

## NOMINATIONS

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2021 (p.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:32 p.m., in Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeanne Shaheen presiding.

Present: Senators Shaheen [presiding], Menendez, Cardin, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Van Hollen, Johnson, Romney, and Young.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senator SHAHEEN. Good afternoon, everyone. We are looking for Senator Markey, but we are going to go ahead and begin before he gets here. He is going to do introduction of Vicki Kennedy today.

At this point, the hearing of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs will come to order and I would like to recognize the ranking member, Ron Johnson, who is also here.

We are here today to consider nominations for four important positions representing the United States in several partner countries in Europe: Mr. Jeffrey Hovenier to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Michael Murphy to be Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon—I am sorry for massacring your last name—to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra, and Mrs. Victoria Reggie Kennedy to be Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

Let me begin by congratulating each of you on your nomination and thank you for agreeing to take on the commitments of being an Ambassador of the United States, should you be confirmed.

Let me also welcome your relatives who are here. I always think of hearings for ambassadorial candidates as kind of like a wedding. Everybody is happy when they are here.

I wanted to take a moment also today to celebrate the diversity of our nominees appointed by this administration.

I have participated in a number of nomination hearings this year, and I have been struck by the diversity of the appointments which reflects the diversity of our country. Of the 21 nominees who have been confirmed by the Senate, 52 percent are women, over half of the State Department nominees are people of color, and one in three nominees is either an immigrant or a child of immigrants. You all are in very good company.

The nominees today are not only well qualified, but you offer a unique perspective that will serve to strengthen our ability to advance U.S. policy interests overseas.

I have been heartened to hear the stories of nominees who were born outside of the United States or whose parents immigrated to America in hopes of providing a bright future for their children.

Your experiences not only enrich America, they also advance America's interests overseas as a living testament to America's values in action. Thank you all for agreeing to stand as candidates for these positions.

I think we will go ahead and begin opening statements and take a break if Senator Markey is able to come here so he can do the introduction.

I also want to recognize former Senator Chris Dodd, who is hiding in the audience. Thank you very much, Senator Dodd, for being here. It is nice to see you, although I almost did not recognize you. But it is great to have you here.

I want to also point out that we are in the middle of votes, and so at some point Senator Johnson and I will take our leave to go vote and we will hand the gavel to each other during that time.

Again, thank you for agreeing to be considered for these posts.

For more than two decades, Kosovo has demonstrated the importance of the NATO Alliance. The U.S. and Kosovo's strong transatlantic and regional security cooperation is supported by the NATO-led Kosovo force, which has maintained peace and security in the country for more than 20 years.

In the coming years, Kosovo must work with Serbia to reach a final comprehensive agreement to normalize relations. This is paramount to a more stable region.

Unfortunately, corruption remains a problem in Kosovo and, as a committed ally, the U.S. should push Kosovo to address the underlying causes of corruption. Mr. Hovenier's distinguished career in the Foreign Service has prepared him for the geopolitics of the Balkans, I am sure.

He currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ankara, Turkey, and has previously served in Berlin, Lima, Athens, and Vienna, to name a few places. I am sure that your deep diplomatic experience will serve you well in Kosovo.

I am going to do introductions for the other nominees and then we will ask you to give your opening statement.

Next, we have Michael Murphy, who is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with a distinguished history with the department. He has been nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Like Kosovo, Bosnia has come a long way since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The Dayton Agreement continues to provide the framework for governance in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and I was glad to see earlier this year the appointment of a new High Representative to oversee civil aspects of the agreement.

If confirmed, I hope that a priority of yours will be addressing unemployment, particularly among the young people in the country. While down compared to recent years, the youth unemployment rate in Bosnia is at an abysmal 34 percent.

Bosnia and Herzegovina must continue to work with the U.S. and the international community to provide economic opportunities for its young people and prevent creeping malign foreign influence from taking advantage of the economic situation.

Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon, we welcome you back to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. You previously served as Ambassador to Uruguay and we welcome your nomination to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra.

Ambassador Reynoso, you have undoubtedly followed Spain's generous efforts in supporting the evacuation of vulnerable and at-risk Afghans through the use of two military bases.

Spain is a long-standing strong ally of the United States, and we hope your role will strengthen these bilateral ties. As a NATO ally, we are, of course, grateful for all of Spain's security contributions.

But we continue to urge the country to increase its defense spending to support NATO's collective efforts in addressing shared challenges. Although the war in Afghanistan has now ended, NATO must divert its attention to confront new pressing challenges, and we welcome Spain's partnership to help NATO rise to this challenge.

Ms. Reynoso, I, additionally, hope that your current role as First Lady Jill Biden's chief of staff and previous role as co-chair of the White House Gender Policy Council will help you ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment remains a concern across U.S. foreign policy.

I am now going to turn it over to Senator Markey to introduce Victoria Kennedy, and then I will ask Senator Johnson if he will give his opening statement.

Senator Markey?

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

And it is my pleasure to introduce my friend, Victoria Reggie Kennedy, as the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Austria. I would like to welcome her son, Curran, who is here with us today.

I also understand that Vicki's daughter, Caroline, and her husband, Alex, as well as Vicki's mother, Doris, are all watching on television today, and we know Vicki's late father, Judge Edwin Reggie, would be so proud of her.

Vicki is a public servant at heart, which is how she has fused her intellect with her desire to serve. She is an advocate for art education, has a track record of working on initiatives that empower women and girls to promote a more inclusive society.

While her roots are in Louisiana, where she was born, raised, and educated, Vicki has become a very valuable member of our community in Massachusetts. She is a member of the board of directors of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and serves on the board of the New England Council.

Her legal and business experience make her perfectly poised to represent the United States in Austria, one of the top 10 fastest growing U.S. trade partners and foreign direct investors as of 2019.

From 2015 to 2020, direct foreign investment in the United States has grown by more than 40 percent, sustaining an estimated 34,000 jobs in our communities.

The modern U.S.-Austria relationship forged in the aftermath of World War Two is built on a commitment to our shared values of democracy, rule of law, and the protection of human rights.

These are values that Vicki Kennedy understands and promotes as the president of the board and co-founder of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization headquartered in Boston that educates the public about the unique role of the United States Senate in our system of government, established in honor of her late husband and our former colleague, Ted.

The Kennedy Institute has won both domestic and international awards for its innovative and interactive design and approach to encouraging participatory democracy, invigorating civil discourse, and inspiring the next generation of citizens and leaders to engage in the civic life of their communities.

Vicki's commitment to public service, good governance, and civic engagement will serve her well as she represents the United States and Austria at a time when our cooperation with the European Union is vital as we grapple with the mutual challenges of the pandemic, rising authoritarianism and nationalism, and the climate crisis.

Vienna is also home to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, both of which are key to President Biden's commitment to reinvigorate U.S. global leadership with a focus on diplomacy and rebuilding alliances.

Vicki's political skill will make her an important asset to the President's commitment to build back a better foreign policy after a period of tumults unique in our history.

And if I may quote my longtime delegation partner and Vicki's beloved husband, Ted, this is what he said: "Together, we have known success and seen setbacks, victory and defeat. But we have never lost our belief that we are called to a better country in a newer world."

Vicki has spent her life working for a better country. I have no doubt that Vicki will bring all of her skills to support this administration. Congratulations on your nomination. I look forward to more years of your dedicated service to our great nation, and I recommend with no conditions that this committee give her a unanimous vote of support to take on this very important position.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Senator Markey.

I will now turn to Senator Johnson for his opening statement before asking each of our nominees to give their statements.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Madam Chair. In the interests of time, I will just ask that my prepared opening statement be entered in the record and, really, just wanted to welcome the nominees and their families.

Thank you for your past service. All of you, nominees and family members, I think you all realize, particularly those who have already served in similar capacities, this is a commitment. This is an act of service and sacrifice on the part of the entire family, and we truly appreciate it.

I do want to say thank you to those that took the time to meet with me. I am always struck, not only just today but in previous meetings with the ambassador nominees, how they generally express what an honor it is to represent the United States to the chosen country.

It is just true. I think we all recognize what a unique nation America is, and in discussions, whether it is with Kosovo or Bosnia and Herzegovina, these are nations that are struggling with democracy, and the advantage of representing the United States, as we discussed, is that they generally recognize America as wanting to be helpful. We are not there seeking some advantage. We are not there trying to control things. We just want what is best for the people of those countries. And so that makes it a pretty unique experience being U.S. ambassador to any nation.

And I think my only other comment—we had these in our meetings as well—is we do rely on ambassadors and members of the embassies to communicate with members here so that we can be helpful.

I think we need to be mindful as members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that what we say can have an impact passing resolutions, but we need the ambassadors and members of the embassy to let us know how we can be helpful.

In my previous life, I managed sales individuals, and I would always impress upon them, yes, it is your responsibility to represent the company to the customer.

It is your responsibility to represent America to your country but it is also important that you represent your country that you are ambassador to back to us. We need to have the expertise that you are going to develop as our ambassadors to these nations.

Again, I sincerely thank you for your past service. Thank you for your willingness to serve and I look forward to your testimony.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson.

We will now ask each of our nominees to give their opening statements. We are going to ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes but your full statements will be included for the record, without objection.

And we will begin with you, Mr. Hovenier.

**STATEMENT OF MR. JEFFREY M. HOVENIER OF WASHINGTON,  
A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE,  
CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AM-  
BASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF  
KOSOVO**

Mr. HOVENIER. Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo.

I am humbled by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary of State have placed in me, and I hope to earn your trust as well. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and the Congress to advance the United States interests and priorities in and with Kosovo.

Thank you for this opportunity to recognize my wife, Laura Hovenier, who is here with me today and to thank her for her love, counsel, support, and patience. She and our four children—Helen Sabin, Peter Hovenier, Megan Atkin, and Julia Hovenier—have made significant sacrifices in this rewarding but challenging life we have shared as a Foreign Service family.

If confirmed, I would be particularly honored to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, a country that emerged from the horrors of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and the ethnic cleansing of the Milosevic regime.

The United States played an essential role, together with our European partners, to protect the people of Kosovo and support them in their effort to establish a multi-ethnic democratic country.

I had the good fortune to participate in these efforts in various capacities, including as a member of the U.N. team led by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari that developed the “Ahtisaari plan” and paved the way for Kosovo’s independence.

The people of Kosovo have never forgotten America’s role and steadfast support over the last 22 years, and as a result, Kosovo is one of the most pro-American countries in the world and a close partner. Following democratic elections in February, a new government has taken office with a decisive mandate, and the U.S.-Kosovo relationship remains positive and productive.

I want to particularly acknowledge the early and generous response of the people in the Government of Kosovo in hosting evacuees from Afghanistan. The Government of Kosovo agreed to temporarily host up to 2,000 at-risk Afghans, many of whom served the U.S. Government and NATO at great personal risk.

But receiving refuge when in need is something that many Kosovoans intimately remember.

If confirmed, I intend to lead a whole-of-government effort to advance the following priorities.

Continuing U.S. support for a sovereign democratic Kosovo, as this remains essential to regional stability and key to our long-standing strategic goal of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

Supporting the EU-facilitated dialogue to normalize Kosovo-Serbia relations, which, to quote President Biden, “should be centered on mutual recognition.”

Normalization is essential to regional stability and security, and will pave the way for both countries’ integration into Euro-Atlantic and European institutions. If confirmed, I will encourage Kosovo authorities to engage constructively, flexibly, and with urgency.

Continuing to help Kosovo rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic—when Kosovo requested our help, the United States delivered. In September, the United States donated over 500,000 life-saving Pfizer vaccine doses to Kosovo. This shipment was the largest single COVID-19 vaccine donation to Kosovo by any country or organization.

If confirmed, I will continue to support the Government of Kosovo, Kosovo citizens, and its independent justice institutions as they work to strengthen the rule of law, improve governance, and combat corruption.

I will also work to advance human rights for all citizens of Kosovo, particularly emphasizing ethnic and religious minorities.

In 1999, our commitment to human rights led us to intervene with our NATO allies in Kosovo, saving innocent lives. We remain committed to this.

I will work with our partners in Kosovo to foster economic growth and an improved enabling environment to help address Kosovo's high unemployment rate and assist Kosovo in securing a sustainable and green energy future to attract investment, create jobs, curb migration, and reduce environmental damage.

Finally, if confirmed, I will support the Kosovo Security Forces' continued, gradual, and transparent development to a multi-ethnic NATO interoperable territorial defense force.

By building on Kosovo's first international deployment together with U.S. forces and its first hosting of Defender Europe 21 exercises, we can help Kosovo transition from consumer to provider of security.

Thirteen years ago, the people of Kosovo claimed their right to determine their own future and status as a sovereign and independent state. In those 13 short years they have achieved something remarkable, a capable and successful democracy with an economy that supports prosperity for all Kosovans.

If confirmed, it would be the honor of my career to lead the women and men of the U.S. Mission to work with the Government and people of Kosovo and our international partners on these priorities.

Thank you for your attention. I would be pleased to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hovenier follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JEFFREY M. HOVENIER

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo. I'm humbled by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary of State have placed in me, and I hope to earn your trust as well. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and the Congress to advance the United States' interests and priorities in and with Kosovo.

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If confirmed, I would be particularly honored to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo—a country that emerged from the horrors of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the ethnic cleansing of the Milosevic regime. The United States played an essential role, together with our European partners, to protect the people of Kosovo and support them in their effort to establish a multi-ethnic, democratic country. I had the good fortune to participate in these efforts in various capacities, including as a member of the U.N. Team led by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari that developed the "Ahtisaari Plan" and paved the way for Kosovo's independence.

