

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

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**HEARINGS**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS**

**FIRST SESSION**

—  
**JANUARY 3, 2017 TO JANUARY 3, 2018**  
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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## NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017 (p.m.)

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

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

Present: Senators Flake, Gardner, Young, Booker, and Coons.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator FLAKE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today the committee will consider the nominations of seven experienced career Foreign Service officers to be U.S. Ambassadors to African nations. On the first panel, we will get to meet the Ambassador nominees to Djibouti, Cameroon, and Niger. I was pleased to meet with each of you in my offices earlier or a couple of weeks prior. Thank you for making that effort of coming in.

Now, while Djibouti faces high unemployment, poor health, and food insecurity concerns, Djibouti has stepped up as a key partner on security, countering violent extremism, regional stability, and humanitarian efforts. The United States has a base in Djibouti. My brother spent several months there just a couple of years ago. Small country, big base there. The U.S. has a base there. It is located in a country that also hosts a Chinese naval base.

Cameroon is facing domestic political strains and regional security threats. It is an important partner in the fight against Boko Haram. Cameroon faces serious challenges with democracy and governance, as was evidenced this past weekend when the government attempted to silence political opposition by banning public meetings and travel to the region where marches were scheduled to take place.

Niger faces explosive population growth that could result in food shortages. I learned in the visit to my office that I guess the birth rate there is close to seven kids per family. It almost sounds like where I grew up. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I will tell my 10 siblings about that. But that was a surprise to hear.

This year, Niger has received about \$437 million in an MCC compact, with the compact to combat food insecurity through improved agriculture and water access. Although Niger has increased secu-

rity threats on its borders, it has contributed to peacekeeping operations in other African countries.

I want to thank each of you for your time and for sharing your expertise. And also a big thank you to family members who are here. I hope that you will introduce them.

With that, I will turn to Senator Booker for any comments he has.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CORY BOOKER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator BOOKER. I want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his great work and really valued partnership.

I really want to thank each of you all for being here today and for your years of service to our country.

I am a little frustrated, as I have expressed already in this committee, on the subcommittee as well, about us lacking a coherent Africa policy from this administration, especially dealing with some of the worst elements of human suffering, mass human suffering, on the planet earth right now. Food insecurity continues in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia. And I would want to take a moment right now just to say something about one of the countries that is not represented by ambassadorial candidates here, but that is South Sudan.

This subcommittee, with the support and leadership of our chairman, held a hearing in July on the conflict and famine in South Sudan. I came to the conclusion that despite understandable frustration among witnesses and my colleagues with the leadership in South Sudan, frustrations borne from many legitimate reasons, but the U.S. should maintain its leadership and presence there. We can make a difference.

I understand now there is a difference of opinion on the committee about how to move forward with a U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan. But I strongly, strongly believe that the U.S. should do all it can to ease the horrifying levels of human suffering in the country and work with the international community in a substantive way to bring about an end to the political crisis and to alleviate some of the suffering that is going on there that should disturb the conscience of all in humanity.

But it is in that spirit, seeing you all before me, that I am eager to ensure that we have solid career service officers such as you who are nominated with us today and that you all are in place as quickly as possible in the field. You are the leadership, in my opinion, that we need. I want to thank you all for putting yourself forward. Your careers are extraordinary, and the posts that you are being nominated for give you the opportunity literally save lives, to literally help to influence the justice, and to bring about the values of democracy and make them real in people's lives. You are all going to countries that are important to many of our strategic priorities as a Nation in sub-Saharan Africa. Many are very, very tough postings, to countries like Cameroon and Mauritania that could either see democratic transitions or could be thrown into political crisis.

If confirmed, many of you all will go to countries that represent critical challenges. And I want to say thank you. There are ques-

tions to be asked, therefore, about how the effects and implications of our defense-led foreign policy is going to manifest itself in these fragile states. Niger, Cameroon, Mauritania face insecurities from violent extremist organizations such as Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, Islamic Maghreb, and ISIS-West Africa which pose threats to the most vulnerable populations in those countries as well as to stability in the region.

However, human rights concerns and abuses by state security forces, as well as through media and civil society crackdowns that are justified as national security prerogatives, may fuel other grievances and continue the cycle of violence.

We must consider how to balance support for security assistance with humanitarian and development aid, especially as we see funding for security sector assistance become a disproportionate piece of the funding pie in sub-Saharan Africa.

We ask that if you are confirmed, you remain in communication with us. It is critical that we have dialogue between your posts and our subcommittee. And let us know continuously about the challenges you face, what is working well, and how we can help you all be effective in your job, should you be confirmed.

I look forward to hearing your testimony today and want to thank you again. And I want to say a special thank you as well to your family, some of whom are here right now. It is a tremendous sacrifice to make not only by individuals who are taking on these difficult posts, but as well as the family members who empower, their spouses, their parents, their brothers or sisters or family members, to do this job. With that, I turn it back over to the chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker. With that, we will turn to our nominees.

The first nominee is Ambassador Larry Andre, who is currently Ambassador to Mauritania. We met 3 years ago when we went through this before. So it is nice to be here for the second round. He is an experienced Africa hand serving in Tanzania, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Guinea, Cameroon, and Nigeria. In addition, he has been director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and served as senior advisor to the Bureau of African Affairs.

Our second nominee is Peter Barlerin, who most recently served as senior bureau official at the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs. Postings include Zaire, Madagascar, Oslo, Tokyo, Paris, of course, Washington, D.C., and Mali where he was Deputy Chief of Mission.

Our third nominee, Eric Whitaker, most recently was Acting Deputy Secretary for East African Affairs. Prior assignments have included Chad, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Mozambique, Mali, Ethiopia, and Uganda. We are confident that he has a good understanding of Africa issues.

With that, we will recognize Mr. Andre.



**STATEMENT OF HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRE, OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI**

Ambassador ANDRE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with the committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests.

I am supported here today by my wife, Ouroukou Andre; by my father, Larry Edward Andre, Sr., and by his wife, Claudia Andre; my daughter, Ruhyyih Rahman Andre, could not attend due to her responsibilities working for an American firm in the renewable energy sector in Kenya. She shares my enthusiasm for all that America and Africa can do together.

Mr. Chairman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon recently presented the administration's four main policy goals for Africa at the U.S. Institute for Peace. If confirmed, I will lead our team at Embassy Djibouti to further those four goals: advancing peace and security, countering the scourge of terrorism, increasing economic growth and investment, and promoting democracy and good governance.

Since 2002, Djibouti has hosted the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, Camp Lemonnier. It is a crucial platform for our armed forces to advance security throughout the region. Serving as the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, the installation is home to over 4,000 American soldiers. Ensuring the long-term viability and maximum operational flexibility of this important security presence is a key priority. If confirmed, I look forward to a highly productive and mutually supportive relationship with the commander of the Combined Joint Task Force.

The Government of Djibouti counters terrorism beyond its borders by contributing peacekeeping troops to the African Union mission in Somalia in its fight against Al Shabaab. We help train and equip Djibouti's peacekeepers.

As for increasing economic growth, the World Economic Forum recently listed Djibouti as the sixth fastest-growing economy in the world, with a GDP growth rate of 7 percent. Despite the small size of its market, this growth and Djibouti's strategic position present opportunities for U.S. business. If confirmed, I will lead our embassy team to further those opportunities for U.S. business.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Djibouti's security and prosperity gains can best be protected in the long term by strong democratic institutions. To that end, Djiboutians need to develop a more competitive, transparent, and accountable political system. Next year's legislative elections will give us an opportunity to encourage further progress on key democratic institutions.

Having spent my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous security environments, I feel deeply the responsibility of an ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. government

employees. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Djibouti to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. government colleagues.

Finally, I close with a few words about my preparation for the great responsibility for which you are considering me. My career in Africa began 34 years ago as a fresh-out-of-college Peace Corps volunteer working and living in a small village in West Africa. As a diplomat since 1990, I have focused my career almost exclusively on Africa. As Ambassador to Mauritania since September 2014, I lead a highly productive interagency team engaged in advancing specific goals. We live up to our motto, "One Mission, One Team."

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of my predecessors and their teams in advancing an American-Djiboutian partnership based on shared values and shared interests. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your kind consideration of my nomination.

[Ambassador Andre's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with this committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests.

I am supported here today by my wife, Ouroukou André; by my father, Larry Edward André Sr. and his wife, Claudia André; and by my friends and colleagues. My daughter, Ruhyyih Rahman André, could not attend due to her responsibilities working for an American firm in the renewable energy sector in Kenya. She shares my enthusiasm for all that Africa and America can accomplish together.

Mr. Chairman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon recently presented the administration's four main policy goals for Africa at the U.S. Institute of Peace. If confirmed, I will lead our team at Embassy Djibouti to further those four goals: advancing peace and security, countering the scourge of terrorism, increasing economic growth and investment, and promoting democracy and good governance.

Since 2002, Djibouti has hosted the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, Camp Lemonnier. It is a crucial platform for our armed forces to advance security throughout the region. Serving as the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, the installation is home to over 4,000 American soldiers. Ensuring the long-term viability and maximum operational flexibility of this important security presence is a key priority. If confirmed, I look forward to a highly productive and mutually supportive relationship with the Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force.

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Having spent my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous security environments, I feel deeply the responsibility of an ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. government employees. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Djibouti to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. government colleagues.

Finally, I close with a few words about my preparation for the great responsibility for which you are considering me. My career in Africa began thirty-four years ago as a fresh-out-of-college Peace Corps Volunteer living and working in a small village in West Africa. As a diplomat since 1990, I have focused my career almost exclusively on Africa. As Ambassador to Mauritania since September 2014, I lead a highly productive inter-agency team engaged in advancing specific goals. We live up to our motto, "One Mission, One Team."

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of my predecessors and their teams in advancing an American-Djiboutian partnership based on shared values and shared interests. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your kind consideration of my nomination.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.  
Mr. Barlerin?

**STATEMENT OF PETER HENRY BARLERIN, OF COLORADO, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES TO REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

Mr. BARLERIN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, it is an honor to appear before you today as nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position.

Thank you to my wife, Ines Rulis Barlerin, who is with me here today, as well as our sons, Sebastien and Maximilian, and our daughter, Ines Alexandra, who are here very much in spirit.

I would also like to recognize my sister Joan and other family and friends present in this room and wish my mother and mother-in-law could be present here to have lived to see this day.

It has been an honor to have had the opportunity to serve in an interim capacity as senior official in the Bureau of African Affairs for nearly half a year. The people of the Africa Bureau, including these two gentlemen, are an extremely hardworking, dedicated, and mutually supportive family. I cherish their confidence and friendship.

Turning to Cameroon, the United States was one of the first to establish diplomatic relations with the country in 1960. Since 1962, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps volunteers have given their all there, and many I have talked to were all transformed by the experience.

Cameroon is known as Africa in miniature because of its cultural diversity and because it has nearly all of the many, varied geographic features of the entire continent: active volcanoes, rainforest jungles teeming with wildlife, broad savannahs, and a beautiful coastline.

Cameroon also faces a number of the same challenges as the rest of sub-Saharan Africa in terms of health, security, and governance. These challenges are somewhat holding back a country that is as full of potential as any other in Africa.

On health, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief provides treatment, care, and prevention to Cameroonians affected by HIV/AIDS. And as a Global Health Security Agenda Phase I country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential. Finally, at the UN General Assembly last

month, USAID Administrator Mark Green announced Cameroon would be a new focus country of the President's Malaria Initiative.

On security, the United States is proud to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad basin neighbors in their effort to defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS-West Africa. If confirmed, I will work to emphasize that security forces stand a much greater chance of defeating the enemy when they respect human rights and when they build trust with civilians. I would also seek to engage Cameroon to implement the Tripartite Agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the treatment of Nigerian refugees.

My experience in Africa has taught me that good governance is the single most important factor in the success or failure of a nation and that the ends do not justify all means. If confirmed, I would encourage the government to release peaceful protesters detained in connection with the situation in the Anglophone regions and urge all parties to commit to dialogue. Violence on anybody's part is not the solution.

In spite of the challenges, Cameroon has achieved considerable progress in the brief period since its independence. If confirmed, I would seek to help build on that progress and would work with the government, the people of Cameroon, and our international partners to ensure that elections in 2018 are free, fair, and credible, as well as peaceful.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon. I would be happy to answer any questions.

[Mr. Barlerin's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY PETER HENRY BARLERIN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee: It is an honor to appear before you today as nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position.

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It has been an honor to have had the opportunity to serve in an interim capacity as senior official in the Bureau of African Affairs for nearly half a year. The people of the Africa Bureau are an extremely hard-working, dedicated, and mutually supportive family. I cherish their confidence and friendship.

Turning to Cameroon, the United States was one of the first to establish diplomatic relations with the country in 1960. Since 1962, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps volunteers have given their all there, and the many I have talked to were transformed by the experience.

Cameroon is known as Africa in miniature because of its cultural diversity and because it has nearly all of the many, varied geographic features of the entire continent—active volcanoes, rainforest jungles teeming with wildlife, broad savannahs, and a beautiful coastline.

Cameroon also faces a number of the same challenges as the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of health, security, and governance. These challenges are somewhat holding back a country that is as full of potential as any other in Africa. If confirmed, I would do everything I can to help the government and the people of Cameroon to realize that potential.

On health, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief provides treatment, care, and prevention to the many thousands of Cameroonians affected by HIV/AIDS. And as a Global Health Security Agenda Phase I country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential. Finally, at the UN General Assembly last month, USAID Administrator Mark Green announced Cameroon would be a focus country of the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative.

On security, the United States is proud to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad basin neighbors in their effort to defeat Boko Haram and its off-shoot, ISIS-West Africa. If confirmed, I will work to emphasize that their soldiers stand a much greater chance of defeating the enemy when they respect human rights, and when they have the trust of civilians. I would also seek to engage Cameroon to implement the Tripartite Agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the treatment of Nigerian refugees.

My experience in Africa has taught me that good governance is the single most important factor in the success or failure of a nation, and that the ends do not justify all means. If confirmed, I would encourage the government to release peaceful protesters detained in connection with the situation in the Anglophone regions, and urge all parties to commit to dialogue. Violence on anybody's part is not the solution.

In spite of the challenges, Cameroon has achieved considerable progress in the brief period since its independence. If confirmed, I would seek to help build on that progress, and I would work with the government, the people of Cameroon, and our international partners to ensure that elections in 2018 are free, fair, and credible, as well as peaceful.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Whitaker?

**STATEMENT OF ERIC P. WHITAKER, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REPUBLIC OF NIGER**

Mr. WHITAKER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Niger. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. Thank you, members of the committee, for your consideration and for your ongoing attention to our relations with the nations of Africa. I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Niger.

I am supported here today by my brother Craig and regret that my late wife, Jonita, who was also a Foreign Service officer, is not here as well.

Mr. Chairman, a former Peace Corps volunteer, I have served in 10 or our diplomatic posts in Africa, including Niamey, Niger, where I was Deputy Chief of Mission from 2008 to 2010. I also was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve as Deputy Chief of Mission in N'Djamena, Chad, to the east of Niger, and as Political Economic Chief in Bamako, Mali to the West.

During my career, I have served throughout several major challenges in Africa, including conflicts and military coups, refugee crises, droughts and floods, while also witnessing at the same time noteworthy economic growth and an expansion of democracy. If

confirmed, I will draw upon my experience to expand the strong partnership between Niger and the United States of America as we continue to work together toward our mutual goals of combating extremism throughout the region, strengthening democratic governance and respect for fundamental freedoms, and fostering inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

As a result of Niger's progress in developing democratic institutions, it was approved in 2016 for a \$437 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, as you mentioned. This focuses on improving water management, agricultural productivity, and market access to improve incomes for small-scale farmers and pastoralists.

Despite these achievements, however, Niger still faces great challenges. We are committed to supporting Niger's efforts to protect its borders, build capacity to interdict illicit goods, promote good governance and rule of law, and help return security and stability to northern Mali.

Niger also continues to face serious humanitarian challenges, ongoing migration issues, and persistent food insecurity.

Despite its own serious humanitarian situation, however, Niger has generously opened its door to over 57,000 Malian and 106,000 Nigerian refugees. From fiscal year 2013 to date, the United States has provided over \$225 million in emergency assistance to address food insecurity and to address the needs of Malian and Nigerian refugees hosted by Niger.

The United States and Niger partner across a variety of programs to address the needs of Niger's most vulnerable people. This year USAID Administrator Green announced Niger as a new target country for the Global Food Security Strategy, and Niger also became a President's Malaria Initiative country.

In fiscal year 2017, the United States is providing \$61.5 million in bilateral development assistance to Niger for programs supporting democracy, governance, health, education, nutrition, and agriculture. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to implement economic reforms and develop the infrastructure needed to attract investment and promote trade, particularly with the United States.

Overall, I will work to ensure that our bilateral partnership remains firmly rooted in our shared vision of security and prosperity. I will endeavor to assist in partnering for a democratic and prosperous Niger that respects human rights and provides economic opportunities for all.

Through this partnership, I look forward to fulfilling my priorities of protecting American citizens and advancing U.S. national security interests in the Sahel.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be most pleased to answer questions that you may have.

[Mr. Whitaker's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC P. WHITAKER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Niger. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. Thank you, members of the committee for your consideration, and for your



ongoing attention to our relations with the nations of Africa. Specifically, I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Niger.

Following service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines, and thereafter in municipal management in city government in California, I began my Foreign Service career as a Vice Consul in Seoul, South Korea, twenty-seven years ago. I have since had the great fortune to serve in four regions of the world, including as a Leader of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in red-zone Baghdad, as a Foreign Policy Advisor to Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa in Djibouti, and as a Refugee Coordinator in wartime Croatia. I have served in ten of our diplomatic posts in Africa, including Niamey, Niger, where I was Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires from 2008 to 2010. I have also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in N'Djamena, Chad, to the east of Niger. My most recent assignments have been as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and as Director of East African Affairs in the Department of State's Africa Bureau.

