

**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**

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

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Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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## CONTENTS

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

---

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

IV

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

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

VI

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

APPENDIX

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

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m. in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio, presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding], Young, Menendez, Murphy, and Kaine.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

This is a nominations hearing for Rear Admiral Kenneth Braithwaite, who is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Norway; the Honorable Carlos Trujillo, who is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States; the Honorable Brock D. Bierman, who is the nominee to be the USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia; and Mr. Lee McClenny, who is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay. And we thank all of you for being here today and for your willingness to serve our country.

Today these four nominees are here for very different positions, but all are important and are all influential areas of U.S. foreign policy. Each of you will have a critical role in advancing U.S. policy and objectives in your respective posts abroad and here in the United States.

The Organization of American States describes itself as the oldest multilateral regional organization in the world. The main pillars of the OAS include democracy promotion, the protection of human rights, economic and social development, and regional security cooperation.

Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states—and I quote—the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. Democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas. End quote.

It is critical to empower the OAS to fulfill its mission as stipulated in that article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and do so by working closely with our regional allies. Efforts to continue OAS engagement and security cooperation are indispensable to the stability of the region.

Sadly here in our own hemisphere, we still have dictatorial regimes that deprive citizens of their most fundamental rights.

In Cuba, the Cuban people have not been able to freely elect their leaders in 65 years and live under an oppressive regime.

In Venezuela, the erosion and now cancellation of democracy and freedom is truly tragic and catastrophic and has led to a humanitarian disaster.

In Nicaragua, we recently saw shocking reports of executions carried out by the military, including against innocent civilians.

Our hemisphere clearly still has many challenges to overcome before the democratic ideals of the OAS charter can fully be realized for all the people of the Americas.

Moving on to Paraguay, we see a nation that plays a key role in joint efforts to promote and strengthen democracy, security, and counternarcotics. Under the leadership of Admiral Tidd, Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, the United States has supported efforts to fight transnational crime and counterterrorism in Paraguay. We must continue to build on our partnership with Paraguay, which is vulnerable to illicit trafficking of narcotics, weapons, illegal goods, and people.

The tri-border area where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet is a place where illicit financing for criminal organizations and terrorists exists, terrorists including Hezbollah, and this has long been a concern. The U.S. needs to work with all three countries that share a responsibility for the tri-border area to better secure borders, reduce illicit trafficking, and improve counterterrorism monitoring.

Although Paraguay has made extensive progress in fighting corruption, it is still ranked 123 out of 176 in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index for the year 2016.

The U.S. is also an important trading partner for Paraguay. We should look for new ways to expand our trade relationship and help Paraguay grow their economy and strengthen their government institutions.

Norway is one of our closest and most active security allies, especially given that its population is only 5 million people, or roughly the same size as where I live in south Florida. As a founding member of NATO, Norway has fought with us in conflicts ranging from the Balkans to the present day operation in Afghanistan. It is also an important contributor to the fight against ISIS, putting boots on the ground in Jordan to help train Syrian freedom fighters.

Beyond our security alliances, Norway shares our concerns about Russia's aggression and interference, particularly given that long border that the two countries share.

Norway is an important contributor in other regions, including in our own western hemisphere. Oslo, for example, has pledged \$22 million over 3 years to fund humanitarian demining in Colombia to support the peace process.

And lastly, the United States Agency for International Development plays a critical role in promoting American interests and values abroad by supporting the advancement of freedom, human dignity, and development. In particular, USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia is working to foster resilient and democratic societies, strengthen economic growth, and to support European-Atlantic in-

tegration. We have seen countries in the region such as Croatia and Montenegro graduate—that is in quotes—“graduate” from U.S. foreign assistance. This is the objective. Our foreign assistance is critical towards building sustainable economic and security partnerships that not only improve the lives of citizens of these countries but also are in our own national security interests.

As Vladimir Putin’s malign influence continues to spread throughout the region, particularly in nations already suffering from rampant corruption and organized crimes, the United States must be engaged and proactive in securing our interests and in promoting peace and prosperity throughout Europe and Eurasia.

Although USAID’s challenges can be overwhelming, especially with increased Russian activities in the region, the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia that you will be overseeing, if confirmed, is more important than ever.

So in closing, all of these positions have a key role to play in American foreign policy, and I thank you and I thank your families for your commitment to your country and your willingness to serve it.

And now I turn to the ranking member.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

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

And let me congratulate all our nominees on their nominations. I continue to be concerned about the slow pace of nominations from the President and the vacancies at the State Department, at USAID, and at critical posts overseas. So I welcome this opportunity to hear from nominees for the western hemisphere and for positions that stretch the definition of the western hemisphere far beyond even my imagination.

But we welcome you here, all. And we are happy that the committee is actually serving as a vehicle for moving your nominations.

While you have been nominated to serve in a range of positions, you are all signing up for the same fundamental duty: to serve the interests of the United States of America, the American people, and to promote our foreign policy objectives through diplomacy and development.

As a 25-year veteran of both the House and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I can think of no other position that is more significant in terms of both national security and national interests than the positions that our diplomats serve abroad and our development people serve as well. So it is a high calling.

I also appreciate your families because these positions are a sacrifice not only of yourselves but of your families, and we appreciate that reality as well.

And while we have several nominees beyond the normal jurisdiction of the committee, let me just say the OAS, as a longtime observer and someone who considers himself a Latin Americanist, is an incredibly important position. It is a position for which I believe we need vigorous leadership in an institution that also needs greater reforms. I am proud to have sponsored legislation that was signed into law in 2013 that urged management reforms at the OAS. And I am pleased to see that the OAS has taken some of

these reforms on, including its strategic vision plan that aligns with parts of the law, but I think we can agree that probably more can be done. So I look forward to hearing from you in that regard.

Also, the hemisphere—while we enjoy overwhelmingly democracy, there are challenges. And there is a backward slide. And I am really concerned about what happens at the OAS as an institution to move particularly the democratic charter of the OAS as a vibrant document, one that is living in its purpose, not simply as part of an overall aspirational goal versus something that is being pursued. And so I appreciate that.

I appreciate the AID work. I have long been a supporter of USAID. I think the development work we do is an important part of our national security and diplomacy interests and that without it, I think we cannot achieve many of the goals that we seek to achieve in the world. So I look forward to hearing from you.

And Norway. You know, it is one of those places in the world where often when we do not have trouble, so we do not talk about that country. But it is an incredibly important country. It has one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world and also incredibly important in terms of the challenges that we have with Russia. So I look forward to hearing from you very much so in that regard, as well as with Paraguay.

As we are trying to develop this hemispheric further consolidation of democracy in the process. It may be in some people's minds a small country. I think it is an important country as it relates to that overall effort.

So I look forward to hearing from all of you. I will save the bulk of my time for questions.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the witnesses' testimony.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you to the ranking member. And you are right that the scope is broader. This is actually a hearing of the full committee being chaired and co-chaired by two Cuban Americans, which is a trend. Three would be a conspiracy. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. But Senator Cruz is not a member of the committee.

All right. So let us begin with the nomination of Rear Admiral Kenneth Braithwaite. I am sorry. Let us begin with the nomination of Mr. Bierman. And Ambassador Pamela Smith, who served in the Foreign Service for over 30 years, including a stint as our U.S. Ambassador to Moldova, is here, and I would like to recognize her to introduce Mr. Bierman.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PAMELA SMITH,  
FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO MOLDOVA**

Ambassador SMITH. Thank you very much, Senator Rubio, Senator Menendez. It is a great honor to be here to introduce Brock Bierman.

He is really ideally suited to be USAID's Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia. In over 30 years in the Foreign Service, I have not met anyone whose talents, experience, and dedication better match the demands of this challenging job.

Brock was chief of staff for the same bureau when we first met in 2003 when I was Ambassador to Moldova. With his hard work

in Washington, our outstanding USAID mission helped that friendly, struggling little country cope with the grueling transition from East to West and from communism to democracy and a market economy, a journey that is regrettably not yet complete. I could not have been more impressed with Brock's pragmatism, tenacity, and sensitivity to the dynamics of the complex political environment.

I could also see that while his heart and some family roots were in Moldova, his results-oriented approach made him just as effective in the entire region.

Brock brings not just 5 years of success in the same bureau he has been nominated for. He also is committed philosophically to foreign assistance as a key tool of foreign policy as a national security priority. With Russia playing, as you said, an aggressive and pernicious role in the region and with violent extremism and destabilizing floods of refugees on the rise, we need people working there with seasoned expertise, people like Brock who can gauge trends and use our assistance to help consolidate democracy and combat the fracturing of the West.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, 12 of the 24 country programs receiving assistance from USAID's Bureau of Europe and Eurasia have graduated, as you noted, and joined the Euro-Atlantic community through such institutions as NATO and the EU. I spent much of my career in the Balkans, and believe me, this is an astounding track record. The next 11 countries will be much harder, but it seems to me that someone who knows the region, the bureau, the agency, and the Administrator well has the best chance to build on this success.

Brock and I have stayed friends since our time advancing U.S. interests in Moldova. I just want to share a few more words about him.

His engagement in the region preceded his first assignment in USAID and continued after he left the agency. This region is his personal passion. You should know that he served three terms as a State legislator in Rhode Island, and thus grasps the special relationship between government institutions and legislative bodies. He has also owned and operated several small businesses and has sat on many nonprofit boards and commissions. He knows how things work, how to make them work, and he has developed people skills that suit many circumstances.

His experience outside the beltway also gives him a unique ability to think outside the box. Importantly, he thoroughly believes in bipartisanship. Our friendship would not exist otherwise. His work with you will prove this immediately.

We are lucky to have someone of Brock's caliber put forward for this important position. He has my unqualified endorsement. He will serve the United States well and honorably, and I urge you to support his nomination. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you so much.

So let us begin. Mr. Bierman, thank you for being here and your willingness to serve and you are recognized.

By the way, for all the nominees, your opening statements are already in the record. So it will not be held against you if you abbreviate it. It will not be held against you if you skip them. I am not asking you to, but obviously, the shorter they are, the more

time we will have to interact with all of you. So just a suggestion. It will not count against you.

But anyway, thank you for being here, and you are recognized, sir. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. BIERMAN. Thank you and good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee. Actually I can take out the sentence about full statements being entered because I did shorten it.

Well, I just want to say I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia at USAID. I would like to thank President Trump, Administrator Green, and Secretary Tillerson for their support.

I would also like to thank Acting Assistant Administrator Margot Ellis, who is here today, who has led the bureau since January, and her staff who were invaluable as I prepared for my hearing. Having spent more than 5 years working in the Europe and Eurasia Bureau from 2002 to 2007, it has been wonderful to reconnect with many former colleagues.

And of course, I want to thank Pamela Smith, Ambassador Smith, for her kind introductory remarks. Ambassador Smith's work in Moldova has demonstrated the importance of American leadership, and she has been a mentor of mine since we met.

Most importantly, I want to thank my family, my wife and best friend of more than 30 years Lisa, who is sitting behind me, and my children Allison and Robert, who are sitting behind my wife. They are the most important inspiration, and without their love and support, I would not be sitting here today.

I want to start out by telling you that I am a second generation American. My grandfather came to the United States in 1906 from what now is the Republic of Moldova. He quickly learned what it meant to live in this country and what made our country great. He understood the importance of our democratic systems and volunteered to serve his new country during the First World War. Upon returning from the war, he served his community as a leader and philanthropist.

And to quote one of America's leading historians, David McCullough, in his recent book "The American Spirit," he said—and I quote—"history is about who we are and what we stand for, and it is essential to our understanding of our role and what it should be in our time." In many ways, I sit here today as a direct result of who we are as a country. My grandfather exemplified the American spirit, which I believe defines this nation and is at the heart of what USAID does.

In 1997, while serving in the Rhode Island State legislature, I participated with an exchange program with the American Council of Young Political Leaders, a nonpartisan organization that introduces next generation leaders to politics and governance of other countries. Knowing that my grandfather lived within the Russian Empire, I decided to participate in the Russian exchange program,

and interacting with Russian legislators at the time not only gave me a new perspective on my job as a State legislator but also was the beginning of my passionate interest in the region.

I returned to Eastern Europe in 1999 when Senator John Chafee made it possible for me to join the International Republican Institute as a volunteer trainer in Ukraine. While traveling from Kyiv to Odessa, I shared my own experience with democracy and helped Ukrainians of all parties learn more about our system of government.

In 2002, I was privileged to serve as chief of staff for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau, and while at USAID, I developed a region-wide initiative that brought young people together from different political parties to talk about problems facing the region and how to solve those problems. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing these efforts.

While at AID, I was also proud to support opportunities for professional development and training of our staff. If confirmed, I will support every member of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau through professional development, capacity building, and training.

Now, as you know, Ambassador Green has said USAID's objective is to end the need for foreign assistance. And I am excited to advance this priority. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you. I look forward to working with Administrator Green and the dedicated staff in the E&E Bureau to support U.S. national security interests.

I also think that Administrator Green's priority to respect the taxpayers' investment in foreign aid is critical. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring USAID's programs in Europe and Eurasia are effective and efficient while also demonstrating how USAID's work brings stability and prosperity overseas, which in turn benefits neighborhoods across America.

I also look forward to spending time listening to my colleagues both here in Washington and in the field, as their perspectives will be vital to developing a successful course of action.

The challenges of Europe and Eurasia look a lot different now than they did when I was previously at USAID. The challenges cannot be overstated. The region has been hit with a major economic recession. Russia's malign influence is a serious problem. Russia has violated the territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine and is interfering with the internal affairs of several other countries in the region. In many ways, our efforts to counter this pervasive undercurrent will also serve to prevent the spread of violent extremism in Europe and Eurasia. As Administrator Green has stated, terrorist groups often feed on frustration and despair. The American spirit and the ideals that it reflects is our most valuable export. It serves as a counter to this frustration and despair.

The Europe and Eurasia Bureau faces other critical challenges such as government corruption, weak economies, fragile democratic institutions, and the energy dependence on Russia. I look forward to exploring those topics in greater depth today and working with your staff to answer any questions you might have. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to address these critical issues.

And in closing, I wish to thank the committee for their dedication to the American spirit. Thank you.

[Mr. Bierman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BROCK BIERMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I would like to thank President Trump, Administrator Green, and Secretary Tillerson for their support, and for the confidence they have placed in me.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Acting Assistant Administrator Margot Ellis, who has led the Bureau since January, her staff, and the staff within the Legislative and Public Affairs Bureau all of whom were invaluable help as I prepared for this hearing today. Having spent more than five years working within the Europe and Eurasia Bureau from 2002–2007, it has been wonderful to reconnect with so many knowledgeable professionals, many of whom were colleagues during my first appointment. And of course, I thank my good friend Ambassador Pamela Hyde Smith for her kind introductory remarks; Ambassador Smith's work in Moldova demonstrated the importance of American leadership, and she has been a mentor ever since.

Most importantly I want to thank my family—my wife and best friend of more than 30 years Lisa, my daughter Allison, and my son Robert. They are my most important inspiration and without their love and support, I would not be sitting here today.

I am a second-generation American on my father's side, as my grandfather came to the United States as part of the mass immigration of the late 19th early 20th century. He immigrated to this country during a turbulent time in Russian history, and came from what is now the Republic of Moldova. He came to America with the hopes and dreams to make a better life for himself and his family. And although I never knew my grandfather, my father told me that he quickly learned what made our country great. After only a few short years in America, he understood the importance of our democratic systems, and volunteered to serve his new country during World War I. Upon returning from the war and throughout his life, he served as a community leader and philanthropist.

David McCullough said it best in his recent book, *The American Spirit*. To quote him, "History, I like to think, is a larger way of looking at life. It is a source of strength, of inspiration. It is about who we are, and what we stand for, and it is essential to our understanding of what our role should be in our time. History, as can't be said too often, is human. It is about people and they speak to us across the years." In many ways, I sit here today as a direct result of who we are as a country. My grandfather exemplified the American Spirit, which I believe defines this nation, and is at the heart of what USAID does.

