against persons with disabilities; social stigma against persons with HIV/AIDS; and limitations on workers' rights.

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 Russia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Since Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, he has initiated a crackdown on dissenting voices that many have characterized as a return to Soviet-era repressive practices. His government has gutted independent institutions, turned the parliament into a rubber stamp, eliminated judicial independence, and taken control of all television media. The government has subjected hundreds of dissenters to politically-motivated prosecution, launched a crackdown on independent civil society through laws that label NGOs "undesirable foreign organizations" and "foreign agents," prevented the political opposition from appearing on the ballot, and targeted unpopular minorities for harassment and discrimination. Recent new laws and prosecutions designed to clamp down on internet freedom threaten the one remaining bastion of free speech.

Authorities routinely deprive LGBTI individuals and their supporters of free assembly rights. A 2013 law prohibiting so called propaganda of homosexuality to minors has provided grounds to deny LGBTI activists and their supporters the right of assembly and has been used on multiple occasions to interrupt public demonstrations by LGBTI activists. Hate crimes against LGBTI persons are common and rarely investigated. State-controlled propaganda is openly homophobic, contributing to heightened societal stigma and discrimination.

Authorities have used extremism charges to suppress many forms of dissent and difference, including to revoke the legal status of some minority religious organizations and individuals. The "Yarovaya" amendments to antiterrorism legislation further undermined freedoms of religion, expression, and assembly by banning the sharing of religion outside of officially sanctioned religious buildings, banning in practice prayer in private homes, private conversations between co-religionists, dissemination of religious materials, preaching, and inter-faith discussion.

Nevertheless, if confirmed, I promise to work with allies and partners to continue to call on the U.S. Government, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting regularly with human rights activists, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to meet regularly with a broad spectrum of Russian society, including human rights activists, civil society, and religious minorities.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the U.S. Government to address cases of notable political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly detained in Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge Russian authorities to take steps to ensure the release of victims of politically-motivated prosecution, conduct independent and credible investigations into reported human rights violations, and hold any perpetrators responsible.

I will lead Mission Russia in continuing to support longstanding efforts to ensure the rights of all Russians are protected, and to promote values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity.

Question 6. Will you engage with the U.S. Government on matters of human rights, civil rights and accountable governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Although the bilateral relationship has been strained by other issues, I believe it is important to continue to express our concerns about our longstanding American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. As Secretary Tillerson has said, "promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy."¹⁷ The Russian people deserve a government

Question 14. The decline in the U.S.-Russia relationship could generate pressure on you to smooth over bilateral relations wherever possible. But the reasons for this decline lie squarely with the Kremlin, because of its aggression in Ukraine, Syria, and against the United States and our allies. What will be your diplomatic posture in Russia, given these factors? How will you approach the implementation of Russia sanctions, including the Magnitsky Act?

Answer. The United States is open to pragmatic cooperation with Russia in areas that benefit the American people. At the same time, we will hold Russia accountable for meeting its international obligations and commitments and will deter Russia from actions that would undermine international security.

I am committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere, and if confirmed, I will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable. I am committed contributing to the implementation of all Russia sanctions, including the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which Congress recently passed. These sanctions have been carefully coordinated with our allies, and I will maintain this collaborative approach. The goal of the sanctions, however, remains the same: to impose costs on Russia, sufficient to change the U.S. Government's behavior.

Chechnya /LGBTQ Rights

Question 15. Global attention was focused this year on Chechnya, where hundreds of gay and bisexual men were rounded up and detained. Many were tortured and some were killed, either as a result of torture or in so-called honor killings. Reports indicate that new detentions continue to happen and that the Chechen authorities are using new tactics to try to keep these cases out of the public eye. What would you do to address this situation, and the broader human rights crisis in Chechnya?

Answer. I also share your concern about the violence against the LGBTQ community in Chechnya that was brought to light by brave journalists at *Novaya Gazeta* and researchers at Human Rights Watch. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBTQ persons, and extrajudicial killings.

Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has requested from the U.S. Government a full investigation of the reports of abuse against LGBTQ persons in Chechnya and accountability for those found to be responsible.

If confirmed, I will support the use of various fora and mechanisms to shed light on the situation for LGBTQ persons in Russia, and will stand in solidarity with civil society organizations and journalists working to respond to the crisis.

Question 16. The anti-LGBT violence in Chechnya takes place against a backdrop of homophobic laws and homophobic violence throughout Russia. How do you plan to raise the human rights concerns of Russia's LGBTQ community with U.S. Government counterparts?

Answer. I believe the Department of State's mission is at all times guided by longstanding American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. I also believe the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution. I am concerned the space for civil society and free expression in Russia has become increasingly restricted, in particular for LGBTQ individuals.

I am also committed to upholding the rights of individuals, including LGBTQ persons, in Russia and elsewhere and will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners to continue to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 17. Countering U.S. Government aggression will be more effective when it is done in a coordinated fashion with our allies. How will you coordinate closely with European counterparts and other partners in Moscow to deter the Kremlin's aggressive foreign policy and support human rights and democratic values?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign to undermine core institutions of the West and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market systems. This campaign is aggressive, coordinated, and involves the entire U.S. Government. The United States should continue to work closely with its Allies and partners to en-

six-party format; this example proves the three nations are capable of working from a common playbook to get things done.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO GOVERNOR JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR. BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. This month, the Russian Government poured tens of thousands of troops into its Zapad military exercises. What do you think the significance of these exercises with these kinds of troop levels means for American security posture in Europe?

Answer. The ZAPAD 2017 exercise has raised regional tensions within Europe. Russia's disregard for the territorial integrity of its neighbors has caused significant concern among NATO Allies and partners about potential threats to their security.

Russia has the right to exercise its forces; the United States and its NATO Allies conduct military exercises as well. However, we adhere scrupulously to all of our commitments with regard to military transparency under the OSCE's Vienna Document and have been careful to meet all relevant arms control obligations. Russia's lack of transparency regarding some of its large military activities has heightened tension and increased the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. Russia's neighbors are particularly concerned about Russia's so-called "snap" military exercises where Russia fails to inform its neighbors in advance.

It is important the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. If confirmed, I am committed to working with State Department Leadership, other agencies, and our Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats that we face.

In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies and partners. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. NATO's unity is critical to an effective deterrent.

Question 2. How much of a military threat does Russia pose to our European neighbors?

Answer. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to use military force against its neighbors, most recently in Ukraine, and to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the frontline states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over \$750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important that our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

Question 3. What are the administration's plans to continue to reassure our European allies that the United States remains committed to transatlantic security?

Answer. NATO's unity and U.S. leadership are both critical to an effective deterrent against aggression. In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all.

It's important that the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. I'm committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats we face today.