During my career, I have served throughout several major challenges in Africa, including conflict and military coups, refugee crises, drought and famine, and floods. More importantly, I have also witnessed noteworthy growth in democracies and economies driven by human capital. If confirmed, I will draw upon my experience to expand the strong partnership between Niger and the United States of America as we continue to work together towards our mutual goals of combating extremism throughout the region, strengthening democratic governance and respect for fundamental freedoms, and fostering inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world and its having some restrictions in freedom of expression, Niger has made significant progress in developing democratic institutions and combating corruption. In 2016, as a result of this progress, Niger was approved for its first Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact. MCC and the Government of Niger signed a \$437 million compact focusing on improving water management and productivity, and strengthening market access, with the objective of improving the income and livelihoods of small-scale farmers and pastoralists, who make up the majority of the Nigerien population. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Nigerien government and civil society to continue this momentum for reform by promoting responsive democratic institutions, reliable government services, and the development of critical infrastructure.

Despite these achievements, Niger still faces great challenges. The collapse of security in southern Libya and conflict in Mali and northeast Nigeria have placed Niger at a dangerous crossroads, as extremist groups and international criminal networks exploit porous borders and long-used smuggling routes to move people, weapons, and other contraband across the Sahel. Niger has also been a victim of terrorism from its border along the Lake Chad basin, where roughly 40 women and children were abducted in July by Boko Haram.

The United States and Niger share the common goal of countering terrorism and denying violent extremism an environment in which to take root. We are committed to supporting Niger's efforts to protect its borders, build capacity to interdict illicit goods, promote good governance and rule of law, and help return security and stability to northern Mali.

Niger has invested its limited resources in combating the scourge of extremism, and has been a leader in the international response to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), both by providing critical support for the peaceful political process and committing a battalion of ground troops to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and to the follow-on U.N. Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The United States has supported these troops by providing training, equipment, and logistical support.

Niger is also a strong partner in our Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), through which we are working together to increase security sector capacity, address underlying causes of radicalization, and amplify the voices of moderate leaders to positively influence populations potentially vulnerable to radicalization. For tactical and institutional capacity building, we are working to improve crisis response capabilities (SWAT) for Nigerien law enforcement. Current initiatives also work to build community resilience in the most vulnerable regions by working with local security actors to develop and exercise crisis response plans. In response to the growing threat by Boko Haram in 2015, the United States provided significant assistance, including armored personnel vehicles and logistical support. We also train and support our Ministry of Justice counterparts as they work to bring terrorism suspects to trial.

If confirmed, I will seek to advance our already-strong security cooperation to further our shared goal of countering terrorism in the region and addressing the underlying drivers that fuel insecurity.

On top of great security threats, Niger also continues to face serious humanitarian challenges, irregular migration issues, and persistent food insecurity. As threats spill over from neighboring Mali and Nigeria, markets have been disrupted and significant numbers of people have been displaced, sometimes hurting Nigerien livelihoods. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa continue to have a significant impact on the Lake Chad Basin, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in all four countries, including Niger. Yet, despite its own serious humanitarian situation, Niger has generously opened its doors to over 57,000 Malian refugees and 106,000 Nigerian refugees. Economic and vulnerable migrants from West and Central Africa continue to use Niger as a transit country to Europe via Libya, in an effort to reach Europe. Furthermore, from Fiscal Year 2013 to date, the United States has provided over \$225 million in emergency assistance to address food insecurity and the needs of Malian and Nigerian refugees.

Recurrent shocks, including drought, flooding, and food price increases, have exacerbated deep poverty and recently resulted in food insecurity for over 1.8 million people. The United States and Niger partner across a variety of programs to address the needs of Niger's most vulnerable people. This year, USAID Administrator Green announced Niger as one of the 12 new target countries for the Global Food Security Strategy.

We also coordinate with the Nigerien government to support its innovative programs to address food security, including the "3N Initiative" (Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens) that empowers local communities to work together to improve agricultural productivity. Thanks to this initiative, Niger has made significant progress in its fight against land degradation and reduced the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 50 per cent since 2011. For its inclusive design as well as its significant achievements, the 3N Initiative was recently recognized with the 2017 Future Policy Bronze Award, awarded by the World Future Council in partnership with the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting these efforts, leveraging these investments to promote U.S. interests, and exploring new areas of cooperation.

In addition to addressing food insecurity, Niger must improve health indicators that place Niger at the bottom of most measures for wellbeing. It must generate sustainable economic growth to tackle high poverty rates. Rapid demographic growth driven by the highest fertility rate in the world threatens to overwhelm the government's ambitious plans for development. To address health indicators, USAID has selected Niger to be a Presidential Malaria Initiative country, with the aim to substantially reduce malaria's impact as the leading cause for death for children under the age of 5. In Fiscal Year 2017, the U.S. is providing \$61.5 million in bilateral development-focused assistance to Niger for programs supporting democracy, governance, health and nutrition, and agriculture.

To expand economic opportunity, Niger will need to diversify the economy, invest in infrastructure, and improve education. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Nigerien government to implement the economic reforms needed to attract investment and promote trade. I will also seek to build new relationships between Nigerien and American companies to create opportunities for trade that benefit both our countries.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our bilateral relationship remains firmly rooted in our shared vision of security and prosperity. I will endeavor to assist in partnering for a democratic and prosperous Niger that respects human rights and provides economic opportunities for all. Through this partnership, I look forward to fulfilling my priorities of protecting American citizens and interests, advancing U.S. national security interests in the Sahel, and expanding mutual understanding between our citizens.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, all of you. Again, thank you to your family for being here as well.

Mr. Andre, with regard to Djibouti, this is the first country where the United States and China both have military bases. What kind of challenges does that present? And how will that go?

Ambassador ANDRE. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I note that General Waldhauser, the Commander of AFRICOM, recently pointed out that China's presence presents both opportunities and challenges. The challenge I will mention first, which is to safeguard with the Djiboutian authorities our basic rights, which



have always operated in a manner that gives us full flexibility and maximum effectiveness. From all I have heard in my briefings, from all I have seen, the Djiboutian Government is motivated for its own purposes to see that that maximum effectiveness for Camp Lemonnier remains in place. So, of course, we will be on high alert to see if there is any attempt to curtail our base rights, but everything I have seen indicates that the Djiboutians would not want to go there.

Now, General Waldhauser also mentioned opportunity. We do have shared interests, for example, in anti-piracy. Anti-piracy explains the presence of some of the other militaries there. About 10 percent of world trade, 8 percent of petroleum products move through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, 18 miles long. It is a two-lane highway. So it really forces the traffic through a narrow point, and that is exactly where Djibouti is found with Yemen on the other side. And where we have shared interests, that is opportunity. Where not, we are on very much high alert.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

With regard to Cameroon, Mr. Barlerin, U.S. forces have trained with Cameroon security forces. There have been some alleged abuses in the security forces there. How are we dealing with that?

Mr. BARLERIN. Thank you, Senator.

I have read the Amnesty International report carefully. And the embassy has interacted with the government at the highest levels to express concerns about alleged human rights violations. In the report, it also mentions that there was some awareness on the part of our forces far north of Cameroon. The commander of the Special Operations Command forward conducted an initial investigation into those allegations, did not find anything. General Waldhauser, the Commander of AFRICOM, has initiated a follow-on investigation led by a general officer, and that investigation is underway. Thus far, we have seen no evidence that any of our troops were aware of any violations of the Law of Armed Conflict.

As you know, we are prohibited from training or working with any units that have been found to be guilty of—or suspected of committing gross violations of human rights, sir.

Senator FLAKE. How important is our relationship with Cameroon with regard to the fight against Boko Haram?

Mr. BARLERIN. I would say it is extremely important. Cameroon pays a heavy price. They have approximately 2,000 troops with the multinational joint task force, with other Lake Chad Basin countries, and they have another 2,000 troops with this rapid intervention battalion in the far north fighting. And we do training and equipping. We build the capacity of the Cameroonian security forces, not just the military but also the police and the judiciary. And we have a full range of support for their effort to fight Boko Haram and ISIS—West Africa.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Whitaker, you mentioned—obviously, there is a lot of security cooperation that we have in Niger, building a base there. You mentioned in your testimony the opportunity for more commercial engagement or trade. In what sectors is that possible?

Mr. WHITAKER. Regrettably, Mr. Chairman, the level of trade and investment with Niger is coming from quite a low base.

Senator FLAKE. So anything is an improvement.

Mr. WHITAKER. Anything is an improvement and golden. And we look forward to working with representatives of the few American firms that do have agents and distributors present. That would include hosting them perhaps for quarterly business receptions to try to help them to do better business and to help them to work with Nigerian counterparts to improve the climate for trade. There may also be spin-offs with the MCC compact. There might be opportunities for U.S. firms to bid on infrastructure projects or American NGOs to bid on some of the community-level projects associated with that. So I look forward to working with them and doing consultations with the Department of Commerce, the Corporate Center for Africa, and others to try to improve the number of opportunities that we have in Niger.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. With your permission, I would like to defer my time for now to Senator Coons.

Senator FLAKE. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Flake. Thank you, Ranking Member Booker. I appreciate your accommodating my schedule.

Mr. Whitaker, good to see you again. Good to be with you, Mr. Barlerin and Mr. Andre. Thank you for your willingness to serve in three different countries on a continent where I think the U.S.-Africa relationship is critical and where developments in terms of the balance between security and economic partnership and cooperation, human rights, and the promotion of democracy is more important really than it has ever been.

Our ongoing humanitarian assistance in countries from South Sudan to Nigeria to Somalia continues to save lives, and our aid and support of democracy has helped ensure relatively peaceful democratic transfers of power in countries like Ghana and The Gambia.

Initiatives like Power Africa, the Young African Leaders Initiative, Feed the Future, PEPFAR, AGOA, all increase ties between the United States and Africans while promoting trade and investment, and are all examples of why the U.S.-Africa relationship has been and must continue to be bipartisan. These are initiatives across Republican and Democratic administrations, and we have been blessed by the engagement of Republican and Democrat leaders here in the Senate.

So let me ask just a few quick questions, if I might, in particular about the violence in Cameroon and news reports today that something on the order of 17 protesters have been killed.

As the co-chair of the Senate Human Rights Caucus, I am deeply concerned about the government's crackdown on human rights and civil liberties, especially in the Anglophone portions of Cameroon. Some of the reports from yesterday also report that there are dozens more peaceful protesters who have been arrested. I know you referenced this in your opening remarks.

Do you intend to continue the longstanding U.S. policy of supporting the rule of law, supporting self-expression and free speech? And how will you use your role, if confirmed, to strengthen the

U.S.-Cameroon relationship while also speaking for our core values?

Mr. BARLERIN. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, I will uphold our current policy of strengthening rule of law in Cameroon. As you know, the Anglophone regions—the situation started back in October or November of last year when lawyers and teachers protesting what they perceived to be unfair treatment on the part of the Francophone majority and the government in Yaounde staged stay-at-home strikes. And the government responded with force and shut down the Internet and arrested a number of leaders, as well as peaceful protesters. Partly in response to efforts from the international community, including the United States, the UN and civil society organizations, they restored the Internet after 93 days of it being closed down.

These demonstrations on Reunification Day that took place on Sunday—we deplore the loss of life. And we have expressed to the government that disproportionate use of force in these kinds of situations is not acceptable. And if confirmed, Senator, I promise you that I will carry that message forward.

We have, at the same time, called on all sides to come to dialogue, to engage in a credible dialogue because these are long-standing issues, Senator, and they cannot be resolved overnight and certainly they cannot be resolved with violence.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

In all three of the countries to which you have been nominated to serve as Ambassadors, there is a delicate balance between complex security situations, supporting and partnering effectively with regimes that have at times been our important partners in counterterrorism work or in regional stability while also advocating for openness for democracy, for human rights. The practice of the regime in Cameroon of shutting off the Internet when things are said that they do not like is the sort of thing we cannot tolerate. But by the same token, in the fight against Boko Haram or in the fight against regional sources of instability, whether in the Horn or in the Sahel, we need to sustain our partnerships.

If I could just ask briefly of all three of you, how will you balance the need to promote America's national security interests with America's core values of democracy, human rights, rule of law? If you might, Mr. Whitaker.

Mr. WHITAKER. Thank you, Senator.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my country team to address the equilibrium of which you speak. I am delighted that Niger has qualified for an MCC compact. That itself says it has met a number of criteria on the so-called scorecard. It also tells us that they have passed the bar on corruption, which is a necessary precondition to that. I look forward to this as helping with governance and the agricultural sector where 83 percent of the country works. I think policy reforms that spin off that will be helpful.

I am also delighted that the USAID program is wrapping up and that Congress has supported additional funding, \$61.5 million this fiscal year just ending. It is an increase from before, of which \$5 million is for democracy and governance programming alone from \$2 million the year before, \$1 million the year before that. So we are in a good position in terms of an increase in resources. We will,

of course, need to ensure that they are being used with accountability.

But I look forward to working with our team to ensure that these things help improve health, education, the role of civil society in a democracy, respect for human rights. I am also pleased that we have a Department of Justice resident legal advisor working with law enforcement and the judiciary, as well as a regional security office that works with law enforcement training that includes respect for human rights.

Furthermore, we have an active public diplomacy program that amplifies our message both private and public. So I look forward to helping to ensure that that balance is there, and I do take that very seriously. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Whitaker.

I am well beyond my time, so I will leave it to the discretion of the chair whether to invite the other two nominees to finish or to move on.

Senator FLAKE. Finish, briefly I am sure. [Laughter.]

Mr. BARLERIN. I will be brief. I would say that I have always stressed in my career to African government counterparts that in the long run, the ends and the means have to converge and that in the long run, protecting human rights and the fundamental freedoms of association and expression are the best way to ensure the stability of the country. And I will continue to do that in Cameroon.

As you know, Senator, Cameroon is going to be facing elections in the fall of next year, and so I plan, if confirmed, to put together a good program with the Bureau of Democracy Rights and Labor, our Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Africa Bureau, and the embassy team to support elections that are free, fair, and credible and peaceful.

Senator COONS. You will have a busy year. [Laughter.]

Ambassador ANDRE. Senator, that is a question that I have considered a lot in my career. What I saw in wartime Sierra Leone was how a total lack of security led to outrageous human rights violations. What I saw in Kenya during the December 2007 election and the violent aftermath was a democratic deficit leading to widespread violence and undermining security. So human rights and security are complementary. They are both required.

What I have done in Mauritania for the last 3 years is, when necessary, speaking out publicly and at other times making specific points privately, but as a friend, as the U.S. is a friend of that country, explaining how we see the necessity of maintaining both security and progress on human rights.

Djibouti will have legislative elections in 2018. That will be an opportunity to make progress in establishing democratic institutions. The American people through USAID are funding a \$3 million program to develop civil society. Djibouti has an exceptionally weak civil society, and that is a necessary component of a robust democratic establishment.

In the end, all of the security and economic gains that Djibouti has achieved can only be guaranteed over the long run by democratic institutions. And that is the message that I will be making to the Djiboutians.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. You give an inch to Coons and he takes 4 extra minutes. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I was going to warn you when you gave that, you will never get it back.

Senator BOOKER. No. I really am grateful for not only the chairman of this committee, but Senator Coons has been a friend who was the ranking member before me on this committee and has done an extraordinary job and continues to do in his leadership.

I failed to say in my introductory remarks, Mr. Whitaker, that I am sorry we did not get a chance to meet and discuss this in person, but I understand that your wife, who was also a State Department Foreign Service officer, passed away in the field while you were here in D.C. And I just want to express not only my condolences but my deep appreciation, reverence, and honor that this country should extend to your wife. And I am sure my colleagues join me in that sentiment. Thank you very much.

So Senator Coons really hit on a tension that I have been struggling with which, Ambassador Andre, you spoke to, which is the tension between human rights and humanitarian concerns, democratic principles and ideals, and our security concerns. And really since 9/11, 2 decades, we have been ramping up our spending on security concerns in the nations that you all represent. And my concern is that the democratic stability of these countries has not improved. One would argue in many cases democracy continues to erode or is on a precipice, as we see in Cameroon, for example, of potential disastrous concerns. Senator Coons has been yanking my ear over the last 24 hours or so about the challenges in Cameroon alone. And that is sort of what I worry about is that we are, as the State Department's posture now, especially with the administration's budget request, investing less in building civil society, investing less in the kind of State Department activities that provide security.

There was a new UNDP study based on interviews with more than 500 recruits of violent extremism that found that over 70 percent of the cases of government action, including the killing or arrests of a family member or friend, was the tipping point that prompted them to an extremist organization. I have listened to some of my more senior colleagues in open committee discuss what we are seeing in Yemen right now and our participation in many ways with the Saudis in what has been—I should not say our participation—what the Saudis are doing in indiscriminate bombing in many ways and creating a more unstable environment for future acts of terrorism or future recruits for terrorist organizations. And so I really do worry about the abuses right now that some of the security forces are engaging in against civilians and how they can be a powerful recruitment tool for terrorist organizations, which is an important consideration as the executive branch thinks about continuing security assistance for countries like Cameroon whose military has been implicated in torture.

And so I want to ask—maybe, Mr. Barlerin, we will begin with you—in your position what can we be doing to ensure that U.S. se-

curity assistance does not enable much of this reprehensible abusive behavior by partner militaries who are in many ways fueling the long-term instability of their country, as well as the problems that we are trying to prevent. And what I am worried about is how the U.S. seems to be in some cases, as we have seen in Cameroon—you mentioned that you read the Amnesty International report. In some ways, it is casting a shadow over the American presence in Cameroon as well.

Mr. BARLERIN. Thank you, Senator.

I cannot give you a perfect answer and I will not purport to try. But what I will promise you is that I will carry forward the same spirit, the same concerns, the same message that you have, if confirmed, and try my best to impress upon Cameroonian interlocutors the importance of respect for human rights and basic freedoms, fundamental freedoms.