In 1997, while serving my second term in the Rhode Island State Legislature, I was chosen along with another colleague to participate in an exchange program with the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL), a non-partisan organization that introduces next generation leaders to the politics, governance, policy-making, and cultures of countries around the world through on-site exchanges. Knowing that my grandfather lived within the Russian Empire, I decided that this was the country and region I wanted to get to know better. Participating in the ACYPL program in Moscow and interacting with Russian legislators not only gave me a new perspective that made me a better legislator, but it was also the beginning of my passionate interest with the Europe and Eurasia region.

My understanding of the region further deepened when I returned to the region in 1999, this time to Ukraine as a volunteer trainer for the International Republican Institute, (IRI). A former U.S. Senator, John Chafee, had encouraged me to run for public office and serve in the State Legislature. Senator Chafee was a dear friend and mentor, and his influence made it possible for me to join IRI as a trainer. While traveling from Kyiv to Odessa, I enjoyed the opportunity to share my own democratic experiences and help Ukrainians of all parties learn more about our system of government.

Three years later, in 2003, I was privileged to serve as Chief of Staff for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau under Dr. Kent Hill, and spent the next five years dedicating my life to USAID's mission. During that time, I helped Dr. Hill advance the Bureau's top priorities, and specifically assisted with improving the Bureau's outreach and communications. I also worked to develop a region-wide initiative that brought young people together from all of our partner countries, and from different political parties to talk about difficult problems that were facing the region and how



to develop solutions they could apply from the local to regional levels. Youth programming was a top priority then, as it is again today, and, if confirmed, I look forward to deploying that experience to continue these efforts.

I was also involved with the Bureau's Trafficking in Persons initiatives, and served as a member of the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Task Force. Further, I am proud of my work to support capacity-building within the Bureau to create opportunities for professional development and training for our staff. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting every member of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau through professional development, capacity building, and training.

Although some of the same overall issues remain today, the challenges in Europe and Eurasia look a lot different now than they did when I previously served at USAID. The scale of challenges that are facing Europe and Eurasia is hard to overstate. Since my previous tenure with USAID, the region has been hit with a major economic recession. Russia has violated the territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine, and continues to have a military presence in Moldova. At the same time, Russia is interfering with the internal affairs of several other countries in the region. Putin's propaganda is exploiting ethnic divisions in the Balkans, furthering democratic backsliding throughout the Balkans.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Administrator Green and the dedicated staff in the Europe and Eurasia Bureau to continue USAID's tradition of supporting U.S. national security interests, with the aim of eventually transitioning countries in the region from U.S. assistance, along a positive path that will reduce these threats.

Administrator Green has set a clear path forward for USAID, and I am excited to advance his priorities. Clearly, USAID's objective to end the need for foreign assistance should be a goal the Agency keeps in mind during its strategic planning and budgeting, and as it works with our host countries. USAID's host countries do not believe in everlasting assistance either, but look forward to the day when they can stand on their own and be respected contributing partners in the world community. Increasing USAID's investments with local organizations to build capacity is a key part of this process.

I also think that the Administrator's priority to respect the taxpayers' investment in foreign aid is critical. If confirmed, I look forward to shaping USAID's programs in Europe and Eurasia in an effective and efficient manner, by using more innovative award mechanisms, while also educating our public on how USAID's work brings stability and prosperity overseas, which in turn benefits neighborhoods across America. Finally, I look forward to spending some time listening to my colleagues both here in Washington and those in the field, and learning from their experiences. Their perspective will be vital to developing a successful course of action.

As mentioned earlier, Russia's malign influence is a serious problem throughout the region, one that has developed since my last appointment. In 2014, I saw firsthand the open cooperation between Moldovan politicians and Russian government officials during the parliamentary elections. Many countries in the region are vulnerable to Russian influence because of their weak economies, corrupt public officials, and fragile democratic institutions. With assistance from the U.S. Government and USAID, I believe we can support countries that are committed to pursuing the Euro Atlantic path, and help them build a bright future of self-sufficiency, rather than dependence.

Since my first visit to Russia 20 years ago, I have had the opportunity to meet with many Russian citizens and talk openly about their hopes and dreams. It never ceases to amaze me how similar we all are on so many levels. I know that, on a personal level, many Russians share our vision for open democracy, fair and free elections, and a future in which all citizens have a chance for a better life. I believe we must remember that it is the Government of Vladimir Putin, rather than the people of Russia, that is trying to undermine our work with democracy and governance in the region.

In many ways, the efforts we must undertake today to counter this pervasive undercurrent will also serve to prevent the spread of violent extremism in Europe and Eurasia. We are all aware of the alarming rise of violent extremism which has led hundreds to travel to fight alongside ISIS. As Administrator Green has stated, terrorist groups often feed on frustration and despair. The American Spirit, and the ideals which this reflects, of equality, rights, and consent of the governed, is our most valuable export, and serves as a counter to this frustration and despair.

Although I touched on several of these issues earlier, I could go on about other critical issues, such as prevalent government corruption, border security, mass migration, human rights violations, energy dependence on Russia, lack of open markets and youth unemployment. I look forward to exploring those topics in greater depth today, and to answering any questions you might have.

In closing, I wish to thank the committee again for your dedication to the American Spirit we all share. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to further our shared goals and address the critical issues facing the Europe and Eurasia region. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Admiral Braithwaite, thank you for being here.

**STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE,  
USN (RET), OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EX-  
TRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY**

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. It is almost impossible for me to capture in 5 minutes the words to adequately define how I feel, should I be confirmed, to be able to once again serve our great nation and the people of the United States. I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence, their faith and trust in me to serve as our nation's envoy to Norway. I can think of few greater honors than to be the principal representative of the United States to such an important strategic ally.

I would also like to thank several mentors who have guided me directly and indirectly as I have developed in my service to our nation: my first commanding officer, Admiral Tom Lynch, former Superintendent of the Naval Academy; Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who I served under in Islamabad; Ms. Uschi Keszler, U.S. Olympian and my life coach who is with me today; and my best friend, Mr. David Urban, a West Point graduate and proof that the Army and the Navy can get along well.

Finally and most especially, I would not be here without my wife Melissa and our two children, Grace and Harrison, who are with me today to support me hopefully once again in service to our nation together. I am reminded, as Senator Arlen Specter told me so many years ago when I worked for him, that the reason we serve is to ensure that our children and our children's children inherit the same great country that we received from those who went before us. After 31 years in the uniform of our nation, I intend, with your approval, sirs, to once again do all I can to uphold that sacred responsibility.

Our relationship with the Kingdom of Norway is truly a special one for so many reasons. Built upon a shared commitment to the idea that freedom is a sacred privilege that must be protected vigilantly, Norway has stood closely by the United States in many conflicts since its independence from Sweden in 1905. Norway was one of the first nations to stand with us in Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11th of 2001 and, as the chairman noted, continues to contribute troops to NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

As a founding NATO ally, Norway is the key guardian of our northern flank of this important alliance, standing watch over a vast Arctic frontier. Norwegians have demonstrated time and again their commitment to ensuring that regional aggressor nations do

not threaten ours or our allies' interests. As a young naval officer during bilateral carrier battle group operations in the fjords and later as a senior officer operating upon the Baltic Sea in joint fleet exercises, I personally witnessed, sir, the Norwegian military's incredibly impressive capabilities at sea and ashore. They are, without doubt, a highly valued and greatly trusted ally.

Norway also shares our faith in a strong market-based economy. Norwegians have established one of the most secure markets in the world, and only earlier this year, their national sovereign wealth fund reached an unprecedented achievement by surpassing \$1 trillion. This stability affords them the opportunity to look towards new and innovative technologies and other investments seeking partner nations such as the United States with which to pursue greater economic strength.

Looking to the future, should you confirm my nomination, I would seek to pursue three principal objectives for the United States and our partnership with Norway.

First and foremost, I would seek to reaffirm that our commitment to NATO remains as strong as ever. The President and Secretary Tillerson, along with Secretary Mattis, have stated repeatedly that we stand behind article 5 and fully recognize the importance of a strong and adequately funded North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Secondly, I would seek to strengthen even further our investment and trade ties. I would work with U.S. businesses to seek opportunities to expand into growing Norwegian markets by exploring ways for Norwegian businesses to work in collaboration with U.S. companies in markets here and abroad.

And finally, I would do everything in my power to work closely with the Norwegian Government to ensure the safety and security of Americans abroad, whether engaged in business, academic exchange, research collaboration, or the pleasure of just traveling to such a wonderful nation as Norway. All free peoples are at risk of terrorist attacks today across the globe. So working closely with Norwegian security agencies, I would seek to extend an umbrella of safety over our respective nations.

As I close, I am reminded of something my father said to me as a young boy. My dad, Private First Class Kenneth J. Braithwaite, Sr., was severely wounded, shot in the head in France shortly after landing in the very first wave upon the beaches of Normandy on June 6th of 1944. He loved our country and all it stood for and was the first person, along with my mother Sylvia, to instill in me a sense of pride in our nation and a sense of duty and service above self. I asked him once how he did it, how he exited that landing craft that morning with enemy bullets hitting all around him. He said simply, it was my duty, son.

My father, although humble to a fault, was proud to have served to ensure our American dream could persevere. He told me as a young boy that anything was possible in America if you applied yourself and worked to realize your dream. He and my mother were very proud when I went off to the U.S. Naval Academy, both having never had the opportunity to attend college, nor being able to really afford to send me. I cannot help but reflect upon my father's life, that his sacrifice and duty to our nation is today real-

ized, his son, here before you, nominated to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. In America, the home of the free and the land of the brave, anything is possible.

Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, I am honored to be here and I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Braithwaite's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. Words cannot adequately define how I feel, should I be confirmed, to be able to once again serve our great Nation and the People of the United States. I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence, faith and trust in me to serve as our Nation's envoy to Norway. I can think of no greater honor than to be the principle representative of the United States to such an important strategic ally.

I would also like to thank several mentors who have guided me directly and indirectly as I have developed in my service to our country; my first commanding officer Admiral Tom Lynch, former Superintendent of the Naval Academy; Ambassador Ryan Crocker under whom I served in Islamabad; Ms. Uschi Keszler, U.S. Olympian and my life coach who is with me today; and my best friend, Mr. David Urban, a West Point graduate and proof that the Army and the Navy can get along well. Each of these individuals and so many others contributed to my development and continue to offer advice and guidance as I prepare with your support to serve again.

Finally and most especially, I wouldn't be here without my wife Melissa and our two children, Grace and Harrison, who are with me today to support me hopefully once again in service to our nation. I am reminded, as Senator Arlen Specter told me so many years ago when I worked for him, that the reason we serve is to ensure our children and our children's children inherit the same great country that we received from those who went before us. After 31 years in the uniform of our nation, I intend with your approval to once again do all I can to uphold that sacred responsibility.

Our relationship with the Kingdom of Norway is truly a special one for so many reasons. Built upon a shared commitment to the idea that freedom is a sacred privilege that must be protected vigilantly, Norway has stood closely by the United States in many conflicts since its independence in 1905. Norway was one of the first nations to stand with us in Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, and continues to contribute troops to NATO's Resolute Support Mission alongside us today. Nearer to my Navy roots, the Norwegians have deployed naval assets to support anti-piracy efforts in Operation Ocean Shield off Somalia in alignment with their belief as a maritime nation of the importance of open sea-lanes of communication. And today Norway is one of our strongest Allies in NATO, fully committed to supporting this important strategic alliance in both manpower and materiel.

As a founding NATO ally, Norway is the key guardian of the Northern Flank of this important alliance, standing watch over a vast arctic frontier. Norwegians have demonstrated time and again their commitment to ensuring that regional aggressor nations do not threaten our or our Allies' interests. As a young Naval Officer during bilateral carrier battle group operations in the fjords and later as a senior officer operating on the Baltic Sea in joint fleet exercises, I personally witnessed the Norwegian Military's incredibly impressive offensive and defensive capabilities at sea and ashore. They are without a doubt a highly valued and greatly trusted ally!

Norway also shares our faith in a strong market-based economy. Norwegians have established one of the most secure markets in the world and earlier this year their national sovereign wealth fund reached an unprecedented achievement by surpassing one trillion dollars. This stability affords them the opportunity to look towards new and innovative technologies and other investments, seeking partner nations with which to pursue greater economic strength.

Looking to the future, should you confirm my nomination, I would seek to pursue three principal objectives for the United States in our partnership with Norway.

First and foremost, I would seek to reaffirm that our commitment to NATO remains as strong as ever. The President and Secretary Tillerson, along with Secretary Mattis, have stated repeatedly that we stand behind Article 5 and fully recognize the importance of a strong and adequately funded North Atlantic Treaty Orga-

nization. I would personally deliver that message through routine engagement with the Norwegian government and public.

Secondly, I would seek to strengthen even further our investment and trade ties. I would work with U.S. businesses to seek opportunities to expand into growing Norwegian markets by exploring ways for Norwegian businesses to work in collaboration with U.S. companies in markets here and abroad. I believe Norway is in an unprecedented period in its history of market expansion, and I am confident the United States could further assist and benefit from such a relationship.

Finally, I would do everything in my power to work closely with the Norwegian government and its respective security agencies to ensure the safety and security of Americans abroad, whether engaged in business, academic exchange, research collaboration, or the pleasure of traveling to such a wonderful country as Norway. All free peoples are at risk of terrorist attacks today across the globe. Therefore, I would work diligently to ensure our security agencies are working closely with Norwegian security agencies to extend an umbrella of safety over our respective nations.

As I close, I am reminded of something my father said to me as a young boy. My dad, Private First Class Kenneth J. Braithwaite, Sr., was severely wounded, shot in the head in France shortly after landing in the very first wave upon the beaches of Normandy on June 6th 1944. He loved our country and all it stood for and was the first person along with my mother Sylvia to instill in me a sense of pride in our nation and a sense of duty and service above self. I asked him once how he did it—how he exited that landing craft that morning with enemy bullets hitting all around him. He said simply, "It was my duty son." My father, although humble to a fault, was proud to have served to ensure our American dream could persevere. He told me as a young boy that anything was possible in America if you applied yourself and worked hard to realize that dream. He and my mother were very proud when I went off to the U.S. Naval Academy, both having never had the opportunity to attend college, nor being able to really afford to send me. I can't help but reflect upon my father's life, that his sacrifice in duty to our nation is today realized, his son, here before you, nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. In America, the Home of the Free and the Land of the Brave, anything is possible.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for your time. I would be honored to learn from your comments and to answer any questions you may have.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you very much, sir.  
Representative Trujillo?

**STATEMENT OF HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO, OF FLORIDA, TO BE  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,  
WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR**

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and the opportunity, with your approval, to represent the American people during a critical period in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

Before I begin, I would like to take an opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have supported me along the way: my wife Carmen, who is present today, along with our four children, Carlos, Isabella, Juan Pablo, and Felipe, along with my mother and in-laws—my mother, Georgina Fernandez, and in-laws Consuelo and Hector Mira, who are also present; my father Ruben Trujillo, who is watching from home; my step-parents, Hector and Jamais; and my grandparents, Manuel and Alba Fernandez, and Ruben and Mirtha Trujillo.

I know today is a remarkable day for my grandparents. They arrived in this country exactly 50 years ago from Cuba with nothing. This country has been our safe harbor and our greatest blessing. For me to stand here before this august body is a testament to the American dream and the power of education and hard work.

By way of background, I am currently the Special Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. That job has uniquely prepared me for the challenges that come ahead. In addition, my mix of public, private, and professional experience has given me a set of skills that I hope to be able to employ on behalf of the United States of America and in service to its people.