The people of Kosovo have never forgotten America's role and steadfast support over the last twenty-two years. As a result, Kosovo is one of the most pro-American countries in the world and a close partner. Following democratic elections in Feb-

ruary, a new government has taken office with a decisive mandate, and the U.S.-Kosovo relationship remains positive and productive.

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Finally, if confirmed, I will support the Kosovo Security Force’s continued gradual and transparent development to a multi-ethnic, NATO-interoperable, territorial defense force. By building on Kosovo’s first international deployment together with U.S. forces, and its first hosting of Defender Europe 21 exercises, we can help transition Kosovo from consumer to provider of security.

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Thank you for your attention. I would be pleased to take your questions.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Hovenier.

Mr. Murphy?

[No response.]

Senator SHAHEEN. You need to turn on your microphone.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL J. MURPHY OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Mr. MURPHY. I just realized that.

Chair Shaheen, Ranking Member Johnson, and distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Biden’s nominee as U.S. ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina.



I am honored by the confidence and trust the President and the Secretary of State have placed in me and, if confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance the United States interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I want to recognize my wife, Kimberly, who devoted 30 years to public service, starting in the Senate and followed by a career in the Foreign Service. Without her love, patience, and support, I would not be sitting here today.

I also want to thank my parents, John and Barbara Murphy, who died in 2019 and 2018, respectively, but who I am confident are watching over me now. They instilled in me the values that have guided my career: a strong work ethic, a devotion to public service, and a commitment to integrity.

If confirmed, I look forward to returning to Sarajevo, where I served from 2006 to 2009. I found the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina welcoming and friendly, and I am eager to engage with them again.

There has been a strong bipartisan consensus throughout my career that a Europe whole, prosperous, and at peace is in our national interests. The United States' engagement in and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina are critical to accomplishing that goal, and our leadership there is essential.

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to support implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, subsequent state-level reforms, and most importantly, Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Twenty-six years of peace is a great achievement but we cannot take it for granted. We must steadfastly support an independent, democratic, and multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina. We must support the Office of the High Representative and implementation of its 5+2 agenda.

If confirmed, I will also support the following. First, I will support Bosnia and Herzegovina's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. I will work with our allies and partners to facilitate the reforms necessary for Bosnia and Herzegovina to move towards EU membership and a deeper partnership with NATO.

Euro-Atlantic integration is the surest path to the democratic, prosperous, and secure future that all of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens seek and deserve.

Second, I will support rule of law reforms, especially anti-corruption activities. Corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina damages U.S. national security by undermining the functionality and stability necessary for Dayton implementation, by putting at risk Bosnia and Herzegovina's Euro-Atlantic integration, and by exposing Bosnia and Herzegovina to malign external influences.

Third, I will support reforms to promote economic growth, bolster trade and investment with the United States, and create the prosperity necessary for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their children to enjoy the opportunities that come from a thriving economy.

Fourth, I will work to counter efforts by local and outside actors, especially Russia and the People's Republic of China, that threaten our interests and undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina's future.

I am grateful for this committee's leadership highlighting the challenges posed by malign actors and providing tools and resources to push back against them.

Fifth, I will support efforts to advance reconciliation among Bosnia and Herzegovina's constituent peoples and others. The 1992–94 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a terrible tragedy. One hundred thousand lives were lost and horrible crimes were committed, including the genocide in Srebrenica.

The guilt for Srebrenica and other crimes rests with those who committed them, not with entire ethnic groups. The duty of today's leaders is to hold perpetrators accountable, acknowledge and honor the victims, and promote reconciliation.

It is also to focus their energies on building a common democratic and prosperous future for all in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, if confirmed, I will focus on the safety and security of U.S. citizens as well as the security and well being of the United States mission in Sarajevo, its branch offices in Banja Luka and Mostar, and the employees of all three.

This includes hiring, recruiting, developing a diverse group of American and local staff, and ensuring our diplomatic platforms are sufficiently robust to advance our interests.

Madam Chair, I thank this committee and other members of Congress for your interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I appreciate your time, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Murphy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. MURPHY

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee as U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am honored by the confidence and trust the President and the Secretary of State have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this Committee and others in Congress to advance the United States' interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I want to recognize my wife, Kimberly, who devoted 30 years to public service, starting in the Senate and followed by a career in the Foreign Service. Without her love, patience, and support, I would not be sitting here today. I also want to thank my parents, John and Barbara Murphy, who died in 2019 and 2018 respectively, but who I am confident are watching over me now. They instilled in me the values that have guided my career: a strong work ethic, a devotion to public service, and a commitment to integrity.

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If confirmed, I will make it a priority to support implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, subsequent state-level reforms, and most importantly, Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Twenty-six years of peace is a great achievement, but we cannot take it for granted. We must steadfastly support an independent, democratic, and multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina. We must support the Office of the High Representative and implementation of its 5+2 agenda.

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Finally, if confirmed, I will focus on the safety and security of U.S. citizens as well as the security and well-being of the United States' mission in Sarajevo, its branch offices in Banja Luka and Mostar, and the employees of all three. This includes recruiting, hiring, and developing a diverse group of American and local staff and ensuring our diplomatic platforms are sufficiently robust to advance U.S. interests.

Madam Chair, I thank this committee and other members of Congress for your interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I appreciate your time, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.  
Ms. Reynoso?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JULISSA REYNOSO PANTALEON OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF ANDORRA**

Ambassador REYNOSO. Madam Chair, the ranking member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and Principality of Andorra.

I am deeply honored to be considered by the Senate for this position and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

Let me especially thank Dr. Jill Biden. Dr. Biden is the reason I am here. She is one of the most remarkable people I have ever met, and she and the President honored me by giving me the opportunity to serve this country and this administration.

If confirmed, I look forward to another opportunity to serve this great nation.

I would like to recognize my family, friends, mentors, colleagues who have supported me over the years, many of them who are vir-

tual at this time and in different parts of the world, primarily in New York City.

There are too many to name, but here present with me is my mother, Rosario, and my sister, Jessica, and my son is presently in kindergarten.

[Laughter.]

Ambassador REYNOSO. I will also like to extend my gratitude to my dear colleagues at the White House, especially those from the Office of the First Lady, who I am sure are eating popcorn and watching, and my colleagues at the General Policy Council. I want to especially thank my dear friend and brother, Anthony Bernal.

Finally, I want to thank Secretary Clinton and Cheryl Mills, who, in 2009, gave me the opportunity to first serve at the U.S. Department of State as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and then as U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay.

If confirmed, it would be my privilege to lead the U.S. mission to one of their strongest bilateral partners, where our talented interagency teams in Madrid and Barcelona work tirelessly to expand U.S.-Spanish cooperation in defense, law enforcement, commerce, and trade, science, education, and people-to-people exchanges.

The relationship between the United States and Spain is strong. We share important values including a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Sound economic policies, investment in people, a desire to protect the planet from the impacts of climate change, a commitment to peacefully resolve disputes between nations, and respect for the multilateral system.

If confirmed, I look forward to continue the productive partnership and transatlantic alliance between our two countries and will work diligently to advance those goals.

Spain is a vital bilateral partner and a NATO ally whose government is already reenergizing transatlantic cooperation with the Biden administration as a host of next year's NATO Summit, the outstanding cooperation we have enjoyed with our Spanish hosts at Naval Station Rota and Moron Airbase, for nearly 70 years the tangible example of our strong partnership including Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome.

In Afghanistan, over 30,000 Spanish military personnel served alongside Americans during the 20-year mission, and over a hundred Spaniards tragically lost their lives.

Beyond our strong defense partnership, Spain enjoys a special relationship with Latin American nations and Latinos in the United States due to linguistic, cultural, and historic affinities.

Spain and Latin American nations have a long and vibrant tradition of exchanges in training and law enforcement, defense, and other sectors.

Spain and the United States share goals in protecting human rights and democracy throughout the hemisphere. The United States and Spain also share a deep economic relationship, trading over \$36.9 billion in goods and services in 2020 alone.

Spain is the tenth largest source of foreign direct investment in the United States, and the United States, in turn, is the largest source of foreign direct investment in Spain.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Spanish President Pedro Sanchez, civil society, and the private sector to build upon our already strong bilateral relations and expand the political, commercial, educational, and cultural ties between our two countries.

If confirmed, I also look forward to fostering a relationship with the Principality of Andorra and working together with Andorra's head of government, Xavier Espot Zamora, to further our joint goals to support democracy, human rights, and financial transparency.

Finally, if confirmed, I will work closely with this body, with the members of this committee, to ensure your interests and concerns are addressed and we work together to advance our interests while strengthening our partnership with Spain and Andorra.

Thank you for your time, members, and I am so happy to be here and happy to answer your questions—any questions you may have. Thanks again.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Reynoso follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. JULISSA REYNOSO PANTALEON

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra.

I am deeply honored to be considered by the Senate for this position and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me. Let me specially thank Dr. Jill Biden. Dr. Biden is one of the most remarkable people I have ever met, and she and the President honored me by giving me the opportunity to serve this Administration. If confirmed, I look forward to another opportunity to serve my country.

I would like to recognize my family, friends, mentors, and colleagues who have supported me over the years. There are too many to name here, but I would like to thank my mother Rosario, my sister Jessica, and my son Lucas. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues at the White House, especially Anthony Bernal. Finally, I want to thank Secretary Clinton and Cheryl Mills, who in 2009 gave me the opportunity to first serve at the U.S. Department of State as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and then as U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay.

If confirmed, it would be my privilege to lead the U.S. Mission to one of our strongest bilateral partners, where our talented interagency teams in Madrid and Barcelona work tirelessly to expand U.S.-Spanish cooperation in defense, law enforcement, commerce and trade, science, education, and people-to-people exchanges.

The relationship between the United States and Spain is strong. We share important values, including a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; sound economic policies; investment in people; a desire to protect the planet from the impacts of climate change; a commitment to peacefully resolve disputes between nations; and respect for the multilateral system. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the productive partnership and transatlantic alliance between our two countries and will work diligently to advance these goals.

Spain is a vital bilateral partner and NATO Ally whose government is already reenergizing transatlantic cooperation with the Biden administration as host of the 2022 NATO Summit. The outstanding cooperation we have enjoyed with our Spanish hosts at Naval Station Rota and Moron Air Base for nearly 70 years is a tangible example of our strong partnership, including Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome. In Afghanistan, over 30,000 Spanish military personnel served alongside Americans during the 20-year mission, and over 100 Spaniards lost their lives. Spain deploys roughly 3,000 troops overseas each year in NATO, EU, U.N., and national missions. It is a key partner in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and maintains a contingent deployed to Iraq.

Beyond our strong defense partnership, Spain enjoys a special relationship with Latin American nations and Latinos in the United States due to linguistic, cultural, and historical affinities. Spain and Latin American nations have a long and vibrant tradition of exchanges and training in law enforcement, defense, and other sectors.

Spain and the United States share goals in protecting human rights and democracy in the hemisphere, most notably in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

The United States and Spain also share a deep economic relationship, trading over \$36.9 billion in goods and services in 2020. Spain is the tenth largest source of foreign direct investment in the United States, creating over 90,000 jobs in the United States. The United States is the largest source of FDI in Spain, supporting more than 178,000 Spanish jobs.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Spanish President Pedro Sanchez, civil society, and the private sector to build upon our already strong bilateral relations and expand the political, commercial, educational, and cultural ties between our two countries.

If confirmed, I also look forward to fostering our relationship with the Principality of Andorra and working together with Andorra's Head of Government Xavier Espot Zamora to further our joint goals to support democracy, human rights, and financial transparency.

Finally, if confirmed, I will work closely with this body to ensure your interests and concerns are addressed, and that we work together to advance U.S. interests while strengthening our partnerships with Spain and Andorra.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.  
Mrs. Kennedy?

**STATEMENT OF VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA**

Mrs. KENNEDY. I am having—am I on? Thank you.

Chairwoman Shaheen, Ranking Member Johnson, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you to be Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

I am grateful and humbled by President Biden's confidence in me. I thank Senator Markey for his generous introduction. I am delighted that my son, Curran, is here with me today, and it means the world to me to be joined by my dear friend, Senator Chris Dodd.

My daughter, Caroline, and her husband, Alex, are watching from Germany, and my mother and other family members are viewing from various parts of the country.

I am thinking today in a special way of my late husband, who revered this place, and of my late father, the first diplomat in our family, who was appointed by President Kennedy as Special Envoy to the Middle East in 1961.

One of the countries my father visited as envoy was Lebanon, the land his parents left in 1920 in their early 20s to come to America. Forty-one years later, their youngest son landed in Beirut to find his parents' entire village at the airport to greet him. His grandmother was in that crowd and he met her for the first time as the representative of the President of the United States. What a moving testament to the American dream.

I have five siblings, and all our lives were shaped by that sense of infinite possibility. I grew up in a small town, Crowley, Louisiana. I attended Catholic schools and then Newcomb College, followed by Tulane Law School. I clerked for a federal appellate judge and then began private law practice.

I first traveled to Europe with my brother when we were college students, faithfully following a guidebook entitled "Europe on \$5 to \$10 a Day." That gives you an idea how long ago it was.

But when we arrived in Vienna, we were overjoyed to find a letter from our parents with a little something extra in it and a note that read, "So you can enjoy the music." How glorious it was to attend the opera in Vienna and hear a concert in Salzburg.

From that time on, Austria was special to me. Of course, I could not have imagined then that I would be sitting here today. But I feel my background has prepared me well.