I will say that the Leahy amendment is like a vaccine for us because it prevents us from being mixed up with military units that are engaged with gross violations of human rights. So that has been, I think, a very helpful thing for us. And AFRICOM's investigations into the allegations of Amnesty International, I hope and I am confident, will clear any idea that the U.S. is somehow involved with something that is not correct.

I would also like to just note that we are doing a lot more in the far north of Cameroon. Cameroon is host to a huge number of refugees, about 225,000 from the Central African Republic, about 93,000 from Nigeria. For a population that size of a fairly small economy, that is the equivalent of having about 8-plus million refugees in the United States of America in an economy that is facing serious challenges, as you mentioned.

The USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives is working in the far north to build local capacity of opinion-makers, of expressing moderate messaging, of helping youth to resolve their differences in a peaceable manner. And then we provide a great deal of assistance. We are the leading assistance country for humanitarian assistance in that area to help the people of the far north of Cameroon get through this difficult time. So the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration provides a little over \$13 million this year. USAID's Food for Peace provides about \$18 million to \$20 million of feeding. And then USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provides psychosocial support and other support for these communities.

But let me stress that Cameroon has been and I hope will continue to be a good and a strong partner with us in facing these very serious challenges.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. And again, the dialogue between us is so important, especially as we set the budget for the State Department. And some of these organizations that you rightfully mentioned and gave highlight to—their resource needs is something that is important to help form our understanding of where we should be making investments.

I am very conscious of another panel but, Mr. Whitaker, I do want to just press you a little bit, and then I will end and let Ambassador Andre escape my questioning. [Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Sorry, Mr. Whitaker. Your brother is filming this. I want to give you a chance to—[Laughter.]



Senator BOOKER.—really look good on camera.

But Niger has got a really tough neighborhood, obviously, when it comes to Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, and then unrest in Mali and Libya. And so the intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities in the region are really—it is such an important mission.

But there was a CNN article that described Agadez as becoming a tinderbox packed with migrants willing to risk everything, those who have spent all they had and failed to make it to Europe, and an unemployed local population that is rapidly running out of patience. And so AFRICOM seems to recognize this. An official was noting—and I quote that official saying the stability is absolutely fragile. There is a youth bulge we have here, the median age being less than 15 for more than half the population, literacy estimated to be at 15 percent, and the humanitarian conditions very poor is going to affect how we conduct business.

And so this is why I am concerned again about us expending over \$100 million in our military base there. U.S. foreign assistance, however, towards health, agriculture, good governance, and other programs totaled less than \$37 million in fiscal year 2016. And the fiscal year 2018 request from the administration was \$1.6 million, given all that was going on.

And so I am just curious for you entering again this extraordinary challenge and the extraordinary strategic importance of what is going on there—not only is it counterterrorism but preventing real humanitarian crises of the future. Are you concerned about the over-investment in the military or maybe it is not an over-investment in the military but not enough of an investment when it comes to things to stabilize the community, to empower locals to not only have the basic needs but also to help to stabilize democratic ideals? I am just wondering if you could give me any thoughts, as someone who has to make these policy decisions in cooperation with my colleagues about our investments or at least the mismatch that I seem to see about our investments in an important nation.

Mr. WHITAKER. Thank you, Senator. I take your question very seriously in particular because I have served in Niamey before and in neighboring Mali and Chad. And they all face the scourge of terrorism.

We are trying to help Niger as a partner by training and equipping their military, helping to build an airfield near Agadez so they can conduct surveillance over their borders and protect from gun runners, movement of foreign fighters from country to country, and other smuggling. And this is important to their own security, but it is also important that the region, through a variety of initiatives, attack regional issues jointly. We are trying to help develop that capacity. This also includes our training of Nigerien military for the MINUSMA next door in Mali where they have a battalion and we train a battalion each year. So they are well prepared to carry out the responsibilities.

I understand the importance of balance. That is why I am excited about the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact which will help with agricultural productivity because that is where people work is in the agricultural sector. Work in that area I think will

help fight terrorism and any lure that violent extremism might have.

The AID programs are going up. We are seeing an increase in funding, including in health and education, and I think these will support governance and give people hope for tomorrow.

So I see we are doing a number of things. It may not be enough. I am certainly open to suggestions, which I will take in my consultations. I will be consulting with AFRICOM as well and getting a better handle on their programs and trying to ensure we have some greater balance in our relationship. So I look forward to working with my country team, if confirmed, to ensure that this takes place.

I do share your concerns, sir.

Senator BOOKER. All right.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker and Senator Coons, it is nice to have people so knowledgeable on the subject. We have worked on this issue for a while. I was with Senator Coons and traveled with him. I am glad that he spent some time here, as well as the interests that Senator Booker shows and the experience that he has.

So with the thanks of the committee, I appreciate you testifying, and we will now call the second panel up and we will start in about 2 minutes, if that is okay. [Pause.]

Senator FLAKE. That was fast. Thank you so much. We will now start with the second panel.

The first nominee, Michael Dodman, who most recently was Executive Assistant to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment. He served as counsel general in Karachi, as well as he was the economic officer to the European Union in Baghdad as well.

Our second nominee, Nina Fite, most recently was Principal Officer in the U.S. consulate in Montreal. She also has served as Principal Officer in our consulate in Pakistan and served a previous tour in Angola, among other assignments.

Our third nominee, Daniel Foote, most recently was Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs at State. He has been deputy chief of mission in both Santo Domingo and Port au Prince.

Our fourth nominee, David Reimer, who most recently was Director for West African Affairs, also has been Director for East African Affairs and deputy chief of mission as well.

So thank you so much. And with that, we will recognize Mr. Dodman.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL JAMES DODMAN, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA**

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic



of Mauritania. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence.

I am thrilled to be joined today by my wife Joan. Joan and I first met as freshman at Georgetown, and she has been an inspiration and support to me ever since then.

One of our four children—

Senator BOOKER. Family members have to raise their hand. We got to know who you are talking about here. [Laughter.]

Mr. DODMAN [continuing]. Thank you. And since Senator Booker has jumped in, I will also say she is a proud daughter of New Jersey.

Senator BOOKER. You did not tell me. I recognize a Jersey girl. [Laughter.]

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you.

Our daughter Claire, the youngest of our four kids, is also here. Our other three children and my parents are here in spirit. But I can just say for all of us, for the six of us, the 30 years that we have spent in the Foreign Service as a family has been the greatest thrill and honor for all of us to represent our country abroad.

Mr. Chairman, Mauritania is a strong U.S. partner located at the crossroads of the Maghreb and the Sahel. The country's success and stability are important to the United States, and that is why we so emphatically support Mauritania's efforts to strengthen their democratic institutions, to end slavery and its vestiges, and to build a secure, united, and prosperous society.

Like its neighbors, Mauritania faces security threats from Al Qaeda and similar extremist groups. Thankfully, Mauritania has not experienced a terror attack on its soil since 2011. The country's leadership often cites U.S. training and assistance as a prime factor for this achievement.

Today, Mauritania's contributions to regional security include their hosting in Nouakchott the secretariat of the G5 Sahel organization. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our security cooperation with Mauritania and also with the G5 Sahel.

Mauritania is preparing for presidential elections in 2019. Many Mauritania's hope to distance their nation from a history of autocratic governance. Impartial, transparent, and accountable governance is the best means to strengthen Mauritania's national unity and to promote a prosperous future.

Mauritania has struggled to achieve a national identity that reflects its ethnic and racial diversity. If confirmed, I will support Mauritania in this important effort, including pressing for the full implementation of laws and policies that guarantee freedom from slavery for all Mauritania's and that hold anyone accountable who infringes on the rights of others.

Like many of my colleagues before you here today, the primary focus of my career has been economic diplomacy, and this is an area where I see significant opportunities in Mauritania. Bilateral commercial relations are growing, including with an American firm's discovery of significant offshore gas deposits. I am glad that we also have a new American business forum recently established in Nouakchott. So if confirmed, I look forward to being very active in this area.

My recent tours have included some of our toughest Foreign Service posts, in particular my last assignment overseas running our consulate in Karachi. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I take very seriously a chief of mission's responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all employees and of all resident Americans.

Mr. Chairman, I am thrilled to be participating in this hearing today with friends and colleagues who represent the very best of the Foreign Service. I am especially grateful to Ambassador Larry Andre, whose seat I appear to have taken, for his support and guidance throughout this process. If confirmed, I look forward to building on the many achievements of Ambassador Andre and the strong team at Embassy Nouakchott to further advance an American-Mauritanian partnership based on shared values and shared interests.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to any questions you may have.

[Mr. Dodman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. DODMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me.

I am joined here today by my wife Joan and our daughter Claire. For us, the Foreign Service has been very much of a family venture, and all of us are looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that this nomination presents.

Mauritania is a strong U.S. partner in Africa, strategically located at the crossroads of the Maghreb and the Sahel. Mauritania's success and long-term stability are important to the United States. That is why we emphatically support the Mauritanian Government, political parties, and civil society in their efforts to strengthen the country's democratic institutions, end slavery and its vestiges, and build a secure, united, prosperous, and free society.

Mauritania suffered vicious terrorist attacks from al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb starting in 2005. While the region continues to face serious threats from al-Qaida and similar groups, Mauritania has not experienced a terrorist attack on its soil since 2011. Mauritania's civilian and military leaders often cite our security partnership as a prime factor in this success, recognizing that U.S. training and assistance have boosted the capacity of Mauritanian security forces.

Mauritania is contributing to efforts to confront regional security threats, including by hosting, in Nouakchott, the secretariat of the G5 Sahel regional organization that brings together Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad to address trans-border threats. If confirmed, I look forward to seeking ways to further strengthen our security cooperation with Mauritania, and through them with the broader region.

Mauritania supports its neighbor, Mali, as that country also confronts violent extremism. Mauritania is supporting regional stability further by deploying peacekeepers to the U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic, to whom the United States provides training support. Mauritania hosts around 52,000 refugees from Mali. The United States has provided \$48 million in humanitarian assistance to Mauritania over the last five years to address food and emergency needs of Malian refugees.

Mauritania is preparing for its next presidential election in 2019. Many Mauritians seek to distance their nation from a history of autocratic governance, and the surest path to this is a commitment to democracy, in the hands of a well-informed public who enjoy equal rights and equal recourse to the law. Impartial, transparent, and accountable governance is the best means to strengthen Mauritania's national unity to promote a prosperous future.

Mauritania has struggled to achieve a national identity that fully reflects its cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity. If confirmed, I will work to support Mauritians in this important effort, and that includes pressing for the implementation of laws and policies that guarantee freedom from slavery for all Mauritians and that hold accountable any individuals who infringe on the rights of others.

The focus of my three decades of work as an American diplomat has been economic diplomacy. I take great pride in the contributions I have made to build bilateral economic ties and strengthen economic development in post-communist Eastern Europe and in Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan. This is an area where I see significant opportunities in Mauritania. Bilateral commercial relations have expanded dramatically in recent years, including with the discovery of sizeable offshore natural gas resources by an American firm. A new American business forum has just been established in Nouakchott. If confirmed, I look forward to expanding our commercial and economic partnership in a manner that will provide increased economic opportunities for all of Mauritania's citizens, while also supporting America's national interests.

My recent assignments have included some of our toughest Foreign Service posts, notably my last overseas assignment leading our consulate in Karachi, Pakistan. I take very seriously the responsibility of a Chief of Mission to protect the security and safety of all resident Americans and of all U.S. Government employees.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it has been my great privilege and honor to represent the United States over the past thirty years, and to advance the interests of the American people in every country in which I have worked. If confirmed, I look forward to building on the achievements of Ambassador Larry André and his team and further advancing an American-Mauritanian partnership based on shared values and shared interests.

I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for your kind consideration of my nomination.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.  
Ms. Fite?

**STATEMENT OF NINA MARIA FITE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA**

Ms. FITE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

If confirmed, I will devote myself to advancing U.S. interests and values, as I have throughout my 27-year career in the Foreign Service. I will work closely with this committee and other Members of Congress on our shared interests and strengthening the partnership between the United States and Angola.

I would like to introduce my sister Tereza and her husband Peter who have traveled here from California via a week down the shore. Just putting in your New Jersey credit there. And I would also like to acknowledge my brother Richard and his wife Ruth, who were unable to be here with me today. For nearly 30 years, my path of service has meant that I have not been able see them as much as I would have liked, but their support has sustained me every step of the way, as it does today. I would like also a moment to acknowledge my deceased parents, who instilled in me a dedication to public service and a love of international affairs.

Angola is the United States' third largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest oil producer in that region. Diplomatically, the United States has benefited from a strong and productive partnership with Angola. The Angolan Government has been an effective voice for peace in the region and has proven an excellent partner in our efforts in other African countries facing crisis, including those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and

the Central African Republic. We have a shared interest in seeing a peaceful, prosperous, and stable African continent.

15 years ago, a resource-rich Angola emerged from its civil war as a major economic power in the region. Some U.S. businesses have thrived in Angola for decades, with many commercial relationships that predate our bilateral diplomatic relationship.

While there are significant opportunities for U.S. companies, the commercial landscape remains challenging. Corruption remains widespread throughout society, and the country's economy requires diversification so that its security and prosperity are not dependent on oil prices. The U.S. supports Angola's goal of broadening its economy and creating a business climate that is more attractive and transparent for international partners. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. companies and the Government of Angola to advance U.S. commercial interests to create the best climate possible for American businesses. An improved business environment in Angola will also bring benefits and jobs to the United States and to our economy.

When I served in Angola a decade ago, the United States was instrumental in helping the Angolan people prepare for national elections, in which many voted for the very first time in their lives. And 2 months ago, Angola marked a milestone in its democratic progression and elected its first new president in 38 years. As President Lourenco articulates his vision for Angola, I believe it is an opportune time to deepen our relationship. We must build on our burgeoning defense cooperation and strong economic ties, while working to expand the space for democratic debate, to empower Angolan civil society and to reinforce Angola's foundations for democracy. If confirmed, I will focus my efforts on strengthening our dialogue on these important issues.

Angola has the economic means to achieve substantial improvements in health outcomes for its people, including infant mortality, a measure by which Angola has fallen tragically short of its potential. The United States has supported Angola with targeted technical assistance in the health arena, fighting malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. We also support Angola in its goal to make the country landmine-free by 2025, an achievement that would help end one of the most painful reminders of its devastating civil war. If confirmed, I will focus on helping new models of assistance evolve as African nations like Angola mature economically and socially.

Since I was last there, Angola has continued to move forward from the effects of its long civil war. But then, as now there is more work to be done. I will bring the experiences of my State Department career, including tours in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to advance U.S. interests in Angola, and a prerequisite to advancing any of our goals is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Americans, whether members of the embassy team or private citizens working, living, or doing business in Angola.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you again for your enduring interest and support for engagement. I look forward to your questions.

[Ms. Fite's prepared statement follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF NINA MARIA FITE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will devote myself to advancing U.S. interests and values, as I have throughout my 27-year career in the Foreign Service. I will work closely with this committee and other Members of Congress on our shared interests in strengthening the partnership between the United States and Angola.

I would also like to introduce my sister, Tereza, and her husband, Peter who have traveled here from California; and acknowledge my brother Richard and his wife Ruth who were unable to be here today. For nearly 30 years, my path of service has meant I have not been able to see them as much as I would have liked, but their support has sustained me every step of the way, as it does today. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge my deceased parents, who instilled in me a dedication to public service and a love of international affairs.

Angola is the United States' third-largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, and the second-largest oil producer in that region. Diplomatically, the United States has benefited from a strong and productive partnership with Angola. The Angolan government has been an effective voice for peace in the region and has proven an excellent partner in our efforts in other African countries facing crisis, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. We have a shared interest in seeing a peaceful, prosperous, and stable African continent.

Fifteen years ago, a resource-rich Angola emerged from its civil war as a major economic power in the region. Some U.S. businesses have thrived in Angola for decades, with many commercial relationships that predate the bilateral diplomatic relationship. While there are significant opportunities for U.S. companies, the commercial landscape remains challenging. Corruption remains widespread throughout society, and the country's economy requires diversification so that its security and prosperity are not dependent on oil prices. The United States supports Angola's goal of broadening its economy and creating a business climate that is more attractive and transparent for international partners. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. companies and the Government of Angola to advance U.S. commercial interests to create the best climate possible for American businesses. An improved business environment in Angola will also bring benefits and jobs to the United States and our economy.

When I served in Angola a decade ago, the United States was instrumental in helping the Angolan people prepare for national elections, in which many voted for the first time in their lives. Two months ago, Angola marked a milestone in its democratic progression and elected its first new president in 38 years. As President Lourenço articulates his vision for Angola, I believe it is an opportune time to deepen our relationship. We must build on our burgeoning defense cooperation and strong economic ties, while working to expand the space for democratic debate, to empower Angolan civil society, and to reinforce Angola's foundations for democracy. If confirmed, I will focus my efforts on strengthening our dialogue on these important issues.

Angola has the economic means to achieve substantial improvements in health outcomes for its people, including infant mortality, a measure by which Angola has historically fallen tragically short of its potential. The United States has supported Angola with targeted technical assistance in the health arena, fighting malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. We also support Angola in its goal to make the country landmine free by 2025, an achievement that would help end one of the most painful reminders of its devastating civil war. Some of this newly cleared land has returned to agricultural use, while other parcels have been used for new schools, allowing more Angolan children to receive a formal education. If confirmed, I will focus on helping new models of assistance evolve as African nations like Angola mature economically and socially.

Since I was last there, Angola has continued to move forward from the effects of its long civil war. But now, as then, there is more work to be done. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the experiences of my State Department career, including tours in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to advance U.S. interests in Angola. A prerequisite to advancing any of our goals is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Americans, whether members of the Embassy team or private citizens working, living, or doing business in Angola.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I thank you again for your enduring interest and support for our engagement in sub-Saharan Africa and for this opportunity today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.  
Mr. Foote?