One of the steps the administration has taken to bolster our military presence in Europe is the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which includes \$4.8 billion re-

Ukraine has a right to defend itself against Russian aggression. The United States continues to focus on finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine through the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Russian aggression in Ukraine includes the use of hybrid warfare to include disinformation and malign influence. Ukraine was the target of cyber-attacks in December 2015 and 2016, and in June 2017. On September 29, an interagency team will visit Kyiv for meetings with Ukrainian officials to discuss policy and incident response to cyber-attacks. Countering hybrid warfare requires a broad whole of government approach in order to build national resiliency.

In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than \$750 million in security assistance to provide training and equipment to help Ukraine better monitor and secure its borders while deploying its forces more safely and effectively. The United States and allies established a Multinational Joint Commission and training group to coordinate international efforts and build Ukraine's defense capacity to deter further Russian aggression. Sanctions, too, remain a valuable tool in this effort. As Secretary Tillerson told his Russian counterpart directly, Minsk-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements its commitments, and separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns the peninsula to Ukraine.

More broadly, the United States, along with our European Allies and partners, has assisted and encouraged Ukraine to pursue broad reforms that will reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, and reduce corruption. Reform across sectors such as energy, the economy, land, pension, education, healthcare, defense, and most importantly judicial, will help to build a stronger and more resilient Ukraine. Continuing Kyiv's democratic and economic transformation, coupled with more capable Ukrainian Armed Forces, contributes directly to Ukraine's resilience in the face of continued Russian aggression, and in particular, Moscow's hybrid warfare tactics.

Question 7. While we must focus on Russia's ongoing military aggression, as you stated in your hearing, Russia is increasingly engaged in hybrid warfare including effective strategic communications. Do you believe the United States should maintain investments into public diplomacy efforts in Eastern Europe?

Answer. Yes. Public diplomacy efforts that invest in people through exchanges, media literacy programs, and English-language trainings are indispensable as the United States seeks to advance its national interests in the face of a rising tide of Russian disinformation. Initiatives such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the Fulbright Program, and other people-to-people exchanges build enduring relationships that cannot be perfectly measured but rank among our most effective investments. This is particularly true in countries such as Ukraine and Moldova, where Russian disinformation threatens to turn citizens away from the Euro-Atlantic community. Many U.S. exchange program alumni become leaders in their home countries; by investing in a country's most promising youth through short exchanges, we invest in a shared vision for the future. Media-focused exchanges, such as Ukraine's Media Partnership Program that pairs independent Ukrainian media outlets with U.S. media outlets in a long-term mentorship relationship, are equally impactful and result in better quality information for the Ukrainian public. Empowering the public with facts advances the U.S. goal of a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine.

To inoculate foreign publics against disinformation, our embassies work with European partners to build media literacy skills in audiences vulnerable to disinformation and fake news. By training citizens to more carefully scrutinize news items for simple markers such as source, author, and byline, we can empower countless people to protect themselves against disinformation and mitigate the firehose of falsehood, particularly in critical regions such as eastern Ukraine. This moves the needle forward on the U.S. strategic goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, I will ensure this work continues.

English-language programs enable foreign publics to consume alternate news and obtain a more balanced perspective of the world. Ukrainian President Poroshenko announced 2016 as the Year of English and promoted English learning as a way to make Ukraine's workforce more competitive as Ukraine pursues its chosen European trajectory. U.S. public diplomacy programs are essential to fulfilling this goal. English-language programs not only provide skills that help Eastern Europeans pursue a Euro-Atlantic path but also build lasting people-to-people relationships in even the most challenging context.

Question 8. What programs do you believe are most effective to countering Russian propaganda?

If confirmed, I will certainly take every opportunity to raise this in Moscow, as this is a significant issue in the bilateral relationship.

The administration is taking additional steps to pressure Russia to return to compliance and ensure Russia will not gain a significant military advantage from its decision to violate the Treaty. If confirmed, I will work closely with our Allies as we develop proportionate responses to Russia's ongoing violation and make very clear to Russian officials U.S. concerns about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and the risks it poses to European and Asian security.

Question 11. We have seen Russia build an increasingly cooperative relationship with Iran, particularly vis-a-vis Syria, but also Afghanistan and elsewhere. How should the United States respond?

Answer. Recent Russian actions in Syria and ongoing cooperation with Iran across a range of issues are concerning. The region is complex, and U.S. efforts to defeat ISIS must factor in our interest in ending the conflict in Syria and containing Iran's influence.

If confirmed, I will remain clear-eyed about Russia's actions in Syria and its relationship with Iran, and I will be frank in our dialogue with Russia. I will be resolute in calling out Russia's bad behavior as it arises, and will consider our full range of sanctions, as well as military, diplomatic, and law-enforcement tools to protect U.S. interests.

If confirmed, I will urge Russia to fully support the Afghan Government through coordinated international efforts aimed at ensuring an Afghanistan that is stable, prosperous, and not a threat to the United States and others. To date, cooperation between the United States and Russia on Afghanistan has been limited. The United States has offered bilateral consultations with Russia to discuss how we might cooperate to support Afghanistan and to foster a peace process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, though it remains to be seen whether Russia is interested in playing a productive role in this process, or rather that of a spoiler.

Question 12. We have seen Russia build an increasingly cooperative relationship with Iran, particularly vis a vis Syria, but also Afghanistan and elsewhere. What do you assess to be Russia's long term interest in building a relationship with the world's leading sponsor of terrorism?

Answer. Russia views Iran as a key partner in addressing common threats: impeding Western interests in its region of influence, maintaining stability in Central Asia, retaining influence in Afghanistan and Syria, and blocking U.S. goals in the Middle East.

Moscow and Tehran have cooperated to bolster the Assad regime since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, with Russia dramatically increasing its support in September 2015. Iranian-supported militias backed by Russian air support enabled pro-regime forces to seize and hold key terrain from opposition forces. In turn, Russia offered Iran legitimization by giving it a seat at the table in international discussions about the Syrian conflict. At the same time, Moscow and Tehran are jockeying for the role of top influencer on the Assad regime.

Russian official rhetoric shows it is keen to expand its economic and trade relationship with Iran. However, Russia and Iran are both highly dependent on energy exports. While trade volumes between Russia and Iran grew to \$2.2 billion in 2016 from \$1.3 billion in 2015, Iran is only Russia's 42nd-largest trading partner. Virtually the entire increase in Russian exports to Iran from 2015–2016 came in military procurements and civil aviation.

Question 13. How can the United States and its allies, particularly in the NATO, work to confront this alliance?

Answer. Countering traditional military threats remains as central to NATO as it was when the Alliance was created in 1949. But today's security environment involves a broader array of challenges, including asymmetric warfare. Iran is developing ballistic missiles that threaten NATO Allies. Russian disinformation and malign influence campaigns seek to undermine Western democratic institutions and principles, sow disunity within Europe, and weaken our transatlantic bonds.