As a lawyer in a global law firm, I have led diverse teams to resolve complex problems, working collaboratively toward a common goal. I am a trustee of the Kennedy Center, where I have chaired the Education Committee for more than a decade.

I am president of the board of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, which focuses on the vital role of the Senate in our governance, fosters civil dialogue, and seeks to inspire new generations to engage in civic life. And I have been an active member of the business community in New England, serving on the boards of our Regional Business Council as well as the Chamber of Commerce.

U.S.-Austrian relations are strong, based on our mutual interests and shared ideals. We have been friends for a long time, first establishing formal diplomatic ties in 1838, and we have just marked the 74th anniversary of the Marshall Plan with which in partnership with Austria has turned into an investment that is an economic success story that continues to pay dividends for both of our countries.

Our bilateral economic ties are strong and growing. The United States is the second largest market for Austrian exports and bilateral trade is projected to be greater this year than last.

Austria recorded the second fastest rate of growth in foreign direct investment in the United States in 2020 and that direct investment overall has resulted in the creation of tens of thousands of U.S. jobs.

If confirmed, I am eager to strengthen our trade and investment relationship even further. Austria and the United States share many common values and perspectives, including support for human rights and the rule of law.

Austria is a member of the global coalition to defeat ISIS and has contributed peacekeepers and trainers around the world.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance America's interests and values, and strengthen and deepen our already strong relationship with Austria across the full range of political, security, economic, and social issues that bind us together.

Thank you very much. I look forward to answering your questions. It is an honor to appear before you today.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Kennedy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY

I'm honored to appear before you as the nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Austria. I am grateful and humbled by President Biden's confidence in me.

I thank Senator Markey for his generous introduction. My son Curran is with me today. My daughter Caroline and her husband Alex are watching from Germany and my mother and other family members are viewing from various parts of the country. I'm thinking today, in a special way, of my late husband, who revered this place, and of my late father, the first diplomat in our family, appointed by President Kennedy as Special Envoy to the Middle East in 1961.

One of the countries my father visited as Envoy was Lebanon, the land his parents left in 1920, in their early 20s, to come to America. Forty-one years later, their youngest son landed in Beirut to find his parents' entire village at the airport to greet him. His grandmother was in that crowd, and he met her for the first time, as the representative of the President of the United States. What a moving testament to the American dream.

I have five siblings, and all our lives were shaped by that sense of infinite possibility. I grew up in a small town, Crowley, Louisiana. I attended Catholic schools and then Newcomb College, followed by Tulane Law School. I clerked for a federal appellate judge and then began private law practice.

I first traveled to Europe, with my brother, when we were college students, faithfully following a guidebook entitled "Europe on \$5 to \$10 a day." (That gives you an idea of how long ago it was.) But when we arrived in Vienna, we were overjoyed to find a letter from our parents with a little something extra and a note that read: "So you can enjoy the music." How glorious it was to attend the opera in Vienna and hear a concert in Salzburg. From that time on, Austria was special to me. Of course, I couldn't have imagined then that I would be sitting here today.

But I feel my background has prepared me well. As a lawyer in a global law firm, I have led diverse teams to resolve complex problems, working collaboratively toward a common goal. I'm a Trustee of the Kennedy Center, where I've chaired the Education Committee for more than a decade. I'm President of the Board of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, which focuses on the vital role of the Senate in our governance, fosters civil dialogue and seeks to inspire new generations to engage in civic life. And I've been an active member of the business community in New England, serving on the Boards of our regional business council as well as the chamber of commerce.

U.S.-Austrian relations are strong, based on our mutual interests and shared ideals. We've been friends for a long time, first establishing formal diplomatic ties in 1838. And we've just marked the 74th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, which helped rebuild Europe after World War II. Austria, in partnership with the United States, turned this investment into an economic success story that continues to pay dividends for both countries.

Our bilateral economic ties are strong and growing. The United States is the second largest market for Austrian exports, and bilateral trade is projected to be greater this year than last. Austria recorded the second fastest rate of growth in foreign direct investment in the United States in 2020. Their direct investments overall have resulted in the creation of tens of thousands of U.S. jobs. If confirmed, I am eager to strengthen our trade and investment relationship even further.

The United States and Austria share many common values and perspectives, including a support for human rights and the rule of law. Austria is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and has contributed peacekeepers and trainers around the world. Austria is also a valued partner in the Western Balkans, where it contributes nearly 350 troops to NATO's KFOR mission for peace and stability in Kosovo, and nearly 300 troops to the EU's stabilization mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance America's interests and values and strengthen and deepen our already strong relationship with Austria across the full range of political, security, economic and social issues that bind our nations together.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Before we begin the panel's questioning, I have some questions for each of the nominees that I am going to ask you to respond to either yes or no, and we will go down the line and ask that each of you verbally respond.

First question, do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

Mr. Hovenier?

Mr. HOVENIER. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Ms. Reynoso?



Ambassador REYNOSO. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mrs. Kennedy?

Mrs. KENNEDY. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you commit to keep this committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Mr. HOVENIER. Yes.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Yes.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Mr. Hovenier?

Mr. HOVENIER. Yes.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Yes.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Mr. HOVENIER. Yes.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Yes.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you to all of our nominees for answering yes to all four questions. We will hold you to that, once confirmed.

We are going to rotate questions as we normally do between the chair and ranking member, and then we will go to the other members who have arrived.

Each member is going to have five minutes to question and we may do more than one round, depending upon how many senators show up.

First of all, I am going to begin with you, Mr. Hovenier, as soon as I can find my question.

I think this is, really, both for you and for Mr. Murphy because it speaks to what is happening in the Balkans, and Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina have long aspired for membership to the EU and NATO.

But it is unlikely, I think, based on what I am seeing and what I am hearing from Europeans that membership is unlikely to be granted anytime soon.

The question that I have is how do we keep those countries looking West? What kind of incentives can we provide to them to help them as they aspire to join the EU and look West so that they are not tempted by Russia and China?

I will begin with you, Mr. Hovenier.

Mr. HOVENIER. Thank you for that question.

In some respects, Kosovo is sui generis in the Balkans because since neither Russia nor China have recognized Kosovo as an independent state, while we still keep an eye on things, and if confirmed, this will be a very high priority of mine to keep an eye on efforts by Russia to exercise malign influence or by China in some

ways, there is not the same national affinity as in some other parts of the Balkans towards some of that behavior.

That said, the problem you raised is something that I think concerns all of us. As you are aware, the European Union will have a summit tomorrow, and if press reports can be believed they will reiterate and restate their commitment to enlargement, including the Western Balkans.

I think in the short term our task is to continue to encourage the authorities of Kosovo and, if confirmed, this will be a priority of mine, to continue to do the reforms that are required so that they are ready for membership both in the EU and in NATO.

The European Union has played a constructive role in many ways with regard to Kosovo, both through assistance. But you are right that this incentive of eventual membership has been a very important catalyst for reform and change and, if confirmed, one of my priorities will be to try to build further momentum and to work with our European Union partners to ensure that the prospect is real and that real reform is carried out consistent with their obligations, should they obtain membership either in the EU or in NATO.

And on that one last thing, I would like to add and would be to encourage those EU member states who have not yet recognized Kosovo to think seriously about the implications of that, which would also be part of our diplomacy.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Yes, that would be very helpful.

Mr. Murphy, really, the same question. I was in Bosnia and Herzegovina back in 2010 with then Senator George Voinovich, and one of the things we heard from the Bosnians was how important it would be to have some signal from NATO about the prospects there.

And we came back and argued very strongly that Bosnia should at least get MAP—Membership Action Plan—to help them understand that that aspiration was possible in the future, should they continue with reforms.

What do you think the most important aspects of reform are right now in Bosnia and Herzegovina so that they can continue to aspire to NATO and to the EU?

Mr. MURPHY. Let me start by emphasizing the importance of continued strong U.S. engagement and leadership in the Western Balkans and advising Herzegovina in particular.

I think our presence, our engagement, is critically important to motivating and pressing the domestic parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to do the right thing.

Second, one of the things, if confirmed, that I will hammer home in my engagements publicly and privately is that the reforms associated with Euro-Atlantic integration, while it takes time to meet the EU requirements, have immediate benefits to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina now.

That includes a more open and free democracy, a more open and free economy with greater opportunities for prosperity for all including the children of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a better future for them. I would continue to stress those points, if confirmed.

With regards to NATO particularly, I want to underscore that the United States strongly supports NATO's open door policy and the membership aspirations of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are focused now on the benefits of deepening the partnership that exists between Bosnia and Herzegovina where there is a consensus within Bosnia and Herzegovina to pursue that partnership.

The key challenge there and one I will make a priority, if confirmed, is to encourage the Government to press forward with its reform program and present it to the Alliance because that will serve as a catalyst to getting more allied engagement to support the reforms necessary for Bosnia to move forward.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much. I am out of time, and I am going to go vote. But I am delighted that we are joined by the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Menendez, and I am going to turn it over to him to—because I know he has some questions.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Madam Chair, very much. Congratulations to all of you on your nominations, and I appreciate my colleague's indulgence.

I would have had this panel before a full committee, but in order to get nominees out there we had the able work of Senator Shaheen doing it so because your assignments are incredibly important, which is why I do not always come to subcommittee hearings. But I want to come to this one because there is a couple of nominees here to places that I deeply care about.

Ambassador Reynoso, let me start with you. It is good to see you again. I am concerned. Spain is an important ally. NATO ally, Rota Bay, the—all of the elements of our relationship is very important.

But I am deeply concerned that the Spanish have not been particularly helpful, particularly in the Western Hemisphere. I am sure that they would not like us acting the way they are acting towards us if it was in their sphere of the world.

And so I get deeply concerned that Spain has taken views that are outside of the democracy and human rights provisions that we would want to see of a NATO ally.

I am deeply concerned when I see their actions as it relates to Cuba and their unwillingness to join us in our global declaration.

It seems to me that the Spaniards are more—care more about their hotels and investments than they care about democracy and human rights there. It worries me to see what role the Spaniards are playing in Venezuela as well, which is a cancer in the Western Hemisphere.

And I could go on about other places as well where the Spaniards have not been as forthcoming but, if anything, not only not forthcoming, they seem to be contrary to where we are at in our own hemisphere.

If you are to be confirmed, would you tell me what you would do to try to get our Spanish friends more in line with democracy and human rights in this hemisphere?

Ambassador REYNOSO. Thank you, Senator. It is wonderful to see you again.

And let me start by thanking you for your leadership in this space. Obviously, this is an issue that you care deeply about and so do I.

Given my trajectory in Latin America and the Caribbean, I am quite familiar with the lackluster presence or politics and policy of Spain vis-a-vis some of these countries, primarily Cuba and Venezuela and Nicaragua, I should say as well.

If confirmed, my objective will be to work bilaterally with Spain and, obviously, given their presence and their important role in the European Union vis-a-vis Latin America and the Caribbean, I will urge them to be much more vocal and much more transparent and to hold the same standard in terms of enforcement and accountability with respect to the human rights violations and the lack of liberty and transparency and accountability in places like Cuba and Venezuela that they hold with respect to other countries.

Given their important leverage and their interests in these countries, primarily in Cuba, I think Spain can do a lot more and, frankly, sir, I look forward to working with you closely to make sure we can—you can help me inform those positions and ensure that Spain is doing more than it is doing currently.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope this will be a robust part of your agenda upon confirmation. We have a lot of things with the Spaniards. You know, I used to chair the U.S.-Spain Council for years in developing closer ties politically and economically.

But that does not mean that I am willing to turn a blind eye to their neglect in this hemisphere as it relates to human rights and democracy. That is something I care passionately about.

I have two final questions to Mr. Hovenier. You know, we seem to put a lot of focus on Kosovo, but I am not quite sure that I find Serbia to be a particularly good partner in this process in terms of the efforts that are taking place, and we want both sides to engage.

But how do you view—I know that is not—your assignment is not to go to Serbia. It is to go to Kosovo upon confirmation. But how do you view that reality?

Mr. HOVENIER. Like any other problem—thank you, sir, for the question—like any other problem in the Balkans, the problem is very multifaceted and requires work from both sides.

If I am confirmed, one of my highest priorities would be to seek to advance Kosovo-Serbia normalization. My focus has, of course, been the things I will need to do as the confirmed ambassador of the United States to encourage the authorities of Kosovo to engage constructively and with urgency and creatively in that process.

But I would agree with you that the authorities in Serbia equally require that sort of push and impetus, and I cannot dispute at all your assessment that the Serbian interlocutors have not always performed in that way in this process.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that, because sometimes we say we want both sides to act but sometimes it is clear that one side is not doing their just part, and I often feel the State Department takes this leverage nuanced approach when one side is very clearly not participating.

And finally, Mrs. Kennedy, it is good to see you again.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Good to see you.

The CHAIRMAN. I just want to say I hope that you will take seriously, and I am sure you will but I want to hear it from you, when individuals come with Havana syndrome at—we have had a rash of them in our embassy there and in our various international organizations there where our people are serving, that you will make this a very serious part of your mission.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Senator, thank you so much for your leadership on this issue and thank you very much for that question.

As you know, my information is all public information at this point. I have not been read in specifically. But it is an issue I take very, very seriously.

The health and well being of the staff and family members of the members of the embassy is something I take extremely seriously, and I do pledge to you that I will take extreme care and be sure that everyone who has been affected by this syndrome will get the care—if I am confirmed, will get the care and attention that they need, but more than that, that I will, if I am confirmed, pledge that I will urge that we get to the bottom of what is causing this and really push on that and see what we can do about trying to prevent further incidents of it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I have other questions. I will submit them to the different nominees for the record. I understand Senator Johnson—

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start with the Mr. Hovenier. Again, enjoyed our meeting this afternoon and our discussion. I think we all recognize, as the chairman had indicated, that both sides share responsibility to make concessions to move forward in the region between Serbia and Kosovo.