**STATEMENT OF DANIEL L. FOOTE, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

Mr. FOOTE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, I think you have earned the concise version of my statement today.

I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. If confirmed by the Senate, I will work with Congress to advance American interests in Zambia.

Please allow me to thank my beloved family for their inspiration, support, and sacrifice. First and foremost is my wonderful wife Claudia, without whom none of this would be possible. I am blessed to share this special day with my daughter Cecilia and remotely and later, because I expect my son at boarding school should be on the football field right now at practice. I would also like to thank my parents, Curt and Caroline, and my outstanding friends.

My heart goes out to the victims and families of the tragic events in Las Vegas yesterday, and while not related this time to foreign policy, I am struck by the importance of diplomacy in protecting the American people.

Zambia is a strong partner, and if confirmed, I will energetically promote our citizens' shared values of diplomatic principles, greater prosperity, regional stability, and improved health and education.

While we have long appreciated Zambia's democratic history, it must remain focused on its democratic environment. Developments such as problematic media restrictions and treatment of opposition members tarnish its reputation. If confirmed, I plan to promote constructive dialogue aimed at reconciliation and the restoration of Zambia's strong democratic traditions. I will staunchly advocate for human rights and freedoms and the inclusion of all in democratic processes.

Improved economic growth is vital to create employment, to improve the lives of people, to create market opportunities for U.S. entities. And if confirmed, I will strive to boost prosperity and increase U.S. trade and investment in Zambia.

Zambia, as a dependable peacekeeping contributor and a welcoming sanctuary for refugees fleeing conflict, has the potential to be a great regional leader. If confirmed, I will cultivate Zambia's ongoing efforts to advance regional stability.

Healthy and engaged populations are critical to advancement. Our development in health programs in Zambia have saved millions of lives and educated a generation of people. I commit to officially implement our assistance programs in Zambia as a faithful steward of U.S. taxpayer funds.

Having served across the globe, including twice in Iraq, once in Afghanistan, and once in Haiti, I have developed a sense of what I think it takes to run a happy and safe embassy. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I pledge to you to lead a produc-



tive, high-morale embassy working for the American people and fortifying the U.S. relationship with Zambia.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing today and I welcome your questions.

[Mr. Foote's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL FOOTE

Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to advance American interests in Zambia.

I want to express deep appreciation to everyone who helped me through this incredible journey. Please allow me to recognize and thank my beloved family, as my key source of inspiration through their indispensable support and incalculable sacrifice. Foremost is my wife Claudia, to whom I owe everything. I'm blessed to share this special moment with my children, Cecilia—here today with Claudia—and, if only via C-SPAN, with Danny, who is away at school. I hope you three are a fraction as proud of me as I am of you. And to my parents, Curt and Caroline, my siblings, and many mentors. I believe my diplomatic service, in diverse and increasingly challenging jobs in ten countries and the United States, provides me with a strong foundation to serve successfully as Ambassador, if confirmed. I expect my broad experience advancing human rights, democracy, security, development, education, and health will enable me to further American interests effectively.

I have great respect for the importance of diplomacy in protecting our nation and the American people by strengthening ties and partnerships. Zambia is a strong partner with which we share democratic values and goals of development, economic growth, and regional stability. If confirmed, Senators, I pledge to protect U.S. citizens and interests by energetically promoting democratic principles, broad-based economic growth and development, regional security, and improved health and education outcomes. Additionally, I commit to secure, develop, and lead the dedicated professionals, and their families, at Embassy Lusaka, and to protect all Americans in Zambia.

While Zambia carries a record of stable democratic transitions, it needs to maintain and advance its democratic achievements. I am concerned that, in recent years, we have seen problematic media restrictions and treatment of opposition members. Such developments tarnish Zambia's democratic reputation. If confirmed, I will be a staunch advocate for human rights; the promotion of open and constructive dialogue among political parties, media, and civil society; and the equal inclusion of all citizens in democratic processes. I will also encourage Zambia to realize its potential as a regional democratic leader.

Zambia's eventual success in diversifying its economy from copper into sectors such as agriculture, energy, and tourism would create employment, reduce debt, enhance stability, and provide market opportunities for U.S. companies and investors. If confirmed, I will use all the tools of the U.S. government to enhance transparency and improve the operating environment for U.S. firms working in or with Zambia. I will work to increase U.S. trade and investment with Zambia, as the U.S. representative to the region's economic group, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Reinforcing our existing partnership can help Zambia expand its role as a good neighbor in the region and as a positive, global actor. Supported by U.S. military training and assistance, Zambia has become a dependable peacekeeping contributor in the Central African Republic. Zambia has welcomed those fleeing conflict for decades, and it hosts an estimated 55,000 current and former refugees. If confirmed, I will cultivate Zambia's continuing efforts to advance regional and global stability.

Productivity and strong partnerships begin with healthy and engaged populations, and the United States' and Zambia's combined efforts have delivered impressive results. Our PEPFAR (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) partnership investment in Zambia has saved millions of lives, and, since 2004, increased the number of Zambians with access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) from 3,500 to more than 800,000. As a result, Zambia is on track to achieve epidemic control of HIV/AIDS by 2020.

Additionally, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact with Zambia is providing \$355 million to improve the lives of over 1.2 million people, and support

the government's efforts to improve water and sanitation services. If confirmed, I will continue to implement our assistance programs constructively and with accountability and ensure American taxpayers' funds are spent effectively. I will encourage increased efforts by the Zambian government to provide for its citizens.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman: if confirmed, my duty would be, first and foremost, to the American people. I promise to strive to lead an effective Embassy, protect and develop our people, and fortify U.S.-Zambia relations.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today, and I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Mr. Reimer?

**STATEMENT OF DAVID DALE REIMER, OF OHIO, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES**

Mr. REIMER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, I am honored to appear before this committee today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. I am grateful for the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

I would like to introduce my wife Simonetta Romanola. Simonetta and I have been married for a grand total of 2 and a half months. Simonetta is Italian. However, she has worked for the U.S. Department of State longer than I have, over 30 years at the U.S. consulate in Milan, Italy.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Richard and Lois Reimer, who could not be here today, as well as my brother Paul and my sister Sue.

Democracy and trade continue to be important elements of our bilateral relationship with the Republic of Mauritius. Mauritius is politically stable, committed to democracy, ethnically diverse, and economically strong. Since its independence from the United Kingdom nearly 50 years ago, the country has gone through a remarkable economic transformation from an economy based on sugar production to a diversified economy of export-oriented manufacturing, tourism, and financial and business services. In many ways, Mauritius is a model, politically and economically, for Africa and the rest of the developing world.

A challenge in our bilateral relationship with Mauritius is its claim of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean territory, which Mauritians call the Chagos Islands. Together with the United Kingdom, we have operated Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia in these islands for the last 50 years. Mauritius has taken its sovereignty claim to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. However, we continue to strongly support the UK's longstanding territorial claim.

As a career diplomat and economic officer, I bring years of experience to the task of promoting democracy and economic prosperity for the benefit of the United States and our partners around the



world. I have visited Mauritius several times, and my service in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East has prepared me for the challenges and opportunities of this post. If confirmed, I will work with the Mauritian Government and people and encourage them to embrace leadership roles to promote democracy and build economic prosperity in the region, which will also benefit the American people. I look forward to the opportunity to promote U.S. exports and investment in both Mauritius and Seychelles.

The United States Government enjoys a positive bilateral relationship with Seychelles. In the recent past, the Government of Seychelles has been a steadfast partner in fighting maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa. The near elimination of that scourge owes much to the efforts of the Seychelles. We continue to partner with the Seychelles people and government in the fight against piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing.

On the economic side, Seychelles has the highest per capita income in Africa. However, income is not evenly distributed and poverty remains. Over the last 8 years, though, Seychelles has implemented needed economic reforms and the economy remains on a positive track. In the last year, Seychelles has adapted well to a political environment in which, for the first time in the country's history, the presidency and the legislature are controlled by opposing parties. If confirmed, I will encourage Seychelles to continue with its economic reforms, to continue to improve its human rights standing, and to continue its growth as a strong, fully functioning democracy. Although our embassy is located in Mauritius, if confirmed, I intend to travel frequently to the Seychelles.

My highest priority, if confirmed, will be the protection of Americans living and traveling in Mauritius and Seychelles. I commit to you to serve as an energetic advocate for U.S. business and to promote U.S. investment opportunities. I will be a careful steward of U.S. resources in Mauritius and Seychelles.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply honored to be nominated for the post of Ambassador to Mauritius and Seychelles. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee. I welcome your questions.

[Mr. Reimer's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID DALE REIMER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before this committee today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. I am grateful for the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

Democracy and trade continue to be important elements of our bilateral relations with the Republic of Mauritius. Mauritius is politically stable, committed to democracy, tolerant of ethnic diversity, and economically strong for nearly fifty years, since its independence from the United Kingdom. The country has gone through a remarkable economic transformation from an economy based on sugar production to a diversified economy based on export-oriented manufacturing, tourism, and the financial and business services sectors. In many ways, Mauritius is a model, politically and economically, for Africa and the rest of the developing world.

A challenge in our bilateral relationship with Mauritius is its claim of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory, which Mauritians call the Chagos Islands. Together with the United Kingdom, we have operated Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia in these islands for the last fifty years. Diego Garcia is a strategic military base for our armed forces in the region. Mauritius has taken its sovereignty claim

to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion, and we continue to strongly support the UK's long-standing territorial claim.

As a career diplomat and economic officer, I bring years of experience to the task of promoting democracy and economic prosperity for the benefit of the United States and its partners around the world. I have visited Mauritius several times, and my service in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East has prepared me for the challenges and opportunities of this post. If confirmed, I will work with the Mauritian government and people to encourage them to embrace more strongly leadership roles that will promote democracy and build economic prosperity in the region, which will also benefit the American people. As a former Economic and Commercial Officer overseas, I look forward to the opportunity to promote U.S. exports and investment in both Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The United States Government enjoys a positive bilateral relationship with the Government of Seychelles. In the recent past, the Government of Seychelles has been a steadfast partner in fighting maritime piracy in the Horn of Africa. The near-elimination of that scourge owes much to Seychelles' efforts. We continue to partner with the Seychelles' people and government in the fight against piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing.

On the economic side, Seychelles has the highest per capita income in Africa, although it is not evenly distributed, and poverty still is problematic across the country. Over the last eight years, Seychelles has achieved needed economic reforms, and the economy remains on a positive track. In the last year, Seychelles has adapted well to a political environment in which the Presidency and Legislature are controlled by opposing parties. This is the first time this has happened in the history of the country. If confirmed, I will encourage Seychelles to continue with its economic reforms, to continue to improve its human rights standing, and to continue its growth as a strong, fully-functioning democracy. Although the United States Embassy is located in Mauritius, if confirmed, I intend to travel frequently to the Seychelles.

If confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of Americans living and traveling in Mauritius and Seychelles. I commit to you to serve as an energetic advocate for the promotion of U.S. business and investment opportunities and will be a careful steward of U.S. resources in Mauritius and Seychelles.

I am deeply honored to be nominated for the post of Ambassador to Mauritius and Seychelles. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee. I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you. And might I say that is not a bad place to honeymoon too. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I have spent time in southern Africa and a lot of people would go to Mauritius and the Seychelles, and I have not yet been there. So I look forward to being there.

Mr. Dodman, with regard to Mauritania, they have taken a step backward a bit with regard to governance. There is an upcoming 2019 presidential election that will certainly send a signal as to where they are going. How important is that? How important is our presence there in ensuring that they have proper governance? It is obviously important to our security arrangements with them.

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, you are right. The presidential election is coming up in 2019. It is critical. Mauritania has a history of autocratic governance. There has not been a transition from one democratically elected government to another in Mauritania. So this upcoming election in 2019 is important. President Aziz has stated repeatedly that he intends to step down at the end of his two terms, as is required by the constitution, and certainly, if confirmed, part of my dialogue with the president and with all the figures in Nouakchott will be to continue the dialogue that Ambassador Andre has had about the importance of that transition specifically and of democracy more broadly.

Democracy is the foundation for a stable society. Mauritania, of course, is a strong partner on counterterrorism issues, but my mes-

sage will be, if confirmed, that in order to maintain the stability that is important to Mauritania and important to the United States, it is critical that human rights be respected, all human rights. I am certainly including working on slavery and actively removing slavery and all of its vestiges in Mauritania, but also that democratic transition.

Both Ms. Fite and I were in Pakistan when Pakistan also had its first democratic transition from one democratically elected government that completed its full term and went on to be replaced by another democratically elected government. So I have seen firsthand the importance that one single election can make to a country's trajectory, and that is certainly a message I will be carrying to Nouakchott, if confirmed.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

With regard to Angola, we met in my office before President Lourenco gave his inaugural address. How do you expect things to change? I am assuming the effort will be to make sure that oil wealth is spread more broadly than in the past. I think all any of us can remember after 38 years is dos Santos in that position. What is going to change there?

Ms. FITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In his inaugural address, President Lourenco talked about diversifying the economy and developing the economy and getting it away from oil wealth because I think he is recognizing that it is a difficult time to be dependent on oil when the prices are so low. At the same time, he addressed the need to combat corruption. He also addressed a need to have multiple voices and perhaps voices that do not agree with you speaking and being heard. So he made a number of comments. He talked about education, addressing technical training for Angolans, young Angolans. He talked about his youth bulge and how to create jobs and an economy for those people.

I think the truth will be 6 months from now, a year from now, how does he deliver on those. But as a U.S. Ambassador, I would certainly encourage him to do everything he can to deliver on those promises in his inaugural speech and also in his campaign speeches.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Foote, low copper prices have really hobbled a lot of the governments around, and Zambia is pretty reliant on that. How are they going to diversify? What can they do and how can we help them?

Mr. FOOTE. Well, you are exactly right, Senator, and thank you for that question.

While prices have rebounded 35 percent so far this year and perhaps alleviated some of the urgency for structural reform, I think that is important for Zambia to undertake. Diversification into sectors such as construction, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, and tourism will be important. A focus on fiscal management, better transparent regulatory trade and other frameworks, and creating a predictable and level playing field to reduce uncertainty and attract businesses and private sector investors is going to be critical for them.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Reimer, when we spoke in my office, we talked about there is not an issue right now in Mauritius or the Seychelles with any terrorist cells or security issues like that, but strategically they are important places with regard to piracy. Seychelles is in a tough neighborhood, I guess, in that regard. What are we doing or what are they doing to combat piracy? How much of an issue is that?

Mr. REIMER. Thank you for that question, Senator.

In the recent past, Seychelles has been an outstanding partner in that area. We have provided training to government officials, and in turn, the Government of Seychelles has tried, convicted, and imprisoned more pirates than any other country in the world. Thankfully, the scourge of piracy is greatly diminished, and so we do not have that problem as we had before. But we continue with an excellent security relationship with the Seychelles. It is a very popular port of call for the U.S. Navy, and we have done a little bit of security assistance for the country as well. So we have a good record and an excellent ongoing relationship.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

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

Mr. Dodman, can I just start with you real quick because I know Mauritania, along with Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso is part of the G5 Sahel, which has proposed a multinational counterterrorism and border security force. Correct? And I guess that is why I found it sort of surprising to me that President Trump added Chad to the administration's travel ban list, prompting the Chadian Government and France, which has worked closely with Chad and with us, frankly, to counter terrorism in the Sahel. And I have been one of those people sort of questioning this as France and the Chadian Government have been asking the administration to reverse this determination.

So I guess a few questions. I will throw them out there and let you respond. But what, if any, impact do you think that the travel ban designation regarding Chad will have on the G5's operational capacity and the U.S.'s ability to provide assistance to its component of the forces? To what extent do you think the designation will make other Sahel countries more reticent to work with the United States? What factors do you think enabled Mauritania to escape the similar designation? What differentiates them from Chad? And do you believe that the criteria that the administration used to add Chad to the travel ban that maybe Mauritania is at risk of being added to a travel ban in the future? And if so, what effect will that have in our security efforts?

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I will be honest up front and say I will not be able to give a full answer to it. I have not been working this issue. I have been working economic issues. I still am working economic issues. So I was not directly involved in any of the preparation of the review of all of the countries and their information sharing agreements.

What I can tell you is that Chad is a critical counterterrorism partner to the United States. That is absolutely true. They are critical to the success of the G5 as an organization that promotes not just security and counterterrorism cooperation among the five but promotes development and growth and trade and all the sorts of

things that we would like to see these five Sahelian countries work more closely to promote their own growth and stability.

What it means for the G5 and our potential assistance to the organization in terms of building up these joint forces—I do not believe that there is any direct correlation, but I would have to get back to you with a more formal answer after I have looked into that and checked into it.

As I understand the process that was announced a few weeks ago, there is a clear set of steps for each of the countries that was designated to move forward in terms of working in cooperation with the State Department and with the Department of Homeland Security on sharing of information. It is all about sharing of information.

Certainly discussions are underway. I assume discussions are underway between Chad and the U.S. Government now about how to meet those requirements.

And certainly when I get to Mauritania, should I get to Mauritania, I will be working with the Mauritanian Government to make sure that that form of cooperation on border security issues continues because the last thing any of us would want to see is to have our strong partnership on counterterrorism issues be at all harmed by any failure to provide the information requested.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Foote, in Zambia, 43 percent of the women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence. When women live in fear of violence, when girls are married too young, taken out of school, a society faces tremendous long-term development challenges, not to mention the sheer evilness to have that level of percentage of your population having experienced violence. It is abhorrent and unacceptable.

And I just wondered in your role, how are you planning on raising this as a serious concern? And how do you think you can help improve Zambia in meeting these challenges?

Mr. FOOTE. Thank you, Senator.

I agree wholeheartedly that gender-based violence and violence against vulnerable populations is a terrible drag on societies.