NATO is already responding. Under the leadership of Secretary General Stoltenberg all Allies agreed, by the end of 2017, to outline concrete plans for reaching their 2 percent defense spending goal. In June 2017, Allies also individually agreed to take on the full set of military capabilities assigned to them by NATO—the first time this has ever occurred. The President has proposed spending \$4.8 billion on the European Deterrence Initiative as a concrete demonstration of the U.S. will and capability to defend our Allies. In July 2016, Allies declared Initial Operational Capability of a NATO ballistic missile defense capability, which defends Alli-

The United States remains concerned over Russia's low political will to address human trafficking. If confirmed, I will engage Russian officials at all levels to encourage them to take concrete steps to prevent trafficking, protect the victims, and prosecute the offenders.

Question 16. Venezuela's state-owned oil company PdVSA, (Pedevesa) and its subsidiary Citgo—which has energy infrastructure in the United States—are under extreme financial pressure. Under a deal last year, 49.9 percent of Citgo was mortgaged to Rosneft, the Russian Government-owned oil company run by Vladimir Putin crony Igor Sechin. It is also possible that Rosneft acquired other PdVSA bonds on the open market what could bring their ownership potential to over 50 percent. If Citgo defaults on its debts, Rosneft, an entity currently under American sanctions because of Russia's belligerent behavior, could come to own a majority stake in strategic US energy infrastructure including 3 refineries and several pipelines.

- Does this potential deal concern you?

Answer. Russian state-controlled oil company Rosneft has extended a number of loans to Venezuelan state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A (PDVSA). Some of these loans are secured by PDVSA assets located in the United States, specifically PDVSA-owned U.S.-based petroleum company Citgo. At this time, PDVSA is not in default on loan payments to Rosneft and there are no plans to transfer Citgo ownership to Rosneft.

Question 17. Do you believe the United States Committee on Foreign Investment (CFIUS) should be reviewing this case?

Answer. Should a change in the foreign ownership of Citgo occur in the future, the transaction would be closely scrutinized by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (CFIUS).

Question 18. Are you concerned about other efforts of the Russian Government to meddle in the American energy market?

Answer. This CFIUS review process allows the U.S. Government to impose mitigation measures or block any ownership changes which could negatively impact U.S. national security.

Question 19. Three respected international tribunals have concluded in unanimous decisions that Russia violated international laws and norms by expropriating Yukos oil company and must compensate shareholders. Additionally, in 2014, the European Court of Human Rights concluded that Russia's actions against Yukos violated Russia's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights and awarded Yukos shareholders more than \$2.5 billion in compensation. However, thousands of U.S. investors have lost an estimated \$14 billion and have received no compensation.

- Will you engage with the Russian Government and advocate for the U.S. investors who have yet to receive compensation?

Answer. We are currently awaiting the outcome of two cases in front of U.S. Federal and Dutch courts involving the U.S. investors in Yukos. If I am confirmed, I will monitor these cases closely and, if necessary, will advocate to the Russian Government on behalf of the U.S. investors in Yukos for compensation.

Question 20. As you know, the situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Russia can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, with a strict "anti-propaganda" law that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality. And the Russian republic of Chechnya has lately conducted an anti-gay purge that really beggars description, with witch hunts, torture, and summary executions.

- Unfortunately, the Trump administration's response to these attacks on this vulnerable community has been weak. Secretary Tillerson and the President have not raised Chechnya publicly even once and Secretary Tillerson has stated that he does not view protecting human rights as a priority of his department. This could have dangerous implications for security and stability in the region.
- How do you plan to raise human rights concerns with your Russian counterparts, and especially with regards to the LGBTQ community?

Answer. I believe the Department of State's mission is at all times guided by long-standing American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. I also believe the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution—and am concerned the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted.

to Russia that the United States remains strongly committed to NATO and defending our European allies?

Answer. The United States is committed under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty to the collective defense of any and all NATO Allies. Collective defense under Article 5 is a bedrock principle of NATO, which underpins the transatlantic relationship. President Trump has publicly reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to Article 5, as have Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis.

The United States' commitment to Article 5 is ironclad, and the United States backs up this commitment through a broad set of actions, including deterrence and reassurance. This includes leading a rotational multinational battle group in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. In addition, the United States supports deterrence and defense activities in Europe through the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). This administration's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request included \$4.8 billion—a \$1.4 billion increase from last year—to fund ERI.

The ERI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises. These activities also support Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which focuses on individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Question 3. Russia is also currently out of compliance with the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and is developing ground-launched cruise missiles prohibited under the Treaty.

What can we do to bring Russia back into compliance with the INF Treaty? Will you commit to raising this issue with the appropriate contacts if appointed as Ambassador to Russia? What is your perspective about the trajectory that strategic arms reduction dialogue should take, between Russia and the United States and also China?

Answer. The administration has made very clear to Russia its concerns about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and the risks it poses to European and Asian security. I believe the INF Treaty is in the national security interest of the United States and of Russia—but only if Russia returns to full compliance with its treaty obligations. If confirmed, I will certainly take every opportunity to raise this in Moscow, as this is a significant issue in the bilateral relationship.

Ultimately, it is up to the decision-makers at the highest levels of the Russian Government to make the political decision to return to compliance with its obligations under the INF Treaty. For several years, the U.S. has pressed Russia to do so; thus far Moscow has refused to substantively engage at either the political or technical expert level. I understand that the administration is taking additional steps to pressure Russia to return to compliance, and to ensure Russia will not gain a significant military advantage from its decision to violate the Treaty. If confirmed, I will work closely with State Department Leadership and our Allies to develop proportionate responses to Russia's ongoing violation, including sharing available information on Russia's intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missile production and flight-testing.

Regarding the trajectory of the strategic arms reduction dialogue, the administration is focused on ensuring the United States and Russia reach the central limits of the New START Treaty on February 5, 2018 before assessing next steps on strategic arms control.

Question 4. If confirmed, what would you do to persuade Russia to work with the United States and China to peacefully denuclearize the Korean Peninsula? Did you gain any insights as Ambassador to China about how we might work with China and also with Russia to develop a coordinated, multilateral diplomatic strategy to dealing with North Korea?

Answer. Both Russia and China have publicly committed to the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The international community is united in condemning North Korea's continued violations of its international obligations and commitments and demanding that North Korea give up its prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The administration's goal is to seek Russian agreement to increase pressure on North Korea through the full implementation of DPRK related U.N. sanctions, employing all economic and diplomatic levers available in order to press the Kim Jong-Un regime to change course. Russia has repeatedly called for restraint and dialogue with North Korea, but has resisted strengthening sanctions against the Kim Jong-Un regime.

and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over \$750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

The European Defense Initiative (EDI), including the \$4.8 billion requested for FY 2018, provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

Further on the military side, NATO will continue to prepare for, deter and defend against attacks that employ chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material; to invest in robust, flexible, and interoperable military capabilities; and to protect our military supply chains and work to address, as appropriate, existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts and multinational cooperation.