It is difficult to move on. There were—as I think you stated in testimony, there were atrocities on both sides. It is hard to just forgive and forget and that means we also discussed within the education systems that they are really not trying to instill a forgive and forget attitude.

I thought it was the right approach when Ambassador Grenell and President Trump engaged and got the parties to agree, focusing on the area of agreement in terms of economic cooperation. I mean, it is the best way to move beyond and put the past behind everyone if you really can show the people of the region what happens if you put your disagreements aside and concentrate on greater opportunity, greater prosperity, for yourselves and your kids and your grandkids.

But, Mr. Hovenier, can you just kind of speak to your basic approach when it comes to representing the U.S. to Kosovo and what we need—you know, what we are going to be looking for from Kosovo to be able to move forward?

Mr. HOVENIER. Thank you for that question.

Yes, as we discussed, first, the Washington commitments were an important step in reducing tensions and played a very important role in moving closer towards the outcome we would like to see, and this administration, of course, validated those.

And if I am confirmed, one of the things I hope to do, working with my colleague from Belgrade, is to see further implementation

of that broad swath of commitments that were achieved in the last administration.

More broadly, what I would like to see from Kosovo authorities, what the United States would like to see from Kosovo authorities, would be to engage actively, creatively, constructively, and with urgency in this EU-facilitated process to work towards a normalization of relations, which we believe should be centered in mutual recognition.

An incident of just the last few weeks with regard to temporary license plates shows what can be done when the leaders come together and they have a real problem that needs to be resolved. They can find common ground and it can be resolved. This model can be applied to a range of different issues that divide the two sides right now.

And as you point out, sir, this is very important. Without a normalization of relations, without mutual recognition, the region will be stymied.

Senator JOHNSON. I always point out—I mean, focus on the areas of agreement. There is plenty of things to disagree on. We are also trying to point out that a negotiation is a give and take. Give and take.

I think so often because we are an honest broker everybody wants the U.S. to get involved, but I always got the feeling they want us to get involved to take their side in things.

And would you agree with me that we do need to be that honest broker and we need to press all sides to not only be willing to take but also to be able to give in those negotiations?

Mr. Hovenier?

Mr. HOVENIER. Yes, sir. I agree with you completely.

Senator JOHNSON. This is for the other three nominees. I think, universally, we are seeing throughout Europe, Eastern Europe, not only what Russia is doing but what China is doing.

They have two totally different approaches. Russia just seems to destabilize just for, I guess, the sheer joy of destabilizing. China is far more focused and, I think, long-term strategic in terms of investment.

And I will just ask all the nominees. We will start with you, Mr. Murphy. What is your viewpoint of what it looks like in Bosnia and Herzegovina right now in terms of both Russia and China's influence?

Mr. MURPHY. Russia has a very different vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina than the United States. As I said earlier, we are for a democratic, prosperous, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina that takes its place in the Euro-Atlantic family of nations.

Russia is presenting the image of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a failed state. It is stoking ethno-nationalist tensions. It is facilitating and taking advantage of the seams provided for by corruption, all of which is problematic to the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and also to our interests, because if we believe in a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace, and that has been a bipartisan national security objective for my entire career, then we need to address that and push back against malign influence.

The Chinese are taking a slightly different approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As you pointed out, Senator, they are looking at

economic investments, particularly in critical infrastructure, places like roads, power plants, IT, 5G networks, things of that nature.

And their game is a little bit, as you put it, more long term. Again, they are taking advantage of the seams and opportunities presented by corruption, which is one of the reasons, if confirmed, not only will we have to push back against malign influence from both actors but we have to be vigorous and aggressive in pursuing anti-corruption activities to close those seams to the malign outside actors who are seeking to destabilize the country.

Senator JOHNSON. I would just ask the other two nominees to also answer, but I think Mr. Murphy has kind of laid out what they are doing.

The question I would have for you then is what should be the U.S. response to their activities, Ambassador Reynoso?

Ambassador REYNOSO. With respect to Russia, Senator, obviously, there has been quite a bit of coverage of the allegations of disinformation with respect to the referendum in Spain, in particular.

The United States—I mean, I know the embassy already is engaging with our counterparts to ensure that the Russian tactics of fracking and disinformation are being addressed and that the Spaniards have the capabilities to investigate and prevent this type of practice.

More of that, more cooperation, more between our law enforcement and also our other agencies to ensure that we are working with one of—Spain, one of our key partners to prevent these types of tactics and practices, I think, will be key.

With respect to China, Spain is one of the few countries that has not signed the Belt and Road Initiative MOU and is quite, in my view, cautious with respect to moving forward with China, irrespective of the fact that it is a significant economic player in Spain.

We should continue to press allies, especially NATO allies like Spain, to ensure these engagements are limited and have a values-driven approach to engagement with countries like China.

And I should say both with respect to Russia and China, Spain, within the EU, has been an important partner in pursuing and supporting sanctions against both countries, especially when it comes to human rights violations.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Mrs. Kennedy?

Mrs. KENNEDY. Thank you, Senator. We want to be able to negotiate with China from a position of strength and we need a strong—we need strong relationships with our partners like Austria to be able to do that.

And if I am confirmed, I will just continue to—I will continue to press Austria and work with them on that. I think it is a real global approach to it.

With respect to Russia, countering malign influence is a top priority and that is an issue that I would also continue to raise. Austria is in a very interesting and unique position where it is geographically, where it is constitutionally, and where it is historically.

It is a, by constitution, a neutral country but it is firmly entrenched in the EU and in transatlantic relationships, and that is something that we would continue to foster and encourage.

But it also sees itself in a unique position as a place where it looks both East and West. It was the place where President Kennedy met Khrushchev. It is the place where President Carter met Brezhnev, and Austria is very proud of its ability to have those relationships where it can bring countries together in that way.

It is important that we recognize that role of Austria and—but to continue to work and strengthen our transatlantic ties and work with Austria in that way.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I understand, Senator Kaine, you are next by agreement with Senator Van Hollen.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, and, actually, Senator Murphy has also deferred to me and I appreciate—I appreciate that, Madam Chair, and congratulations to the nominees. This is a very strong panel.

Mrs. Kennedy, let me start with you. What a treat to see you in this way, and it is good that you are on this panel together with two other ambassadors serving in European nations in the Balkans where Austria has troops participating in peacekeeping missions. It is a good panel together.

I wanted to follow up on what Senator Menendez asked you about the Havana syndrome reports and the obligation to try to keep people safe.

And just for the record, because Senator Menendez sort of short formed it and I do want the public to be aware of this as well, on the 23rd of September the Washington Post reported that the CIA had removed its Vienna station chief due to concerns that he was not adequately addressing a recent spate of what the CIA characterizes as anomalous health incidents reported by U.S. intelligence and diplomatic personnel.

These incidents are referred to by this committee and others as Havana syndrome. The chairwoman has been very active on this, as we all have. We have had a number of briefings about this over the course of the past few years, mostly classified.

But according to the Post article, dozens of U.S. personnel in Vienna, including diplomats and intelligence officials as well as some of the children of U.S. employees, have reported symptoms, according to the current and former officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter, and the reports are more significant in terms of the number and frequency in Vienna than any city other than Havana.

I know this is going to be a huge concern for you, certainly, for embassy personnel and others who are stationed in Vienna. And so, again, if you would just talk about the priority that you would place upon being responsive to U.S. employees under your supervision, should you be confirmed.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Thank you, Senator. And first, I want to say how much I personally appreciate the involvement of the committee and interest in this issue because I think it is a very significant issue.



If I am confirmed and am going to be in Vienna, I look forward to having the opportunity of addressing this issue and really delving into it in a very serious way.

The health and safety of the personnel, their families, their children, is of paramount importance. Getting prompt attention to these incidents is in—and medical treatment is imperative, but also getting to the bottom of it and also seeing if there are ways to prevent it but pushing, taking it seriously, pushing and working with you all as well.

And if I am confirmed, I look forward to communicating with you regularly about it and as well as with all of the people back here in Washington to see what we can do to get—try to get a resolution of this extremely serious matter.

Senator KAINE. Thank you so much. And I think I might speak in a bipartisan way for the whole committee to say we are not satisfied with the answers we are getting.

We have been getting briefings about this for a number of years, and now we are talking about multiple cities, including cities in United States, including in Virginia, where people have been subject to these kinds of attacks.

And with the most sophisticated intelligence operation in the world, I would have hoped that we might have had a better handle on this by October 2021 than we do. But your commitment to that, that will be heard well by embassy staff in Austria.

Ambassador Reynoso, I would just like to congratulate you. I am just going to be very brief because you sort of answered my questions about the role of Spain and Latin America in response to Senator Menendez's questions.

I am the chairman of the subcommittee overseeing the Western Hemisphere. I was, like Senator Menendez, honorary chair of the U.S.-Spain Council for five years, and I think the opportunities for Spain and the United States to work together on issues in Latin America are enormous.

I am doing everything I can to convince this administration to put a higher priority on Latin America. I think the State Department sometimes operates as if there is an East-West axis in the world and not a North-South access.

Your experience being an ambassador in the Americas and the work that you have done in the Americas, in my view, makes you uniquely well suited to be part of the—to be our ambassador in Spain.

But I hope that I will be successful in getting the administration to give a higher priority to the Americas. But I have reason to believe—I do not need to be hopeful, I am confident—that should you be confirmed, you will make that relationship between the U.S.-Spain on Latin America matters a high priority. Your background suggests that you will and that gives me strong reason to support your nomination.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, and if you would like to just say anything about that, but you have already done a pretty good job.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Those were incredibly kind words, Senator. My trajectory as an immigrant and also as a person who has worked in the Americas, I am completely committed to ensuring

that this country, our country, understands fully how important Latin America and the Caribbean is to our national security and our future.

And if I am confirmed as the ambassador to Spain, I will just continue to work to flourish and empower those connections, sir, and I really look forward to working with you to make sure we do give it the importance it requires.

Thank you.

Senator Kaine. Thank you so much. And with my thanks to my colleague, Senator Murphy, I yield back.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you to all four of you for your willingness and your continued willingness to serve.

Senator Dodd, good to see you back in the Foreign Relations Committee again. Thank you for your service to this committee and to our state.

Ambassador Reynoso, I want to take—continue along the line of questioning begun by my colleague, Senator Kaine. In July, Spain declined to sign a U.S.-led statement on the repression of protests in Cuba, and instead, they decided to lead an EU statement that expressed concerns about the repression of the protests but predictably called for an easing of external restrictions in order to promote reforms in Cuba.

You, obviously, have an enormous amount of experience here. You have seen firsthand the irritant that U.S.-Cuba policy has been both in our relations with countries in the Western Hemisphere but also occasionally with Spain.

And so I might just ask you to talk a little bit more about Spain's policy towards Cuba and how U.S. policy towards Cuba affects our ability to work with Spain in the Western Hemisphere.

I agree with Senator Kaine. This is an opportunity for us to integrate more broadly with Spain on Western Hemisphere policy. I worry, though, that Cuba stands in the way—U.S. policy towards Cuba stands in the way.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Make sure I get this right.

Yes, Senator, as you know, Spain and Cuba have a history together. It was one of the last Spanish colonies in the Western Hemisphere and there are affinities that go beyond the political and economic, so the cultural and national connections as well.

Spain's position, as far as I understand it, is that we share with the—Spain shares with the United States ideals of human rights and liberty as concepts. But in terms of tactics with respect to how they manage their affairs with Cuba, it has been—we have had important differences.

It has been much more tolerant, if you will, of certain actions by the Government and encourages more robust dialogue than we have been willing to engage in.

That said, in July, when there were important protests in Cuba, we and Secretary Blinken led an effort to have countries from—allies from throughout the world sign a statement and Spain refused. Did not do so, and went with the EU statement.

I do think the fact that they helped issue a statement is something. It is important that they did collectively push the EU to issue a statement.

My position is that we can be even more aligned because, optimally, our main objective is to see real reform in Cuba, both for the improvement of economic conditions of the Cuban people but also, obviously, the need for greater human rights.

I think we share those values and those objectives. How we get there is something we have to work on. Given that, I think the rest of the hemisphere, frankly, sir, has so many economic issues and struggles at this time that Cuba may not be as relevant as it was 20, 30 years ago on the ideological front.

I think, in that regard, Spain is an important partner for us because it is one of the most active for foreign governments in the region in terms of assistance and political relations and the like.

I really, if confirmed, hope to work with Spain, make sure that Cuba and the Cuba situation is not a point of conflict with the rest of the region but a point of focus to push forward for greater aligned interests and, again, driven by our collective values.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you. I apologize. I want to get in—thank you for that answer. I look forward to working with you. I want to get in one question to at least one of our nominees to the Balkans.

I have been fortunate enough to work with both Senator Shaheen and Senator Johnson on U.S. policy towards the Balkans. No surprise that inside the Pandora Papers were a number of Balkan officials who had been, potentially, using public funds in order to enrich their own bank accounts.

What is the importance of continuing a pathway to EU integration on our efforts to try to address what is still often far too rampant corruption in the Balkans with respect to Kosovo and Bosnia?

It seems that as the dream of Europe disappears for some so is the pressure relieved on many of our partners there to continue to make anti-corruption reforms.

Mr. HOVENIER. Thank you for that question. I presume I should go first.

