

**The Honorable Erin Elizabeth McKee  
OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF  
CAREER-MINISTER, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES  
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia for the United States Agency for International Development.

I would like to thank the President for his trust in me, and I am deeply grateful for the honor of being nominated to serve in a position at USAID, an Agency I dedicated much of my career to, at a moment when its leadership and development expertise are so urgently needed in Europe and Eurasia. I am grateful to the members of the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to advance our nation's interests in this critical region of the world.

I would like to thank my family for their steadfast support, particularly my husband Sean and my daughter Caitlin. Their unconditional love and encouragement have been my rock throughout my public service career—from Moscow to Lima—from Baghdad to Jakarta, they have stood by my side and shared in the sacrifice and adventures of nearly 30 years in the Foreign Service. I could have not made this journey without them, and for that I am truly grateful.

Since 1995, I have had the tremendous opportunity to represent the United States in nine overseas assignments, as well as here in Washington, D.C., with the U.S. Agency for International Development, and currently as U.S. Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. It has been my privilege to serve the American people and advance our country's interests, promote our values and principles, and offer host-country nations a model for hope, security, and prosperity across a variety of diverse contexts.

If confirmed, I will have the distinct honor and responsibility to lead the USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia at a time when the stakes are as high as we have seen since USAID first opened its doors in the region's newly independent nations thirty years ago.

Although many of USAID's partners in Europe and Eurasia have achieved remarkable democratic and economic progress, the region's development trajectory is under increasing threat. The Kremlin's malign influence across the region has expanded and intensified in recent years, and with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we are facing a grave and dangerous moment in the region.

The People's Republic of China is also increasingly leveraging its economic might to capture economies, undermine sovereign decision-making, and weaken democratic norms.

While the people of the region work to secure prosperity, a stronger voice in government, and independence from foreign manipulation, powerful, anti-democratic elites, both domestic and foreign, seek to bend the region toward a future of authoritarian rule and pervasive corruption.

USAID is a critical counterweight to the predatory partnerships peddled by authoritarian regimes. USAID's work – work that reflects American quality, integrity, and commitment -- helps host country partners secure mutually beneficial investments, connectivity, peace, security, and development impact, with results that will be sustained and endure. And critically, USAID inspires hope among the people of the region that the democratic dividend - good governance and a fair economic playing field - are attainable.

Let me also note that while the region's challenges are great, so too are the opportunities. From democratic bright spots, such as Moldova and Armenia, to the increasingly perilous conditions in Belarus and the on-going political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region's people continue to stand up for transparent, accountable government, human rights, and human dignity -- at times, even at great risk to their own personal safety. Their efforts lay the foundation for the region's democratic future. USAID can and must do its part to safeguard their hard-fought gains, support their courageous efforts, and encourage further progress.

Whether we are confronting the COVID-19 pandemic, corruption, economic or social inequality, climate change, threats to energy security, an outwardly aggressive Russia, an increasingly assertive China, or cyber threats, the United States is most effective when we partner with our allies and support those striving every day in their countries to build a democratic, prosperous future.

If confirmed, I will work closely with our allies and partners to promote peace and security, increase economic opportunity, and advance respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, building enduring partnership with our host countries in the process.

Thank you for this invitation to appear before you, I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.