If confirmed, I will continue to press these core U.S. national security interests at all levels within the Russian government.

Question 2. LGBT rights have been a strong interest of mine both before coming to the Senate and here in the Senate. These rights have been under acute pressure in Russia, particularly in certain provinces such as Chechnya. What do you plan to do, if confirmed, to help protect LGBT rights in Russia?

Answer. I believe the Department of State's mission is at all times guided by long-standing American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. I also believe the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution—and am concerned the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted.

I also share your concern about the violence against the LGBT community in Chechnya that was brought to light by brave journalists at Novaya Gazeta and researchers at Human Rights Watch. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBT persons, and extrajudicial killings.

Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has requested from the Russian government a full investigation of the reports of abuse against LGBT persons in Chechnya and accountability for those found to be responsible.

I am also committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere and will continue to support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners to continue to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL 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. I have advanced the cause of democracy by helping to create the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), whose mission is to promote an economically vibrant, geopolitically secure and politically free Central and Eastern Europe with close and enduring ties to the United States. CEPA's programs and analysis have advocated for Europe's new democracies to solidify the gains of the post-Communist period and to act beacons to the countries to their east. An important component of these efforts is close engagement with both senior government leaders and civil

will urge them to conduct independent and credible investigations into reported human rights violations, and bring those responsible to justice.

In particular, I will continue to advocate for consular access to all U.S. citizens and swift due process for all detained or incarcerated U.S. citizens in Europe.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to thoroughly vet all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities, in accordance with the Leahy law. If there are findings of credible information regarding gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training and will assist their respective governments to bring them to justice.

Question 6. Will you direct U.S. embassies in Europe and Eurasia to engage on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring our Embassies in Europe and Eurasia remain engaged on these issues. As Secretary Tillerson has said, American leadership requires moral clarity. We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement on combatting democratic backsliding, civil rights, and human rights violations remain integral components of our mission.

Question 7. What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Europeans, and to support European and Eurasian civil societies, human rights activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support the Bureau's broad range of public diplomacy, media training and literacy, civil society engagement and other programs that support the goals of sharing and amplifying American values on independent media, human rights, and fostering robust civil society dialogue. Continued congressional engagement and support of professional and academic exchange programs, peer-to-peer engagement, as well as educational, cultural, and other regional programs that provide exchanges of ideas and best practices will be key to the continued success of those efforts.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team in the European and Eurasian Affairs Bureau, across all of its missions, and communicate this is a priority for me as the Assistant Secretary. If confirmed, I will urge the Bureau to reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all supervisors, at all of our missions, have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and maximize diverse talents in our workforce.

Question 9. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds that may have investments in Europe and Eurasia; however, investments in diversified mutual funds are exempt from the conflicts of interest rules. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I will divest my interests in any future investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 10. 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.

economic reforms, is arguably even more critical in the long-run than the conflict in the east.

My role, if confirmed, will be to lead in the development and implementation of the overall U.S. approach to Ukraine while coordinating closely with Special Representative Volker on negotiations with Russia. I have every confidence in Volker's ability to succeed and, if confirmed, will work to ensure frequent and effective communication between him, myself and the Secretary so that his work and the Bureau's wider approach to Ukraine are coordinated.

Question 16. Russia has also deployed its military and other influence tools to support the breakaway of territories in Georgia and Moldova. What will you do to counter Russian aggression in these states and address the "frozen conflict" situations in them? How will you promote democratic, accountable governance and the rule of law in Georgia and Moldova, critical antidotes to Russia's attempts to undermine their sovereignty and stability?

Answer. The U.S. supports Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognized borders and reject Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. I support the continuation of active U.S. participation in the Geneva International Discussions, the only forum that brings together Georgia, Russia, the United States, and de facto officials from Abkhazia and South Ossetia and addresses the security and humanitarian consequences of the 2008 conflict. The United States counters Russian influence in Georgia by supporting democracy and governance, promoting economic growth through targeted economic opportunities, and increasing access to objective sources of information for populations vulnerable to Russian influence, including in communities bordering the Russian occupied Georgian territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. U.S. policies and corresponding assistance programs in Georgia strengthen institutional checks and balances and the rule of law. U.S. assistance builds the capacity of law enforcement authorities and encourages reform in criminal justice sector institutions, strengthening Georgia's ability to prosecute transnational organized crime and maintain the country's low levels of corruption. If confirmed, I will continue to support these important priorities in Georgia.

Concerning Moldova, the United States supports the country's chosen European trajectory by building resiliency in Moldovan institutions so they are better able to withstand Russian malign influence. I will continue our bilateral coordination in a number of key areas, including efforts to modernize and increase the capacity of Moldovan law enforcement and criminal justice institutions to counter corruption, combat trafficking in persons, and support essential reforms in the justice and law enforcement sectors. I will continue to focus on building the capacity of Moldova's internal security institutions to effectively and appropriately respond to destabilizing activities. I will also continue to ensure our assistance increases Moldova's energy security by advancing renewable energy opportunities and promoting inter-regional connectivity to reduce reliance on Russian resources. Moreover, I will work to strengthen Moldova's economic growth by continuing programming that improves the business environment. Such assistance will foster investment opportunities for American businesses, as well as counter Russian malign influence by reducing Russia's economic leverage over Moldova. I will actively participate in the 5+2 negotiations, which seek to provide for a true special status for Transnistria while guaranteeing Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States supports the full implementation of the 1999 Istanbul summit commitments.

Question 17. The recent Russia sanctions legislation was signed into law on August 2 and includes a robust authorization for assistance to counter malign Russian Government influence across Europe and Eurasia. In contrast, the administration's FY18 budget request called for significant cuts across Europe, at a time when Russia is aggressively attacking democratic institutions and exerting its influence across the continent. What is your plan for implementing the intent of this legislation with respect to building resilience in democratic institutions in Europe?

Answer. Russia uses a constellation of approaches, overt and covert, to influence the policies of other governments and undermine domestic stability in Europe. Russia seeks to weaken European unity and erode faith in democratic institutions. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security, while institutionalized respect for human rights, good governance, and rule of law contributes to long-term stability. By promoting our shared democratic values, and by holding our European partners accountable to their commitments and the rule of law, the United States strengthens our partners' capabilities to mitigate vulnerabilities to malign influences and counter threats to their security and sovereignty. The approach to this must be comprehensive and whole-of-

Question 20. How will you respond to the separatist efforts of Republika Srpska, or efforts by some Bosnian Croats to carve out an ethnic entity of their own? Do you see any opportunities for substantial reform in Bosnia, including coming into compliance with the European Court of Human Rights ruling that ethnic criteria for seats in the collective presidency and parliament are discriminatory?