I have served as a prosecutor fighting for dignity and justice for all.

I have also served on the board of directors of the fourth largest public hospital in the country, the Jackson Memorial Public Health Trust. There I learned that people from all over the world still strive for a better and higher quality of life.

I have served as a State legislator elected four terms in one of the largest States in the nation. There I served as the Chairman of the Florida House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee, which oversees an \$83 billion budget. My experience working in a legislative body and negotiating delicate, confidential, and immensely important matters will only complement my service to the United States in this honorable capacity to which I have been nominated.

In my private life, I am a graduate of Spring Hill College and the Florida State University College of Law. I have built a small and successful business. Along with my partners, I founded and managed a mid-sized Hispanic-owned law firm with more than 50 employees. We have weathered the storms of recession and strife, and I have learned much about the importance of tact, tenacity, integrity, and perseverance which has served me throughout my career in public service.

If confirmed, it will be an honor for me to advance U.S. foreign policy interests throughout the OAS, a noble organization that remains the preeminent multilateral forum for our region, the Americas.

OAS and the Inter-American system were created to promote democracy and the rule of law in the Americas; to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms; to advance the security of our citizens; foster economic development and prosperity; and to uphold the practices, purposes, and principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States, the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in accordance with the United States Constitution. These instruments embody the shared democratic values that make the Americas unique and make our own country great. If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that the OAS lives up to its legacy as it confronts today's daunting challenges.

I will also work to make sure American taxpayers are getting a fair return for their investment in the OAS by working to build a stronger, more efficient, and more effective organization. Through tough but good faith negotiations with member states, we can

achieve a broader, more sustainable financial base for the OAS that does not depend so heavily on a single country, in keeping with the objectives outlined in the Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the U.S. mission to the OAS in advancing the above-mentioned goals. I believe that my past experiences have prepared me, if confirmed by the Senate, to serve more effectively as the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I am cognizant of the difficulties that have historically and currently face the region. If confirmed, I promise to work closely with you, with the executive branch, and all those concerned in advancing the goals of the American people.

Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today, and I look forward to your comments, humbly ask for your support, and look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[Mr. Trujillo's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLOS TRUJILLO

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and for the opportunity—with your approval—to represent the American people during a critical period in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

Before I begin, I would also like to take an opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have supported me along the way: my wife Carmen and our four children; Carlos, Isabella, Juan Pablo and Felipe, who are with me here today. My family watching at home, my parents Georgina and Ruben, my step-parents Hector and Jamais, and grandparents Manuel and Alba Fernandez, and Ruben and Mirtha Trujillo.

I know that today is a remarkable day for my grandparents who came to the United States of America with nothing. This country has been our safe harbor and our greatest blessing. For me to stand before this august body is a testament to the American dream and the power of education and hard work. By way of background, I am currently the Special Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. That job has uniquely prepared me for the challenges that come ahead.

In addition, my mix of public, and private, professional experiences has given me a set of skills I hope to be able to employ on behalf of the United States of America and in service to its people.

I have served as a prosecutor—fighting for dignity and justice for all. I have also served on the Board of Directors of the largest public hospital in the country, the Jackson Memorial Public Health Trust. There, I learned that people from all over the world will strive for a better and higher quality of life.

I have served as a State Legislator, elected to four terms, in one of the largest states in the nation. There, I served as Chairman of the Florida House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee, which oversees an \$83 billion budget. My experience working in a legislative body and negotiating delicate, confidential, and immensely important matters will only complement my service to the United States in this honorable capacity to which I have been nominated.

In my private life, I am a graduate of Spring Hill College, and the Florida State University College of Law. I have built a small and successful business. Along with my partners, I founded and manage a mid-sized Hispanic-owned law firm, with more than 50 employees. We have weathered the storm of recession and strife, and I have learned much about the importance of tact, tenacity, integrity and perseverance which has served me throughout my career in public service.

If confirmed, it will be an honor for me to advance U.S. foreign policy interests through the OAS, a noble organization that remains the preeminent multilateral forum for our region, the Americas.

The OAS and the Inter-American system were created to promote democracy and the rule of law in the Americas; to promote and protect human rights and funda-

mental freedoms; to advance the security of our citizens; foster economic development and prosperity; and to uphold the practices, purposes, and principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States, the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution. These instruments embody the shared democratic values that make the Americas unique, and make our own country great. If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that the OAS lives up to this legacy as it confronts today's daunting challenges.

I will also work to make sure American tax payers are getting a fair return for their investment in the OAS by working to build a stronger, more efficient and more effective organization. Through tough but good-faith negotiations with other member states, we can achieve a broader, more sustainable financial base for the OAS that does not depend so heavily on a single country, in keeping with the objectives outlined in the Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the U.S. mission to the OAS in advancing the above-mentioned goals. I believe that my past experiences have prepared me, if confirmed by the Senate, to serve effectively as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I am cognizant of the difficulties that have historically, and currently, face the region. If confirmed, I promise to work closely with you, others in the Executive Branch and all those concerned with advancing the goals of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today. I welcome your comments, humbly ask for your support, and look forward to answering your questions.

Senator RUBIO. We were just commenting. You were a whole minute under on your statement. Very good.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Just a joke.

Mr. McClenny?

**STATEMENT OF M. LEE McCLENNY, OF WASHINGTON, 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 PARAGUAY**

Mr. McCLENNY. Good morning, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez.

It is an honor for me to be selected by Secretary Tillerson and nominated by President Trump to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay. I am deeply pleased to enjoy the invaluable support of my family and friends and colleagues, some present here today, and most especially the support of my wife Katherine who is following today's proceedings from our posting in Caracas, Venezuela.

Mr. Chairman, I have been privileged to serve our nation for some 30 years as a career Foreign Service officer, working to achieve our foreign policy goals and national security objectives. My nine overseas postings have been predominantly in the western hemisphere.

Paraguay today is one of our most like-minded partners in this hemisphere. It is clear that the Paraguayan people take the view, as we do ourselves, that sustained prosperity and long-term stability and security are inextricably linked to democratic governance and transparent and efficient institutions. If confirmed for this position, I pledge to continue our ongoing efforts to strengthen our mutually advantageous ties with Paraguay, to continue to assist Paraguay with its efforts to build durable and independent institutions, to grow a strong and resilient economy, improve government



transparency, and weed out corruption. These elements will strengthen Paraguay as a bilateral and regional partner and build support for critical U.S. priorities in this region, including fighting money laundering and financial crime, strengthening intellectual property rights protections. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to support Paraguay's pursuit of transnational criminal organizations that abuse that nation's territory to commit a range of crimes, including contributing to the financing of known terrorist groups and trafficking in narcotics, weapons, counterfeit goods, and people.

Paraguay has a steadily expanding open-market economy and progressive trade policies that make it increasingly attractive to the U.S. and to other international firms. Paraguay actively seeks involvement from U.S. companies in the country's growing role as a manufacturing and logistics hub for the much larger economies of Argentina and Brazil. We export some \$2 billion worth of goods to Paraguay each year, and we enjoy a strongly positive bilateral trade balance. Paraguay's agricultural sector produces many of the same products as the United States, notably soy and beef cattle, but this creates opportunities for the export of advanced U.S. technology, agricultural services, and other synergistic trade relationships. Paraguayans admire the high quality of U.S. products, and a sustainably growing and inclusive Paraguayan economy will continue to increase demand for U.S. goods and services. If confirmed, I will work to expand our trade for the benefit of both nations. Paraguay's economic success advances U.S. economic success.

Our two nations have a long history of strong people-to-people ties, especially through the more than 5,000 Peace Corps volunteers who have served there since the program began in 1966. If confirmed, I will also support the Peace Corps program in Paraguay, as well as our embassy's flourishing programs to support English language teaching and learning, science education, and higher educational exchanges. These programs are especially valuable to reach the 44 percent of Paraguay's population that is younger than 25 years of age. They will also help strengthen people-to-people ties, foster mutual understanding, and encourage greater engagement between our two nations.

I look forward to, if confirmed for this position, to working closely with Congress to advance our national interests by further strengthening our positive relationship with the Republic of Paraguay as that nation builds its economy, strengthens its democratic institutions, confronts international criminal and terrorist actors, and plays an ever larger role on the international stage, including especially leading in regional and international efforts to defend human rights and democracy in Venezuela.

I would be delighted to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

[Mr. McClenny's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEE MCCLENNY

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, it is an honor to be selected by Secretary Tillerson and nominated by President Trump to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay. I am deeply pleased to enjoy the invaluable support of my wife, Katherine, as well as that of my family, friends, and colleagues. Many of them expressed a desire to be present to witness this important Constitutional process, but

the pressures of time, distance and commitments to work mean only a few have been able to be present today.

Mr. Chairman, I have been privileged to serve our nation for some 30 years as a career Foreign Service Officer, working to achieve our foreign policy goals and national security objectives. My nine overseas postings have been predominantly in the Western Hemisphere, including my current assignment leading the staff of our embassy in Caracas, Venezuela.

Paraguay is one of our most like-minded partners in the hemisphere. It is clear that the Paraguayan people take the view, as we do ourselves, that sustained prosperity and long-term stability and security are inextricably linked to democratic governance and transparent and efficient institutions. If confirmed for this position, Mr. Chairman, I pledge to continue our ongoing efforts to strengthen our mutually advantageous ties with Paraguay. We will continue to assist Paraguay with its efforts to build durable and independent institutions, grow a strong and resilient economy, improve government transparency, and weed out corruption.

These elements will strengthen Paraguay as a partner and build support for critical U.S. priorities. These include fighting money laundering and financial crime while strengthening intellectual property rights protections. We will support Paraguay's pursuit of transnational criminal organizations that abuse Paraguay's territory to commit a range of crimes, including contributing to the financing of known terrorist groups and trafficking in narcotics, weapons, counterfeit goods, and people.

Paraguay has a steadily expanding open-market economy and progressive trade policies that make it increasingly attractive to U.S. and other international firms. Paraguay actively seeks involvement from U.S. companies in the country's growing role as a manufacturing and logistics hub for the much larger economies of Argentina and Brazil. We export \$2 billion worth of goods to Paraguay each year, and enjoy a strongly positive bilateral trade balance. Paraguay's agricultural sector produces many of the same products as the United States, notably soy and beef cattle, creating opportunities for the export of advanced U.S. technology, agricultural services, and other synergistic trade relationships. Paraguayans admire the high quality of U.S. products, and a sustainably growing and inclusive Paraguayan economy will continue to increase demand for U.S. goods and services. If confirmed, I will work to expand our trade for the benefit of both nations. Paraguay's economic success advances U.S. economic success.

Paraguay and the United States have a long history of strong people-to-people ties, especially through the more than 5,000 Peace Corps Volunteers who have served there since the program began in 1966. If confirmed, I will also support the Peace Corps program in Paraguay, as well as the embassy's flourishing programs to support English language teaching and learning, science education, and higher education exchanges. These programs are especially valuable to reach the 44 percent of the Paraguayan population that is younger than 25 years of age. They help strengthen people-to-people ties, foster mutual understanding, and encourage greater engagement between our two nations.

I look forward, if confirmed for this position, to working closely with Congress to advance our national interests by further strengthening our positive relationship with the Republic of Paraguay as that nation builds its economy, strengthens its democratic institutions, confronts international criminal and terrorist actors, and plays an ever larger role on the international stage.

I would be delighted to respond to any questions you may have.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

I am going to defer my opening questions to the ranking member, Senator Menendez.

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

Thank you all for your statements.

Let me ask all of our nominees this question. A simple yes or no would suffice. It is a question that I have asked of every nominee that has been before us. And without commenting on the potential impact, do you believe that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential elections?

And I ask because in our own hemisphere, as Mr. Trujillo in a visit with me yesterday noted, there are going to be at least six countries that are going to be holding elections in the hemisphere. We know that Russia has ramped up various activities there. Obviously, for your portfolios, Rear Admiral Braithwaite and Mr.

Bierman, this is quite salient. So I am not asking whether or not they actually created an impact. I am asking whether or not you believe that they actually sought to interfere. So a yes or no would suffice.

Mr. BIERMAN. Yes.

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Yes, sir. As you know, the Norwegians moved to a paper ballot in September because of that concern. Thank you for the question.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, Senator.

Mr. MCCLENNY. Yes, Senator. I also see their involvement and influence in Venezuela where I serve currently.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you. I appreciate that because if we understand that they are a challenge, then we have to think about how we deal with that challenge.

Now, Mr. Trujillo, I want to thank you for stopping by yesterday. I appreciate our conversation. And let me pick up on some of the OAS institutional questions that I have.

You noted to me yesterday that one of your priorities was restoring credibility to the OAS, specifically noting that some Caribbean countries who have failed to condemn the current human rights and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, for example, is an issue.

So tell me and the committee how do you plan to engage with these countries. What specific tools in our diplomatic arsenal do you believe will be most effective at motivating other countries to stand up for the Inter-American Democratic Charter?

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

You know, I think it is extremely important for these countries to realize the importance of the humanitarian side of what is happening in Venezuela.

I also think it is very important for the congressional support. I have reviewed the Humanitarian and Defense of Democracy Act in Venezuela that was sponsored by Senator Rubio and Senator Cardin. I think the energy independence for the Caribbean countries will ultimately help us accomplish that goal. But ultimately, I think it is very important for them to understand the importance of the humanitarian side, the importance of democracy and how important that is to the United States and to the region.

Senator MENENDEZ. I hope you will look at other tools of diplomacy that we have in our universe. Although you are not going to be a bilateral representative to any of these countries, obviously, in a multilateral institution, there are still opportunities, working with your colleagues throughout the hemisphere, to think about the other elements of American diplomacy, the use of aid, trade, international opinion, and sometimes, when it is appropriate, the denial of that aid or trade at the end of the day. So I would like you to think about some of those.

I want to ask you do you believe that high level representation of the United States in international organizations is important.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, I do, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. And I appreciate that answer because Secretary Tillerson has yet to attend a ministerial level meeting of the OAS, and that sends a hemispheric impression.

Now, I know that when we spoke yesterday, I asked you whether you had met with the Secretary, and that is not the case.

By the way, have any of you met with the Secretary as it relates to the nominations that you have received?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. No, sir.

Mr. MCCLENNY. No, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Bierman?

Mr. BIERMAN. No, I have not.

Senator MENENDEZ. So I hope that if you are confirmed, will you recommend to the Secretary that at some point he personally participate in critical OAS meetings?

Mr. TRUJILLO. I will, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you about the reform bill that we passed in 2013, which I referenced in my opening comments. I authored and passed that legislation into law, which urges management reforms of the OAS. And as I said, their 2014 strategic vision aligns with parts of that law, but I think we can do more.

Do you think the State Department has developed a successful strategy as it relates to pursuing OAS reform? How would you evaluate the State Department's implementation of the law, and what components—I do not know if you are familiar with the law. I know I mentioned it to you yesterday—of reform would you specifically focus on beyond obviously pursuing a more vigorous response of countries of the Democratic Charter?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Well, I think, Senator, what is really important is just the governance of the institution from a managerial perspective. The United States contribution should not exceed 50 percent as far as the U.S. mission to the OAS. Their response in Cancun—they were very successful in achieving that. It is a 5-year glide path. We are hopeful to reaching it. If I am confirmed, I will definitely towards being successful in accomplishing those goals. But the financial integrity, aside from the charter, but the financial and the governance of the institution is of foremost importance.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired, but if there is no one else, I do have one other question for you, and then I would like to turn to one of our other nominees.

Now, I have spent the better part of a quarter of a century in Congress trying to improve our immigration laws and the lives of immigrants in their communities. And unfortunately, in the past few years, we have seen a surge of Central American migrants fleeing violence, oppression, and poverty. And when I engage with ambassadors from Central American countries, their primary focus is protecting their citizens, not only from the challenges they have at home, but from immigration orders that tear families apart and potentially incur other devastating consequences.