I will encourage and engage with the government and with civil society to empower civil society to hold its government accountable.

Additionally, I bring some experience from Afghanistan where we worked in establishing and broadening women's shelters and associated family guidance centers where we were able to sort of in the areas where we were working change the culture and make women and those who were vulnerable to or victims of gender-based violence comfortable to come in and seek help and assistance and get shelter and assistance. So that is an issue that I will take seriously, and I welcome any further guidance.

Senator BOOKER. Well, I welcome you communicating with us about evidence-based programs that address this as something that we as a Congress might want to invest in.

Mr. FOOTE. You have my commitment.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

Ms. Fite, a lot of talk about how much the Chinese are investing in sub-Saharan Africa, their presence there. We just talked about the base in Djibouti. It is tremendous. And I am wondering when

it comes to investment and trade, how do you assess China's role in the Angolan economy and giving us a fair shot as we continue our economic relationship?

Ms. FITZ. Thank you, Senator.

I believe that China's investment and presence in Angola is not a threat to the United States. I think that their relationship with Angola has gone on for a number of years. It is very much oil-based. And China has become, I think, Angola's largest importer of oil at this point.

At the same time, I think we have some shared interests in Africa in general—the United States and China. And certainly China has helped in some humanitarian issues that we have been very concerned about. They provided I think more than \$1 million to Ebola eradication and treatments in West Africa in 2014. They have also been involved in some of the other health issues.

I think one thing that can happen, though, is with the U.S. there, we can, first off, help Angola develop a better business environment because I believe fundamentally that U.S. companies will compete very well and can win contracts against Chinese competitors because U.S. companies are known for high quality training and maintenance and training of technicians. And so I think these are things that, again, I do not see China as a competitor, but another—or sorry—not as a threat but just another competitor for products and for exports in Angola.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you.

Mr. Reimer, given the time, I am not going to ask you a question, but I will make two points. The first point is that Chairman Flake is—I know how hard of a worker he is in the United States Senate. I know he visits lots of hotspots. I doubt we will be doing a CODEL during your time there, but if he should choose to and believe that it is important, I will give full consideration to joining him. [Laughter.]

Mr. REIMER. You both are very welcome, Senator.

Senator BOOKER. And then my last comment is very simply congratulations. You will have to tell me about this marriage thing, if it is something I should explore myself. And I do want to say that your wife—you did not have any connections to New Jersey, sir, but your wife is Italian and we have the highest per capita Italian population in the entire United States of America in New Jersey. So she is welcomed to visit anytime.

Mr. REIMER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Thank you all, the witnesses in both panels today. We really benefit from your testimony. And as mentioned by Senator Booker, we hope that you will stay in touch with us and certainly interact with our offices when there are things that are needed. And hopefully we will get to visit some of you at least during the time. So we appreciate that.

The record will remain open until the close of business today, including for members to submit questions for the record. We ask you to respond as quickly as you can, and your responses will be made part of the record.



With the thanks of the committee, the hearing is now adjourned.  
[Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

## Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO LARRY E. ANDRÉ 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.* As Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania since 2014, I led my team to contribute toward eradicating slavery and its vestiges by working with both Mauritanian and American civil society organizations and coordinating the advocacy and programming activities of U.S. government agencies. Mauritians closely identify the U.S. Embassy with the anti-slavery struggle. Our advocacy helped free imprisoned activists. Our programming increased funding to local organizations providing legal assistance to slaves resulting in liberation of slaves and successful prosecutions and other legal actions against slave owners.

As Director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, serving multiple and lengthy stints as Chargé d'Affaires in Juba, South Sudan, I strenuously advocated the release of imprisoned ruling party dissidents threatened with death for alleged treason, including attendance at their trials and visits to their places of detention. Once released, the dissidents were conducted directly to the Embassy, where they met with concerned members of the diplomatic community. Among only five Americans remaining at the Embassy following evacuation during factional fighting in Juba, I protested to the government the killing of civilians and threats to the United Nations-managed camp in Juba for internally displaced persons. While the government continued to complain about the camp, there were no incursions while I was present (January-April 2014).

I have advocated for human rights and democracy throughout my career, and, if confirmed, will continue to do so in Djibouti.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Djibouti? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Djibouti? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

*Answer.* The most pressing human rights issues in Djibouti are the suppression of opposition political voices; the refusal to allow some groups to form legally recognized political parties; the harassment, abuse, and detention of some government critics; the government's denial of access to independent sources of information; and restrictions on freedoms of speech and assembly. I will advocate, both with the public and privately with Djibouti's leadership, for the strengthening of democratic institutions and the adoption of democratic practices as the best guarantors of long-term peace, prosperity and stability. Specifically, I will seek to influence the authorities to improve significantly the fairness and credibility of the legislative elections scheduled for 2018.

*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 Djibouti in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

*Answer.* Many Djiboutians see their neighbors to the south (Somalia) and to the east (Yemen) as examples of state failure, leading to collapse into violent anarchy. Djiboutian government authorities tend to fear that loosening political restrictions will increase the risk of severe instability within their country, with potentially disastrous consequences. It is our task to strongly and consistently advocate for human rights and responsive, democratic institutions as the best guarantors of peace, stability, and prosperity over the long term.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Djibouti? 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. Yes, I am committed to working with both U.S. and local civil society organizations to promote our human rights objectives. This has been my practice throughout my career. If confirmed, I will direct all personnel under chief of mission authority to proactively implement the Leahy Law and similar provisions. I understand that our current security cooperation includes human rights components. I commit to review those components to ensure they are clear.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Djibouti to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Djibouti?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will lead our team to engage in this area, just as I did in Mauritania and in South Sudan. Djibouti's long-term peace, stability, and prosperity requires rule of law and protections for individual citizens' political rights.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Djibouti on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. A formal objective of the U.S. Mission is that Djibouti achieve progress on human rights and good governance. If confirmed, I will advance that objective.

*Question 7.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Djibouti?

Answer. No.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. My experience leading U.S. Missions overseas confirms the research referenced in your question. If confirmed, and as I have done at other posts, I plan to mentor and maintain a diverse, inclusive Embassy team, including consideration of aspects of diversity relevant to our Djiboutian workforce and the composition of Djiboutian society.

*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will speak publicly and regularly, including in Town Hall and Country Team meetings, about my own commitment to diversity and inclusion and my expectations that all members of the Embassy team will experience and sustain an inclusive and supportive workplace. I will require all supervisors to promote an inclusive, supportive, and ethical workplace. I will encourage all supervisors to include in performance evaluations a comment on the supervisor's success in valuing diversity and promoting inclusion, and will recognize and commend efforts among supervisors to value diversity and foster inclusion. I will ensure that supervisors are cognizant of EEO principles and rules, and held accountable for respecting them. I will ensure prompt engagement, and corrective action when warranted, on any expressions of concern that the Embassy workplace does not value diversity or promote inclusion.

*Question 12.* In the wake of President Guelleh's meeting with President Obama in 2014, the United States launched the U.S.—Djibouti Binational Forum.

- What issues were discussed as part of the Binational Forum? Will the Forum continue? What issues should be covered as part of the forum?

Answer. The Binational Forum (BNF) covers issues in political, economic development, health, and military cooperation. In the political sphere, we were successful in our efforts to encourage Djibouti to join the Counter ISIS coalition, improve conditions for refugees in Djibouti, including educational opportunities for refugee chil-

dren. Djibouti also agreed to host the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Center of Excellence for countering violent extremism (CVE). Further, we made progress in helping Djibouti improve efforts to combat trafficking in persons. In the economic development sphere, the BNF advanced USAID projects in workforce development and energy, and improved the positive economic impact of our military presence through the Djibouti First, and now Africa First, programs which aim to improve the local economy. In the military cooperation sphere, the BNF helps to deepen our military-to-military cooperation, ensure operational coordination, review security assistance, and respond to requests from the Government of Djibouti. The BNF has served, and continues to serve, as an important forum for U.S. engagement with Djibouti, which will be hosting the next BNF meeting in the spring of 2018.

*Question 13.* If confirmed, what would be your approach to maintaining security cooperation while advocating for accountability and transparency in government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Embassy team continues to emphasize the need for accountability and transparency in all of our engagements with the Government of Djibouti, not just in security cooperation. As I have done throughout my career, if confirmed, I will speak both publicly and privately in favor of Djiboutians developing transparent and accountable democratic institutions and instituting democratic norms as the best long-term guarantor of their nation's stability and prosperity. I will share our own nation's history of developing democratic institutions and practices.

*Question 14.* How much has the United States provided to Djibouti in security assistance in each of the past four fiscal years?

Answer. During Fiscal Years 2014–2017, the Department of State provided approximately \$18.9 million in funding for security assistance to Djibouti. This amount includes funding from Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and multiple Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)-funded programs, including the Africa Military Education Program (AMEP), African Maritime Security (AMS), Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT), Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI—including Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) training), and Non-Proliferation, Anti-terrorism, demining, and Related Programs (NADR).

In FY 2017, we provided approximately \$4.236 million; in FY 2016 \$4.795 million; in FY 2015 \$5.559 million; and in FY 2014, \$4.316 million in security assistance to Djibouti.

*Question 15.* What are the major programs and funding sources for our security assistance programs?

Answer. The major programs and funding sources for Department of State security assistance programs include:

- International Military Education and Training (IMET)—sending Djiboutian officers to school in America side by side with our officers and NCOs;
- Foreign Military Finance (FMF)—providing financing for the purchase of U.S.-manufactured military equipment and training;
- Various Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)-funded programs, including:
  - The Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI)—including the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program—supporting Djiboutian peacekeepers;
  - Counterterrorism programming under PREACT;
  - Africa Military Education Program (AMEP)—which is working on curriculum development at the Djiboutian military academies;
  - African Maritime Security (AMS)—working with the Djiboutian Navy and Coast Guard
  - Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) funding for the Antiterrorism Training and Assistance (ATA) program.

*Question 16.* How much development and humanitarian aid have we provided to Djibouti in each of the past four fiscal years, and what are the major areas of focus?

Answer. Over the last four fiscal years, the United States provided development assistance to Djibouti in the following amounts: FY 2014 \$11,735,000; FY 2015 \$19,904,000; FY 2016 \$19,008,000; and FY 2017 (allocation) \$16,900,000. Humanitarian assistance to Djibouti over the same period is as follows: FY 2014 \$6,022,137; FY 2015 \$5,166,137; FY 2016 \$6,566,137; and FY 2017 (allocation) \$5,100,000. The major focus areas of assistance are Health-HIV/AIDS, Humanitarian Assistance, Workforce Development, Basic Education, and Civil Society.

*Question 17.* The United States pays a reported \$68 million a year to lease Camp Lemonnier. What steps did we take to ensure that the proceeds would be used to support spending on social services that benefit the poor and underserved population in Djibouti?

Answer. The U.S. encourages the Government of Djibouti to use its resources to expand economic opportunity for the poor and underserved, and to provide support for refugees, migrants, and groups vulnerable to trafficking. This advocacy has produced a notable success: This year, the government welcomed refugee youth into the national education system. The Government of Djibouti recently agreed to pay for 18 health personnel to work at the International Organization's Migration (IOM) Response Center in Obock. With trafficking, we have increasingly encouraged the Government of Djibouti to provide more social services to trafficking victims, and the Minister of Health (MOH) has requested IOM to provide training in counter trafficking in persons for MOH personnel.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO PETER HENRY BARLERIN 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 been a consistent advocate for human rights throughout my Foreign Service career. In my first tour at the Consulate General in Lubumbashi, Zaire nearly 30 years ago, I conveyed our government's concern by visiting the family of a human rights lawyer who had been arrested by the Zairian government. I also met with a professor at the University of Lubumbashi who had had run-ins with government authorities. The day after Presidential Guard forces were alleged to have attacked and killed a number of University of Lubumbashi students, I went directly to my neighbor, the local commander, to protest and demand an explanation. The commander was replaced in the wake of ongoing scrutiny of the incident.

As Deputy Director in the Office of Regional and Security Affairs from 2007–2009, I oversaw Leahy vetting and Africa Bureau input into the State Department's Human Rights Reports. I also represented the United States in international contact group meetings in Conakry, Guinea, to try to convince Guinean coup leader Dadis Camara to step down, and later attended a contact group meeting in Paris, France to try to induce Mauritanian coup leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz to release the detained Prime Minister and organize elections. Dadis Camara was eventually replaced by democratically elected President Alpha Condé and Abdel Aziz ultimately stepped down as head of state in order to run for President in accordance with the Mauritanian constitution. He was elected President in an election that was deemed largely free, fair, and credible.

As Deputy Chief of Mission in Bamako, Mali, with the assistance of a very talented entry level officer, I succeeded in getting Mali to take the necessary concrete actions against trafficking in persons to be upgraded to Tier 2 after being on Tier 2 Watch List status for two years in a row and facing an automatic downgrade to Tier 3. Tier 3 would have entailed withholding of all non-humanitarian foreign assistance. I made multiple, high-level démarches including to the President and the Prime Minister to impress upon them the possibility of losing badly needed U.S. foreign assistance if they did not show more progress in fighting trafficking in persons. In the end, we prevailed.

After a coup overthrew the democratically elected president of Mali in March 2012, I was the first American to call coup leader Amadou Sanogo to demand that he step down and to insist that the military return to their barracks. I met regularly with civil rights groups and opposition politicians including Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who went on to be elected president of Mali. After my departure, Sanogo was detained and remains in prison.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with oversight responsibility for West Africa and then as acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and finally, as Senior Official in the Africa Bureau, I consistently sought to advance human rights and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, we supported an effort by the Economic Community of West African States to convince Yahya Jammeh, a dictator who had ruled The Gambia for 23 years, that he should respect the results of the election that had ousted him. I worked with our Embassies and the team back in Washington to support free, fair, and credible elections in Burkina Faso, Niger, Ni-

geria, and Ghana, among other countries. I met with opposition leaders from the several countries and pressed government leaders in many countries to show respect for human rights and constitutional term limits.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in the Republic of Cameroon? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in the Republic of Cameroon? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Over the last year, the most significant challenges to human rights and democracy in Cameroon include the ongoing situation in the South West and North West Anglophone regions that has resulted in loss of life, restrictions on the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, and the detention of numerous peaceful demonstrators and journalists covering the events, many of whom are still awaiting trial. Reports of forced repatriation of thousands of Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram, back to unsafe areas is likewise an issue of great concern. Also deeply troubling are allegations that Cameroonian security forces tortured individuals thought to be linked to Boko Haram.

If confirmed, I would continue to urge all parties to commit to dialogue in order to resolve the root causes of the conflict, and to find a mutually acceptable, peaceful resolution that will ensure Cameroon's long-term stability. I will continue to call for the release from detention peaceful protesters and political prisoners, and to press the government to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

I will directly engage senior Cameroonian government officials on upholding refugee protection within the country in accordance with international norms and ensuring that any refugee returns are voluntary and conducted safely, and with dignity. I will make the case that defeating terrorism in the long-term is possible only when security forces respect human rights and gain the trust of civilians. Torture is not acceptable under any circumstances, and I will insist that Cameroonian authorities fully investigate credible allegations that its security forces or law enforcement personnel have engaged in torture.

If confirmed, I am also committed to working with the Cameroonian people and government to increase political space and democratic participation, including among women and young people, to advance civil and political rights. With presidential elections scheduled for 2018, promoting democracy, human rights, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and the rule of law will be among my highest priorities.

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

Answer. In spite of challenges, Cameroon has achieved considerable progress since its independence. If confirmed, I will seek to help build on that progress. Looking forward, the Government of Cameroon stands a much greater chance of success when it respects human rights, and when it has the trust of the people. Good governance is the single most important factor in the success or failure of any nation, and the ends do not justify all means. I will work with the government, the people of Cameroon, and our international partners to ensure that elections in 2018 are free, fair, and credible, as well as peaceful.

I will, if confirmed, encourage the government to release peaceful protesters and journalists detained in connection with the protests in the Anglophone regions, and urge all parties to commit to dialogue. In addition, I will continue to engage the Government of Cameroon to uphold its commitments in implementing the Tripartite Agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the treatment of Nigerian refugees.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Republic of Cameroon? If confirmed, what steps will you take to proactively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with U.S.-based human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations, and with local and international human rights NGOs in Cameroon. I will encourage the Cameroonian government to engage with these groups in order to open political space and to encourage the participation of civil society, particularly in the run-up to the 2018 Presidential elections. It is important to make the case that engaging with and hearing

the views of individuals from these organizations will go a long way toward demonstrating that the Government of Cameroon is serious about human rights.

The United States values Cameroon as a key partner in combating Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS-West Africa, in the Lake Chad Region. If confirmed, I will work closely with AFRICOM, and senior Cameroonian military officials to ensure that, in accordance with the Leahy Law, the United States does not furnish foreign assistance to any Cameroonian security force unit if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such a unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. I will also continue to fully support the participation of appropriately vetted candidates in AFRICOM's International Military Education and Training (IMET) Expanded IMET (E-IMET) courses, which provide instruction in military law and justice, human rights, and the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) as a means to interconnect military education and the importance of respect for human rights.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Republic of Cameroon to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Republic of Cameroon?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, my team and I will continue the Embassy's long-standing policy of advocating for key political prisoners and individuals unjustly targeted. I am particularly concerned about cases in which targeted individuals or organizations that expressed views at odds with government policy are arbitrarily detained, as highlighted in the U.S. Department of State's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

If confirmed, I will advocate for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, in accordance with Cameroon's constitution and its commitments and obligations under international law.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with the Republic of Cameroon on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will make the promotion of human rights, civil rights, and democracy, a key priority, and will ensure these issues are raised directly with senior officials of the government of Cameroon.

*Question 7.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Cameroon?