Answer. The United States supports the provisions of the Dayton Accords, including a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina comprised of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. The United States and our European Allies are committed to working with our Bosnian partners in a spirit of dialogue to pass election law amendments that enjoy broad political support. Any changes to the election law must move Bosnia and Herzegovina closer to European standards by addressing European Court of Human Rights rulings. If confirmed, I will actively oppose changes that run counter to European Court of Human Rights rulings, make the rulings harder to implement, or strengthen divisions among the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I agree with the administration that it is important to make progress on electoral reform prior to the October 2018 elections, and will hold accountable Bosnian politicians who undermine efforts to build consensus.

Question 21. The Helsinki Final Act and subsequent OSCE agreements have established that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are a "direct and legitimate concern" of OSCE participating states, not simply an internal matter. Can you outline your views on the OSCE and give us your vision on how the United States can best use this organization to promote U.S. objectives in Europe? Do you think that raising concerns about human rights violations and promoting democratic development is imposing our values on others, or represents a strategic part of advancing U.S. security interests in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. Although Europe has made enormous strides since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, serious challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy persist, with implications for U.S. security interests and universal human values. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), its institutions, and participants address these challenges through the most highly-developed body of human rights commitments of any regional organization. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to press all OSCE participating States to meet their commitments.

I fully support the continued close cooperation between the United States and the OSCE to advance comprehensive political-military, economic and environmental, and human dimension security and stability throughout Europe and Central Asia. In particular, if confirmed, I will continue to promote U.S. leadership and robust engagement in the OSCE to advance democratic reform, prevent and resolve conflicts, support civil society, promote tolerance and non-discrimination, and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 22. Among the OSCE region's protracted conflicts, where do you see the greatest possibility for the United States to help achieve a positive resolution?

Answer. The OSCE plays an important role toward resolving the protracted conflicts in Europe. If confirmed I will support the United States' continued active participation in the relevant negotiating bodies—including the Geneva International Discussions addressing the conflict in Georgia, the Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh, and the 5+2 talks on a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict—and will continue to encourage dialogue and engagement at the OSCE on these protracted conflicts. As a co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States fully supports efforts to help Azerbaijan and Armenia find a lasting settlement based on international law, the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, including the principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the rights to self-determination of peoples. The Geneva International Discussions—in which the United States is a participant—provide an important forum for dialogue on security, stability, and humanitarian issues in Georgia. As an observer of the 5+2 Talks on the Transnistrian Settlement Process, the United States seeks a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement of the conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for Transnistria that fully guarantees the human, political, economic, and social rights of its population. The United States also heads the OSCE field Mission in Moldova, which works on a full range of political, social, economic and other issues in Moldova, as well as conflict settlement and implementation of OSCE Summit commitments on withdrawal of Russian forces from the territory of Moldova.

Question 23. How can the OSCE help to push back against Russian disinformation and aggression across Europe?

the state of emergency and rely on its democratic institutions, which are sufficiently strong to overcome the threats and challenges Turkey faces.

The detention of U.S. citizens, Amnesty International and other human rights officials, journalists, academics, prosecutors, judges and opposition politicians is very concerning. If confirmed, I will underscore with the Turkish Government the importance of respect for due process and individual rights, as enshrined in the Turkish Constitution and consistent with Turkey's own international commitments. Non-governmental organizations, dissenting voices, and a robust civil society are essential elements of any strong democracy. If confirmed, I will remind the Turkish Government that freedom of expression, including for speech and the media— even speech which some find controversial or uncomfortable—strengthens democracy and needs to be protected. At the same time, I will continue to work to strengthen the U.S.-Turkish security relationship and to deepen Turkey's anchoring in the transatlantic alliance.

Question 26. Let us assume the United States walks away from the nuclear deal with Iran and Europe does not follow us. Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 27. With increased incidents of hate at home and in Europe, concrete initiatives addressing racism and xenophobia are critical for the safety of our diplomats. I have annually supported funds to address anti-Semitism in Europe. How can we work together to establish a similar funded initiative for Europe to counter racism and xenophobia?

Answer. If confirmed, ensuring the safety of our diplomats and all Americans abroad will be my number one priority. The Department of State works with our European partners to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance, to foster inclusion, and to promote the human rights of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, including those of the Jewish faith. The Department also annually reports on anti-Semitism in European countries where threats or attacks against Jewish persons are particularly significant. In addition to diplomatic engagement, U.S. foreign assistance in Europe and Eurasia supports and empowers civil society in these areas, helping to foster increased inclusion of minority and disadvantaged groups.

As Europe grapples with a rise in xenophobic far-right parties, I look forward, if confirmed, to working with you to strengthen our diplomacy and partnerships with Europeans as well as such European institutions as the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe to ensure we are adequately combatting racism and xenophobia. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out forcefully against racism and xenophobia.

Question 28. Anti-Semitism, harassment and discrimination against Roma and Europeans of African descent, closing borders to refugees from Africa, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere are cause for concern in Europe. As the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance, I have supported work to combat intolerance in Europe. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, what will you do to ensure that anti-Semitism, harassment and discrimination against Roma and Europeans of African descent, and closing borders to refugees from Africa, Syria, and Afghanistan remain of top priority in United States foreign policy and in our OSCE work?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy. These values form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies. Standing up for human rights and democracy is not just a moral imperative but is in the interest of the United States in making the world more stable and secure. As Secretary Tillerson said in the introduction to the 2016 Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, when it comes to human rights, "our values are our interests."

sexuality. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has sent concerning signals that it will not prioritize promotion of human rights, particularly of LGBT persons. How do you plan to raise with your counterparts the human rights issues facing LGBT persons? Do you see these issues as relevant to security and stability in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. The Department of State remains committed to protecting the human rights of all persons, including LGBT persons. Democracy and stability are most secure when all people, including the most vulnerable, live freely without fear of violence or discrimination.

In June, Secretary Tillerson emphasized that violence and discrimination against any vulnerable group undermines collective security and American values, and has raised concerns with the Russian Government about the treatment of LGBT persons in Chechnya. U.S. Embassies—including those in hostile environments—continue to take steps to protect the human rights of LGBT persons. U.S. diplomats continue to use their convening power to bring different allies together in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's special focus on the protection of vulnerable groups, including religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, and LGBT persons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. This month, the Russian government poured tens of thousands of troops into its Zapad military exercises. What do you think the significance of these exercises with these kinds of troop levels means for American security posture in Europe?

Answer. The ZAPAD 2017 exercise has raised regional tensions within Europe. Russia's disregard for the territorial integrity of its neighbors has caused significant concern among NATO Allies and partners about potential threats to their security.

Russia has the right to exercise its forces; the United States and its NATO Allies conduct military exercises as well. However, we adhere scrupulously to all of our commitments with regard to military transparency under the OSCE's Vienna Document and have been careful to meet all relevant arms control obligations. Russia's lack of transparency regarding some of its large military activities has increased the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. Russia's neighbors are particularly concerned about Russia's so-called "snap" military exercises where Russia fails to inform its neighbors in advance.