In 2015, you authored what I would consider a draconian bill in the Florida legislature that would have made not complying with the deportation order a felony, punishable up to 30 years in prison. So I want to give you a chance on the record because I know this is going to be pursued by others, and so I figured in fairness to you, I want to give you a chance on the record to give me a sense of what you meant by that bill because when you deal with the ambassadors of these countries, they are going to know this and they are going to say to themselves, you know, you want me to vote in a certain way. Some of these countries, Mexico, Guatemala, and others in Central America, are good partners with us at the OAS.

So this is going to be a bit of a challenge, and I want to hear what your intent was and how you are going to deal with that.

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

I would not have supported that bill in the form it was drafted. It was poorly drafted and it never captured my original intent. My original intent for that bill was to codify the federal statute of illegal reentry post deportation, post all of due process being exhausted.

As far as dealing with other ambassadors at the OAS, if I am confirmed, I think I would discuss my body of work in the State legislature. I supported KidCare. I supported a permanent resident of the United States being able to practice law in the State of Florida. I supported in-State tuition. So overall the comprehensive work that I did towards immigration reform, given the confines of being a member of the State legislature, I would definitely discuss that with them.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, it speaks volumes about the need to make sure, which I know we agonize here with what we introduce being what our intent was. And so if you are to be confirmed as the Ambassador to the OAS, what resolutions we pursue and how they are drafted are going to be incredibly important. So I hope that that is an experiential factor that you will take with you to the institution.

Mr. Bierman, I appreciate your past service.

According to USAID and the E&E Bureau, it seeks to promote resilient and democratic societies, strengthen economic growth and energy security, support European-Atlantic integration to realize a region that is whole, free, and at peace.

Now, I would argue, in the face of ongoing Russian military aggression and disinformation campaigns aimed at eroding democratic institutions and western alliances, this mission has never been more important.

Now, the question I would like to get a sense from you, do you feel that you are going to have the resources necessary to carry out your mandated duties? The request for fiscal year 2018 of the budget would eliminate—eliminate—not reduce—eliminate assistance for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I do not know how those proposed cuts serve the national interest of the United States. And I know you are not there to have been an advocate of what the budget is. But, if confirmed, that statement that I read about a core mission is going to be very difficult to pursue without the resources, for example, Ukraine that is suffering under direct military occupation by Russia. So give me a sense of how you are going to meet that challenge.

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, thank you very much, Senator, for that question. And thank you to the entire committee for their work on this specific issue. I think Senator Cardin's work specifically in addressing the increasing resources in our region has been critical in our efforts over the last 2 years. As you can see, we have had a significant increase since 2015.

Senator MENENDEZ. You had an increase but the budget calls for an elimination.

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, I have not had a chance to actually work on those specific details, but I do look forward to working, if I am con-

confirmed, specifically within the administration and being an advocate for foreign assistance and its value and then working again with your committee to try to address those specific issues.

I also would very quickly just like to thank you for your question earlier about Russian influence in elections because it is having an impact in every country, not just covertly but openly. I was in Moldova in 2014, and I saw open campaigning of President Putin with at least one specific political party. So it is an open campaign, as well as a covert campaign.

And I also want to thank you for your question regarding working with our partners. I think it is very important. I am looking forward to working with my European partners in the EU specifically on resources and how we can work together to have a larger impact on our role.

But I do think that, if confirmed, I am looking forward to working with you and the committee specifically on how to address the resource issue in our area.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate that answer. And I will close on this, Mr. Chairman. The rest of my questions I will submit for the record.

Earlier this month, a "Washington Post" article opened with a disheartening headline. And I appreciate the chairman who has been supportive of some of my efforts when we were marking up here on USAID. This is the headline: "The Developing World Will Have Fewer American Engineers, Economists, Teachers, and Health Workers to Help Prepare for the Future," referring to the abrupt cancellation notices to 178 people previously accepted into Foreign Service positions.

So one of the questions I was going to ask you, but you preempted it, is if you are confirmed, hopefully you will be an advocate internally for—and I supported Ambassador Green to be the Administrator. I want to see every dollar used wisely. I want to see every dollar used effectively. But if we do not believe as we work to that goal of never needing foreign assistance again—but we are not there by any stretch of the imagination. If we do not believe that this is a critical element of U.S. foreign policy, then we are incredibly short-sighted.

So I hope that you will use your experience to explain how this is actually a force multiplier and an opportunity.

Mr. BIERMAN. If I might, I would like to say that the Europe & Eurasia Bureau specifically has been a model for success. 11 of our countries are now members of the EU, countries that we had missions in.

As you probably heard through my statement, I am an historian by nature, and in the same book that David McCullough wrote, he mentioned that in order to chart a path forward, we have to have an understanding of the past. And in many ways sometimes I think it is like planting cut flowers. If there is no root, there is no foundation, there is no understanding of the past, then it is not going to last. So I think it is important that we have a strong foundation in Europe & Eurasia, and I am looking forward to working with you and the committee on that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

And, Mr. Trujillo, your sons have made me feel very at home because they are doing what my kids used to do when I used to talk. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. They are lovely.

All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. We will see now if they wake up when I talk. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. I want to follow up on a question that the ranking member asked. Who is the highest ranking State Department official that any of you have met with in preparation for and anticipation of your nomination with regard to this posting?

Mr. BIERMAN. I have met with Administrator Green, and we have had several discussions specifically, by the way, I will say on working with our European partners. So it actually addresses the ranking member's question earlier, but I have met with Ambassador Green and had substantive comments with him.

Senator RUBIO. Admiral?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Deputy Secretary Sullivan, sir.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Kevin Sullivan over at the OAS.

Mr. MCCLENNY. Officials within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and I will be meeting with Under Secretary Shannon later today.

Senator RUBIO. This question is kind of more open-ended. I will give you an opportunity to expand on your opening comments for each of you, and in fairness, since you have gone last every time, Mr. McCleddy, we will start with you. Plus you have a pretty tough post right now, so I think you deserve a little benefit here given your current challenges that you face in a very difficult posting.

What is the greatest central challenge, if confirmed, in your new assignment, in your new post?

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

I think the greatest challenge will be continuing the policy of engagement that we have manifested, that we have executed over the recent years to carry Paraguay's own efforts forward on the areas of judicial transparency, fighting corruption, fighting transnational criminal organizations, as well as terrorist financing.

I think in your remarks, sir, you made reference to something that has been a constant and returning, recurring issue of concern in the western hemisphere, and that is activities of an illegal and terrorist nature taking place or emanating from the tri-border region. I agree completely with the comments you made that this is a problem that has been—it is a problem that we have been observing closely and we have been working against for a number of years. There is a lot of smoke. It continues to be a source of a great deal of concern for all of us. It will require work, if confirmed, on the part of myself and the staff in the embassy in Asuncion but also for the my colleagues across the border in Argentina and in Brazil. I pledge to pay very close attention to what is going on in the tri-border region because it is an area of great concern and it has been for many years.

Senator RUBIO. And just to expound on that for a second—and I apologize to the other nominees. We will get to you in a moment on the same question.

When you talk about the tri-border region, for those who may not be familiar with what exactly—you were actually referring to Hezbollah. A lot of people think about Hezbollah as a threat in the Middle East, and to the extent that their engagement in the western hemisphere exists, it has largely been viewed as a fundraising mechanism, a place where they conduct illicit activities to raise money and send back.

But just today there was an open source report in one of the press outlets about an increasing concern about Hezbollah scouting and surveiling and preparing contingency plans for activities against the United States and its interests in the western hemisphere and potentially having carried out those in the past in the western hemisphere.

In the case of a conflict either with Hezbollah and/or Iran, they would serve as a proxy, in essence. If the U.S. entered into some sort of conflict, the Iranians could order Hezbollah to conduct asymmetrical attacks both against the homeland and in the western hemisphere against U.S. interests in a way that gives them a level of deniability publicly, but we would know. And it would be a price that they would want us to know that we would have to pay.

So particularly with the threat of Hezbollah, it is your view that Hezbollah poses both—that they pose both, obviously, a financial threat but also a potential operational threat?

Mr. McCLENNY. It is my view, based on the information that I have seen, sir, that there is an actual financial fundraising threat that is ongoing, current, and requires attention, and that there is a potential for an operational threat in the future. I have not seen any information to indicate that Hezbollah is operationally active in the tri-border region at this point in time, but completely agree with your view that this is something that must be watched very closely.

Senator RUBIO. Representative Trujillo, the same question on the broader challenge.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

I think the broader challenge is the backward slides in democracy. If you look at the situation in Venezuela where they have gone over the last 15 years and how that has spilled out over the region, it is something that will continue to affect the region for years to come, the humanitarian issues, the lack of democracy, the lack of elections, corruption. I think when you look at the Panama Papers and Odebrecht and how that corruption starts really challenging people's trust in a democratic system, I think that is definitely a challenge facing the region. And going forward is the elections, as Senator Menendez mentioned, over the next year, the six, maybe seven elections that will take place, the outcomes of those elections and making sure that not only are they democratic in nature and fair and transparent but also those leaders govern democratically once they are elected.

Senator RUBIO. Admiral?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would have to say the Arctic, sir. And specifically, the Arctic is a top strategic foreign policy priority for the Norwegians and the United States in our partnership with them, but specifically the re-



militarization of the region by the Russians. As you know, sir, the Russians have reinstated strategic bomber flights along the Norwegian coast. They have reestablished both land and closer to my roots, naval forces on the Kola Peninsula, including their brand new Borei class ballistic missile submarine.

So I think that our challenges are going to be to assure the Norwegians that we are there. We have created a number of interoperability opportunities with us with the Joint Strike Fighter and the P-8 Poseidon aircraft. With my roots as a former antisubmarine warfare pilot who spent a lot of time hunting then Soviet submarines, I think that is going to be at the forefront, if I were confirmed, during my time in Oslo working very closely with the Norwegian Government and keeping eyes on our friends in Russia.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Bierman?

Mr. BIERMAN. As I mentioned earlier, Russian malign influence is going to be a top priority along with fighting violent extremism.

But on a micro level, I think youth unemployment is of great concern specifically in the Balkans. Some of our countries are seeing a better than 50 percent unemployment rate between the ages of 18 and 25, and I think that that is a serious issue and it raises issues beyond unemployment.

I also think that open media and a free media is something of great concern and a top priority.

And lastly, I think decentralization is very important as we work with local communities to try to involve the local communities in governance and open and fair elections.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. By the way, to Mr. Trujillo and McClenny, he speaks Spanish very well. He is very tricky about that, but he does speak very well. But we are going to do this in English today.

Senator KAINE. He is overstating mi habilidad.

But thank you all and congratulations on your nominations for these important positions. Let me just ask each of you a couple of questions.

Mr. Trujillo, first to you. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It has long been considered one of the crown jewels of the OAS and it has been a critical forum to focus on human rights issues, and it often is a target because of that focus and it is a target from folks on both the left and the right.

What is your assessment of the commission at this point, and what steps will you take to make sure that it is defended and appropriately funded, especially at a time when the administration is proposing some pretty significant budget cuts and being seen by objective observers as deemphasizing human rights issues as part of the portfolio of the administration?

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

I think the Human Rights Commission is extremely important. The most important thing is that it is autonomous. It cannot be controlled by a member state. It cannot be controlled by the organization. It really has to be an organization that stands for justice and stands for human rights.

My goal and my commitment is making sure that they have the adequate funding to carry out their mission. Obviously, Venezuela

and other members in the OAS are trying to undermine their objectives. My goal, if I am confirmed, is to advocate making sure that they are properly funded, they are autonomous, and they are able to carry out their mission.

Senator Kaine. Can you talk a little bit, using Venezuela as an example, what more might the OAS be able to do? What could you do? What could the United States do to help them be more vigorous in trying to promote human rights and more peaceful resolution of challenges within Venezuela?

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

I think one thing that they have done—Secretary Almagro, having the hearings over the last 3 months and analyzing violations of human rights and having those forums in which dissidents could come and express their concerns and ultimately trying to build a case in which those people are referred to The Hague Commission for prosecution—I think it is an exceptional step forward from the OAS and their prerogative.

As I mentioned earlier to Senator Menendez, I think the ability of the OAS to really stand by their charter, if they really believe in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and hold Venezuela accountable, making sure that they are held accountable for violating the charter. And I think as the United States, I think the sanctions are very effective, the sanctions that we have passed against high level officials. I think it is very important for us to try to deliver humanitarian aid. Obviously, it is being blocked by the Venezuelans, but I think it is of foremost importance for people to have access to water and food and medicine. They are human rights that should always be upheld.

Senator Kaine. I understand that Senator Menendez has already asked about this, but I am concerned about it as well. As a member of the Florida State legislature, you had legislation that would have charged undocumented immigrants with felony penalties under State law if they reentered the United States after deportation. And I am wondering about that. There are penalties for reentering under immigration law. What was your thinking about trying to, in addition, make that a State felony?

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

The way it was originally drafted was never my intention. My intention was to capture the illegal reentry and codify the federal statute. I was a prosecutor for 4 years in Miami, and one thing that was always a bit concerning were individuals with final ICE deportation holds being released. So they were people who were afforded due process, were released from either county jail or from State prison, transported back to our local facilities, a 48-hour ICE hold, and ultimately they were released back into the residence.

Senator Kaine. And they would be released because ICE would determine—they would be notified, but they would determine that there was no need to deport the individuals?

Mr. Trujillo. They were released—sometimes there were issues with communications between ICE and the county jails or the Department of Corrections. There were multiple issues with the communications between the interagencies.

Senator Kaine. I am just curious. When I was Governor, we had a very standard practice. If somebody was in a jail or prison who

was there and was undocumented, we would let ICE know before release. And we would let ICE make the decision about whether somebody needed to be deported or whether there was some other sort of process that needed to be engaged against them. And that was something we did as a matter of course. ICE usually, after checking someone's record, decided not to do anything, and somebody would be released.

But I am just curious. What exactly was your intention then in making that a separate State-level felony if ICE had determined that the individual posed no safety threat?

Mr. TRUJILLO. My intention was that if the person was forcibly removed from the United States, not a person who voluntarily leaves and returns, a person who is forcibly removed, has exhausted all due process, has a final deportation order and is removed, if they reenter and commit a new offense, they will be held for the additional crime of illegal reentry as to the State statute. As far as the ICE issue in Florida, there was some disconnect based on communication in which individuals could only be held under State law for 48 hours. After 48 hours, they have to be released. If not, their attorneys could file a writ of habeas corpus and have them released. So that was the issue I was trying to address.

Senator KAINE. Mr. McClenny, let me ask you a question about Paraguay. It is a significant transshipment point for cocaine and all the attendant challenges, corruption, limited government resources, affect on the public safety system.

I notice in budget submissions—well, first let me ask you this. What is your assessment of the steps that the Government of Paraguay is taking to increase the capacity to interdict illicit drugs?

Mr. MCCLENNY. Thank you for the question, Senator Kaine.

The Paraguayan Government is a strong partner and a good partner in the efforts regionally and bilaterally to interdict drug traffic shipments, as well as to interdict movements of money that are associated with drug trafficking. There are clear shortcomings in ability and technology and equipment and supplies and a variety of other things. Interagency and embassy programs are working to address those shortcomings. They have been over a number of years, and we will continue to do those. If confirmed, I pledge that we will continue to work hard on these important issues.

Paraguay is a transshipment country for cocaine but it is also a source country for marijuana that circulates largely in South America. That is another subject of focus for them and something that is a lower priority for the United States but still an important counternarcotics priority.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, I have one more question, if I could continue before maybe going to Senator Murphy, on Paraguay.