*Answer.* No. I have not had any material changes to my financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the Office of Government Ethics financial disclosure form since the date I signed it.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

*Answer.* As Deputy Chief of Mission in Bamako, Mali from 2009–2012 and in leadership positions in the Africa Bureau from 2013 to the present, I have made consistent and sustained efforts to increase diversity and nurture people from different backgrounds. Over the years, I have mentored and remain in close contact with entry level officers from diverse backgrounds through the State Department's formal mentoring program and have informally mentored other Foreign Service and civil service officers from diverse backgrounds and gender over the years.

First as Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, and then as Senior Official in the Bureau of African Affairs, I was responsible for making recommendations for Chief of Mission and Deputy Chief of Mission assignments, and ensured that diversity and gender were reflected on the short lists of candidates whenever possible.



*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will make diversity and inclusivity elements of the work requirements of all supervisors at the Embassy, including locally employed staff, and hold them accountable, just as I do with other standards of performance. I will speak regularly to the value of diversity and gender inclusivity and lead by example through my own behavior.

*Security Assistance*

*Question 12.* How much money has the United States provided to Cameroon in each of the past four fiscal years from both bilateral and regional accounts?

Answer. From FY 2014–FY 2017, the United States Congress obligated \$85.349M in security assistance funding for Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) to support military professionalization, counterterrorism, peacekeeping, maritime security, and counter-poaching efforts.

- Breakdown per Year
  - FY 2014—\$13.014M was obligated for Cameroon in IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, peacekeeping, and counter-poaching efforts.
  - FY 2015—\$31.305M was obligated in FMF, IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and peacekeeping.
  - FY 2016—\$7.503M was obligated in FMF, IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and peacekeeping.
  - FY 2017—\$33.527M was obligated in FMF, IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and peacekeeping.

While Cameroon does not receive bilateral International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds for civilian security assistance, Cameroon has benefited from the centrally managed INCLE funds for the period of FY 2014–FY 2017.

- Breakdown per Year:
  - FY 2014—\$915,000
  - FY 15—\$1,034,000
  - FY 2016—\$1,362,000
  - FY 2017—\$1,490,000 (estimated)

*Question 13.* What is the status of AFRICOM's inquiry into whether or not American soldiers were aware of torture and abuses being carried out by Cameroonian soldiers?

Answer. A preliminary inquiry, directed by the Commander, Special Operations Command Africa (Forward), found no evidence that U.S. forces observed or received reports of the law of armed conflict (LOAC) violations allegedly committed by partner forces in Cameroon.

Nevertheless, after reviewing the findings of the preliminary inquiry, the Commander of U.S. Africa Command (US AFRICOM) appointed a general officer, assisted by various subject matter experts, to further investigate the extent to which U.S. forces had engaged with Cameroonian forces who were alleged to have committed LOAC violations. The investigation is examining the human rights and LOAC training received by U.S. forces prior to deploying, as well as any training provided by U.S. forces to Cameroonian forces. The investigation will make recommendations on the actions that the Department of Defense should take moving forward.

*Question 14.* Will the results of this inquiry be provided to Congress?

Answer. The provision of the results of the inquiry will be determined by AFRICOM.

*Question 15.* How will you, if confirmed as Ambassador, effectively message that the United States does not tolerate human rights abuses by the Cameroonian military?

Answer. If confirmed, I will reiterate to the Cameroonian Government that the United States takes gross human rights abuse allegations seriously and, in accordance with the Leahy Law, does not furnish assistance to any security force unit if the Secretary of State has credible information that such a unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

I will urge Cameroon to uphold its commitments and obligations under international law. All allegations and reports of torture and abuses must be fully investigated in a transparent manner. If warranted, the perpetrators must be prosecuted and punished in order to meet those commitments.

We value Cameroon's partnership in combating terrorism. And as a valued partner in this fight, it is necessary to underscore that the strong partnership between the United States and Cameroon is not sustainable if Cameroonian security forces show a pattern of human rights abuses in the fight against terrorism.

*Question 16.* The State Department has ranked Cameroon "Tier 2 Watchlist" on trafficking in persons. If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and aid, if any, would you pursue to help Cameroon better tackle this problem?

*Answer.* The Government of Cameroon does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. There are several lines of diplomatic effort I will pursue, if confirmed, to encourage the Government of Cameroon to improve on its current Tier 2 Watchlist ranking.

I will urge the Government of Cameroon to increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers for all forms of trafficking—including complicit officials and cases referred by NGOs—under the trafficking section of the penal code. I will also encourage Cameroon to provide repatriation assistance, including travel documents, to Cameroonian trafficking victims identified abroad, expand trafficking-specific services for all victims, and increase collaboration with NGOs on identifying and protecting victims and raising awareness of trafficking.

Additionally, I will work with the Government of Cameroon to encourage efforts to protect Cameroonian women who are recruited to work abroad, especially in exploitative situations in the Middle East, by encouraging the active regulation and investigation of labor recruiters and the provision of pre-departure information to citizens on their rights as foreign workers.

*Question 17.* In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Cameroon's security sector and the rule of law?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I believe that there is an opportunity through AFRICOM to amplify an anti-trafficking message in their work with the Cameroon Armed Forces, specifically the Gendarmerie. As precedence, in 2016, U.S. Marines and Sailors worked with Cameroonian counterparts to increase their capabilities to combat illicit activity and improve maritime security. In accordance with the Leahy Law, the Department of State has the ability to train and increase the capacity of Cameroonian security forces so that they are more representative of and accountable to the communities they serve. In addition, the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies (DILS) provides our foreign partners with professional development in the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity within the military. AFRICOM works closely with DILS to sponsor numerous training events and workshops each year.

If confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT), which works specifically with partner governments to increase the effectiveness of their rule of law institutions. Such programs would help strengthen the country's judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute these crimes in a transparent and credible manner.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO ERIC P. WHITAKER 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.* Throughout my Foreign Service career I have supported democracy and human rights, including promoting civil liberties, civil society, anti-trafficking in persons, and freedom of religious belief and practice. This has included serving as an election observer in Ethiopia, co-hosting civil society conflict prevention roundtables in Niger, promoting civic and voter education in Mali, and working with district advisory councils to improve local human services in Iraq.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in the Republic of Niger? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to pro-



mote human rights and democracy in the Republic of Niger? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most serious human rights problems include attacks by armed groups that resulted in death, disappearances, and abuse; harsh and life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; trafficking in persons, including forced labor and caste-based slavery; and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly.

The United States government is concerned by a troubling trend in the past few years of Nigerien authorities arresting and threatening critics of the government in a series of what regime opponents and human rights organizations deem as politically driven actions. Political activists and journalists use language on social media perceived by the government as provocative or overly critical, including sometimes calling for regime change. Rather than acknowledge the right of freedom of speech, the Nigerien authorities frequently react using diverse and in many cases concerning tactics, ranging from temporarily detaining individuals for questioning, months-long detentions with threat of imprisonment, and in a few cases, convictions with suspended sentences.

If confirmed, I will continue to implement and champion programs and funding to combat violations of human rights and civil liberties, and expand respect for fundamental freedoms in Niger. I will engage proactively with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I will speak out in the media. I will encourage the Nigerien Government to seek input from a broad range of viewpoints, including civil society. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Nigerien people, and that, in accordance with the Leahy law, units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training. I will also forcefully advocate for the protection and defense of human rights. I will press the Nigerien government to adhere to its own constitution and laws, and to hold accountable violators of those laws.

Through these actions, if confirmed, I will seek to reinforce with both the Government of Niger and the Nigerien public the strong stance of the U.S. government with respect to democratic progress and respect for human rights, including media freedoms, space for civil society actions, and political space for all political parties. This support will extend to judicial practices so as to minimize pre-trial detention, improve penal conditions, and improve the treatment of those in custody by law enforcement officials. Furthermore, I will seek to advocate against any abuses by security forces against civilians, infringements of labor rights, and exploitation of any element of the Nigerien public, to include slavery or servitude.

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

Answer. There are many obstacles to improving the human rights situation in Niger. Niger's armed forces are not numerous enough and lack sufficient resources to protect all of Niger's citizens from being victimized by violent extremists. Nigerien prisons are critically underfunded, and as a result, conditions are dire. Nigerien law enforcement officials lack sufficient training on the importance of respecting fundamental freedoms, and accountability mechanisms to deter violations are not in place; as a result, these freedoms are occasionally violated.

In Niger's prisons, nutrition, sanitation, potable water, and medical care are poor. National Guard troops have acted as untrained prison guards, but a new training institute has been established, and prison officials at all levels are enrolled. Record-keeping on prisoners is inadequate. There are no official penal or judicial alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders. Some Nigerien law enforcement officials have violated Nigeriens' freedom of expression and freedom from arbitrary detention in order to counter what the government perceives as threats to public safety.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Republic of Niger? If confirmed, what steps will you take to proactively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will proactively engage with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I will encourage the Nigerien government to seek input from a broad range of viewpoints, including civil society. I will also vigorously advocate for the protection and defense of human rights.

If confirmed, I will make certain the Embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy requirements to ensure that recipients of U.S. security assistance are subject to human rights vetting and that security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training for Nigerien peacekeepers in Mali under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, include human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Niger participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Nigerien people, and that units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Republic of Niger to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Niger?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will work hard to ensure that the rule of law is respected in Niger, including the Nigerien Constitution, which guarantees basic human rights.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to advocate for the respect of fundamental freedoms to include the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for persons unjustly detained by the government.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with the Republic of Niger on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and will regularly engage with the Nigerien government on these issues. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagement with the Nigerien government across the full range of issues. Niger stands to benefit greatly in all areas when its people are empowered, free to express their views and engage their government without fear of retribution, and have trust in the rule of law.

*Question 7.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Niger?

Answer. No.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a Foreign Service officer who has served with diverse teams throughout my career, I strongly believe in the value of workplace diversity. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Niamey has active and accessible Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Women's Program (FWP) operations, programs, and outreach, and will ensure that EEO and FWP counselors are trained and afforded time at the workplace to perform their duties. I will ensure the embassy has a structured mentorship program and that each member of the embassy team has opportunities for personal growth and professional success. I will include staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in activities, committees and boards, working groups, visitor hosting, field travel, and other developmental assignments. I will also hold sessions to listen to their feedback regarding the mission and its undertakings.

Furthermore, in my own behavior, I will model a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. I will ensure that the employee evaluation process is rigorously followed, including formal and documented counseling sessions throughout each performance period, so that employees receive timely and constructive feedback on

their performance and have structured opportunities to raise with their supervisors any workplace concerns or impediments to success.

*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will speak publicly, including in Town Hall and Country Team meetings, on a regular basis regarding my commitment to diversity and inclusion, and underscore my expectations that all embassy team members will experience and sustain an inclusive and supportive workplace. I will require all supervisors to promote an inclusive, supportive, and ethical workplace, and will emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion in my oversight of section and agency heads as well as in orientation and training sessions. I will encourage that the performance evaluations of all supervisors comment on the supervisor's success in valuing diversity and promoting inclusion, and will recognize and commend efforts among supervisors to value diversity and foster inclusion. I will ensure that supervisors are cognizant of EEO principles and rules, and held accountable for respecting them. I will ensure prompt engagement, and corrective action when warranted, on any expressions of concern that the embassy workplace does not value diversity or promote inclusion.

*Question 12.* According to a report in the New York Times last month, the administration is considering new rules for drone strikes and raids that may well affect operations in Niger.

- What rules currently govern who is targeted drone strikes, and is that rule in fact going to be relaxed? Should we expect to see more strikes in Niger? Will such strikes be vetted and approved at the same levels within our government that they were in the Obama administration? Will rules governing "commando raids outside conventional battlefield," as the article suggest be changed?

Answer. The United States bases and operates MQ9 unmanned aerial vehicles from Niamey, Niger. In close coordination with the government of Niger, U.S. Air Force Africa (AFAFRICA) supports a range of security missions. This effort promotes regional stability in support of U.S. diplomacy and national security, and strengthens relationships with regional leaders committed to security and prosperity. The United States has not armed any of these drones, so there are no strikes. I must defer to the Department of Defense for more specifics regarding this program.

*Question 13.* How much money have we provided to Niger in each of the past four fiscal years in security assistance from all sources? What are the primary accounts and programs through which we have provided such assistance?

Answer. During Fiscal Years 2013–2016, the United States provided nearly \$90 million in funding for security assistance to Niger. This amount includes funding from Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and related programs (NADR), counter-terrorism (TSCTP) the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF), and Peacekeeping Operation Funds.

In FY 2016, we provided \$34.5 million; in FY 2015 \$28.2 million; in FY 2014 \$9.7 million; and in FY 2013, \$18 million in security assistance to Niger.

*Question 14.* What are the current proposals for funding the "G-5 Sahe." (a grouping of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso) under discussion in the Security Council?

Answer. Some G-5 member states and France have attempted to persuade the U.N. Security Council to authorize the deployment of the G-5 Joint Force, under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.

*Question 15.* What is the United States position on how the G-5 should be funded and what international partners should contribute?

Answer. The United States applauds the increased leadership that regional organizations have demonstrated and strongly supports the efforts of the G-5 Sahel countries to bolster regional security. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force represents a concrete opportunity to leverage resources to solve problems. The United States will continue to support the G-5 through flexible bilateral and regional support, which have proven the most pragmatic in the Sahel. Since 2012, the Department of State has provided over \$600 million in security assistance to G-5 countries. Since February 2013, the United States has also provided \$95 million in logistics support for French stabilization and operations to counter violent extremism in the Sahel.

Many donor nations have pledged support intended for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The European Union has pledged 50 million euros, to be disbursed through a French parastatal. Each of the five G-5 countries—Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mau-

ritania, and Chad, has pledged 10 million euros, as well as a minimum of one battalion of the troops and law enforcement personnel who will constitute the force. France has pledged to pay eight million euros by the end of 2017, and will donate helicopters to Niger by 2019. France is currently providing military staff support to Mauritania. Germany has pledged to provide ambulances, water tank trucks, construction, training, and mobility support.

*Question 16.* Freedom House's 2017 report stated that, "Niger's political rights rating declined from 3 to 4 due to the repressive conditions surrounding the 2016 presidential and legislative elections, including harassment of the opposition, as well as alleged irregularities in the balloting itself." The report goes on to say that the "struggle to meet the security challenges that surround Niger has served as an alibi for the government to restrict freedoms and civil liberties."

- What assistance have we provided to Niger over the past four fiscal years to support democracy and human rights?

*Answer.* From FY 2014—FY 2017, the United States provided approximately \$9 million in bilateral foreign assistance to support democracy, governance, and human rights activities in Niger. In addition to the bilateral funding, Niger has also received approximately \$40.5 million in resilience programming between FY 2014 and FY 2017 from USAID's West Africa Regional Mission, which supports programming in Niger for health and family planning, environment, agriculture, trade, and peace and governance, including countering violent extremism.

*Question 17.* How will you, if confirmed as Ambassador, ensure that the government in Niger understands that security challenges should not serve as an excuse to restrict freedoms and civil liberties?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would ensure that my messaging, both public and private, to the government and people of Niger would underscore the importance that the U.S. government attaches to the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, support for effective and accountable government, and the maintenance of open political space with freedom to express peacefully views critical of the government. These elements all work to support long-term stability and deepen Niger's democratic consolidation. Furthermore, the embassy's public diplomacy, high-level visits, field trips, and programming would continuously accentuate the importance of democratic freedoms and civil liberties to a vibrant democracy that serves as a foundation for Niger's development.

Our Embassy has set up a press freedom working group to highlight concerns that protection of democratic institutions and civil liberties is critical to our partnership. We aim to advocate for, and effect actions that result in, easing of journalist harassment and safe platforms for those with opposing views. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the activities of this working group in order to promote greater freedom of expression for all Nigeriens.

If confirmed, I will make certain the embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy requirements to ensure that recipients of U.S. security assistance are subject to human rights vetting. Furthermore, I will require that security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training to Nigerien peacekeepers in Mali under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, include specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Niger participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Nigerien people, and that units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training.

The U.S. Mission in Niger is working on two levels to improve good governance. At the local level, we support multi-stakeholder dialogues, planning, budgeting, and joint action to identify and address citizen needs. At the national level, we support priority policy reform, including improvements to the Electoral Law, Young Girl Education and Protection Law, and Future Generations Law. We also continue to strengthen the capacity of the legislative branch, media, civil society, and other actors to fulfill their critical roles in society, increase public dialogue, and serve as a check and balance on the executive. If confirmed, I will continue to implement and champion similarly effective programs and funding to combat violations of human rights and civil liberties, and expand respect for fundamental freedoms in Niger.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MICHAEL J. DODMAN 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. Promoting respect for human rights and democracy has been a priority in each of my Foreign Service assignments. The following examples are among my most significant actions, drawn from two very different posts.

As Consul General in Karachi, one of my top priorities was fostering dialogue among religious groups, both to build respect and tolerance for religious freedom, and to promote conditions conducive to a more democratic, stable, and prosperous society. I met regularly with religious leaders of all faiths, including direct outreach to students in madrasas, and established the Consul General's residence as a space for regular interfaith discussions. I directed that the beneficiaries of any assistance programs in our consular district include representatives from Pakistan's many religious and ethnic minorities. Likewise, I ensured that women and girls benefited from our assistance programs, and were represented in all of our public diplomacy programs. The Consulate team and I developed a close partnership with the country's leading philanthropist, and together we hosted a series of educational sessions and social events for residents of the city's largest orphanage for girls. Finally, I made sure that the U.S. Consulate was widely recognized as a model employer in the region, where qualified employees were hired and promoted regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, or social status. For instance, during my time in Karachi, we expanded the number of women hired as security guards. As the public face of our compound, this sent a visible signal to the city about U.S. values and equal employment opportunity.