It is important the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats confronting NATO.

In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies and partners. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. NATO's unity is critical to an effective deterrent.

Question 2. How much of a military threat does Russia pose to our European neighbors? What are the administration's plans to continue to reassure our European allies that the United States remains committed to transatlantic security?

Answer. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to use military force against its neighbors, most recently in Ukraine, and to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

The United States is committed under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty to the collective defense of all NATO Allies and has led NATO's efforts to establish a persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence on NATO's Eastern Flank. The U.S. is leading the NATO enhanced Forward Presence multinational battle group in Poland. In addition, the United States supports deterrence and defense activities in Europe through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI). This administration's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request included \$4.8 billion—a \$1.4 billion increase from 2017—to fund EDI. The EDI funds Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), which is the

Ukraine's ability to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As Secretary Tillerson stated, Ukraine has a right to defend itself against Russian aggression. The United States continues to focus on finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine through the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Russian aggression in Ukraine includes the use of hybrid warfare to include disinformation and malign influence. Ukraine was the target of cyber-attacks in December 2015 and 2016, and in June 2017. On September 29, an interagency team will visit Kyiv for meetings with Ukrainian officials to discuss policy and incident response to cyber-attacks. Countering hybrid warfare requires a broad whole of government approach in order to build national resiliency.

In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than \$750 million in security assistance to provide training and equipment to help Ukraine better monitor and secure its borders while deploying its forces more safely and effectively. The United States and allies established a Multinational Joint Commission and training group to coordinate international efforts and build Ukraine's defense capacity to deter further Russian aggression. Sanctions, too, remain a valuable tool in this effort. As Secretary Tillerson told his Russian counterpart directly, Minsk-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements its commitments, and separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns the peninsula to Ukraine.

More broadly, the United States, along with our European Allies and partners, has assisted and encouraged Ukraine to pursue broad reforms that will reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, and reduce corruption. Reform across sectors such as energy, the economy, land, pension, education, healthcare, defense, and most importantly judicial, will help to build a stronger and more resilient Ukraine. Continuing Kyiv's democratic and economic transformation, coupled with more capable Ukrainian Armed Forces, contributes directly to Ukraine's resilience in the face of continued Russian aggression, and in particular, Moscow's hybrid warfare tactics.

Question 6. What would your strategy be to deal with Russian aggression in Ukraine and other Russia-related threats in Central and Eastern Europe? How do you propose addressing Russia's perceived "spheres of influence" or national interests versus another country's territorial integrity and national interests? What options would you employ to achieve Russia's withdrawal from lands it unlawfully controls, such as Crimea, eastern Ukraine, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign to undermine core Western institutions and weaken faith in the democratic and free-market system. This campaign is aggressive and coordinated. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken European unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the neighboring states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries. The Western Balkans are also increasingly a target, as Russia is trying to block the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. It is important our assistance deter Russian aggression against these countries as well as encourage reforms in them to eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure. The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), including the \$4.8 billion requested for FY 2018, provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

The administration supports a country's right to choose its own future, its own partners, without outside interference or intimidation. The administration in turn continues to support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognized borders and rejects Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. If confirmed, I would support this policy by continuing to actively participate in the Geneva International Discussions—the only forum that brings together Georgia, Russia, the United States, and de facto officials from Abkhazia and South

I have not been privy to discussions with Turkish officials, but I can assure you that if confirmed, I will always strive to protect the interests, safety, and security of the United States and the American people. I will work to ensure that we have a relationship with Turkey that protects, promotes, and defends those interests.

Question 10. Turkish security guards violently assaulting peaceful protestors in Sheridan Circle in Washington, D.C. in May of this year during President Erdogan's visit. Will you continue to raise this issue with the Turkish government?

Answer. I share Secretary Tillerson's opinion that the conduct of some Turkish security personnel during President Erdogan's visit to the United States was deeply disturbing.

I have not been privy to discussions with Turkish officials, but I can assure you that if confirmed, I will always strive to protect the interests, safety, and security of the United States and the American people. I will work to ensure that we have a relationship with Turkey that protects, promotes, and defends those interests.

Question 11. Are you concerned about increasing Turkish-Russian military cooperation?

Answer. Turkey is an important NATO ally that supports U.S. national security interests in a number of crucial areas, notably in the effort to defeat ISIS. With regard to Turkish-Russian military technical cooperation, Turkey's expression of interest in purchasing Russian S-400 air defense missiles is concerning, and potentially constitutes a violation of recent U.S. sanctions. If confirmed, I will continue to make clear to Turkish officials the importance of the commitment NATO Allies, including Turkey, made at the Warsaw Summit in 2016, to enhance resilience by working to address existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen U.S.-Turkish security cooperation and will encourage all Allies to abide by their NATO commitments and procure military equipment interoperable with NATO systems.

Question 12. Unfortunately, the negotiation process over the Cyprus question is currently stalled, as U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded the latest round in Crans-Montana in July 2017 after the parties failed to reach agreement. U.N. Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide has left his position. Will the United States maintain high level engagement on this issue?

Answer. The United States will maintain high-level engagement on this issue. Although it did not participate formally in the UN-facilitated, leader led negotiations, the United States has played a critical role. The administration has sought to be helpful in facilitating communication between the sides throughout the negotiations maintaining a strong relationship with both leaders, and the UN. The U.S. remains ready to assist with the resumption of negotiations in ways the sides deem helpful and we remain committed to the framework for reuniting Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation based on political equality and continues to urge the sides to take advantage of the work achieved thus far. Senior American officials are prepared to travel to Cyprus to support efforts to return to negotiations.

Question 13. Unfortunately, the negotiation process over the Cyprus question is currently stalled, as U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded the latest round in Crans-Montana in July 2017 after the parties failed to reach agreement. U.N. Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide has left his position. What implications does Erdogan's narrow victory in the referendum have on the ongoing negotiations of the Cyprus question?

Answer. We are hopeful that, after the period of reflection, all parties will engage in the effort to reach a negotiated settlement. The Cyprus issue did not feature prominently in the 2017 referendum campaign. If confirmed I will continue to encourage all parties to find common ground.

Question 14. Unfortunately, the negotiation process over the Cyprus question is currently stalled, as U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded the latest round in Crans-Montana in July 2017 after the parties failed to reach agreement. U.N. Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide has left his position. Do you believe that Erdogan will be willing to agree to a withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus?

Answer. Turkey's troop presence is one question on which the parties will need to reach mutual agreement in the context of a final settlement. We urge all parties to make the tough compromises necessary for a solution.

Question 15. How will you work with European countries to ensure they live up to international agreements to impose sanctions on state sponsors of terrorism and human rights abusers, particularly in Iran and North Korea?

items, we can empower people to protect themselves against disinformation, particularly in critical regions such as eastern Ukraine. This moves the needle forward on the U.S. strategic goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, I will ensure this work continues.