I notice that Trump administration has proposed eliminating USAID development assistance to Paraguay. I have not visited Paraguay, but what I know about the country would suggest that there are still some very significant development needs where USAID could be helpful. And over the years, USAID I think has played a pretty important role working in tandem with the U.S. embassy and other American officials in Paraguay.

How would the elimination of USAID development assistance affect the relationship?

Mr. McCLENNY. Again, thank you for the question.

USAID has a long and proud history of work in Paraguay and a significant record of achievements working with Paraguayan counterparts to advance our interests and goals in a variety of development ways.

You are correct that the current budget request for development assistance funds is zero for next year and zero for the year after that. This will have an impact on the programs that we are able to do on the ground. There is money, however, in the pipeline. We will continue to use those funds. We will use the resources that are provided to us the very best we can to achieve the goals that we can in the country.

In general terms with regard to the bilateral relationship, we have a strong relationship with Paraguay, and I do not think the zeroing out over time of these funds will fundamentally affect that relationship.

Senator KAINE. You have had a long career in the State Department and served in many positions, others in Latin America as well. But as a general matter, the USAID portfolio in these countries is an important and productive part of the American relationship with the countries. Would you not agree?

Mr. McCLENNY. I absolutely would agree, sir. Currently where I serve in Venezuela, it is an important aspect. It is an important arrow in our quiver. It is an important tool in our toolbox. It has been in all of the Latin American countries where I have served.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Murphy?

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

Thank you to all four of you for your willingness to serve.

Mr. Bierman, I wanted to ask you a few questions about future USAID investments in Europe and Eurasia. I think many of us have a hard time understanding the set of funding priorities being sent to us by the administration with respect to the challenges that we face in this region. There is no doubt that we need additional military capacity, and we have stepped up to the plate through the Europe Reassurance Initiative. But many of the challenges that we face in the region are not conventional military challenges, and there are massive soft power plays being made by our adversaries in the region, which cannot be met if this Congress were to adopt the draconian funding cuts being proposed by the administration.

I will not ask you to opine on that budget, but I want to ask you about two specific challenges.

First, the Balkans. I think you might have briefly touched on this, but I want you to do a little bit deeper dive here. Russia, Turkey, and the Gulf States have initiated massive soft power offensives in the Balkans, and much of this coming just in 2017. The Russians have significantly doubled down in the Balkans over the last 10 months, having watched the United States telegraph a withdrawal from that region in part because of the budgets that have been submitted.

Do you think the United States is currently doing enough in the Balkans to match these efforts, and what could we be doing better or differently?

Mr. BIERMAN. Just to qualify, I have not been involved with the budgetary talks, but I do look at my role as an advocate for the agency and our mission. I am a believer, having spent 5 years under the previous Bush administration, in the same bureau, and I wanted to come back to this specific job in this specific administration to help guide the principles of development.

Look, I completely agree with what you are saying. I think we have got some serious issues in the Balkans specifically, as I mentioned earlier, with youth unemployment. I think we have got some backsliding with democracy. We have got some issues with ethnic tensions, and I do believe that the Russian malign influence is a serious problem not just covertly but openly.

I think that our way forward is to work openly with the governments, to work openly with democracy and governance, with our efforts to supply energy independence through the entire region. I think we can also work with economic development. We have got some great programs specifically in the Balkans.

I know that specifically in Serbia, for instance, we have a program that has worked with the Serbian Ministry for Construction on helping Serbia jump their permitting process, and since our work in this particular area, they have jumped 103 places which has spurred construction by 20 percent. That impacts Russian malign influence by giving people hope for the future and that their direction is in a Euro-Atlantic path.

Senator MURPHY. Then let us move to Ukraine for a moment. USAID is involved there in a number of different ways. But our funding pales in comparison to the amount of very quiet money that is being put into Ukraine through Russian sources. Talk a little bit about what we can be doing more of in Ukraine maybe specifically with an eye towards some of the anticorruption programming that is still desperately needed at the local level as much as at the national level.

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, there definitely is still work to be done, but we actually have made a great deal of progress with our e-asset declaration system with the Ukrainian Government and officials. It has opened transparency and it has given people confidence in their government.

But we have also had a tremendous amount of success with the ProZorro program, which costs about \$2.2 million, and we have leveraged more than \$1.25 billion, and that basically is an e-procurement system that allows open and transparent bidding on various e-commerce throughout the government. And we have provided technical assistance and I think continued technical assistance, not just at the ministry level but also at the local level. I talked about this earlier. It is very important that we make every Ukrainian understand that they can be involved with their government from the grassroots all the way to the national level. And if confirmed, I look forward to working with you, Senator, and the committee on how we can be effective in our programs and fight the influence from Russia.

Senator MURPHY. Well, I appreciate your testimony. I hope that you will end up being an advocate for increased funding in these accounts. I think in Ukraine, we need to come to the realization that Putin does not want to militarily own Ukraine. He wants to

create enough confusion and dissension within the ranks that he economically and politically breaks that country such that it decides that the fight in the east is not worth the hassle and they should come to some accommodation with Moscow. That means that it is that political and economic support for the country that is in many ways even more critical than the military support that we provide to them, and that happens through USAID. It cannot happen if we continue to have an administration that does not believe in the mission. But I am glad that you are signing up for the job.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two very quick questions and then a comment.

First to Mr. McClenny, let me just say as the only career nominee here today, I want to thank you for your service, and I appreciate those who are committed to the Foreign Service of the United States and have committed their lives to it. I think you promote America's interests abroad up front. So it is incredibly important.

I have a specific question as to your post-to-be. Human trafficking is something that both the chairman and I and the chairman of the full committee have a great passion about. We have passed legislation that I thought was incredibly important. I am concerned in different parts of the world about human trafficking, and I am concerned about it in Paraguay.

Could you speak to that in terms of one of your core missions?

Mr. MCCLENNY. Thank you, Senator Menendez, for the compliment on my service and also for the question about trafficking in persons in Paraguay.

Yes, trafficking in persons is a serious issue, a real issue in Paraguay. We produce an annual report on developments in the subject matter in Paraguay. The most recent report makes it very clear that there remain very serious concerns in prosecution of individuals who have been accused of such crimes, in prevention of further crimes being committed, and also in protection of victims of these crimes.

The Paraguayan Government, however, under President Cartes has recognized that this is an issue and is taking some steps and is working with us to advance on this. Not enough has been done. This clearly remains a priority and is something that we need to address going forward.

Senator MENENDEZ. And so can I glean from you a commitment to the committee that if you are approved, that you will make one of your core missions and you are not going to equivocate on it as it relates to other issues we may be concerned with in Paraguay?

Mr. MCCLENNY. If confirmed, sir, you have my firm pledge that this will be one our priorities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you for that answer.

I have a question for every nominee that I have asked since I have been on the committee, when I was the chairman of the full committee and now I still believe is incredibly important because sometimes people forget.

If you are confirmed—this goes to every nominee—will you commit that if the committee or its members reach out to you and seek to get insights from your posts and positions, that you will share them freely with them? We can down the line.

Mr. McCLENNY. Yes, sir.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, Senator.

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Yes, sir. I consider it my duty.

Mr. BIERMAN. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. And then finally just a quick comment. Admiral, you are extraordinarily competent for this position, but you sort of like have an inside track here with me because your wife is a Jersey girl. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. And she was a Catholic schoolteacher in New Jersey. So that to me is really valuable. So I just want you to know that in addition to your competency, that does not hurt.

I appreciate Mr. Bierman's commitment to the agency. It is incredibly important for me. If I am going to support somebody, I want to make sure they are supporting the agency they are assigned to.

I appreciate, as I said to Mr. McClenny, the career commitment.

And I generally have an affinity for Cubans even when they are Republican. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. So thank you all for your commitment to be willing to serve. I may have some questions for the record. I would just urge you to respond to them as quickly as possible as the committee considers your nominations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

We are headed for the finish line here unless anybody else shows up, but I do want to touch on a couple more topics.

Mr. McClenny—and I am going to paraphrase from the Congressional Research Service. Paraguay is a significant transshipment point for Andean cocaine. Drug traffickers exploit its porous borders and extensive waterways. Paraguay has increased its capacity to interdict drugs and to conduct drug eradication and demand reduction activities. Their congress has supported cooperation with the U.S. on counternarcotics. They expanded their budget for a primary counternarcotics agency.

Here is an article from earlier this year in the Miami Herald." In June of 2017, a Paraguayan man was charged in federal court in Miami with conspiring to smuggle cocaine through the Ciudad del Este Airport with the intent to sell it in the United States. The individual charged had been extradited to the U.S. by the Paraguayan Government on suspicion of using drug trafficking to raise funds for a Hezbollah network.

In light of all of this, I do not ask you to opine on its wisdom because I do not want to put you in that predicament. But I do want to ask you, the President's 2018 foreign aid request for Paraguay would reduce our assistance to \$400,000. That is a 95 percent cut compared to 2016, and this funding is primarily for military training and traditional development programs.

Would that sort of cut, if enacted, which I do not believe it will be, but if it does, will it make it harder or easier for us to work

with Paraguay to confront these challenges if we had a 95 percent cut like that?

Mr. McCLENNY. I do not think it will make it harder for us to work with them because there is a willingness on the part of their government to work with us. But it will make it harder for us to make an impact and make a difference in this regard. Clearly, we would all rather have more rather than less. There are finite limits.

I can pledge to you though, Senator, if confirmed for this position, that we will wisely steward the resources that we are given to make as much of an impact as we possibly can.

Senator RUBIO. And Representative Trujillo, on the OAS—and I think that the ranking member alluded to this. One of the things that undermines any international organism is the inability to take action. And it has been very frustrating to a lot of people to see 20 members representing I think it is like 90 percent of the GDP of the western hemisphere vote to condemn what has happened in Venezuela, which is a direct violation of the very reason why the OAS exists, and that is to protect democracy. And the inability of get a handful of smaller nations to come on board for a variety of reasons—in the Caribbean, St. Vincent and Grenadine, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis have all voted to support Venezuela against efforts by the other countries to confront them. And then you have had a series of abstentions from places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, et cetera.

This is very frustrating. And in particular, it is frustrating when you view this list and you see in the case of, for example, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, nations who receive significant assistance from the United States but have chosen, for a variety of reasons, primarily financial in my opinion, to line up on behalf of a dictatorship and basically call into question the very purpose of the OAS so they cannot take collective action.

And so I guess my question is in regards to that, how do you balance between maintaining friendly relationships and not wanting to be the threatening power that goes in and tells them we are going to cut off your money unless you vote with us and at the same time justifying to the American taxpayer why we continue to pour money into the coffers of governments who in turn go to international organisms and vote against us in violation, for example, of the democracy they enjoy and of the very purpose of the organization in which they serve.

I guess the central question is if the OAS is not able to take collective action against such clear-cut violations of the democratic order, why do we have an OAS. Is that not a central long-term challenge?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator. I think it is the greatest challenge. The countries siding with Venezuela is the biggest challenge that undermines the entire goal of the organization, an organization that is committed to democratic values, that is committed to security, that is committed to human rights, in which you have a country that clearly cannot be a bigger violator of those three pillars and countries within the organization that support them. I think that is central and it is the biggest challenge I will face.



I think one thing that the Senator brought up—and obviously it is under Congress' purview—but the ability to influence trade and influence economic sanctions and influence aid, I think those are great tools in our toolbox that we can ultimately bring out, if necessary, in order to have some of these countries reconsider their position.

Senator RUBIO. Admiral, a more open-ended question. But Norway, obviously because it shares a 120-mile land border and a 14-mile maritime border with Russia—they are up close to this issue and have been historically for a very long time throughout the Cold War and beyond. Both from your military background and now entering the diplomatic world, is there anything that Norway does that we can learn from, anything they do particularly well with regards to Russia? Are there any lessons to be learned about how they deal with Russia that could be applied to the broader European theater and/or the United States?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Thank you, Senator, very much for the question.

Norway is in a much different situation, of course, than the United States is. They are not a super power. They are not viewed by the Russians as a great threat. They, in fact, have been a good neighbor to the Russians working through Arctic Council initiatives. Of course, they share fishery interests. There is border patrol, search and rescue.

But as you well know, sir, the Norwegians are very wise to the ways of Russia, their interests. As Senator Menendez had indicated earlier, their interests around the globe can be suspicious.

The Norwegians engage directly. I believe the United States could probably be a little more direct. And perhaps there is a way that we could partner with the Norwegians. I think the Arctic Council, sir, is a good start. There are numerous interests there, both on behalf of the Russians as well as the United States, as well as every member of the council. And I would intend, if so confirmed, sir, to continue that, be very proactive in our engagement with the Arctic Council and our relationship with Norway, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Finally, Mr. Bierman, my question for you is kind of a variation of the same question I asked Mr. McClenny, and that is, if you look at the President's fiscal year 2018 budget request for assistance to Europe and Eurasia, it was significantly less than the fiscal year 2016's actual funding. And it comes at a time in which Putin—and I do not say Russia. I say Putin because Russian people are not doing this. It is Putin who has made this decision—are increasingly trying to interfere in the Western democratic order particularly in Europe.

And so in the context of that and of the necessity to be helpful to our allies in the region, I am not asking you to opine on the wisdom. That is a policy determination. I am not trying to get you cross with the administration. But I guess my view is if such a reduction in funding—would it be helpful—and I think I know the answer, but would it be helpful or hurtful to our efforts to increase our ability to cooperate and assist allies in the region in need of that assistance?

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, thank you very much for that question, Senator.

Again, although I have not worked directly with this administration and the agency on the budget, I do look forward to working with you specifically as we move ahead.

And I am not trying to avoid that question. I think it is a matter of making the argument as to why assistance and development matters. And I look forward to making that argument, to looking historically as to our successes. We have seen some great successes. We want to make sure that our investment in the past is an investment that continues into the future. And I am excited about that opportunity, and I can tell you you have my commitment.

Senator RUBIO. Well, to all the nominees in the different contexts of the two that are going to particular countries and to you, Mr. Bierman, that is going to be involved in a programmatic effort in a larger region, and of course, Mr. Trujillo, who is going to be, hopefully, representing us in a broader multinational forum, the challenge when it comes to aid—the fundamental question a lot of Americans ask—first of all, they think it is like 30 percent of our budget when it is less than 1 percent. But the others are of the perception that foreign aid is charity, that we are doing this like a charity contribution. And the harder argument, the one we need to make is that these contributions that we make, appropriately channeled—we do not want the money being corruptly used—actually has both national security and soft power elements to it. This is good for America to do this. It is actually cheaper than the alternative. If we could help Paraguay, if we could help Central America, if we could help these nations confront, for example, transnational crime and the flow of illicit drugs, we could save, theoretically, a lot of money on the back end fighting that when it reaches the homeland.

So it is a challenge that all of you will face, perhaps a little bit less in Norway, though certainly in the military scope and the wisdom of NATO, it is relevant. And it is one that I hope all of you will be forceful advocates for. Again, we are not talking about wasting money. We are not talking about giving money to people that do not need it, but we are talking about why spending a dollar at the front end in helping capacitate countries could save us a lot of money at the back end when those problems reach us here. And I hope all of you will be engaged in that effort, if confirmed.

So I want to thank all of you. Unless Senator Menendez has anything else, I want to thank all of you for being here. For your families sitting through this hearing, I appreciate it as well. The fact that you did not get the full committee here is not bad news. It is good news. They know you are here. They know your nomination. They have read it. And obviously, a lot of them feel comfortable about it or they would be here asking tough questions. And to the members that came, I thank them because their questions were important. It was a really good hearing. So again, I thank you for your service and your willingness to continue to serve.

The record of this hearing will remain open until the close of business on Friday.