As Political Counselor in Prague, my team and I exposed details regarding the plight of around 100 North Koreans working at a factory in the Czech Republic in conditions of forced labor. We assessed the scale of the workforce and their working conditions, providing the State Department with details and recommendations. We made a clear and compelling case to the Czech Government to intervene on behalf of the workers. The Government promptly responded, forcing the firm to end its contract with the North Korean government. The Czechs also put in place procedures that prevented future contracts with the North Korean regime.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Mauritania? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Mauritania? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most serious human rights concern in Mauritania is slavery. The elimination of slavery everywhere is long past due, but doing so in Mauritania has been particularly difficult. While Mauritanian law prohibits slavery, the Government has rarely prosecuted alleged slaveholders, and efforts to enforce anti-slavery legislation have been insufficient. If confirmed, I will seek to engage the Government of Mauritania in a partnership to fight slavery, and other forms of human trafficking, and identify and provide protective assistance, social services, and skills training to former slaves. If confirmed, I will seek to increase the capacity of civil society to support the reintegration of marginalized groups, including former slaves, and improve their access to justice. I will work to provide U.S. training to police, prosecutors, and judges to address the challenges of investigating and trying human trafficking cases.

Other human rights problems include incarceration of children with adult prisoners, government influence over the judiciary, arbitrary limits on freedom of assembly, public corruption, and restrictions on religious freedom. The constitution dictates that only Muslims may be citizens. Other reported human rights abuses included gender-based violence against women and girls; discrimination against women; female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); early and forced marriage; political marginalization of sub-Saharan (non-Arab) ethnic groups and of the Arab Haratine caste of slave descendants; racial and ethnic discrimination; discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons and persons with HIV/AIDS; child labor; and inadequate and selective arbitrary enforcement of laws, including labor laws.

If confirmed, I will also continue to underscore that Mauritania's eligibility for trade benefits under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) will require continued progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, including those related to human rights and labor rights. As Mauritania strives to expand our trade and investment relationship, we should leverage AGOA eligibility criteria to encourage greater



progress in combatting slavery, holding slaveholders accountable, protecting worker rights, and ensuring civil society organizations, including anti-slavery NGOs, are able to do their work without threats or intimidation from the government.

Through steady engagement with the Mauritanian Government and civil society, I hope to affect real progress towards the goal of a more just, inclusive, and free Mauritanian society.

*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 Mauritania in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The three courts set up to hear slavery and human trafficking cases are understaffed, underfunded and generally lack political support from the central government. Tadamoun, the Government agency mandated to address poverty and the "vestiges of slavery," does not fulfill its role to submit criminal cases on behalf of victims and represent victims in cases against their alleged traffickers or slaveholders. Government agencies charged with combating trafficking and slavery continue to lack the resources, personnel, and political will to prosecute politically connected offenders, and there remains a fundamental lack of commitment to make serious and sustained efforts to combat hereditary slavery. Many senior government officials, like many Mauritanian citizens, downplay or deny the continued existence of slavery. However, we know that significant work remains to be done if slavery is to be fully abolished from the country.

The Government of Mauritania has taken many necessary steps to create laws and a judicial framework to address and correct human rights abuses, but a major obstacle is a failure to follow through and empower these new institutions to enforce the new laws. For example, in April 2016 the Government created the National Mechanism for Prevention of Torture (MNP) as an independent governmental body charged with investigating credible allegations of torture. Yet to date, the MNP has not launched a single investigation. A major challenge is in getting the Mauritanian Government to recognize that while it has made very modest progress in combating slavery, the international community strongly feels the Government is doing enough in this realm.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Mauritania? 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 meet regularly with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. The U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott has a strong record in this area, and I intend to maintain this focus.

If confirmed, I will make certain the Embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy requirements to ensure that recipients of U.S. security assistance are subject to human rights vetting and that security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training for Mauritanian peacekeepers in the Central African Republic under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, include specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Mauritania participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Mauritanian people, and that units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Mauritania to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Mauritania?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will make it a priority to press for the rule of law to be respected in Mauritania. I am concerned by reports of cases where these rights are infringed by violations of due process and political interference, including with regard to members of the political opposition and civil society. If confirmed, I will advocate for the respect of fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for the release of persons detained unjustly.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Mauritania on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and the embassy's mission. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagements with the Mauritanian government. Mauritania stands to benefit greatly when its

people are empowered, free to express their views and engage their government without fear of retribution, and have trust in and the protection of the rule of law.

*Question 7.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Mauritania?

Answer: No.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer: I am a strong supporter of career development and mentorship for all State Department and Foreign Service employees, and agree fully that diversity is essential to a well-function public service. Likewise, as the face of the United States abroad, it is essential that the Foreign Service represent America in all of its diversity.

As Director of the State Department office managing the initial assignments of all Foreign Service personnel, I took special effort to make sure that participants in the Pickering and Rangel programs—the two programs that most directly recruit underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service—received assignments that would provide a firm basis for success in their Foreign Service careers. I have mentored and supported the applications to the Pickering and Rangel programs of several students from diverse backgrounds whom I have met through lectures and seminars I have led at local universities. In making hiring decisions for my own staff, and through my participation on the State Department committee that selects Principal Officers and candidates for Deputy Chief of Mission positions, I have always emphasized the importance of diversity.

Mentoring, career development, and respect for diversity are all personal core values, and I am confident that they will be front and center of my management of the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, if confirmed. In particular, given the challenges that Mauritania confronts in addressing ethnic and racial barriers, I intend to follow the practice I used successfully as Principal Officer in Karachi, Pakistan, of ensuring that the composition of our local staff fully reflects the diversity of the host nation.

*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer: Most important is leading by example and setting the tone from the top that makes clear that our workplace will be one that embraces respect for everyone. If confirmed, I will highlight this in my first meeting with the country team, and in my first town hall with the full staff; it will be repeated in these settings at least annually, to make sure that newcomers understand my expectations. I will make diversity, tolerance, and respect for equal opportunity an element of each of my performance management discussions with my direct reports, and will take swift action to discipline staff who do not abide by these principles. Finally, I will ensure that all staff receive training on diversity and EEO rules and procedures.

*Question 12.* What are the current proposals for funding the "G-5 Sahel" (a grouping of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso) under discussion in the Security Council?

Answer: Some G-5 member states and France have attempted to persuade the U.N. Security Council to authorize the deployment of the G-5 Joint Force, under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.

*Question 13.* What is the United States position on how the G-5 should be funded and what international partners should contribute?



Answer. The United States applauds the increased leadership that regional organizations have demonstrated and strongly supports the efforts of the G-5 Sahel countries to bolster regional security. The G-5 Sahel joint force represents a concrete opportunity to leverage resources to solve problems. The United States supports the G-5 Sahel countries through flexible bilateral and regional support. Since 2012, the United States has provided over \$600 million in security assistance to G-5 countries. Since February 2013, the United States has also provided \$95 million in logistics support for French stabilization and operations to counter violent extremism in the Sahel.

Many donor nations have pledged support intended for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The European Union has pledged 50 million euros, to be disbursed through a French parastatal. Each of the five G-5 countries—Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad, has pledged 10 million euros, as well as a minimum of one battalion of the troops and law enforcement who will constitute the force. France has pledged to pay eight million euros by the end of 2017, and will donate helicopters to Niger by 2019. France is currently providing military staff support to Mauritania. Germany has pledged to provide ambulances, water tank trucks, construction, training, and mobility support.

*Question 14.* What will be your role in terms of U.S. cooperation with the G-5 if confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania given the “permanent secretariat” is based in Nouakchott?

Answer. I anticipate that the State Department will formally request that the G-5 Sahel Secretariat in Nouakchott recognize our U.S. Ambassador in Mauritania as the official U.S. diplomatic representative to the G-5 Sahel. Having our Ambassador to Mauritania designated as our diplomatic representative to the G-5 Sahel will give us deeper and more immediate information about and help shape our policy toward this regional organization that is emerging as a potentially influential force in West Africa.

*Question 15.* Recent droughts, such as the 2011 Sahel-wide drought, have impacted the resilience and coping mechanisms of Mauritanian households. The presence of Malian refugees in host communities in Mauritania, like the 50,000 Malians in Mauritania’s Mbera refugee camp, have also strained the country. What should the USG’s approach be to improve the level of cooperation with international relief organizations providing food aid and refugee support?

Answer. Though improving conditions in some parts of northern Mali have led some Malian refugees to return home, most refugees have been cautious, and only a small number have spontaneously returned to Mali from Mauritania. The Mauritanian Government is committed to hosting refugees despite its own challenges with food insecurity, and it has maintained open borders for refugees amidst security concerns. The Government works closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to protect and assist Malian refugees.

The U.S. Government is a major multilateral donor that supports U.N. agencies such as the UNHCR, the World Food Program (WFP), and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). We also support international and national non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to ensure that refugees have access to life-saving support. Our assistance also trains refugees and builds their skills in preparation for return to Mali. The good work that we accomplish through these organizations notwithstanding, we note a donor fatigue with regard to global assistance to the Malian refugees in the Mbera Camp. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Mauritania to encourage it and other partners to take a greater role in assisting the refugees and in designing a sustainable exit strategy.

*Question 16.* Mauritania is identified as a “Tier 3” country in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report, meaning it does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. In your estimation, does the Government have the political will to address human trafficking? If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Mauritania better tackle this problem?

Answer. The Mauritanian Government has taken steps that shows it has some political will to address human trafficking, but the U.S. Government would like to see it take many more, and stronger, steps, and fully implement the commitments it has already announced.

While Mauritanian law prohibits all forms of trafficking, including hereditary slavery, the Government has rarely prosecuted alleged traffickers or slaveholders, and efforts to enforce anti-slavery and anti-trafficking legislation have been otherwise insufficient. The Government has taken steps to increase public awareness of

the prohibition of slavery and in 2013 established a national agency. Tadamoun, to address poverty and the “vestiges of slavery;” however, this agency has primarily focused on general poverty-reduction efforts rather than specifically addressing slavery. In 2015, an anti-slavery law was passed following consultations with the United Nations, which strengthened the country’s ability to prosecute all forms of human trafficking. The Supreme Judicial Council set up three courts in 2015 and 2016, with an exclusive mandate to hear slavery and human trafficking cases. One of the courts has convicted two slaveholders, with the convictions upheld by the Court of Appeals. Despite some positive steps, the Government has not taken adequate steps to enforce its 2003 anti-trafficking nor its 2015 Anti-Slavery laws.

The staff of the new anti-slavery courts have not received sufficient training or resources to produce the intended results in terms of convictions (only two to date, but several cases are in progress and others have been handled by civil compromise between the parties). In addition, judges and prosecutors must be trained further to support the referrals of trafficking and slavery cases to the anti-trafficking courts, thereby facilitating victims’ access to justice.

One part of our encourage is to incentivize the Mauritanian Government to meet agreed-upon benchmarks in its efforts to combat slavery in order to maintain economic benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Our Embassy in Nouakchott has taken measures to increase knowledge of AGOA benefits and eligibility criteria among Mauritians, bringing an AGOA expert to Mauritania to meet with business leaders in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. The Embassy worked with business leaders to establish the U.S.-Mauritania Business Forum to, among other purposes, persuade the Government to take actions to preserve access to AGOA benefits.

If confirmed, I will engage the Government of Mauritania in a partnership to fight slavery and other forms of human trafficking, hold slaveholders to account, and identify and provide protective assistance, social services, and skills training to former slaves. I will also work along with the embassy staff to provide training for police, prosecutors, and judges to address the challenges of investigating and trying human trafficking cases.

*Question 17.* Though laws have been passed criminalizing slavery in recent years, practice has been slow to change. What specific further actions will you take to support organizations attempting to address the issue of slavery in Mauritania, if confirmed?

*Answer.* The State Department is funding a \$1.6 million, three-year program focused on the eradication of slavery and full integration of people emerging from slavery into mainstream society. The objectives of the program are to provide skills, opportunities, and support for 310 people emerging from slavery to achieve socioeconomic independence and rights, including citizenship, and to strengthen the legal system and framework to identify and prosecute perpetrators of slavery. The project uses three mutually reinforcing strategies—supporting the socioeconomic empowerment of people emerging from slavery; ensuring that the authorities more rigorously identify and pursue the prosecution of slavery cases and compensate victims; and changing societal norms and attitudes towards slavery and its victims. This program includes sub-grants to two key partners: a leading anti-slavery non-government organization (NGO) in Mauritania and a legal organization which supports the NGO. DRL is funding a second program in Mauritania for \$1.9 million over four-and-a-half years that supports the reintegration of marginalized groups, with a particular focus on improving their access to justice and promoting access to legal identity documents.

Mauritania is also part of the \$1 million Department of Labor-funded global BRIDGE project, which will contribute to the Mauritanian government’s efforts to eliminate all forms of slavery and to provide protection and remedies to victims.

The Department of State is increasing the capacity of civil society to support the reintegration of marginalized groups, including former slaves, and improve their access to justice. If confirmed, I will remain in close communication and share information with local and international NGOs whose mission is to publicize and combat slavery and human trafficking. Whenever possible, and when a visit by such a group would not interfere in any way with U.S. foreign policy, the embassy staff and I will welcome international NGOs to Mauritania and seek to facilitate meetings for them with both government and private officials, so that they may more effectively promote our shared goals of ending slavery and human trafficking.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
 SUBMITTED TO NINA FITE 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.* Throughout my career in the Foreign Service, I have sought to promote human rights and democracy. During my three years as Principal Officer in Lahore, Pakistan, I focused on increasing business and entrepreneurial training and opportunities for women through the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Business Council, enlisting Pakistani companies and business executives to commit to providing internships. In my tour in Afghanistan, I also worked extensively with programs to support business education and training for women.

In Pakistan, I emphasized religious tolerance through public visits to places of worship of all religions represented in my consular district. I championed tolerance with government officials, particularly with regard to several high-profile cases. I used a television appearance, which reached more than 30 million viewers, to talk about religious tolerance in the United States. In Pakistan, as during my previous tour in Angola, I met regularly with human rights groups, provided them access to high-level visitors, and ensured they were represented in our International Visitor Leadership Program. I lobbied the respective governments on human rights cases and the importance of following international standards in their treatment of human rights activists.

During the run-up to Angola's 2008 elections, I led our Political and Economic section in close cooperation with USAID-funded democracy programming to train election officials and citizens on democratic elections and voting. In Pakistan, during the 2013 elections, I directed the Consulate team in our election monitoring efforts, incorporating visiting U.S. election monitors. Our observations and reporting contributed directly to the U.S. government's and international community's evaluation of the election process.

As Principal Officer in Montreal, Canada, I highlighted Native American culture and achievements by arranging for the first Native American federal judge to speak directly to Canadian First Nation members in our consular district. For our 2017 national day celebration, we highlighted Native American culture, including a performance by a Hopi dance troupe, which we sponsored in Montreal. Throughout my tenure in Montreal, our Consulate promoted LGBTQ rights by operating a booth during the Pride Community Days and marching in the annual parade, the only Consulate in Montreal to do so. We used public diplomacy programming to support the Montreal Black Film Festival, and I hosted a lunch at my residence for Martin Luther King III with NGO representatives and city dignitaries.

Throughout my career, I have used my convening power to bring together representatives of religious and ethnic minorities, political parties, NGOs, and women to promote U.S. policy and tolerance.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Angola? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Angola? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

*Answer.* The 2016 Human Rights Report notes instances of cruel, excessive, and degrading punishment, including reported cases of torture and beatings; limits on freedoms of assembly, association, speech, and press; and official corruption and impunity. Issues like these show how important it is for us to sustain high-level dialogue with governments on these issues, seek opportunities to promote civil society, and use public engagement opportunities to expand democratic space. If confirmed, I would make full use of such engagement to seek both resolution in individual cases and to address systemic issues.

*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 Angola in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

*Answer.* The 2016 Human Rights Report notes several potential obstacles to progress on human rights issues, including the government's obstruction of opposition parties' exercise of their right to meet. It also notes restrictions on the operation of civil society, such as 2015 regulations on NGOs, which civil society criticizes as potentially restrictive and intrusive.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Angola? 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. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. If confirmed, I will strengthen U.S. efforts to work with the Government of Angola, as well as non-governmental organizations, to improve human rights conditions in Angola. I will also ensure that my staff fully implements and complies with the Leahy Law and similar efforts.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Angola to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Angola?

Answer. Members of Congress and the State Department have spoken publicly in support of human rights defenders in Angola. If confirmed, I would continue to press these issues and include them prominently in our engagement.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Angola on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. In 2010, the United States created a Strategic Partnership with Angola, agreeing to hold high-level diplomatic meetings on a regular basis, as well as separate meetings on specific issues, including human rights. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our work on these issues and ensure we include human rights issues prominently in our engagement with Angola.

*Question 7.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Angola?

Answer. No.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a leader and manager in several diplomatic posts, I know that diversity enriches our work, as it does the United States as a whole. If confirmed, I will use the diversity of my staff to benefit all at the Mission, while promoting a range of backgrounds and perspectives in the individuals whom I review for future positions.

*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that everyone on my team is treated professionally, that their rights are respected, that they are safe, and that they have the resources they need to perform their jobs. We are all one team working for the good of the U.S.-Angola relationship and the interests of the United States and the American people.

*Question 12.* U.S.—Angola Relations: During the Obama administration, issues of democracy, human rights, and development were discussed with Angola through a Human Rights Dialogue held as part of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue.

- What is the status of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue?
- If confirmed, will you commit to ensure that human rights and democracy are put on the agenda of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue?

Answer. The U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue remains active, and has given us a platform to raise a variety of issues to the highest levels of government. Most recently, in May 2017, the Defense Minister, now the President of Angola, came to Washington to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on security coopera-

tion with Secretary of Defense Mattis. This was regarded as a milestone in our partnership, and shows another facet of our continuing dialogue that our Embassy in Luanda pursues every day.

If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring that human rights and democracy issues are discussed within the framework of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership dialogue. I believe it is important to keep open and frank communication with countries like Angola, and maintaining dialogue on the state of civil society and human rights is vital to U.S. interests. I am confident our strategic partnership will continue to grow in the coming years and deepen and strengthen our countries' ties.