What I would say is the pressure is not relieved and it should not be relieved. This is a critical part of our long-term project of seeing these countries integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions but also being the sorts of partners we want them to be.

And if I am confirmed, an important element of our foreign assistance and our diplomatic engagement will be to partner with the Government of Kosovo and civil society to address corruption.

This is a primary concern of the current Government of Kosovo as well. The prime minister was elected on a record, a campaign, to combat corruption, seeking to enable him but also empowering civil society to hold their government more accountable and to work to ensure greater transparency and good governance.

We also hope that the incentive of integration in European institutions is not dead and we will continue to work as well as the administration with our European partners to keep that hope more alive than some suggest it is. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Mr. MURPHY. Senator, thank you for the question. Let me start by saying, if confirmed, rule of law reform and combating corruption would be among my top priorities. It damages the interests of the United States, the interests of the people and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in more ways than one, and Euro-Atlantic integration is one of those, as you have highlighted.

I think that we have to be prepared to continue the programs that we put in place to tackle rule of law, to promote an open economy and create space for civic-minded democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and if confirmed, I will continue to do that.

In addition, if confirmed, I would support using the new sanctions authority that the President has recently enacted dealing with corruption to exact a price for those ethno-nationalist politicians who are not prepared to address the reforms necessary or to behave in a way that is beneficial not just to U.S. interests but, of course, to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN. I think we have Senator Van Hollen on WebEx.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Chair and—

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator, can I just—I do not think we can control sound at our end. But maybe you could turn the sound down a little bit at your end because it is very loud.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Is that better?

Senator SHAHEEN. Better. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. All right. Sorry. I had wanted to get back in person, but congratulations to all of you.

And to Mr. Hovenier, I just want to associate myself with the comments that Chairman Menendez made with respect to the important U.S. role in seeking to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Obviously, it has been a long road, but we need to keep at that work.

Mrs. Kennedy, it is great to see you again. As you well know, the United States and Austria enjoy a long history of cultural and educational exchange programs.

Every year, about 1,000 Austrians study at universities in the United States and some 2,700 Americans study in Austria through programs developed by Austrian and American educational institutions.

I have a particular recent interest in this because my state of Maryland in 2020 signed an MOU between the U.S. Naval Academy and the Austrian Theresian Military Academy, which covers the exchange of Austrian cadets and U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen.

The first cadets and midshipmen participate in this program beginning this fall, and I am hoping that as our ambassador you will help to cultivate and strengthen this relationship and other exchange programs.

Can you just talk briefly to the significance of those people-to-people exchanges to continuing to maintain strong relations with Austria?

Mrs. KENNEDY. Thank you so much. It is good to see you, Senator.

What a wonderful program that you have described and how important people-to-people exchanges are—I think I will look this way, I think it is a better idea—and how important these people-to-people exchanges are.

Cultural exchanges help our countrymen understand Austria. They help Austrians understand our country, and they are really a vital part of our public diplomacy.

Embassy Vienna is very—has been very devoted to this type of exchange program and I am thrilled about cultural exchanges. I am thrilled about entrepreneurial exchanges and business exchanges.

I think there is no better way than actual hands-on exposure, learning from others, getting the real—that real kind of exposure.

I am excited about it, and if I am confirmed I look forward to having people-to-people exchanges and perhaps even expanding. Thank you very much.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I look forward to working with you on that.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Thank you. And if I am confirmed, Senator, I look forward to meeting some of those cadets. It would be fantastic.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Terrific.

Ambassador Reynoso, as you know, the United States and Spain have cooperated over the years on security issues in Africa. Moron Air Base in Spain is the permanent headquarters of a rotational U.S. expeditionary force with the primary mission of responding to emergency calls for security assistance to U.S. embassies and other U.S. operations in Africa, among other things.

As you know, the French, who have had also a long-standing forces—long-standing forces in Africa have signaled that they intend to draw down their presence in the Sahel.

Does that affect U.S. security interests in the region and how would it affect our operations in Spain, if at all?

Ambassador REYNOSO. Thank you for the question, Senator.

Spain is, as you know, a critical ally and the fact that we have been working with Spain for so many years and that both the bases of Rota and Moron are used for our service people and their families who are located there but other allies also use those bases for operations in other parts of the world, in Africa in particular, says a lot about the strength of our relationship.

Spain is committed and has been committed to working with sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel region to ensure that there is security. I think, frankly, they have been investing significant resources and capabilities to train in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our relationship with Spain is so strong that I believe we can continue using that relationship to increase our collaboration in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Sahel region in particular.

I do not think that the French position at this moment will impact, obviously, our relationship with Spain in continuing the security collaboration, and if confirmed I will work with Spain to make sure that we continue to fortify our security and comprehensive operations and developing our work in sub-Saharan Africa to continue the growth of our security and support for those countries.

I think it is a matter of continuing that support and strengthening those ties and increasing our work with them in sub-Saharan Africa.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, let me thank all four of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country and continuing to serve our country. We know that these are extremely challenging times and we thank you for making the sacrifice to serve our country and we also thank your families.

Senator Dodd, it is really good to see you. Brings back the time in 2007 when I was first elected to the Senate and got appointed to this committee. You were one of the senior members and you helped me in my original years in the United States Senate and mentoring me on this committee. It is good to see you in this capacity here in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

And let me start, if I might, with Mrs. Kennedy. It is great to see you.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Good to see you.

Senator CARDIN. I was in Vienna in July. Been to Vienna many times. Austria is a very important country for the United States, a strategic partner, and we have already talked about the fact that it is nonaligned so, therefore, it presents some challenges to us at times in regards to its relationship with Russia.

And, recently, we have seen that Austria has been supportive of the EU in regards to sanctions against Russia. But I think you are going to have a challenge in regards to our relationship of Austria as it relates to trying to show unity in Europe against the aggression of Russia.

I think less so with China because I think there is more unity there. I just bring that to your attention.

But I want to mention a second part that is unique about our mission in Vienna, and that is we have two other very important missions. We had the IAEA and we had the OSCE.

I am the chair of U.S.-Helsinki Commission. We rely a great deal on our mission in Vienna in addition to our OSCE mission for the support in regards to the OSCE.

I guess my comment is, yes, the bilateral, it is extremely important. We need to deal with unity in our quest against aggression of Russia. But we also are going to need cooperation and support between the three missions that we have and, quite frankly, the ambassador to Austria usually is the senior partner in that relationship.

I would just ask you to recognize that all three of these missions are critically important and you can play a role in assisting the other two missions.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Thank you so much, Senator. I appreciate that. It is good to see you and I am very much looking forward to working cooperatively with the Tri-Mission with the other two ambassadors and coordinating with them. That is something that, I think, would be very, very important, and if I am confirmed I look forward to that.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Murphy, I enjoyed our conversation. It is interesting that Bosnia and Kosovo have a lot in common from the point of view they both have challenges of a strong central govern-

ment representing all of the population, the geographical population, with the challenges in the northern part of Kosovo with the Serbian population and, of course, in Bosnia with the impact of Serbia population and the desire for autonomy.

My question to both of you, we have talked about corruption. Both countries have real serious issues with corruption and we are going to work with you very closely on that.

But in Bosnia, we need to work to constitutional reform. In Kosovo, we need to have a government that is respected all of the communities and has the confidence of all the communities and can provide services to all the communities rather than relying on Serbia to provide a lot of the services to the Serbs that are in Kosovo.

What is your strategies to advance the unity of those two countries so they, ultimately, can make full integration into Europe and, hopefully, membership in organizations such as NATO?

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator, and I, too, enjoyed our conversation and I hope to welcome you and other members of the committee in Bosnia and Herzegovina if I am confirmed.

I want to start by just stating up front, because you spoke about unity and territorial integrity, I want to—I think it is really important to state clearly that we are fully committed to sovereignty and territorial integrity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and rhetoric and actions that put that at risk and put at risk Bosnia's Euro-Atlantic integration, something the citizens want and make clear that they want and the politicians claim to support is both counterproductive, self-defeating, and itself quite risky.

Now, having said that, our immediate focus in the short term is on limited constitutional reform designed to increase the stability and functionality of the country, ensure greater equality for all citizens, and enhance democratic standards and meet a key target in Euro-Atlantic integration.

This has to do with the European Court of Human Rights cases that found elements of the constitution discriminatory.

In addition, we are also pressing for reforms in the rule of law area, in the economy, and others that are critical to the stability and functionality of the state and that would open up political space to more civic-minded parties and participation, and inject greater dynamism and energy into the economy, which would generate prosperity for more of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens.

And if confirmed, I intend to support all of those activities and I also very much look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee on these reforms, but also to discuss longer-term possibilities for additional reforms that are going to be required to advance Bosnia and Herzegovina along the path of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Hovenier?

Mr. HOVENIER. Thank you for that question. May I first beg your indulgence to simply note that my career in government began as an intern at the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe? And so I am delighted to be able to—

Senator CARDIN. You should have put that first on your resume.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HOVENIER. I think you have pointed out exactly what the challenge is. Kosovo is an independent country and the authorities

of Kosovo ought to govern their entire country, and the challenge is, of course, elements of the country that are either not interested in or, at times, the authorities in Kosovo find themselves actively subverted in exercising authority over their entire country. This needs to be done very carefully.

The European Union-facilitated dialogue has made real progress with some of this, and there is a multi-ethnic police nationwide that exercises authority including in the north with customs service, judiciary.

But there is still work to be done, particularly with municipal governments. And if I am confirmed, one of the challenges will be to work with authorities of Kosovo and for my colleagues in Belgrade to work with authorities in Serbia to move this EU-facilitated dialogue forward and further narrow the differences.

We accept that Serbia has desires to support the Serbian community in Kosovo. That is reasonable. But it needs to be done in the constitutional framework and under the legal jurisdiction of Kosovo.

One last thing I would say is another priority of mine would be to encourage the authorities of Kosovo to make abundantly clear that they are a multi-ethnic country and that all citizens, without regard to ethnicity, enjoy the same rights and privileges.

The Ahtisaari plan, the constitution of Kosovo, the Kosovo legal framework, is actually quite good in this regard and there is a number of rights guaranteed in law for ethnic communities.

Implementation has not always been what we would hope. But if I am confirmed, this will also be a big priority to help ensure that the ethnic communities in Kosovo, who have every right to be in their country and to exercise their rights as a citizen, feel safe in doing so.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator Cardin. I do not think we have anyone else waiting for a first round of questions.

I do have several more questions that I would like to ask in a second round. Is there anyone else who has—Senator Johnson, Senator Cardin, do you have a second round that you would like to?

[No response.]

Senator SHAHEEN. I want to go back then to the questions about the directed energy attacks, the anomalous health incidents. I think, Mrs. Kennedy, you got a number of questions about that.

What you did not get asked is whether or not you have been briefed by the attacks that have happened in Vienna.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Senator, I have—my information on the attacks is on an unclassified basis.

Senator SHAHEEN. Okay. Can I ask each of the rest of you have you been briefed about anomalous health incidents and what to do if you are attacked or if any members, any employees who are working with you, were to be attacked?

Ms. Reynoso?

Ambassador REYNOSO. I have been briefed, broadly, but I have not been given specific instructions as to what to do in case of an incident.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Murphy?



Mr. MURPHY. I am familiar with the communications that the department has provided to the field over the last several months about incidents and how they will respond to them and what is expected of us. But I have not received a classified briefing on incidents elsewhere in Europe.

Senator SHAHEEN. And have you been told that, if confirmed, you will be briefed?

Mr. MURPHY. If confirmed, I will seek such a briefing.

Senator SHAHEEN. Okay. How about you, Mr. Hovenier?

Mr. HOVENIER. Just as with regard to Mr. Murphy, I am aware of incidents, more broadly, and I am very aware of the guidance that has been provided out to all of our posts from the Department of State of what to do.

And, of course, in my last job as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ankara, paid very close attention to that guidance as to what we should do if an employee complained or if we felt an incident took place. But I have not been formally briefed at a classified level and, if confirmed, I would absolutely seek such a briefing before heading to post.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I assume both Mrs. Kennedy and Ms. Reynoso have the same response on requesting a briefing.

Mrs. KENNEDY. Absolutely. I will request a briefing. Absolutely.

Ambassador REYNOSO. Yes, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. My final question is for you, Ms. Reynoso, because there has been a lot of discussion in recent months about strategic autonomy on the continent of Europe, usually in the context of national security but not always.

And I know that or at least it appears that different countries in Europe define that term differently. Can you discuss how—your perception of how Spain defines strategic autonomy?

Ambassador REYNOSO. Thank you for the question, Senator.

As you know, Spain is quite active as a member of the European Union and also a NATO member. It is my understanding that, like anything else, these two institutions share a lot of members in common and also have quite a bit of values and goals in common.

That said, with respect to security in particular, NATO is the fundamental and essential institution that we, as the United States, support going—in terms of our broad strategic relationship with Europe.

And, obviously, for my purposes, the platform I will use to engage with Spain, especially in the short term, if confirmed, given its hosting of the NATO Summit next year, any movement in terms of creating other vehicles for security cooperation or security independence from the NATO platform that European members might take on such as Spain, obviously, will be helpful if, ultimately, it will lead to greater expenditure and defense and security support and spending overall in connection with their commitments and targets.

However, my position will be to have NATO and make NATO be and use that platform in my relationship and my work in Spain, if confirmed, as the primary institution of security cooperation and support.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

With that, thank you very much to each of our nominees for your testimony today. I look forward to working with all of you, should you be confirmed.

And for the information of all senators, the record of this hearing will remain open until close of business tomorrow, Wednesday, October 6th.