And without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

## Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

### *Human Rights:*

*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 served on the State Department's Trafficking in Person's Task Force in the George W. Bush administration. I was asked to do so because of my interest in the issue and my knowledge about the challenges in Moldova. During the time I sat on the Task Force, it was charged with determining which countries were most at risk of trafficking and where a significant increase of funds could make an immediate difference. I argued successfully for the inclusion of Moldova, and as a result the additional funds had an impact on protecting basic human rights in Moldova. I look forward to continue advocating for and supporting programs that further the protection of fundamental freedoms throughout Europe and Eurasia, if confirmed.

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

*Answer.* The most pressing human rights concerns in Europe and Eurasia today include efforts to limit the fundamental freedoms of citizens—the freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and expression, and the freedom of conscience. Without these basic freedoms that are so critical to citizen participation and human dignity, the prospects for improving people's lives are greatly diminished. Another major, related concern is the closing space for civil society. When regular citizens are harassed, or worse, just for working together in associations and other non-governmental groups, this also stifles personal freedom and dignity. Finally, inclusion continues to be an ongoing challenge in the region. Members of various minority and underrepresented groups continue to face great challenges to be considered equal members of society. Unfortunately, Russia sometimes exploits these societal divisions to advance its own agenda.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID's programs in Europe and Eurasia will focus on continuing and strengthening our commitment to these fundamental freedoms through support for civil society, fair political competition, freedom of expression and media, and human rights. I will also work to continue our focus promoting an inclusive approach to development that leaves no one behind, including women, youth and marginalized communities.

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

*Answer.* The central challenge for addressing human rights concerns is underdeveloped democratic institutions and democratic backsliding in the region. In some countries in the region, old patterns of concentrating political power mostly in executive authority have re-emerged. Those governments in the region that have shown the least progress in building functioning democratic institutions that can check executive authority are also those that have the most significant human rights issues. Closing space for civil society, and the associated harassment, restriction and repression of non-governmental organizations and activists, has been particularly severe in Eurasia, but has now spread further West to some Balkan and Central European countries. Other challenges include longstanding ethnic and religious divides that complicate efforts to build an inclusive democratic system and social understandings that marginalize some members of the community. Finally, I understand that establishing and strengthening resilient, functioning democratic institutions, processes, and values takes years of consistent effort—and will not be complete overnight.

*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 Europe and Eurasia?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question 5.* What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Europeans, and to support European and Eurasian civil societies, human rights

activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize strengthening understanding between the people of the U.S. and of the region. I feel strongly about this, given my own experience on an exchange to the region through the American Council of Young Political Leaders many years ago and from my service as a volunteer trainer for an IRI program in Ukraine.

I want to do more to help the American public understand the value of such engagement with citizens from the region through greater outreach. Similarly, I think we can do more to tell our story to the people of the region. Both of these efforts can be carried out through people-to-people exchanges. For example, I hope to better galvanize the East European diaspora in the United States to convey these messages of friendship and partnership. I am aware that many of USAID's programs in the region already work to forge and strengthen these ties, but if confirmed, I will work to think about how we can increase those efforts. As part of that process, I will look for input and ideas from my colleagues in both the executive and legislative branches in Washington. I also look forward to working with you on implementing the provisions of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act that you authored earlier this year that was signed into law, and appreciate your leadership on these issues.

*Diversity:*

*Question 6.* What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups at USAID?

Answer. The staff in the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia will be the most important part of our success. In order to achieve our shared goals, the Bureau must have a supportive and welcoming environment for all staff. As someone who hopes to lead the Bureau, I recognize that leadership and support from the top is essential to creating this type of work environment. Administrator Green has made it clear that USAID is "committed to a culture of inclusion, integrity, dignity, and respect." I share the Administrator's vision for a workplace that supports diversity and inclusion. I also look forward to ensuring all staff members in the Bureau have opportunities to grow professionally, develop skills, and benefit from training and capacity-building opportunities.

If confirmed, I will be interacting with all the staff members in the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia and will keep an open door policy. I plan to host two "brown bag" lunches each week, inviting every member of the staff of the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, and inviting only 8 staff at a time, until I have had a chance to meet every member of the Bureau. These meetings will be voluntary, but will give me an opportunity to interact with every member of the Bureau in a small group setting, and will be an important part of my open door policy. I plan to continue these "brown bag" lunches on a bi-weekly basis after I have had a chance to meet with every staff member.

*Question 7.* What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors within the Bureau of Europe and Eurasia are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will insist that all supervisors and managers are fostering an environment that is open and collaborative, in which all cases of harassment and discrimination are dealt with swiftly, and where every staff member feels respected and empowered. I will make sure that all supervisors and managers are able to access training and capacity-building opportunities so they can ensure that the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia is one that welcomes and supports staff from all backgrounds. If confirmed, I will enforce a zero tolerance for any form of harassment or discrimination.

*Conflicts of Interest*

*Question 8.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the USAID 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. Yes.

*Question 9.* 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. Yes.

*Question 10.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No.

*European Resilience*

*Question 11.* The Russia sanctions bill that passed resoundingly in the Senate by 98 votes to 2 and informed the bill President Trump signed into law included a robust authorization for assistance to counter malign Russian Government influence across Europe and Eurasia. In contrast, the administration's FY 18 budget request called for significant cuts across Europe, at a time when Russia is aggressively attacking democratic institutions and exerting its influence across the continent. Congress will likely restore that funding through appropriations. What is your plan for disbursing U.S. assistance in Europe and Eurasia? What are your priorities?

Answer. The scale of the challenges facing Europe and Eurasia is hard to overstate. A still weakened European economy, malign Russian influence, changing demographics, and mass migration present a development context that requires bold USAID engagement across the region.

Although I was not involved in the formulation of the FY 2018 budget request for the State Department and USAID, I understand that it supports the President's commitments to make smart investments to further the capacities of governments, civil society, and the private sector to implement solutions to their development challenges. I strongly believe that USAID needs to be as efficient and effective as it can with its budget, regardless of the level of funding. Moreover, I plan to ensure that our program mechanisms are flexible enough to respond to emerging situations in a timely manner.

I look forward to working with you as we establish shared priorities for the region, and am thankful for your leadership on countering Russian malign influence. I believe that fighting the scourge of corruption, promoting greater regional economic and energy independence, and supporting democratic governance will be key priorities for our work in the region going forward and for countering Russian influence.

*Legacy Funds*

The U.S. established a series of ten enterprise funds across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, to "jump-start" capitalism in the former communist countries. They experienced varying degrees of financial success (in that some ended with considerable more in their investment funds than they started with) and in most cases these proceeds were turned into legacy foundations to provide grants to civil society actors across the region. There is reportedly more than \$1 billion currently in the combined endowments of these legacy foundations, generating \$50-75 million a year for expenditures in grants.

*Question 12.* With the resurgence of malign Russian influence in the region, should the boards of directors of these respective foundations be obliged to consider directing some or all of their grant-making towards projects and programs that address this urgent threat?

Answer. I understand that the Legacy Foundations were designed to operate with a great deal of autonomy with the direction of an independent Board of Directors, and that they work to promote private sector development and policies and practices conducive thereto in their host countries. That said, I'm also aware that the U.S. Government has a permanent non-voting liaison to all the boards, a position often filled by the U.S. Ambassador but sometimes by USAID, which maintains a direct line of communication between the U.S. Government and the Legacy Foundations.

If confirmed, I also look forward to learning more about USAID's relationship with the Legacy Foundations in the region and to exploring avenues, if any, to guide their future investments.

*Question 13.* How do you intend to engage with these boards in order to persuade them to direct funding towards this end?

Answer. I understand that the Legacy Foundations were designed to operate with a great deal of autonomy with, and under the direction of an independent Board of Directors. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about our engagement with the Legacy Foundations and to exploring avenues, if any, to guide their future investments.

*Question 14.* The original USAID grants creating these Enterprise Funds (EFs) called for evaluations at mid-point and end point, but these evaluations apparently did not take place. So, as Congress considers proposals to create new Enterprise

funds in other countries/region, we have no official assessment of these earlier cases. I understand that USAID did conduct an overall evaluation of these enterprise funds in the Europe and Eurasia region just last year. Do you commit to share the findings of that evaluation with the committee upon your confirmation?

Answer. While I have not read the report, I understand that USAID did recently commission its first ever external evaluation of the Europe and Eurasia Enterprise Funds and Legacy Foundation, from the launching of the first Funds in Poland and Hungary in 1990, through the Legacy Foundations' current private sector development work as the U.S. Government's enduring assistance legacy across Central and Eastern Europe.

My understanding is that the evaluation final report is nearing completion. Per USAID's evaluation policy, once finalized, the evaluation report will be made publicly available via the Agency's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) website for the sake of accountability and the use of evaluation findings by all interested stakeholders. I will also ensure the committee receives a briefing on the report.

#### *Democratic Backsliding*

*Question 15.* Hungary and Poland are both engaged in democratic backsliding that threatens their judicial independence, press freedom, and the functioning of their civil societies. Nevertheless, U.S. assistance has been redirected away from Central Europe in recent years as these countries have integrated into the E.U. What scope do you see for regional programs and other efforts to bolster democratic institutions in such places?

Answer. I agree that there are significant challenges to democratic institutions in Poland and Hungary. Support for democratic institutions in those countries could potentially be addressed through the framework of regional programs and in a targeted manner. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of State and would consult with Congress on determining appropriate levels of engagement for supporting democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

#### *Energy Diversification:*

*Question 16.* With the Russian Government continuing to exert pressure on European states through the energy sector, how will you utilize USAID assistance programming to boost resilience to such pressure and increase energy diversification on the continent?

Answer. I recognize the need for programs that address critical areas such as energy security. Over-reliance on Russian sources of energy leaves many of our partners in the region vulnerable to Russia's malign influences. I understand that USAID entered into partnerships with U.S. industry associations and manufacturers to bring U.S. expertise, technology, and best practices in electricity, gas, cybersecurity, and critical infrastructure to the region. Also, through a combination of regional and bilateral programs, USAID continues to support countries in the region with developing regional gas and electricity markets that are integrated with the European Union, leading to improved energy security through (1) diversification of market suppliers; and (2) increased energy sector investments, resulting from transparent and stable legal and regulatory frameworks.

If confirmed, I look forward to exploring these partnerships and programs in greater depth and consulting with Congress on how we can best support energy security in the region.

#### *Discrimination/Xenophobia*

*Question 17.* With increased incidents of hate crimes in Europe, concrete initiatives addressing racism, discrimination, and xenophobia are critical for the safety of our diplomats. I have annually supported funds to address anti-Semitism in Europe. More broadly, how will you work to direct funds in Europe to counter racism and xenophobia? How do you plan to include LGBT issues in USAID assistance? Do you see issues of tolerance and non-discrimination as relevant to stability in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. Tolerance and non-discrimination are important to maintaining stability in the region, and I applaud your leadership on this issue. I am deeply concerned about the rise of extremist groups and those who are willing to use violence to promote their agendas. I understand that currently USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives' programming in Ukraine promotes an inclusive civic identity and has also worked to promote human rights in Macedonia. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to explore new avenues to address these pressing issues.

*Corruption / Rule of Law*

*Question 18.* Russia continues to use extensive corruption networks to influence political actors in vulnerable parts of Europe, as well as to deny its own citizens the transparent, accountable government they deserve. How will you leverage USAID resources, in concert with State and DoJ partners, to address corruption and boost rule of law in Europe and Eurasia?

*Answer.* Corruption, often defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, is indeed a major and growing problem threatening the stability, prosperity and security of Europe and Eurasia. In many ways, corruption can also be conceived of as the manifestation of poor governance and inadequate rule of law. As a result, sound efforts of combat corruption need to work to strengthen democratic governance and the rule of law.

USAID programs can work to deter, detect, and combat corruption through increasing transparency and openness in the public sphere; support watch-dog civic organizations; support investigative journalists; promote open government and e-governance systems; support special anti-corruption institutions and processes; and strengthen judicial independence and capacity, among other areas.

In coordination with State and DOJ partners, USAID's anti-corruption efforts include working with government partners to enhance their capacity to reduce corruption by increasing the transparency and accountability of government institutions. For example:

- ◆ With USAID assistance, eight Europe and Eurasia countries are active in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and have committed to make their governments more transparent, though the extent and depth of this involvement varies from country to country. In fact, Georgia is currently leading the OGP.
- ◆ The Organized Crime and Corruption Network—a USAID-supported collective of investigative journalists who expose corruption—partnered in the release of the “Panama Papers,” the Azerbaijan Laundromat, and the recent “Paradise Papers.” This project sheds light on the illicit financial networks used by autocratic regimes. These illicit networks also divert significant resources from the Europe and Eurasia economies, markets and government budgets.

If confirmed, I anti-corruption efforts will remain a major priority and I will work to build on the progress that has been made, while also exploring new ways to support the rule of law, good governance practices, and strong democratic institutions.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question 1.* Will you advocate internally for an end to the Hiring Freeze at USAID?

*Answer.* USAID and the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia cannot further the Administrator's goal of ending the need for foreign assistance without a highly trained and capable workforce. If confirmed, I will work to meet the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia's staffing requirements, and to provide all staff with training and capacity-building opportunities. I also commit to working with the Administrator to fill all key positions in the Bureau.

*Question 2.* How do you plan to address the effects of Sec. Tillerson's hiring freeze on Foreign Service officers who would ostensibly serve under the auspices of your bureau?

*Answer.* Given the current constraints on hiring new Foreign Service Officers, I believe strategic workforce-planning is critically important to ensuring the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia can deliver on its mission. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of the Agency's strategic workforce-planning decisions, and to advocate for the staffing needs of the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia. I will also work to make sure the Bureau's Foreign Service Officers receive the training and capacity-building opportunities they need to be successful.

*Question 3.* Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, USAID established so-called Enterprise Funds to leverage private sector investment into regions previously in the Soviet sphere of influence. From 2000–2010 nine so-called legacy foundations were established in East Europe and Eurasia to build on these modes, which essentially made equity investments in small and medium sized firms in those regions. These were largely, although perhaps not altogether, successful and profitable, with earned funds being returned to the U.S. Treasury or establishing endowments. As I'm sure you're aware, certain committees in Congress have a hold on the disposi-

tion to the Treasury of the Russia Enterprise Fund, which currently totals about \$150 million.

- Do you know why these funds are being held?

Answer. I understand that in accordance with the terms of the U.S. Russia-Investment Fund's (TUSRIF) grant agreement, following TUSRIF's active investment phase, the liquidation proceeds can only be distributed to 1) a non-profit entity or entities for the purpose of providing assistance for private sector development in Russia, 2) the United States Treasury, or 3) a combination of 1 and 2 above. In February 2007, USAID notified Congress of a plan for the distribution of TUSRIF's assets which stipulated that TUSRIF would return one-half of the liquidation proceeds, million to the U.S. Treasury and that TUSRIF would use the other half to establish the U.S.-Russia Foundation for Economic Advancement and the Rule of Law (USRF).

A hold was placed on the Congressional notification for the portion of the funds to be returned to the U.S. Treasury, and since that time USAID and its congressional oversight and appropriations committees have not been able to agree on a path forward for the funds that remain in TUSRIF—approximately \$147 million.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and other committees of jurisdiction to bring this issue to a resolution.

*Question 4.* As you are also probably aware, in the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act that Congress passed almost unanimously this year, we called for the establishment of a fund to support efforts to counter malign Russian influence, disinformation campaigns and propaganda. Do you believe that these frozen enterprise funds could be put to good use building democratic institutions that would help build resiliency in Eastern European and Eurasian countries against Russian disinformation and interference?

Answer. I share your commitment to building democratic institutions in Europe and Eurasia, as democratic institutions are a critical to counter Russian malign influence. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you on implementing this new law. Strong democratic, market-based economies serve as bulwarks against the expansion of Russian malign influence in Europe and Eurasia. While I am aware that approximately \$147 million of funding remains in the U.S.-Russia Investment Fund (TUSRIF), I have not been fully briefed on the specifics of how those funds may be used. If confirmed, I commit to working with all stakeholders, including USAID's congressional oversight and appropriations committees, to resolve the impasse over the TUSRIF funds and build resiliency to Russian malign influence in Europe and Eurasia through strong democratic institutions.