*Question 13. Angola's Regional Role:* Angola currently holds the presidency of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Given the administration's [decision] not to name a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, much of the responsibility for engaging Angola on regional issues will fall to you for the duration of Angola's term as President.

- What do you see as the most significant issues related to peace and security in the Great Lakes, and what actions will you advocate Angola take as President of the ICGLR related to issues such as the political crisis in Burundi, the political, security and the humanitarian crisis in DRC?
- What diplomatic support will you provide to Angola as they attempt to have the ICGLR address these issues?

Answer. Angola provides stabilizing leadership in the region and exercises considerable regional influence. Under its ICGLR Presidency, Angola has chaired summits on issues in the DRC, for example. We expect Angola to continue to play an influential role in the ICGLR, and we will continue to engage through both Luanda and Brazzaville as the Republic of Congo assumes the Presidency imminently. In addition, Angola has participated in diplomatic plenaries, including the June International Contact Group meeting the State Department hosted here in Washington, to find a common way forward on key issues impacting the Great Lakes Region, including the crisis in Burundi. Most recently, Angola, along with the United States, participated in a high-level event on the margins of the UN General Assembly hosted by France and the United Kingdom to discuss the DRC's ongoing political impasse.

Resolving the political impasse in the DRC, which we believe can be achieved only by the holding of credible elections and a peaceful, democratic transfer of power, is critical given its implications for stability in the DRC and the broader region. Regional leaders, and in particular Angola, can have considerable influence on and access to President Kabila; messages from the region are often better received than those of the United States or western partners. We have therefore worked closely to coordinate our messaging with Angola, which we believe increases the impact of our efforts.

If confirmed, I would work with the Angolan government to strengthen its role as a steadying anchor in a turbulent region, in order to further mutual political and economic interests.

*Question 14. Corruption:* Angola is a country regarded as one of the world's most corrupt—ranked 164th of 176 by Transparency International.

- In what sectors is most official corruption found in Angola?
- To what degree are former President José Eduardo dos Santos and his family implicated in ongoing corruption?
- If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help address corruption and what actions will you take as Ambassador to advocate for improvement in transparency and good governance with relevant Angolan stakeholders?

Answer. Corruption impacts all facets of Angola's economy and society, and limits Angola's ability to grow and produce wealth for its people. It also contributes to a difficult business environment for U.S. companies. A culture of corruption with impunity was allowed to flourish during President José Eduardo dos Santos' 38 years in power. Transparency International also cited former President dos Santos for nepotism in appointing his daughter to head the state oil company Sonangol and his son to head the country's Sovereign Wealth Fund.

Angola is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), a technical working body tasked with promoting and enforcing the Financial Action Task Force's anti-money laundering/counter terrorism financing (AML/CFT) standards in the Southern Africa region. These standards include mandates for transparency and beneficial ownership, regulation of sectors prone to money laundering and counter terrorism financing, and politically exposed persons. If confirmed, I will advocate for Angola's adherence to its ESAAMLG commitments, as well as advocate for changes in the current regulatory environment that allows



proceeds from corruption and other illicit acts to move freely. I would also leverage Angola's upcoming mutual evaluation review of its AML/CFT regime and national AML/CFT risk assessment as an opportunity to advocate for lasting improvements in Angola's financial and other regulated sectors, prone to abuse by corrupt officials.

If confirmed, I will strengthen U.S. efforts to work with the Government of Angola, as well as non-governmental organizations, to increase transparency and promote good governance to combat corruption and impunity better. This will take a coordinated, whole-of-government approach, and commitment from Angola's new government.

*Question 14.* Trafficking in Persons: The State Department has ranked Angola "Tier 2 Watchlist" on trafficking in persons.

- If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Angola better tackle this problem?
- In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Angola's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. Angola moved up from the Tier 2 Watchlist designation in the 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, and has remained off the Watchlist in the most recent 2017 report. The Government of Angola does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but it is making significant efforts to do so.

If confirmed, I will emphasize the critical importance of strengthening law enforcement efforts to detect and interdict suspected traffickers, particularly those involved in sex trafficking and forced labor. I will press the Angolan government to prosecute these individuals to demonstrate to perpetrators that strict penalties exist for these crimes and are enforced under Angolan law. I will also work closely with the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to implement U.S. foreign assistance devoted to combatting trafficking in persons and protecting victims, and incorporate anti-trafficking initiatives into other aspects of the Embassy's work.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO DANIEL FOOTE 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. Promotion of human rights and democracy has been an important part of my career. In Colombia, I oversaw a comprehensive, joint review of the curricula used by the Colombian National Police (CNP) by all officers. A critical impact of the review's recommendations was the successful inclusion of human rights modules at every level of CNP professional development training, and a marked decrease in reported human rights irregularities. In Afghanistan, I led the expansion of U.S. support to shelters, and associated family guidance centers, for women and children who suffer from, or are vulnerable to, gender-based violence or trafficking-in-persons. The impact was a significant increase in the number of at-risk Afghans receiving protection and support.

While serving in the Dominican Republic, I initiated programs to monitor and improve the human rights conditions of Haitian immigrants whom sugar barons mistreated. Working together with the Department of Labor and the Dominican Government, we enhanced Dominican capacity to address broad human rights issues and particularly the worst forms of child labor, leading to improved working conditions. In Haiti, I recruited the regional Department of Homeland Security Investigations office to investigate a large human-smuggling ring with ties to Major League Baseball.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Zambia? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Zambia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. In the lead-up to the 2016 Zambian election, we unfortunately saw increasing levels of intolerance and even some acts of violence that members of both parties committed, along with the incumbent party leveraging the resources of the state to its advantage. Despite these problems, the U.S. Government believed the 2016 election reflected the will of the Zambian people. However, since President Lungu's re-election, we have seen continued conflict between the political parties, culminating in opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema's arrest in April 2017 on

charges of treason. Although Hichilema was released in August, we continue to see government attempts to limit political space for the opposition, civil society, and the media, including an ongoing "threatened" state of emergency, which we hope will lapse in the coming days.

The continued restrictions on freedoms of assembly and speech we have witnessed in Zambia remain a concern. If confirmed, I would continue to engage the Government of Zambia and advocate for respect for the rule of law and the need to enhance further Zambia's reputation for political pluralism. I strongly believe that Zambia's continued democratic success, which includes respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the long-term peace and stability that it provides, is in Zambia's own interests as well as the interests of its people and the U.S. Government.

*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 Zambia in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The political tensions in Zambia continue to serve as potential obstacles to addressing human rights in Zambia, particularly in regard to respecting fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of assembly and press. However, recent developments, particularly the release of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema in August and the offer by the Commonwealth's Secretary General (SG) to facilitate dialogue between the two sides on the issues dividing the country, are promising. The Commonwealth's SG has appointed an envoy to promote constructive dialogue and reconciliation involving Zambia's political parties and civil society, designed to develop reforms that will help lead the country forward. If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will continue to encourage both sides to embrace the dialogue process and work with Zambian civil society and the Commonwealth's envoy.

Furthermore, taking a broader view on the issue of advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy, I will advocate for human rights and the role of civil society in working with government to promote democracy. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our work on these issues and ensure we include human rights issues prominently in our engagement with Zambia, ensuring that all Zambians have a voice in their society.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Zambia? 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. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations because I recognize that it is important that I meet with Zambians from all walks of life, especially representatives from civil society and NGOs. I will absolutely meet with human rights defenders as well as with U.S., local, and international NGOs. If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will direct my staff to ensure all security assistance and security cooperation activities receive Leahy and other vetting to reinforce human rights.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Zambia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Zambia?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will work hard to ensure that the rule of law is respected in Zambia. I will continue to urge the Government of Zambia to exercise restraint in addressing differences, to respect the rule of law, and to follow the due process that we would expect from a country like Zambia that historically has had a reputation for political pluralism and peaceful conflict resolution. I will ensure my team actively engages with the Government of Zambia on political prisoners and others unjustly targeted. I will continue to advocate for the respect of fundamental human rights, to include the freedoms of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for all persons to receive timely, fair, equitable access to justice.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Zambia on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and if confirmed, I will engage with the Zambian Government on these issues. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance a key element of my engagement with the Government of Zambia.

*Question 7.* 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 might have through appropriate channels.

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Zambia?

Answer. No.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Per the Secretary's statement on diversity and equal employment opportunity, the Department of State is committed to having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the people whom we represent.

As a career Foreign Service Officer specializing in management, former Assignments Officer for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and two-time Deputy Chief of Mission, I have spent much of my career recruiting and supporting staff with diverse backgrounds and talents to maximize productivity and reflect the richness of American society. From staffing 88 posts between Reykjavik and Vladivostok, to working in tents on a Forward Operating Base in the hinterlands of Iraq, to supporting multi-billion-dollar assistance programs in Washington, I have developed an intense appreciation for the exceptional value of a diverse team. I took great pride in establishing effective, career-development mentorship programs at Embassies Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will require diversity as a key element in recruitment, model ample and productive mentorship, and support relevant organizations that assist and advocate for employees diversity.

*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. An Embassy environment reflects the attitudes of its leadership. As Ambassador, I will actively set an example of inclusiveness and fairness for my subordinates, direct them to maintain inclusive environments in their sections and agencies, and will counsel accordingly if these standards are not adhered to rigidly.

#### *Democracy Promotion*

*Question 12.* In your confirmation hearing you made a commitment to promote a dialogue aimed at reconciliation and to advocate for respect for human rights.

- How will a reconciliation dialogue help support democracy? Will such a dialogue address such issues as what was deemed the politically motivated arrest and detention of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema, or the removal of civil servants alleged to support the United Party for National Development opposition party? Will it address the closing media space?

Answer. Democracy flourishes when citizens can voice diverse opinions about their government, including critical views, without fear of harassment or persecution. The environment for speaking freely in Zambia has been constricted, and a reconciliation dialogue will provide a formalized structure for all parties to air issues and seek redress or improvements to current processes and institutions. The Commonwealth Secretary General's offer to facilitate constructive dialogue and reconciliation provides all parties the opportunity to move Zambia forward.

If confirmed, as Ambassador, I would continue to encourage both sides to embrace the dialogue process. I believe, in order such a dialogue to be successful, there needs to be a frank discussion of the political environment leading to last year's August general election and the related events that have since occurred. I anticipate these issues will naturally include concerns around restrictions on freedoms of the press, assembly, and expression and respect for rule of law and human rights. I would robustly engage with, and encourage, civil society and journalists to take appropriate steps to hold political leaders accountable for constitutional and democratic principles.

*Question 13.* How much has the United States invested in Human Rights and Democracy programs in Zambia over each of the past four fiscal years? What types of programs would be beneficial in Zambia?

Answer. The U.S. Government has been a stalwart supporter of human rights and democracy in Zambia for years. We have advocated for civil society strengthening, political pluralism, and human rights. In support of our policy approaches, we have supported complementary projects at various points from Fiscal Year 2014 through Fiscal Year 2017 with a total value of approximately \$9,200,000. Our investment in democracy and governance has increased over the past four years from no Development Assistance (DA) Funds provided for this area in 2014, \$1 million in 2015, \$2 million in 2016, and \$4 million in 2017. In addition, \$1.8 million from the Elections and Political Process Fund and \$400,000 in Economic Support Funds were designated for Zambia in 2015. These investments supported national and international civil society organizations to advance productive citizen participation in civic events, as well as technical assistance for the Government of Zambia to reduce corruption, increase efficiency and accountability, and promote the protection of human rights.

Looking forward, Zambia is a country where our investments in human rights and democracy programming can have continued impact. Despite current challenges, the Government is willing and open to engagement, and civil society is poised to play an increasingly important role as watchdog and citizen advocate. If confirmed, I will support national champions of responsive democratic governance within the Zambian Government, in addition to activities to: promote productive engagement by women and youth, buttress the Human Rights Commission, increase respect for fundamental freedoms, and support advocates of reform within relevant parliamentary committees.

#### *Corruption*

*Question 14.* Zambia has made considerable progress in the fight against corruption in the last decade, as reflected by major improvements recorded in main governance indicators. However, corruption remains a serious issue in Zambia, affecting the lives of ordinary citizens and their access to public services.

- How effective is the Anti-Corruption Commission? Does it prosecute high-level government officials? Has the United States provided funding to the Commission? Why or why not?

Answer. The Anti-Corruption Commission has had a reputation for being an independent institution that pursued allegations and developed cases based on their merits, unbiased with respect to the prominence of the person or transaction under review. In recent years, however, that reputation has weakened, with the Commission succumbing to increasing political pressure, i.e., pressure to investigate political opponents or government critics selectively or to prematurely halt investigations of politically connected individuals.

By law, the Commission has no prosecutorial power. Based on the results of its findings, if the Commission believes a case has merit, it must turn the file over to the Zambia Police Service to act on the information and refer the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Commission has referred cases of high-level government officials with decreasing regularity over the last half dozen years.

The U.S. Government last provided funding to the Commission over a decade ago, judging, at the time, that the Commission was among the stronger institutions in Zambia and was worth receiving limited U.S. resources. Currently, given the political pressures on the Commission, U.S. Government resources likely would be more effective in reducing corruption within specific government structures that interface with citizens, such as the sectoral line ministries and the Office of the Auditor General.

*Question 15.* If confirmed, what specific actions will you take in your first year as Ambassador to highlight the need to effectively fight corruption, and how will you support anti-corruption advocates?

Answer. If confirmed, I will leverage my experience leading anti-corruption efforts in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. I intend to meet with anti-corruption advocates, such as Transparency International—Zambia and the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption, to understand the nature of corruption allegations better and learn about Zambians' efforts to address concerns about malfeasance by their own government. If confirmed, I anticipate working in collaboration with civil society partners to bring additional attention to these issues and raise concerns directly with government leaders. I will also work to buttress the role of anti-corruption champions within the Government of Zambia, such as the Office of Auditor General and relevant parliamentary oversight committees. I also plan to undertake efforts to encourage Zambian citizens to hold their

own government accountable, such as continuing a series of dialogues between youth leaders and government officials the Embassy has recently initiated.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO DANIEL FOOTE 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.* Promoting human rights and democracy has been an important part of my work in the State Department. As Director of the Office of West African Affairs, I met regularly with Cabinet-level African officials and Washington-based Ambassadors to press them to ensure their countries respect human rights. On several occasions I brought specific cases to their attention where we believed human rights had been violated. I was part of the Department of State team that led the response to the attempt by The Gambian President Jammeh to remain in power after he lost the election in December 2016. We worked with the international community, especially neighboring African countries, to force President Jammeh to respect the results of the election and give up power peacefully.

As Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in Mauritania, I met regularly with anti-slavery activists and spoke out publicly, including at an anti-slavery event, in order to raise awareness of the issue and demonstrate U.S. support for the activists.

As Refugee Coordinator in Baghdad, Iraq, I advocated with the Iraqi Government on behalf of the displaced and persecuted religious minorities. In Geneva, Switzerland, I advocated bilaterally and in the multilateral arena for other countries to increase their efforts and to match what the United States was doing to assist the displaced.

I believe that my efforts, working in partnership with others, contributed to changes in policies and assistance and support levels. Although the nature of human rights work often does not lead to immediately apparent results, I still believe it is important as a representative of the United States to speak up in support of human rights and democracy and will, if confirmed continue to do so, as I have throughout my career.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Mauritius and Seychelles? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Mauritius and Seychelles? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

*Answer.* Both Mauritius and Seychelles have generally good records on democracy and human rights, though challenges remain. In Mauritius, freedom of speech is a challenge, as the Government owns the sole television station, and has engaged in censorship. Also, violence against women is a societal problem. If confirmed, I expect to engage with the national leadership to expand opportunities for private ownership of media communications and also to call for justice for the victims of domestic violence.

Likewise, in Seychelles, the Government owns the sole television station and one of the country's only two radio stations. Viewpoints at odds with the Government are rarely broadcast, and opportunities to engage in free speech are therefore limited. Domestic violence against women is underreported, and police rarely respond to domestic disputes. If confirmed, I plan to encourage the licensing of additional broadcast stations, and seek effective prosecutions of domestic violence cases.

*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 Mauritius and Seychelles in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

*Answer.* Both Mauritius and Seychelles have expressed interest in continuing to improve their respective human rights records, and I do not see lack of willingness as an obstacle. I would expect that either country or both, may ask for additional training or resources to do so. Civil society and democratic institutions are healthy, as demonstrated by the two countries' high standing in various international indices, including the Ibrahim Index of African Governance.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Mauritius and Seychelles? 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. Yes, in the course of my career, I have met with a variety of human rights and civil society groups in the United States and abroad and, if confirmed, will continue to do so in my new assignment. In previous postings, I have insisted upon strict adherence with Leahy vetting rules, prohibiting human rights violators from participating in U.S. security programs, and explaining, our legal requirements. If confirmed, I will continue to do so in Mauritius and Seychelles.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Mauritius and Seychelles to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Mauritius and Seychelles?

Answer. At the moment, we are unaware of any political prisoners or persons unjustly targeted by either government. But yes, if it becomes necessary, this will be one of the country team's key responsibilities, and if confirmed, I will vigorously engage with the host government.

Answer.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Mauritius and Seychelles on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, this is imperative, and central to the Mission's goals and objectives.

*Question 7.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 8.* Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

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

*Question 9.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Mauritius or Seychelles?

Answer. No, neither I, nor members of my immediate family, have any such interests.

*Question 10.* Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As I have done throughout my Foreign Service career, I will continue to mentor, promote, and support all members of the Mission staff through one-on-one consultations, group training, and counseling, where appropriate. I will pay particular attention to those staff members who come from diverse backgrounds or are from underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service.

*Question 11.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will make sure that this goal is reflected in the stated mission of the Embassy, and that we periodically review as a country team and as individuals how we are meeting these standards. To the extent that I find we are insufficient in fostering such an environment, we will take targeted steps to remedy it.