English-language programs enable foreign publics to consume alternate news and obtain a more balanced perspective of the world. Ukrainian President Poroshenko announced 2016 as the Year of English and promoted English learning as a way to make Ukraine's workforce more competitive as Ukraine pursues its chosen European trajectory. U.S. public diplomacy programs are essential to fulfilling this goal. English-language programs not only provide skills that help Eastern Europeans pursue a Euro-Atlantic path but also build lasting people-to-people relationships in even the most challenging context.

Question 18. What programs do you believe are most effective to countering Russian propaganda?

Answer. Russia rejects the post-Cold War order in Europe and increasingly seeks to undermine U.S. influence with our Allies and partners with an eye to fragmenting the transatlantic alliance. Russia's campaigns use traditional diplomatic, military, and economic tools, as well as "active measures," a major component of which is propaganda and misinformation. The State Department's public outreach strategy is based on the recognition that both the message and the messenger are important for effective communication with audiences.

When making public statements as the United States government, the number one goal should be to empower our embassies with materials and messaging that the local press can carry, both in print and in digital form. This applies both to debunking myths, but more importantly, priming the information environment with positive messages about the United States and the transatlantic alliance. However, the fight against misinformation is bigger than any one country, and the U.S. government cannot be as effective if it fights alone. Those most vulnerable to malign information campaigns could become our strongest messaging allies through systematic support. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our allies and partners who are on the frontlines of the war of misinformation and arm them with the core competencies necessary to not only counter disinformation but advance positive, accurate, and responsible messaging. Specifically, I will seek to help governments communicate more effectively through the European Digital Diplomacy Exchange, empower journalists and other non-governmental communicators to uncover and publicize important stories through the Digital Communicators Network, and strengthen civil society through trainings and networking opportunities through a number of regional programs. I will also work to ensure close and effective collaboration between the Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs and the Global Engagement Center.

Question 19. Do you believe the Global Engagement Center can play an important and constructive role in promoting American national security interests?

Answer. Yes. Both extremist messaging and state-sponsored disinformation operations represent a critical national security threat to the United States. The Global Engagement Center (GEC) was mandated in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act to lead and coordinate Federal Government efforts to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation that undermine U.S. national security interests. The GEC's role in this effort is essential to the effective coordination of the multitude of U.S. government efforts to counter these national security threats.

The GEC has a proven track record of playing an important and constructive role in promoting American national security interests with the work it continues to perform with regard to its original counterterrorism mission. The GEC has been pivotal in U.S. effort to counter the recruitment of terrorist groups such as ISIS and exposing and countering their warped and perverse ideology, and the GEC will continue to advance this effort.

I hope that the GEC will employ the learned skills and successful aspects of its counterterrorism mission towards its expanded mission to counter propaganda and disinformation emanating from foreign states. Congress expanded the GEC's mission and granted it new legal authorities out of growing concern about the adverse effects of state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation, which have emerged as a clear national security concern that is increasing in overall size and sophistication. State-sponsored disinformation operations impact United States foreign policy objectives and create a lack of confidence in foreign populations and sow seeds of doubt in the susceptible populations living in our allied and partner nations. If confirmed I will work to ensure close and effective collaboration between the Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs and the GEC.

tools. We must also continue to build the resilience of U.S. allies on NATO eastern flank, including through the strengthening of military capabilities and through a whole-of-government approach that works with NATO and the EU to improve the defenses of allies and partners against disinformation and malign influence. Both areas will be major priorities for me if confirmed.

Question 2. Based on your experience and your preparation for the hearing, what is the difference between the U.S. military posture we have in Europe and the U.S. military posture we need? Do you believe the U.S. should have a larger and more capable military presence in Eastern Europe? Can you provide specifics? Do you believe we should have permanently stationed U.S. military units in the Baltics?

Answer. It is important that the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats we face today.

In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all.

One of the steps the administration has taken to bolster our military presence in Europe is the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which includes \$4.8 billion requested for FY 2018. EDI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

In addition to Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR)—the United States' contribution to the Alliance's persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence in NATO's East—the U.S. has also deployed a rotational armored brigade combat team (ABCT) to European soil to concretely demonstrate action to back up our commitments.

If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to consult early and often with our NATO Allies to review the state of forward defenses in relation to Russian force levels and military behavior. Through these consultations and in coordination with colleagues at the Department of Defense, I will examine our posture and plans to determine whether additional steps are needed, with a particular emphasis on determining the right mix of rotational and permanently stationed forces to meet deterrence and defense needs.

Question 3. Russia has used energy as a tool of coercion against our allies and partners in Europe. Specifically what more can we do to help our allies and partners in Europe reduce their dependence on Russian energy?

Answer. The administration is committed to working with our European partners to enhance European energy security, and if confirmed, I would continue this engagement. Energy security derives from a diversity of energy type, supply sources, and delivery routes, as well as an integrated and efficient regional energy market. An energy secure Europe serves as a strong partner for the United States in meeting global challenges, and the United States supports European energy projects in several sectors. We use both diplomatic engagement and assistance programming in support of our European allies and partners' efforts to enhance their energy security. Since FY 2014, the United States has provided over \$92 million toward energy programs in Europe and Eurasia.

In the electricity sector, the United States government engages in technical cooperation as the European Union strengthens its electricity market regulator, the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER). The United States supports the Baltic states as they work with the European Commission to complete the integration of the Baltic power network into the EU electricity grid via Poland. The United States also supports key gas projects that will diversify supply sources, including the Southern Gas Corridor, the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria, the Interconnector Bulgaria-Serbia, and the Finland-Estonia Baltic Connector. Additionally, U.S. support for infrastructure for LNG imports, particularly in Croatia, Greece, and Southern Europe, will allow Europe to import gas from anywhere in the world. In addition to infrastructure, the United States supports the EU's implementation of its own market liberalization rules and laws, in particular the Third Energy Package, designed to ensure the proper functioning of Europe's gas system. The U.S. also supports measures to ensure our partners can get the resources they need to be energy secure, such as the recent contract between American company Xcoal and Ukrainian firm Centrenergo to supply Ukraine with 700,000 tons of anthracite coal

What are the prospects for achieving a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine? Is there any other route for a settlement? What might be the impact on U.S. interests if a resolution could only permit some continued Russian presence in eastern Ukraine?

Answer. The United States continues to support Ukraine, along with our French and German allies, in pushing for full implementation of the Minsk agreements. Russia and the forces it arms, leads, trains, and fights alongside in eastern Ukraine are the primary obstacle to Minsk implementation. Moscow will only choose to implement the Minsk agreements if it believes continued conflict in eastern Ukraine is no longer in Russia's interest, and this is why the United States must continue to work with our European and G-7 partners to change Russia's calculations on Ukraine. Transatlantic unity on sanctions, support for the Ukrainian military's transformation into a capable fighting force, and strong encouragement of Ukraine's reform agenda have turned the invasion of eastern Ukraine into an increasingly losing proposition for Moscow. If confirmed, I pledge to keep up the pressure, as this presents our best strategy to change Russia's behavior.