*Question 5.* If so, what is your plan to ensure the release of these funds?

Answer. As mentioned above, the objective of the proceeds is to provide assistance for private sector development. If confirmed, I commit to working with all stakeholders, including USAID's congressional oversight and appropriations committees, to resolve the impasse over the TUSRIF funds and build resiliency to Russian malign influence in Europe and Eurasia through strong democratic institutions.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*Question 1.* Mr. Bierman, as you may know, I have introduced legislation with Senator Wicker to authorize the establishment of an enterprise fund in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which lags the farthest behind the rest of Europe when compared to other economies in the Western Balkans. Last year, USAID produced an assessment of my proposal that found an enterprise fund in Bosnia would effectively support U.S. foreign policy objectives there. Have you read the assessment, and do you agree that an enterprise fund in Bosnia would fill a gap in the financing opportunities available to small business in Bosnia?

Answer. Yes, I have been briefed on that assessment and if confirmed, I commit to studying this issue further and consulting with you.

Bosnia clearly faces significant economic challenges and is one of the most fragile countries in the region. The 2016 internal USAID assessment found that an investment fund could effectively support U.S. foreign policy objectives in Bosnia. Continued economic growth assistance from USAID to support economic reforms and improve the enabling environment for Bosnian businesses and entrepreneurs will be critical to the success of such a fund. A Bosnia enterprise fund would benefit from



the larger existing macroeconomic and trade-oriented support provided by the World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other multilateral financial institutions.

*Question 2.* Mr. Bierman, the key to addressing many challenges in the Western Balkans remains EU enlargement and integration. That said, each of these countries still has a considerable distance to travel before they might join the EU. How can the U.S. continue to encourage EU accession in the Western Balkans?

*Answer.* EU accession represents a defining objective for USAID-assisted countries in the Western Balkans. As I mentioned during my nomination hearing, 11 USAID-assisted countries are now members of the EU. This is not only a testimony to USAID's efforts and legacy, but also to the vision and intent of Congress. These 11 countries have increased their U.S. imports from only \$2 billion in 1995 to more than \$10 billion annually in 2015, and as development peers, they have contributed over \$1.4 billion to development in 2014, up from less than \$200 million in 2002. Clearly, the goal of EU accession is not only central to addressing current challenges in the Western Balkans, but is very much in America's economic and national security interest.

USAID programs promote democratic consolidation and economic growth necessary to bolster our partner countries' efforts to progress toward EU accession. Work in Serbia and Macedonia is on the vanguard of this effort, but we will also continue to drive forward reform and address any backsliding in Bosnia and Kosovo.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the EU, and our partners in the region to sharpen the focus of our assistance efforts and to do what we can to accelerate EU accession across the Western Balkans.

*Question 3.* Mr. Bierman, a large proportion of USAID funding goes to Ukraine. I believe the U.S. must continue to resolutely support the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people, including through assistance to the Ukrainian Government, civil society, and other actors that are integral to the success of that country. In particular, the U.S. must encourage political leaders in Ukraine to continue with critical reforms to their judiciary, in part to ensure that the corruption that has plagued prior governments is rooted out. How do you assess Ukraine's anti-corruption efforts up to this point, and if confirmed, will you continue to emphasize the importance of judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts to Ukrainian political leaders?

*Answer.* Corruption is a central problem in Ukraine and across the region, and I appreciate all the efforts this committee has made to tackle corruption around the world.

Anti-corruption progress has been made in targeted areas in Ukraine, including in the successful implementation of Prozorro, a full-service electronic public procurement system which has saved an estimated \$1.27 billion since its launch in February 2015. However, significant challenges remain.

I believe that corruption is a manifestation of governance problems, and as a result, efforts to combat corruption need to be based on efforts to improve democratic governance. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the importance of judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine and across the broader region, including through embedding good governance into our economic growth and social sector programming.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO KENNETH BRAITHWAIRTE 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.* Having had the opportunity to serve in the United States Navy for over 30 years, I have taken part both as a junior officer and again as a senior officer (Rear Admiral) in numerous humanitarian actions on behalf of Our Nation. During the Balkans Crisis, I was awarded the Department of Defense Humanitarian Service Medal for my actions in support of Kosovo Refugees. I was assigned as one of the liaison officers at the temporary resettlement camp at Fort Dix, New Jersey. In this role I interacted directly with the refugees and was able to convey the aspects of democracy and freedoms that we in our country enjoy. I know those that we supported had a favorable impression of the United States and sought to later immigrate to the US. I was later as a Navy Captain (O-6) deployed to the western Sahara in Senegal to work with Senegalese tribes who had limited access to medical

care. I was part of a humanitarian effort directed towards establishing temporary primary care missions in support of US efforts to extend democracies into these regions. This was in alignment with our national effort to ensure these peoples could understand and appreciate the freedoms our country promotes in contrast to the efforts of AL Qaeda and other Islamic Terrorist Groups attempting to influence them. We were successful in that our enemies were unable to solicit or recruit from the regions where we were involved. Finally, also as a Navy Captain, I was deployed to Pakistan in 2005–2006 to take a direct leadership role in Our Nations efforts to respond to the devastating earthquake affecting thousands of Pakistanis on the eve of their winter season. Our efforts were directed to ensure those impacted knew of our compassion but also the manner in which our democratic principles directed our actions. Here again we wanted to ensure that those we interacted with understood and appreciated our freedoms in contrast with those from radical Islamic groups that were also operating in these regions. As the lead for all Strategic Communications, our direct efforts led to a Gallup Poll shift in the perception of US actions among Pakistanis of nearly 50 points, from a low upon arrival of 23 percent favorable to 79 percent favorable upon conclusion of our mission. I am very proud of all my teams direct efforts which in turn led to my second award of the Department of Defense Humanitarian Service Medal.

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

*Answer.* Norway has a strong record on human rights and is a good partner for the United States in promoting human rights around the world. Norway is one of the world's most generous providers of development aid, spending more than one percent of its GDP per year on assistance. A portion of these funds promotes human rights and democracy. Norway is also a strong NATO Ally that is dedicated to upholding the values upon which the Alliance was founded. As with every country, Norway has some incidence of societal problems such as violence against women and children. NGOs have also reported incidents of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant speech and sentiment in Norway. If confirmed, I will encourage Norway to continue protecting human rights at home and abroad. I will also regularly engage with representatives from government, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations to stress the importance of tolerance and diversity and to share best practices and new ideas for promoting human rights.

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

*Answer.* Human rights are widely respected in Norway and its legal framework for protecting human rights meets international standards, so any obstacles to addressing human rights issues must be viewed in this context. Civil society and democratic institutions are both strong in Norway. To the extent that Norway exhibits human rights problems, they are largely societal and are adequately addressed by the country's judicial system, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations. If confirmed, I will work with those institutions and organizations to exchange experiences and best practices to further our shared values.

*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 Norway?

*Answer.* Yes, I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Norway.

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

*Answer.* Norway has a strong human rights record and generally independent and impartial judiciary. There are no reports of political prisoners or detainees, or politically motivated prosecutions, in the country. If confirmed, I will call out any future cases of this kind if they occur, and work with the Norwegian Government to encourage their resolution in accordance with Norwegian and international law and commitments.

*Question 6.* If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that Embassy Oslo staff have access to appropriate training on Leahy Law requirements. I will also ensure Embassy Oslo thoroughly vets individuals and units it nominates to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities.

*Question 7.* Will you engage with the people of Norway on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance part of Embassy Oslo's regular public outreach. I believe these are excellent areas for people-to-people engagements where our citizens can exchange views, experiences and best practices. Given Norway's excellent record on these issues, I will also look for opportunities where we can jointly cooperate to provide expertise to third countries.

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

Answer. I appreciate the importance of fostering diverse and inclusive teams. Through my military career and experience in business, I have seen the value of diversity in leadership positions. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, if confirmed I will develop an inclusive work environment at Embassy Oslo that encourages different perspectives.

*Question 9.* What steps will you take to ensure that supervisors at the Embassy foster an environment that is diverse and inclusive, including in terms of gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics?

Answer. I will ensure that all supervisors receive regular formal training and guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion. In addition to leading by example, I will monitor the supervisors at the Embassy to ensure they are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive.

*Question 10.* Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

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

*Question 11.* 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 12.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Norway?

Answer. No.

*Question 13.* Have there been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regards to my ethics obligations.

*Question 14.* Russia Sanctions: Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Norway for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. Although Norway is not a member of the EU, it joined the United States and the EU in imposing economic sanctions on Russia in 2014 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. It also suspended military-to-military cooperation with Russia. If confirmed, I will continue to build support within Norway for stronger sanctions on Russia by communicating the importance of Russia sanctions to leaders across the Norwegian Government, and working with Norway to find ways to minimize the impact of sanctions on the Norwegian economy.

*Question 15.* Russian Malign Influence: How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Norwegian institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Norwegian counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia has undertaken a whole-of-government campaign aimed at undermining democratic and free-market processes and core Western institutions. In Norway's September 11 parliamentary elections, local authorities made a last-minute decision to count all ballots by hand after security experts raised the possibility of hacking attacks against the computerized ballot scanning system used in some localities. Norway is more resilient to Russian misinformation due to their extremely high rate of news readership—79 percent of the population ages 9–79 reads a physical or online newspaper daily. If confirmed, I will stand firmly with Norway and the rest of our NATO Allies in countering Russia's malign influence. I will encourage Norway to join us in cooperating with our NATO Allies to counter Russia's malign influence through our Centers of Excellence. I will work with the government and civil society to raise awareness of this issue and to increase institutional and public resiliency to malign influence campaigns. I will also encourage our Norwegian counterparts to share their expertise with our other partners and focus on continuing to build their own resilience and the resilience of others to such threats.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CARLOS TRUJILLO 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. Human rights and democracy are two areas that are extremely important to me. One area of human rights work I have focused on is combatting human trafficking. As an elected representative in the state of Florida, in 2015, I sponsored an appropriations act that provided funding for the creation of 20 to 30 beds for child victims of human trafficking. The act was passed and signed into law during the 2015 Florida Legislative Session. The act created additional separate housing for child victims of human trafficking.

*Question 2.* What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

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

Answer. I am committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, and to upholding equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will remain committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive team in the U.S. Permanent Mission to the Organization of American States, and make this a top priority throughout my tenure. I firmly believe, as articulated by the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of State, that U.S. diplomacy is greatly served and strengthened by a Department of State that reflects America and the richness in diversity that characterizes our great country. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining a robust and collaborative dialogue with Congress in advancing this important shared objective.

*Question 3.* Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. There have been no material changes that would bear on my ethics obligations. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regards to my ethics obligations.

*Question 4.* 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 5.* 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.

*OAS Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013*

*Question 6.* What is your assessment of the State Department's efforts to advance the policy directives included in the OAS Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013 (P.L. 113-41), specifically the provisions on results-based budgeting, the streamlining of mandates, transparent and merit-based personnel practices, and the revision of member quotas related to the organization's budget?

- If confirmed, do you commit to taking all necessary steps to advance the policy directives in P.L. 113-41?
- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with routine briefings on your efforts to advance the policy directives in P.L. 113-41?

*Answer.* I believe it is critical that we continue to press for OAS reform consistent with the "OAS Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013" (P.L. 113-41) to build a stronger, more effective institution and help it reach its full potential.

I understand the U.S. Permanent Mission has made significant strides, working with OAS leadership and other member states, to put the OAS on a firmer financial footing and restore its critical leadership role in the region. It remains vital, however, that we continue to press for additional steps to build on the progress achieved to date and increase the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of the organization. If confirmed, I will remain committed to this critical objective.

Our focus should be to strengthen the core competencies of the institution as outlined in the "OAS Revitalization and Reform Act" (P.L. 113-41), and also focus on further assessing and pressing on ways to strengthen budgetary and management reforms, reducing mandates, and bolster oversight, transparency and accountability mechanisms on the allocation and use of scarce resources to ensure they are utilized effectively in support the organization's most vital functions.

It is also important this be a shared priority for each and every member state as it is in our core collective interest to ensure that a strong OAS remains focused on its core pillars and the purposes and principles upon which it was founded and clear of purpose. We must all consider the value each of our countries gets out of the organization and share the burden of ensuring the OAS' long-term financial sustainability in a way that reflects that.

OAS member states passed a resolution at the 2017 General Assembly in Cancun, Mexico, mandating a reduction of the U.S. contribution to below 50 percent. If confirmed, I will work for a more equitable distribution of quota assessments among member states to ensure that each of them has the necessary fiscal buy-in to guarantee the organization's financial sustainability.

If confirmed, I will also remain committed to briefing this committee on our efforts and also maintaining collaborative engagement to advance this important and shared objective.

*Question 7.* In your discussion with Senator Ben Cardin, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you spoke in support of taking steps to expand opportunities for engagement by Members of Congress at the OAS. If confirmed, do you commit to taking steps to strengthen the role of elected national legislators at the OAS?

- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to strengthen the role of elected national legislators at the OAS?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will look forward to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in advancing this important objective. I believe the OAS can play an important role in bolstering dialogue and cooperation between the region's legislatures. This kind of initiative can have enormous value, in particular in helping strengthen democratic institutions and advancing our region's shared commitment to democracy and to the separation of powers, consistent with the principles articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Strengthening engagement between the U.S. Congress and regional counterparts can also greatly enhance efforts to work jointly in promoting and advancing shared policy goals, values and objectives to the benefit of the citizens of the Americas. I understand the OAS Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy is working to enhance the role of the OAS in this regard and has organized various gatherings of regional legislators. I welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with this committee on ways to build on the OAS' achievements to date and bolster its efforts in this important area.

*Question 8.* What steps will you take to ensure the continued independence of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)?

- What steps will you take to ensure that the OAS IACHR has sufficient resources to successfully advance its mission to defend human rights in the hemisphere, specifically at a point in time when the Trump administration is proposing drastic cuts to the U.S. foreign assistance budget?
- The OAS IACHR has taken incipient steps to review and investigate the July 2012 death of Cuban political activist Oswaldo Paya. If confirmed, do you commit to working with the IACHR to ensure a thorough investigation of Mr. Paya's death?
- In the aftermath of the September 2014 forced disappearance of 43 students in Iguala in the State of Guerrero in Mexico, the OAS IACHR established an Independent Group of International Experts (GIEI) to review the official investigation of the incident. What is your assessment of the GIEI's work?
- Following completion of the GIEI's mandate, the Government of Mexico agreed to establish a follow on mechanism with the OAS-IACHR to implement the GIEI's recommendations. If confirmed, do you commit to working with the OAS Secretariat, the IACHR, and the Government of Mexico to ensure successful implementation of the GIEI's recommendations for the investigation into the September 2014 incident in Iguala, Mexico?
- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to ensure the implementation of the GIEI and the success of the OAS follow on mechanism?

Answer. The United States has great respect for the role the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) plays in addressing human rights in the hemisphere, including delicate human rights issues in the United States, and is its biggest supporter, both politically and financially. The Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights look at some of the most delicate human rights issues in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Ecuador. In some countries, especially those with broken legal systems, it is the only avenue to address human rights violations. As an autonomous organ designed to promote and protect human rights in the Americas, the IACHR is a useful tool for holding states like Venezuela and Cuba accountable. Through our political and financial support, the United States supports the independent work of the Commission without infringing upon its direct engagement with a member state.

Recognizing the vital role the Commission and Court play in protecting and promoting human rights in the hemisphere and the need for both organs to have full independence in exercising their authorities, OAS member states decided at the 2017 General Assembly to increase the regular budgets of both institutions by a third over the next three years (2018–2020). If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for member states to commit sufficient resources to the Commission through the OAS Regular Fund as well as contribute voluntary funds so that the IACHR has a diverse and sustainable funding base.