To my colleagues on the committee, if you have any questions for the record please submit them on time to the nominees. I urge you to answer any questions expeditiously so that your nominations can be considered before the full committee when we hold a business meeting.

With that, this hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JEFFREY M. HOVENIER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* Kosovo's special police recently began enforcing a regulation requiring Serbian vehicles to remove their license plates when entering Kosovo. Kosovo Serbs began blocking border crossings in response, and Serbian military jets and helicopters began flying near the border. An agreement has been reached to resolve the issue, but tensions remain high. How can the United States help lower the temperature and best support the EU-led normalization efforts? What will you do if confirmed to help advance the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue to strongly support the EU-facilitated Dialogue to normalize Kosovo-Serbia relations, including through direct engagement with Kosovo's senior leadership and in collaboration with my counterpart U.S. Chief of Mission in Belgrade. Reaching a comprehensive normalization deal between the parties remains the only way to unlock Kosovo and Serbia's Western-oriented futures. We believe normalization should be centered on mutual recognition. The United States is ready to help the parties in any way possible to reach an agreement that will establish fully normalized relations. We are actively and closely engaged with both sides and the EU to help the process.

*Question.* Traffickers in Kosovo continue to force Kosovo citizens into sex trafficking and forced labor. Members of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities are among the most vulnerable. How will you work with the Government of Kosovo to combat sex trafficking and forced labor, and protect vulnerable communities from these heinous practices?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will actively engage Kosovo authorities and civil society to address human trafficking issues. I will encourage the Government of Kosovo to: vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit officials, and impose strong sentences; provide adequate and consistent funding for NGO-run shelters; designate specific prosecutors and judges to handle trafficking cases; and provide advanced training to judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement on trafficking investigations and prosecutions to ensure appropriate sentences for traffickers. I will encourage the Government to adopt a new Anti-trafficking National Strategy and Action Plan and will meet with vulnerable communities to hear directly from them.

*Question.* Kosovo recently suspended the development of a gas pipeline partly financed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. However, Kosovo continues to depend on coal-fired plants for 95 percent of its electricity. How will you encourage Kosovo to make the energy transition to gas and renewable energy sources, and help bolster its energy security?

*Answer.* Energy security is essential for Kosovo's future economic growth and overall stability. If confirmed, I will encourage Kosovo to finalize and implement a comprehensive energy plan that outlines a transition away from coal toward greater energy diversification, including natural gas and renewables, while securing a stable supply of energy. It should be noted that while the Millennium Challenge Corpora-

tion is supportive of the gas pipeline, its assistance was to be focused on demand creation rather than pipeline financing. Although MCC will no longer move forward with gas investments, due to timeline constraints, I will ensure the whole inter-agency encourages Kosovo to achieve decarbonization by 2050.

*Question.* Kosovo remains the only nation in Eastern Europe not allowed visa-free travel to European Union member states. The EU announced in 2018 that Kosovo met all requirements for visa liberalization. However, the EU has not made any progress towards Kosovo's integration. How will you engage the EU in regional formats on visa liberalization, and how will you approach dialogues regarding the possibility of EU accession?

*Answer.* Like other Balkan countries, it is important that Kosovo has a credible, concrete perspective for eventual Euro-Atlantic integration, and that the EU follows through. This is why the United States supports EU visa liberalization for Kosovo citizens. It is disappointing that the EU has not yet established visa-free travel for Kosovo, notwithstanding recognitions by the European Commission and Parliament that Kosovo has met all requirements. I confirmed, I will engage with Washington colleagues and the U.S. Mission to the EU to develop and implement a strategy to advance visa liberalization for Kosovo and to promote EU accession as well as encourage the Government of Kosovo to redouble efforts to meet the criteria for integration.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO JEFFREY M. HOVENIER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question.* In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Kosovo was identified as Tier 2 due to lack of prosecutions, implementing an anti-trafficking framework, and identifying victims.

- How will you work with the host government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will actively engage Kosovo authorities and civil society to address human trafficking issues. I will encourage the Government of Kosovo to: vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit officials, and impose strong sentences; provide adequate and consistent funding for NGO-run shelters; designate specific prosecutors and judges to handle trafficking cases; and provide advanced training to judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement on trafficking investigations and prosecutions to ensure appropriate sentences for convicted traffickers. I will also encourage the Government to adopt a new Anti-trafficking National Strategy and Action Plan.

*Question.* In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, religious freedom in Kosovo was identified as generally strained, compounded by the lack of legal framework provided under the Law of Religious Freedom. Despite this law's lofty goal of religious tolerance and freedom, it has prohibited some religious minorities from obtaining legal status and therefore, buying property, open bank accounts, access courts, and more.

- What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

*Answer.* Kosovo's constitution commits it to the principles of freedom of worship and religious pluralism. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to advance religious freedom in Kosovo through working with the Ambassador-at-Large, the Government of Kosovo, civil society organizations, and religious communities to enact a revised Law on Religious Freedom. Likewise, I will press the Government to uphold the rule of law and court decisions respecting the protected status of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) with particular focus on the Special Protective Zones around Church heritage sites. I will call on Kosovo authorities to implement court decisions directing the registration of property to the Decani monastery.

*Question.* In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Kosovo was identified as having significant human rights issues like undue restrictions on the press, including violence against journalists, significant government corruption, and attacks against minorities.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

*Answer.* If confirmed I will continue to press the Government of Kosovo to address human rights challenges by improving relations between Kosovo's ethnic commu-

nities. I will also press the Government to ensure that authorities thoroughly investigate instances of violence and harassment against journalists and members of minority communities. My priority would be to reduce and prevent actions that harm relations between ethnic groups and contribute to cross-border tensions. Kosovo needs to do more to implement the laws it has in place, and to hold officials to account when they fail to do so.

*Question.* How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will direct the Embassy to continue actively engaging with Kosovo civil society to address a variety of human rights issues, to identify new civil society partners and amplify civil society voices, and to work in helping to shape Kosovo as a multiethnic and democratic society that reflects and values human rights for all. I will use the tools at our disposal, including U.S. assistance, to bolster the capacity, skills, and reach of civil society organizations.

*Question.* Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years due to COVID. Press reports in February indicated that Embassy Pristina sent a cable detailing extremely poor conditions at post, including long hours, an increase in staff mental health issues, and a rise in interpersonal conflicts, all while dealing with the threat of COVID among staff.

- What is your understanding of current morale throughout Mission Kosovo?

*Answer.* Kosovo was hard hit by the pandemic and registered the world's highest per capita death rate in August 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as movement restrictions and strain on Kosovo's healthcare system, presented new challenges for the Embassy. My understanding is that Embassy morale has improved considerably in recent months, particularly since vaccines were administered, and that on October 6 the Mission established its workforce posture as "least restrictive" under the Department of State's COVID-19 Mitigation Process. If confirmed, I will continually seek ways to promote good morale at post.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve morale at Mission Kosovo?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with my Deputy Chief of Mission and senior leadership team to continue promoting an atmosphere that nurtures healthy living and work-life balance and strengthens the community. Additionally, I will foster an environment in which our staff have sufficient resources and training and are empowered to do their jobs. I will encourage them to bring serious issues to the highest level. I will ensure that everyone in the mission understands that my highest priority is the safety and security of the team and their dependents, and I will promote training and professional development and ensure that all staff members are aware of the employee and family support resources that the USG offers to assist employees.

*Question.* How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission Kosovo?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I plan to establish a strong team with a clear understanding of our goals and objectives, maintain open and transparent communications throughout the mission by sharing information, empower staff to fulfill their missions and potential, and seek ways to support and ensure the safety and community of the mission the community—for both American and local staff.

*Question.* Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission. How would you describe your management style?

*Answer.* My management style is to establish a vision and set clear priorities, ensuring that all team members have the training and resources needed to accomplish their tasks and achieve their goals, and to then delegate to members of the team while establishing mechanisms to ensure accountability.

*Question.* Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

*Answer.* No. While it is important for a leader to provide clear and candid feedback, that feedback should never take the form of berating a subordinate, either in public or private. I am committed to treating all members of any team I lead, or am a member of, with professionalism and respect.

*Question.* What lessons did you learn from your tenure as DCM in Mission Turkey?

*Answer.* I learned the importance of establishing a whole-of-mission and whole-of-government ethos. It is important that colleagues from other agencies can be con-

fidant that the Chief of Mission and Deputy Chief of Mission share their priorities just as they share Department of State priorities. Likewise, I learned the importance of frequent communication with the team and with Mission dependents, particularly in times of crisis and stress. Finally, while this was not a new lesson, I saw the importance of ensuring that my highest priority as a senior leader of a large Mission must be the safety and welfare of the entire Mission, including dependents; it is critical that this point be explicitly stated by the Chief of Mission and DCM and that it is backed up by actions.

*Question.* How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

*Answer.* To be successful, the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) must be the Chief of Mission's final/principal advisor, alter ego, and partner in managing and leading the mission. If confirmed, I fully expect to have that kind of relationship with my DCM in Pristina.

*Question.* If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will entrust my Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) to manage the day-to-day operations of the Mission, and to be fully engaged on and informed about all aspects of policy and Mission management, should the DCM need to step in to lead. The DCM will also be responsible for the professional development of Mission personnel, and join me in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

*Question.* How should the chief of mission lead a post with many U.S. Government agencies present?

*Answer.* The Chief of Mission should establish a whole-of-government and whole-of-mission ethos and foster a team atmosphere. She/he should understand and provide support to the priorities of each U.S. Government agency present in the Mission and ensure that U.S. Government agency heads participate in Country Team and relevant Mission functional meetings and discussions, with frequent direct engagement with the Chief of Mission and Deputy Chief of Mission. The Chief of Mission should also ensure that each U.S. Government agency provides input in establishing the Mission's strategic goals and objectives and understands its role in advancing them. If confirmed, I will work closely with each U.S. Government agency.

*Question.* In your experience, how important are interagency relationships within a post?

*Answer.* Strong interagency relationships are essential to forging a common understanding of the mission's vision and goals. Collegial and productive relationships and information sharing are especially crucial during times of crisis.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you handle interagency disagreement within Mission Kosovo?

*Answer.* Strong interagency relationships are vitally important to the smooth functioning of a mission. Disagreements with process and policy are normal, and I welcome an open exchange of ideas. I will consider all viewpoints before taking final decisions and work with my team to arrive at common understandings.

*Question.* In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking.

- Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

*Answer.* Yes. I believe it is critical to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances, as well as to collaborate with them on planning and developing performance metrics for the coming year. This encourages improvement and rewards success while building a stronger team. If confirmed, I will hold accountable those who have performance or conduct issues. This is what I have done throughout my career.

*Question.* If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I will support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers. I will hold accountable those who have performance or conduct issues.

*Question.* It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

*Answer.* In my experience, U.S. diplomats have gotten outside of our Embassy walls sufficiently to accomplish our mission, and if confirmed I will model the importance of getting outside of our Embassy. Access to, and engagement with, local contacts and the public is an important part of our work overseas. Throughout my career, I have participated in public outreach to all parts of society—from students to non-governmental organizations to the media—and will continue to do so.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to access all local populations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will encourage Embassy staff to spend time engaging with local populations and developing contacts. I will also lead by example to demonstrate to my team that it is important to engage with our local counterparts and to participate in public outreach to provide information about our goals in the country and to learn from our hosts about local conditions.

*Question.* Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Kosovo?

*Answer.* Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, with approximately half of its two million residents under the age of 25 and 70 percent younger than 35. While the United States remains immensely popular in Kosovo, young people who grew up after the Balkans conflict, while appreciative of American culture, often look to the EU, not the U.S., for higher education and work opportunities. Public Diplomacy efforts in Kosovo target three primary audiences: established influencers and opinion leaders, emerging decision makers, and youth. Kosovo has a vibrant and crowded media sector, although the financial sustainability of outlets often leaves them vulnerable to political and external pressures.

*Question.* What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

*Answer.* The United States is immensely popular among Kosovans, and the media environment is vibrant in the Albanian language sector, with a healthy spectrum of differing views and information vital to any democracy. However, minority populations, such as Kosovo Serbs, do not have the same access to an array of Serbian language media due to language barriers, and, as a result, remain vulnerable to Russian disinformation, especially through Serbian-controlled outlets. Along with educational and economic prosperity focused programs, I will continue Public Diplomacy projects that support Kosovo-Serb and other minority communities, with the objective of enabling access to differing views and ideas.

*Question.* How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will focus on closely coordinating the efforts of Washington- and Pristina-based public diplomacy teams and support the strategic planning processes, such as the Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan, to ensure programmatic and message coordination between Post and Washington. I will ensure there is a unified approach to highlighting key messages and U.S. policies in Kosovo, and coordinate messages and information initiatives accordingly. The small size of the Kosovan media market and the great public interest in the U.S.-Kosovo relationship enable the mission to take advantage of the local traditional and social media platforms.

*Question.* Do you believe that the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is fulfilling its mandate? Please explain your answer.

- Do you believe that UNMIK's mandate of "promoting security, stability, and respect for human rights" is efficient in the current political-social climate in Kosovo?

*Answer.* The U.N. Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has long since fulfilled its original purpose and is no longer relevant. UNMIK continues to operate with a diminished role since Kosovo declared independence in 2008. We continue to urge the U.N. Security Council to consider better ways to help Kosovo realize its full potential. Russia, as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, supports Serbian efforts to maintain UNMIK with its current mandate and staffing.

*Question.* UNMIK has an approved budget of \$44,192,100 for 353 total personnel, including civilians, experts, police, and U.N. volunteers. What are U.S. contributions to UNMIK?