The United States will not accept anything less than the full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. As Secretary Tillerson has said, U.S. sanctions will stay in place until Russia meets its Minsk commitments. This means Russia must withdraw its forces from eastern Ukraine and restore control of the contested area to Ukrainian authorities, up to and including Ukraine's internationally recognized border with Russia. Separate Crimea-related U.S. sanctions will remain until Moscow returns the peninsula to Ukraine. Existing sanctions regimes, in coordination with G7 and EU sanctions, provide leverage to compel Moscow to fulfill its commitments. In addition, the United States and its allies must continue to provide all forms of support necessary for ensuring Ukrainian resiliency in the face of Russian pressure.

Russia's proposal for a U.N. force in eastern Ukraine is a possible indication that Moscow is becoming more amenable to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and should be explored. However, as proposed, the measure would fall short of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity. Secretary Tillerson has been clear that any resolution must provide a path to achieving the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the safety and security for all its citizens, regardless of language, ethnicity, or religion. As such, any U.N. force would have to have a broad mandate for peace and security throughout the entire area of conflict, including international supervision of the Ukrainian side of the Russia-Ukraine border, to avoid deepening or institutionalizing the externally imposed divisions inside Ukraine. September 19, 2017

Question 3. What are the administration's plans for continuing to reassure allies and partners and to deter Russian aggressive activity in Europe?

Answer. Russia threatens U.S. allies and partners both militarily and through an aggressive, coordinated campaign to undermine Western democratic institutions. Russia has consistently demonstrated a willingness to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against this full spectrum of threats.

The administration has made a priority of strengthening the European Defense Initiative (EDI). This includes the \$4.8 billion requested for FY 2018, which provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

NATO will continue to prepare for, deter and defend against attacks that employ chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material; to invest in robust, flexible, and interoperable military capabilities; and to protect our military supply chains and work to address, as appropriate, existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts and multinational cooperation.

The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over \$750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
 SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR JEFFERY A. MERKLEY

Question 1. Despite the fact that the United States, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and our European counterparts all certify that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear deal, it appears the Trump administration is looking for a way out. This would pose a threat to the United States and regional security, in addition to undermining U.S. credibility and influence on the world stage. If the United States abandons our European allies on this issue, do you believe the Europeans will back up the United States on other grave international security issues?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and its broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. Europe remains key to addressing any number of other pressing international issues, including combatting terrorism and addressing the threat from North Korea. Our European partners want to work with us to address these challenges, and if confirmed, I will focus on ensuring the United States and Europe remain in lockstep on these issues.

Question 2. European leaders think that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has significantly increased European and Middle Eastern security and have talked about trying to continue the Iran deal even if the United States pulls out. But European leaders have also made clear that in such a scenario, Europe would give Iran more economic and diplomatic concessions to make up for the United States ending sanctions relief. How would it be in the U.S. interest to see Iran get more concessions out of Europe to stay in the JCPOA because the U.S. has begun to pull out?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 3. Russia's hybrid warfare encompasses a range of actions from propaganda and misinformation; to coercive economic measures; cyberattacks; and corruption. You have written that Russia tests alliances within the West by destabilizing small- and medium-size American allies on the periphery. One tool of deterrence is to ensure that European countries have strong and democratic institutions, strong rule of law, and are accountable to their citizens. How will you ensure that we are clear to allies and partners that they are expected to live up to their commitments on democratic governance and anti-corruption? How will you support these efforts in countries that are more vulnerable?

Answer. Russia uses a constellation of approaches, overt and covert, to influence the policies of other governments and undermine domestic stability in Europe. Russia seeks to weaken European unity and erode faith in democratic institutions. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security, while institutionalized respect for human rights, good governance, and rule of law contributes to long-term stability. By promoting our shared democratic values, and by holding our European partners accountable to their commitments and the rule of law, the United States strengthens our partners' capabilities to mitigate vulnerabilities to malign influences and counter threats to their security and sovereignty. The approach to this must be comprehensive and whole-of-government, and the Department of State has a critical role to play in addressing this threat.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to build the resilience of our European partners against Russia's efforts to undermine these democratic processes, including through exchanges of information and best practices, as well as programming for European publics. We will continue ongoing assistance efforts and engagements that

- How exactly does the administration plan to negotiate a better deal without international unity and a leaky sanctions regime?
- How does the administration plan to build consensus in Europe where unanimity amongst all of the EU countries is needed to impose certain EU-wide sanctions?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Our priorities to ensure we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 2. At his confirmation hearing, Secretary Tillerson stated, "We must also be clear-eyed about our relationship with Russia. Russia today poses a danger. But it is not unpredictable in advancing its own interest. It has invaded the Ukraine, including the taking of Crimea, and supported Syrian forces that brutally violates the laws of war. Our NATO allies are right to be alarmed at a resurgent Russia."

- If confirmed, what do you intend to do to reassure our NATO allies regarding Russia?

Answer. NATO's unity and U.S. leadership are both critical to an effective deterrent against aggression. In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all.

It is important that the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. I am committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats we face today.

One of the steps the administration has taken to bolster our military presence in Europe is the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which includes \$4.8 billion requested for FY 2018. EDI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

As part of Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR)—the United States' contribution to the Alliance's persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence in NATO's East—the U.S. has also deployed a rotational armored brigade combat team (ABCT) to European soil to concretely demonstrate action to back up our commitments.

If confirmed, I will continue to reaffirm the unshakeable U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, while calling upon all Allies to fulfill their commitments on defense spending and capabilities so that we can together meet all future threats effectively.

Question 3. According to the figures I have seen, the European NATO allies have approximately 5,200 troops in Afghanistan. In the administration's new strategy, what role do you see for Europe in stabilizing Afghanistan going forward?

Answer. Non-U.S. NATO troops play a crucial role in Afghanistan. Through troop contributions, security assistance, and development assistance, our European Allies and partners have been essential in achieving the progress we've seen since 2001. Europeans are not only contributing forces to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM), but they also pledged in 2016 at the Warsaw Summit to give approximately \$900 million annually to help financially sustain the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) through 2020. Europeans also give a substantial amount of development assistance to Afghanistan. In October 2016, our European Allies pledged approximately \$5.5 billion at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan to support Afghanistan's development through 2020.

The President's new South Asia strategy will give our Allies and partners more predictability in understanding U.S. planning in Afghanistan. With this new strategy, the administration will shift from a time-based drawdown plan to a conditions-based drawdown plan. For too long, slow decision-making by the U.S. Government has forced Allies to scramble to adjust their troop contributions to Afghanistan to