I believe it is imperative that human rights defenders the world over, including the IACHR, remain engaged in reviewing and investigating the death of Cuban political dissident Oswaldo Paya, and that the Cuban Government be held accountable and responsible for its egregious human rights violations and systematic repression of the fundamental rights of the people of Cuba. If confirmed, I will remain committed to advocating for and defending the right of the Cuban people to democracy and respect for human rights, consistent with the principles articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and ensuring that the IACHR and the inter-American human rights system remain fully engaged in addressing the gross and consistent violation of human rights of the people of Cuba under the current dictatorship.

The September 2014 disappearance of the students in Iguala is a tragedy, and the United States actively encourages Mexican authorities to continue to thoroughly investigate and prosecute those responsible.

I understand the Department has met with some of the Iguala victims' families as well as with all of the members of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts who worked under the auspices of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to assist the Government of Mexico with its investigation.

I also understand the Department is actively following the implementation of the follow-up mechanism, agreed to by the Mexican Government, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and families of the victims. This mechanism, funded by Mexico, is intended to follow up on the experts' recommendations and ensuring protective measures for the victims and their families will remain in place. The Government of Mexico recently agreed to a one-year extension of the follow-up mechanism and the next visit of the mechanism is expected to take place February 2018. Mexico's Attorney General's Office remains in regular touch with the victims' fami-

lies. Additionally, Mexican President Pena Nieto signed a new law on forced disappearances November 16.

If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining an open dialogue with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the implementation of the GIEI and the OAS follow-on mechanism.

Also, if confirmed, I will remain firmly committed to work with like-minded member states to push back against those states that seek to undermine the IACHR and work to preserve its critical role in the promotion and defense of human rights in our region.

#### *Honduras*

*Question 9.* What is your assessment of the OAS Support Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH)?

- If confirmed, do you commit to working with the OAS Secretariat and the Government of Honduras to ensure that the MACCIH remains independent in its work and has all of the necessary resources needed to combat corruption and impunity in Honduras?
- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to ensure the success of the MACCIH?
- The OAS currently has an election observation mission (EOM) in Honduras. What is your assessment of the OAS EOM in Honduras?
- The OAS EOM in Honduras has expressed concerns about delays in the tabulation process for the Honduran presidential election. Do you agree with these concerns?

Answer. The OAS Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) represents a wide-ranging approach to reforming Honduras' anti-corruption institutions, from the Prosecutors' Offices to customs to electoral financing, and aims to drive broad reforms to the Honduran judicial system. MACCIH's most notable success to date is helping draft and pass electoral finance reform legislation through the Honduran Congress in time to impact the 2017 presidential elections. The United States has contributed \$8 million to establish a secure foundation for advancing the work of MACCIH. The mission will serve an important role in a comprehensive, long-term effort to tackle corruption networks and improve the rule of law in Honduras.

It is imperative that we continue to urge progress on anti-corruption efforts with the Honduran Government in collaboration with its partners and other OAS member and observer states, to ensure MACCIH has the resources and independence necessary to achieve its mission.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the OAS to ensure MACCIH has the capacity and support to achieve its objectives and is implemented effectively and I will keep members of Congress apprised of our efforts.

OAS electoral observation missions (EOMS) fulfill a critical function in our efforts to strengthen democratic institutions in the hemisphere. OAS EOMS enjoy a long-standing reputation for impartiality and technical competence, respected worldwide for stringent standards in accordance with the UN "Principles for International Election Observation." It is imperative that all stakeholders in the Honduran elections cooperate fully with international observers—including the Organization of American States and the European Union—and that both the OAS and EU be allowed to carry out their critical role in ensuring an open and transparent process that enables public confidence and trust in the results of these elections.

*Question 10.* The OAS maintains a Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP) in Colombia that supports the implementation of Colombia's historic 2016 peace accord. If confirmed, do you commit to working to ensure that the MAPP has all of the necessary resources that it needs to help advance the consolidation of peace in Colombia?

- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to support the work of the MAPP?

Answer. Since 2006, the United States has committed over \$10 million in contributions to the MAPP. The work of the OAS in Colombia remains vitally important given that the peace process is now in its implementation stage, with a support role being played by a UN Special Political Mission. Funding assistance—including through the OAS—will help Colombia secure post-conflict areas, address the needs of conflict victims, and promote licit rural economic opportunity to address the conflict's underlying drivers and build on the success of our prior assistance. Understanding that financing for the MAPP comes primarily from voluntary contributions, if confirmed, I will work to advocate for the necessary political and financial support

MAPP requires from the international community in order to enable it to continue its critical work and I will keep Congress apprised of my efforts.

*Venezuela*

*Question 11.* While OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro has made tremendous efforts to address Venezuela's current political, economic, and humanitarian crisis, OAS member states have not been able to achieve consensus about the current tragedy in Venezuela. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to forge greater hemispheric consensus regarding the situation in Venezuela?

- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to advance a political resolution of the current crisis in Venezuela?
- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to address the current economic crisis in Venezuela?
- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to address the current humanitarian crisis in Venezuela?

*Answer.* With strong leadership from Secretary General Luis Almagro and a majority of like-minded member states, including the United States, the OAS has played a crucial role over the last 18 months in drawing increased international attention to the dire situation in Venezuela. After a series of high-profile Permanent Council sessions and declarations, Resolution 1078 of April 3 established that a rupture in Venezuela's democratic order had occurred, and set the stage for the region's foreign ministers to address the crisis.

Although the OAS General Assembly in Cancun was unable to approve a resolution on Venezuela, the 20 votes in favor of action to address the crisis represented a significant statement from leaders representing over 90 percent of the population of our region. Since then, governments in the Lima Group built on the OAS' work to ramp up international pressure still further.

Based upon the regional consensus originally developed within the OAS, the sanctions we and other partners have imposed on individuals and entities linked to the Maduro regime's repression and corruption have garnered strong support. It is critical that we continue to speak as a region—including through the OAS—regarding our concerns about the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and maintain pressure on the Maduro regime for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I will continue to carry out our concerted efforts to stand up for democracy and human rights in our region, guided by the Inter-American Democratic Charter, that are central to the work of the OAS in securing for our citizens a hemisphere of liberty and prosperity. Our shared goal continues to be to promote the return to full respect for the rule of law and the full respect for political expression and participation in Venezuela, consistent with the terms of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to which Venezuela remains a signatory.

As President Trump has stated, a "stable and peaceful Venezuela is in the best interest of the entire hemisphere, and America stands with all the people in our great hemisphere yearning to be free." The United States wants to see a peaceful, prosperous Venezuela that respects the rule of law and basic human rights like the freedoms of political expression and public assembly. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the OAS continues to have a vital role to play in helping Venezuela find a path back to peace and prosperity.

*Migration*

*Question 12.* As a Florida state legislator, you introduced legislation that would have increased criminal penalties for unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. What was the intent of such legislation?

*Answer.* Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the intent of this legislation. The intent of the bill was to codify certain sections of the federal illegal reentry statute into state law. Mainly, to increase criminal penalties for individuals who had previously exhausted all due process, were forcefully removed from the United States, illegally reenter and are convicted of a new felony.

*Question 13.* The Western Hemisphere current faces myriad migration-related challenges in the hemisphere—including migrants and refugees fleeing violence in Central America, the growing refugee crisis emanating from Venezuela, and the challenges of statelessness facing individuals of Haitian ancestry in the Dominican Republic. If confirmed, will you advocate that OAS member states impose criminal penalties on individuals engaged in irregular migration in the region or will you work to ensure sufficient humanitarian protections for vulnerable migrants in accordance with international standards?



Answer. The OAS serves as a useful forum for generating attention on high-level cross-border and extra-continental migration issues which adversely impact the United States. If confirmed, I will continue to seek constructive engagement with OAS member states to address regional migration issues as well as counter unhelpful interventions by some OAS member states that view migration as way to divide the United States from the rest of the region.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question .* Peru will host the 8th Summit of the Americas in 2018. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States, you will play an important role in the coordination of the Summit. As Cuba doesn't meet the norms of the OAS Charter, do you believe that Cuba should participate at the Summit?

Answer. By precedent, the host of the Summit of the Americas has exercised its prerogative to invite countries at its own discretion. In 2015, Panama invited Cuba to participate, for the first time, in the Summit of the Americas held in Panama City.

Peru, as host of the next Summit, has indicated it plans to invite all governments of the Americas to the 2018 Summit in Lima, Peru, to be held April 13-14. It has chosen "Democratic Governance against Corruption" as the theme for the Summit. Cuba has not made any public statements as to whether or not it will participate in the Summit. If confirmed, I will express strong U.S. concern over Cuba's invitation with the Government of Peru.

I believe the Summit can allow the United States and its like-minded partners to call on Cuba to implement reforms consistent with the highest values of our hemisphere, such as our support for democracy and respect for human rights. As such, if confirmed, I will work with the White House and the State Department to ensure that, if Cuba is invited and decides to attend, it is held to the same standards as all participants in the Summit, and its failures in these areas are raised.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO LEE MCCLENNY 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 Charge d'Affaires of our Embassy in Caracas since July 2014, I led our government's efforts on the ground to defend human rights and democracy from the depredations of the corrupt and increasingly dictatorial Maduro regime. Using USAID and State Department democracy and governance and public diplomacy programs, we supported Venezuelan civil society and NGOs focused on civil rights, human rights, and press freedom through training, networking, and professionalization activities. We supported more than 20 human rights organizations. Embassy Caracas publicly and clearly backed civil society organizations working for equality of opportunity for marginalized Venezuelans, including for persons with disabilities and the LGBTI community.

We have focused especially on fair elections to ensure Venezuelans have a voice in their government. We provided support to NGOs conducting election observation activities, and Embassy personnel monitored nationwide elections for the National Assembly and governorships to assess the degree of freeness and fairness of the registration, tabulation, and actual voting procedures. We have coordinated with the international community to speak with a unified voice on the importance of free and fair elections and support to democratic actors.

We have also supported and engaged directly with both leadership and the rank-and-file of Venezuela's democratic opposition parties, as well as the opposition umbrella organization, MUD. This activity intensified as MUD officials increasingly faced arbitrary arrest and detention of its members. We have repeatedly, and publicly, demonstrated our support for the democratically- and legitimately-elected National Assembly, in the face of Maduro regime efforts to undercut its constitutional role, authorities, and prerogatives. Simultaneously, we have strictly rejected overtures by, and refused contact with, the illegitimate and unconstitutional Constituent Assembly, created by the Maduro regime solely to supplant the duly elected, opposition-controlled National Assembly.

Many of these efforts have amounted, unfortunately, to a rear-guard action. In the face of the increasingly flagrant efforts of the Maduro regime to undermine the few remaining Venezuelan institutions not compliant to its wishes, Embassy Caracas' strong, public stance across the spectrum of human rights and democracy and governance issues marked it as a beacon for many Venezuelans. Numerous of my Venezuelan contacts assessed that the U.S. mission's leadership helped create critically important breathing room, and provided a vital measure of encouragement and inspiration for those many Venezuelans fighting to defend and preserve democracy in their nation.

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

*Answer.* Corruption is the primary human rights issue in Paraguay and a clear drag on both social and economic development. If confirmed, I will strengthen the mandate of the Embassy's newly established Anti-Corruption and Transparency Working Group, which integrates anti-corruption, anti-impunity, and transparency efforts into nearly every Mission activity from public diplomacy to our interactions with the Government, political contacts, and the private sector. We must help Paraguay strengthen its public institutions and improve governance as a critical first step in reducing corruption and impunity.

Child labor is pervasive, particularly for domestic labor and in the agriculture sector. The *criadazgo* system of using children from impoverished families to work as domestic laborers in richer households is prevalent and culturally accepted. No law now exists explicitly outlawing the practice, though a draft law has circulated unsuccessfully for some time. Only a strong legal framework coupled with government enforcement will change the situation, albeit slowly. If confirmed, I intend to maintain pressure on the Paraguayan legislature to make needed legal modifications, and I will urge the executive branch to enforce those laws and provide social support for victims. In the agricultural sector, the U.S. Embassy and Department of Labor have a dynamic working relationship with the Paraguayan Ministry of Labor to eliminate child- and forced-labor programs in the agricultural sector, including a \$6 million project to prevent child labor in the sugar industry. If confirmed, I will reinforce and seek to augment these efforts. Our priority must be to help Paraguay protect its most valuable national asset—its youth.

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

*Answer.* Lack of enforcement of the rule of law, facilitated by a climate of impunity and a dysfunctional and often corrupt judiciary, is the principal obstacle for addressing nearly every human rights issue in Paraguay, including corruption and child labor. Critical to holding government authorities accountable for enforcing the law fairly and justly is a capable and engaged civil society, which is still nascent. Paraguay has not had a strong tradition of effectively incorporating civil society voices, opinions, and ideas into public policy and governance discussions. As such, one of the biggest challenges is empowering civil society organizations to participate in policy-making and implementation while encouraging government agencies to recognize them as a resource. The U.S. Government has an important role to play in training, supporting, and highlighting the important dividends that a strong civil society, as we have in the United States, could provide to the Paraguayan public.

*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 Paraguay?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I am committed to sustaining engagement with a broad spectrum of society among the Paraguayan public, including human rights activists, civil society, religious groups, and the organizations that represent them.

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

*Answer.* While there are no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Paraguay, my Embassy team and I will actively engage with the Government of Paraguay should such issues arise. The Embassy team is closely following reports that public employees have filed complaints with a non-government public employee association for being harassed, dismissed, or transferred for their stance on the upcoming presidential primary. We strongly support the principle of democratic transition of power

through free, fair, and credible elections. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that all relevant stakeholders in this electoral cycle are able to play a supportive and collaborative role on the ground.

*Question 6.* 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. Vetting of potential recipients of U.S. security assistance is vital in maintaining integrity of our assistance programs. Embassy Asuncion already has in place a robust and active Leahy vetting program, processing more than 900 requests per year. If confirmed, I will continue Post's prioritization of Leahy vetting and seek ways to further strengthen the program. If there is credible information implicating security force units or members in gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training, and will assist their respective governments in taking effective measures to bring them to justice.

*Question 7.* Will you engage with Paraguay on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with the Paraguayan authorities on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of our bilateral mission.

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

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

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team in the U.S. Mission in Paraguay. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Mission in Paraguay continually strives to promote equal opportunity for our officers, including women and those from historically marginalized groups. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all supervisors have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and ensure they are helping to foster a work environment that is diverse and inclusive.

*Question 9.* 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 10.* 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 11.* Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Paraguay?

Answer. No.

*Question 12.* If confirmed, do you commit to taking all necessary steps to ensure that justice is upheld for the June 2015 murder of U.S. citizen Alex Villamayor?

Answer. Since 2015, the U.S. Embassy in Asuncion has repeatedly urged the Government of Paraguay to do everything in its power to guarantee an efficient and transparent judicial process, consistent with Paraguay's laws and procedures, and I will continue these efforts.

*Question 13.* If confirmed, do you commit to offering all necessary technical assistance to the relevant Paraguayan authorities to ensure that there has been a comprehensive investigation into Alex Villamayor's death and that there is an expeditious trial?

Answer. The United States and Paraguay enjoy strong cooperation in law enforcement and security, and in the past the U.S. Government has provided technical assistance and training for judges, prosecutors, and police. However, the judicial system continues to be highly politicized, and despite improving levels of transparency, corruption and impunity persist. If confirmed, I will engage with the Paraguayan

authorities to offer all relevant technical assistance that might help achieve a thorough, impartial investigation and fair trial in this case.

*Question 14.* If confirmed, do you commit to meet with the Alex Villamayor's family members?

Answer. Yes.

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