*Answer.* The United States is assessed at 27.89 percent of all Member States assessments, but the Department of State pays 25 percent due to a legislative cap. The U.S. share of that budget, capped at 25 percent, is \$11,048,025.

*Question.* Will you commit to working with Congress, along with the A/S for International Organizations, to effectively measure our contributions against the effectiveness of the UNMIK mandate?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress along with the A/S for International Organizations, to effectively measure our contributions against the effectiveness of the UNMIK mandate.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO JEFFREY M. HOVENIER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

*Question.* The Helsinki Commission has expressed concern about the plight of Roma in Kosovo, who not only face the same discrimination faced elsewhere in Europe but were targeted as alleged Serbian collaborators.

- As Ambassador, how would you propose to find solutions for improved engagement with the Serbian community throughout Kosovo?

*Answer.* Kosovo's constitution affords Kosovo Serbs and other minorities extensive rights and protections, but Kosovo still has substantial work to do to ensure full implementation of the legal rights afforded to minorities and to ensure Kosovo Serbs feel they have a stake in their country's future. If confirmed, I will engage in active outreach to the Kosovo Serb community, seeking to include Kosovo Government and civil society officials in that outreach. I will also use U.S. assistance programs to focus on increasing constructive inter-ethnic cooperation, empowering all citizens to actively participate in government, ensuring equal access to services, and improving economic opportunities for minority citizens, particularly through youth.

*Question.* In your view, how would you pursue improved relations with other minority leaders, including from the Romani community, and advocate for the security of their communities and their integration in Kosovo society?

*Answer.* The Embassy has a strong record of engaging with minority communities and leaders across Kosovo, and, if confirmed, I will actively continue those efforts. Kosovo's legislative framework ensuring equal rights are afforded to members of minority groups is strong, but implementation is often weak. I will continue to encourage the Government of Kosovo to address human rights challenges within its borders and to uphold the rights of members of minority communities in line with Kosovo's constitution, laws, and international obligations. I will also call for Kosovo justice institutions to serve all citizens fairly, without prejudice, in accordance with the law, and to ensure that every resident has equal access to justice.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO JEFFREY M. HOVENIER BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* Kosovo has agreed to permit Afghan evacuees who fail to clear initial rounds of screening to be housed at Camp Bondsteel. This is a generous gesture by our ally in the midst of our strategic failure in Afghanistan. If confirmed, how will you work with the Government of Kosovo to ensure that Afghan evacuees do not become a burden or security risk to Kosovo?

*Answer.* Kosovo provided early and generous support by agreeing to host up to 2,000 at-risk Afghans in need of further processing before relocation to the United States. The decision to house Afghan refugees at Camp Bondsteel, at U.S. Government expense, minimizes the burden to Kosovo. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Kosovo Government in implementing the terms of our legal agreement.

*Question.* What will become of Afghan evacuees that do not clear their initial screenings within the one year time frame Kosovo will permit the evacuees?

*Answer.* An interagency team is working on the ground with the goal of clearing all Afghan evacuees at Camp Bondsteel for onward travel to the United States. Two plane loads of individuals and their accompanying family members have already

successfully cleared and departed Kosovo. U.S.-affiliated Afghans who clear screening will be relocated to the United States as they clear. The United States will work with IOM and UNHCR to relocate to safe and willing third countries any individuals who do not clear screening processes before the one-year period elapses.

*Question.* If confirmed, what procedures will you put in place to ensure constant and careful communication with the Government of Kosovo regarding all Afghan evacuees?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's close coordination with the Government of Kosovo, including with the highest levels of the Government of Kosovo, regarding Afghan evacuees in the country under U.S. auspices. The generous arrangements provided by the Government of Kosovo are clear evidence of the pre-existing close communication between Kosovo officials and Embassy staff. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize and enable close coordination between the Embassy and the Government of Kosovo on the political, consular, security, medical, and humanitarian aspects of this endeavor.

*Question.* Last week we saw that NATO had to increase patrols on the Kosovo/Serbian border due a dispute over vehicle registration. While this is just one issue of many it hints at the continued strain between the two neighbors. What is your assessment of Serbian/Kosovo relations?

*Answer.* Serbia/Kosovo relations remain strained and complex. Serbia remains unwilling to acknowledge the reality that Kosovo is an independent state; Kosovo maintains a deep distrust of Serbian motivations and intentions. Both sides have taken actions that have jeopardized the prospects of normalization of relations, which should be centered on mutual recognition. The recent agreement on license plate issues brokered by the EU with strong U.S. support demonstrates that when leaders in the region engage openly and constructively, they can find common ground benefitting all citizens. The United State considers the EU-facilitated Dialogue the best platform to resolve outstanding issues and to normalize relations centered on mutual recognition.

*Question.* Do you see the current dispute escalating into anything further?

*Answer.* Conditions at the border crossings are calm and traffic is flowing both ways smoothly. I understand that NATO KFOR troops' presence at the affected border crossings is temporary and limited to approximately two weeks.

*Question.* How long do you see the NATO mission in Kosovo lasting?

*Answer.* NATO's current presence in Kosovo provides strategic stability in the region and reduces tensions between Kosovo and Serbia. If confirmed, I will, together with senior USG officials, continue our robust support to the EU's efforts to achieve progress in the Dialogue it facilitates between Kosovo and Serbia. We see progress towards a comprehensive, verifiable normalization agreement as a precondition to any NATO departure.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL J. MURPHY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* Bosnia was ranked 111th on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2020, a decrease of seven points since 2012. What can the United States and its European allies do to help Bosnia and Herzegovina tackle corruption? How will you advance efforts to tackle corruption as ambassador?

*Answer.* The administration has made clear that by countering corruption and demonstrating the advantages of transparent and accountable governance, we can secure a critical advantage for the United States and other democracies. If confirmed, I will work with our international and local partners to advocate for key anticorruption, election integrity, and rule of law reforms. I will also continue to leverage U.S. assistance programs to increase government transparency, strengthen civil society, support investigative journalism, and promote the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption. Finally, I will recommend use of U.S. sanctions tools, as appropriate, to advance these priorities.

*Question.* Bosnia and Herzegovina will hold general elections in October 2020. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Christian Schmidt, recently said that he supports electoral reform in advance of the elections. What reforms do you believe need to be prioritized? Should they be electoral or constitutional? How will you work with the High Representative, and counterparts in the Bosnian Govern-



ment, to enact these reforms? How do you assess these reforms' likelihood of being adopted?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize limited constitutional reform as well as election law and election integrity reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). These reforms are necessary for BiH's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions and to strengthen BiH's electoral processes. The United States remains steadfast in its support of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in BiH, and if confirmed, I will closely collaborate with High Representative Schmidt as well as U.S. allies and partners to promote BiH's stability and functionality. The United States welcomes OHR's focus on fulfillment of the 5+2 Agenda, as the agreed upon conditions for OHR closure.

*Question.* The Republika Srpska parliament passed a law in July on the "non-implementation" of the High Representative's decision banning genocide denial. The law would send those who call the Republika Srpska "genocidal" to jail. How can the United States work to increase tolerance in Bosnian society, while also addressing important legacy issues?

Answer. The United States does not condone efforts to deny historical facts with respect to crimes committed in the 1992–1995 conflict, including the genocide in Srebrenica. A fact-based approach with respect to the past is essential to advancing reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. If confirmed, I will continue to promote transitional justice and reconciliation efforts and support local actors who work to promote human rights and mutual respect. I will engage with younger generations to ensure a more tolerant, equitable, and prosperous future for BiH.

*Question.* In 2019, the EU identified fourteen priorities for Bosnia and Herzegovina to address relating to democracy, rule of law, fundamental rights, and public administration. Bosnia and Herzegovina established the Commission for Cooperation in NATO to help facilitate its Reform Program for 2021–2022. How do you assess progress made by Bosnia since the 2019 priorities were identified? How will you engage with the Bosnian Government on its Reform Program?

Answer. The United States fully supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The reforms outlined in the EU's 14 priorities and in BiH's Reform Program with NATO are necessary for BiH to progress towards membership in both institutions. While there has been some progress, there is much work to be done. If confirmed, I will work with BiH's leaders and the United States' international partners to advance the reforms outlined in the EU's 14 priorities and BiH's Reform Program with NATO. Euro-Atlantic integration is the surest path to the democratic, prosperous, and secure future that all of BiH's citizens seek and deserve.

*Question.* The mandates for the EU and NATO missions in the Bosnia will be up for reauthorization at the U.N. Security Council in November. Russia has already expressed displeasure with the appointment of Christian Schmidt as High Representative and could potentially veto the reauthorization. How will you work to ensure these critical missions are reauthorized and what will you do in the event of a Russian veto?

Answer. The United States firmly supports EUFOR's Operation ALTHEA and NATO's presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). EUFOR plays an important role in maintaining security and stability in BiH. NATO's presence is equally vital. Instability in BiH is not in the interest of any part of the international community, including Russia. If confirmed, I will support the continuation of these important missions.

*Question.* Having previously served in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you are quite familiar with the region's political dynamics. Are there any significant changes in the Balkans' political dynamics compared to when you were last posted to Sarajevo? How has Bosnia and Herzegovina's relations with its neighbors, Serbia and Croatia, changed over the past decade?

Answer. The Western Balkans has made significant strides since 2009 when I departed Sarajevo. Croatia joined the EU; Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia joined NATO; and Greece and North Macedonia reached the historic Prespa Agreement. The U.S. has good relations with Croatia and Serbia. Their commitment to BiH's sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential to the entire region's stability and security. The biggest change since 2009 is that Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) play a more prominent and negative role in BiH and the Balkans. If confirmed, I will work to counter efforts by local and outside

actors, especially Russia and the PRC, that threaten our interests and undermine BiH's future.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL J. MURPHY BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question.* In the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Bosnia was upgraded to Tier 2 due to overall increasing efforts to meet the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- How will you work with the Bosnian Government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

*Answer.* Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has made commendable progress combating trafficking in persons; therefore, BiH was upgraded to Tier 2 in the 2021 TIP Report. Nonetheless, there is more work to be done. If confirmed, I will press for more vigorous investigations, prosecutions, and convictions for this crime. I will urge local officials to increase resources, personnel, and training for law enforcement to investigate these crimes and institute screening procedures to identify trafficking victims within migrant flows. I will encourage BiH officials to standardize victim assistance throughout the country, and I will continue to support assistance for prosecutors and judges so that they focus on the needs of victims and understand the severity of trafficking when seeking and issuing sentences.

*Question.* In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, the need for respect of religious freedom was underscored by the U.S. Embassy as well as between religious minorities and government officials. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to promote universal respect for freedom of religion and belief in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and ensure that the embassy and its branch offices recommend, develop, and implement policies to address any religiously-motivated abuses, harassment, and discrimination. Finally, if confirmed, I will continue to promote inter-religious dialogue and protections for religious minorities in BiH as well as encourage the country's religious communities to support reconciliation in BiH.

*Question.* In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Bosnia was identified as having significant human rights issues, including a lack of independence of the judiciary, restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet, violence against journalists, corruption, and more. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will privately and publicly raise U.S. concerns about violence against journalists, corruption, and other human rights issues. I will work with governmental and non-governmental partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to improve legal protections throughout BiH for free expression and public gatherings. I will continue assistance programs with local, cantonal, entity, and state-level administrative, investigative, and justice officials to improve anti-corruption coordination and promote public accountability and transparency. Finally, if confirmed, I will continue to push for adoption and implementation of legislative reforms to improve judicial independence.

*Question.* How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and advocate, privately and publicly, to advance human rights issues of concern in BiH. I will continue to support U.S. assistance programs and public engagement opportunities to increase the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, and work on human rights issues.

*Question.* Many U.S. missions have been under enormous stress over the last few years, in large part due to COVID. What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will prioritize the well-being of my staff and listen to concerns they may have about the operating environment in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, and where I have the authority and resources, I will work to put in place measures to address them.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve morale at Mission BiH?

Answer. If confirmed, I want Americans and local staff under my leadership to feel heard, respected, and engaged; and I plan to set the tone by my example. I will maintain open and regular communication with the Employee Association, Community Liaison Office, and Locally Employed Staff Committee to discuss issues of concern at mission Sarajevo, including its branch offices in Banja Luka and Mostar. Where I have the authority and resources, I will work to put in place measures to address them.

*Question.* How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision at Mission BiH?

Answer. If confirmed, I will communicate clearly and regularly to all mission personnel U.S. foreign policy objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). I will empower American Direct hire employees from across the interagency and the mission's exceptional local staff to advance these objectives as well as to build and sustain the management platform required to support this work. If confirmed, I will expect collaboration across the mission, including Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar, and among all U.S. agencies present in BiH. I will expect members of the mission to pro-actively share information with one another.

*Question.* Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission. How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I encourage clear, direct and open communication with me about policy, management and other issues. I believe strongly in empowering my team to advance foreign policy and management priorities, and I encourage my team to think creatively, pro-actively and "outside the box" to address challenges and resolve problems. I encourage team members to present their perspectives when discussing policy options, but to respect and execute decisions once they are made. I value diversity of perspectives, honesty, and, above all, integrity.

*Question.* Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

Answer. No, I do not believe it is acceptable nor constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private. Mutual respect in the work place is essential for building the cohesive team required to achieve U.S. policy goals.

*Question.* What lessons have you learned from your tenure as a DAS in EUR?

Answer. My more than three years as Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) have underscored the importance of: 1) clearly defining strategic objectives and priorities; 2) empowering subordinates to accomplish organizational objectives; 3) forging strong, collaborative interagency relationships to develop and implement policy; and 4) devoting time and energy to recruiting, hiring, and developing a diverse staff. In addition, I have learned that integrity is the most important leadership and management value a leader can possess and must safeguard.

*Question.* How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. I have great respect for the current Deputy Chief of Mission, Deborah Mennuti, with whom I have worked previously. If I am confirmed, I anticipate and look forward to a positive and productive working relationship with her.

*Question.* If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will entrust the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) with day-to-day responsibility for mission operations. I will also expect the DCM to be fully engaged with, and informed on, all aspects of policy, so that the DCM is prepared to step into the role of Charge d'Affaires, when necessary, and ensure continuity of operations.

*Question.* How should the chief of mission lead a post with many U.S. Government agencies present?

Answer. As in Washington, interagency communication and coordination at an overseas mission is critical to effective policy development and implementation. If confirmed, I will work to facilitate unity of purpose and vision as well as operational coordination among all agencies at post. I will build strong relationships with each member of the country team, who I will also expect to work cordially and collaboratively with one another. If confirmed, I will also tackle any difficult issues and challenges that may emerge within country team.

*Question.* In your experience, how important are interagency relationships within a post?

*Answer.* In my experience, strong interagency relationships are essential to effective policy development and implementation. If confirmed, I will expect members of my country team to work cooperatively and collaboratively to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you handle interagency disagreement within Mission BiH?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will expect members of my country team to work cooperatively and collaboratively to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will make use of internal interagency working groups and other fora to develop policy and ensure effective coordination of its implementation. If confirmed, I will encourage team members to present their perspectives when discussing policy options, but to respect and execute decisions once they are taken. If confirmed, I will also tackle any difficult issues and challenges that may emerge within country team.

*Question.* In order to create and continue employee excellence at the Department, accurate and direct employee evaluation reports (EERs) for Foreign Service Officers are imperative, though often lacking. Do you believe that it is important to provide employees with accurate, constructive feedback on their performances in order to encourage improvement and reward those who most succeeded in their roles?

*Answer.* Yes, I believe that accurate, constructive feedback on performance is necessary to both encourage improvement and reward officers who excel in the performance of their duties.

*Question.* If confirmed, would you support and encourage clear, accurate, and direct feedback to employees in order to improve performance and reward high achievers?

*Answer.* Yes, if confirmed, I will encourage all supervisors to provide clear and direct feedback to subordinates to improve performance and reward high achievers.

*Question.* It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens. In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

*Answer.* Each overseas operating environment is unique. In my experience, U.S. diplomats excel at building the relationships necessary to advance U.S. foreign policy. During the more than 18 months in which physical outreach has been limited by the global pandemic, our missions in Europe, including Sarajevo, have used technology and other creative means to build and nurture the relationships crucial to advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I will ensure that the mission in Sarajevo and its branch offices in Banja Luka and Mostar actively engage with a full range of outside contacts to advance U.S. interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to access all local populations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work to support the continued expansion of U.S. engagement across all populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Whether meeting with politicians, engaging young people on social media, or hosting civil society leaders, U.S. diplomats are always seeking new tools and avenues to advance U.S. interests. I will support my team in continuing to develop new connections in BiH.

*Question.* Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts. What is the public diplomacy environment like in BiH? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face there?

*Answer.* Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is fertile ground for Public Diplomacy (PD) programs, and these programs are critical to advancing our foreign policy objectives in BiH. Students and professionals alike are eager to participate in our exchange programs, and the Public Diplomacy Section has a grants program that supports democracy, economic reform, and reconciliation. As with many other missions, our public diplomacy work is limited by the finite nature of our staffing and budgets. If confirmed, I will strongly support the work of the PD section and leverage public diplomacy resources to advance U.S. policy in BiH.

*Question.* How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

Answer. U.S. foreign policy and national security goals are the same, whether in Washington or in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). If confirmed, I will ensure my public diplomacy team coordinates closely with Washington, develops a clear message regarding U.S. policy, and communicates it to all intended audiences in BiH, and that Washington does the same with U.S.-based audiences.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO MICHAEL J. MURPHY BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

*Question.* As you noted in your testimony, U.S. support to Bosnia and Herzegovina is critical to maintaining peace in the Balkans and moving the country towards a better future. How will you work with key members of the international community to push reforms that cement support for individual human rights, and bring Bosnia into compliance with the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights Court regarding Sejdic and Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Answer. The United States welcomes efforts by Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) leaders to increase the integrity and transparency of BiH's democratic processes and advance BiH on its Euro-Atlantic path. If confirmed, I will work with local political and civic leaders and key European partners, including the European Union, to encourage reforms that address decisions of BiH's Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. If confirmed, I will also support efforts to ensure BiH's electoral system meets international recommendations for electoral integrity, including those made by the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

*Question.* China and Russia are working to increase their malign influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina daily. As you noted, they aim to keep the country in a state of paralysis to ease their ability to influence local actors. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided another opportunity for China and Russia to play politics with people's lives. In June, President Biden committed 500,000 Pfizer vaccines to Bosnia and Herzegovina based on extremely low availability in-country, and a continued spread of the virus. This commitment is critical in our global fight against COVID-19 in low- and middle-income nations, and reinforces our deep ties with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When will the administration deliver on this now months-long commitment, and will you continue to advocate for support if the county continues to lag compared to its neighbors in vaccine availability?

Answer. Bosnia and Herzegovina suffers from serious healthcare deficiencies across all levels of healthcare administration, which delayed and inhibited government response to COVID-19. If confirmed, I will work with local actors and international partners to support BiH efforts to combat COVID-19 and move out of the pandemic. If confirmed, I will also remain committed to coordinating within the administration to expedite delivery of any currently planned, or future, vaccine donations to BiH.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL J. MURPHY BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* The fragile stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is threatened by growing Russian and Chinese manipulation in the country. China has over \$2 billion in infrastructure projects in the country, most of it in opaque and likely corrupt deals. Russia is allied with leaders in Republika Srpska that are calling for secession from the country and challenging the legitimacy of the country's institutions. If confirmed, how will you confront Russian and Chinese manipulation and influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Answer. Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have very different visions than the United States for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The United States believes that our interests, and the interests of BiH, are best served by building a common democratic and prosperous future for all BiH citizens based upon reconciliation, good governance, economic reform, and rule of law. Euro-Atlantic integration is the surest path to this future. If confirmed, I will continue a whole-of-government approach that leverages the full range of U.S. Government capabilities in supporting BiH on this path as well as to counter efforts by local and outside actors, especially Russia and the PRC, that threaten our interests and BiH's future.

*Question.* How can the United States engage more with Republika Srpska and other sub-national states in support of the Dayton Agreement?

*Answer.* The United States remains fully committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both the Republika Srpska and the Federation entities are fundamental elements of the internal political organization of BiH, which is, and must remain, one country. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with local political and civic leaders from across the country on a range of issues to advance full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and support the reforms necessary to build a common democratic and prosperous future for all citizens of BiH.

*Question.* How do you assess Chinese economic influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What investment sources can the United States promote in the country as an alternative to China's opaque and onerous terms?

*Answer.* Investment from the People's Republic of China (PRC) in BiH is growing and focuses on critical infrastructure such as telecommunications, energy, and transportation. The PRC's opaque business practices and lending mechanisms exploit corruption in BiH. If confirmed, I will continue to support economic and anti-corruption reforms that advance BiH's Euro-Atlantic integration and promote sustainable, transparent economic growth. If confirmed, I will also work with colleagues across the U.S. Government, the private sector, and the Western Balkans region to advance opportunities for U.S. businesses and investment consistent with the highest transparency, labor, digital, and green standards.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. JULISSA REYNOSO PANTALEON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Latin American Migration to Spain*

*Question.* Spain received the second largest number of asylum seekers in the European Union in 2020—at nearly 21 percent of the EU's total asylum applications. The top five nationalities included Venezuelan, Colombian, Honduran, Peruvian, and Nicaraguan. This year, conditions in Latin America have become more complex, with poverty and inequality on the rise, transnational criminal groups gaining strength, and dictatorships increasingly cracking down on populations in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Based on previous migration trends and an analysis of conditions in Latin America, it is a safe bet to assume that asylum applications from Latin Americans in Spain will continue to increase. If confirmed, how will you engage with Spain to align our humanitarian objectives in Latin America? How will you work to facilitate improved data sharing with Spain and an exchange of experiences on refugee and migration challenges?

*Answer.* Latin America remains a priority for Spain's foreign policy. The United States and Spain are in broad agreement about promoting democracy, the rule of law, and economic prosperity in Latin America. Spain is one of our key partners in providing development assistance in the region, which supports U.S. Government efforts to tackle root causes of migration. Spain is also strongly committed to addressing the needs of those affected by the Maduro regime-caused humanitarian crisis and is a leader in providing assistance to countries in the region hosting millions of Venezuelans and others who have fled their homelands. If confirmed, I will seek opportunities to coordinate with Spain on these efforts and work to expand existing cooperation.

*Spain and Venezuela*

*Question.* Last month, Spanish authorities arrested the Maduro regime's former intelligence chief, Hugo Carvajal, and I hope that he will soon be extradited to the United States to face charges related to his role in drug trafficking. However, I am concerned that Spain may be playing a risky game when it comes to the political situation in Venezuela, including the Sanchez Government's repeated outreach to senior members of the Maduro regime at the expense of similar contacts with Venezuela's Interim Government. What steps will you take to ensure better alignment between the United States and Spain when it comes to Venezuela, in particular on the key issues of supporting new presidential elections in Venezuela and advancing accountability for the Maduro regime's crimes against humanity?

*Answer.* The United States and Spain are largely aligned in seeking a democratic transition through free and fair elections in Venezuela. Both countries share an interest in ending the crisis caused by the Maduro regime. If confirmed, I will work

with Spain to support the Venezuelan people and hold the Maduro regime accountable.

*Spain, NATO & Afghanistan Evacuations*

*Question.* As a trusted member of NATO, Spain maintains troops in Iraq and stood with the United States and our allies in Afghanistan during the last two decades. In August, Spain evacuated over 2,200 of our Afghan partners and their families following the fall of Kabul. How do you assess Spain's efforts in Afghanistan? Please outline your priorities for our defense cooperation with Spain, including via NATO?

*Answer.* Since the evacuation of our Afghan partners began in August, Spain has been a trusted and indispensable partner in the effort to evacuate at-risk individuals and their families from Afghanistan. Spain is a committed NATO ally and will host the 2022 NATO Summit, in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Spain's entry into NATO. If confirmed, I would seek to expand existing cooperation on shared objectives with Spain.

*Catalonia*

*Question.* Prime Minister Sanchez pardoned nine pro-independence leaders from Catalonia in June 2021. However, former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont was arrested in Sardinia a few weeks ago on a Spanish Supreme Court warrant. How does the Biden Administration view the pro-independence movement in Catalonia? How will you approach these issues, if confirmed?

*Answer.* The United States supports a strong and united Spain.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. JULISSA REYNOSO PANTALEON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Trafficking in Persons*

*Question.* In the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Spain was identified as Tier 1 but it was noted that investigations, prosecutions, and convictions decreased.

- How will you work with the Spanish Government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

*Answer.* During the COVID-19 pandemic, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions decreased worldwide. The isolation created by the pandemic also made it easier in some cases for traffickers to operate. We have a close working relationship with the Spanish on anti-trafficking. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Spanish government, our international law enforcement colleagues, and civil society partners, to shine a spotlight on these cases, and to push for greater action at all levels to ensure prevention efforts are effective, those who engage in trafficking in persons are brought to justice, and survivors receive the holistic assistance they need.

*Question.* How can Spain be a model for other western European countries that are not Tier 1 but aspire to be?

*Answer.* This year, Rocio Mora Nieto, a Spanish national, was chosen as one of the Department's TIP heroes—thanks to her work, and her mother's work before her, shelters for women victims of trafficking have been established and there has been continued work with the Government to ensure survivors have access to key services. This kind of partnership between government and civil society organizations is a model for other countries. Spain's toll-free assistance number, holistic support services for survivors, and significant sentences that are sufficient to deter traffickers, are also examples for other countries to follow.

*International Religious Freedom*

*Question.* In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Spain was identified as having some issues of religious tolerance within various communities. Notably, there were a large number of religiously motivated hate crimes in 2020.

- What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador At Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will incorporate these topics into the mission's broader efforts to promote interfaith tolerance and the safety of religious, racial, and ethnic minority communities in Spain and Andorra. I will encourage the government at the national, state, regional, and local levels to take steps to improve protection for reli-

gious minority communities, places of worship, and other culturally meaningful sites, incorporating experience and expertise of those communities. I will direct my Country Team to support encounters with and within minority communities that promote tolerance and respect for religious freedom, to include community projects and interfaith coalitions. Finally, I will empower local voices to speak out against hate crimes.

#### *Human Rights*

*Question.* In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Spain was identified as having no reported incidents of significant human rights abuses during the reporting period.

- Despite this positive news, how will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to continue to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will direct my entire team to continue working closely with the Spanish Government and civil society to promote fundamental freedoms and protect the rights of women and girls; LGBTQI+ individuals; people with disabilities; ethnic, racial, and religious minorities; and other marginalized communities.

#### *Spain—Venezuela*

*Question.* Please describe your understanding of the extent of money laundering and corruption schemes in Spain involving Venezuelans who are both part of and connected to the Maduro regime.

*Answer.* The United States has shared with our Spanish partners information about a number of individuals and their relatives who reside in Spain and who benefitted from money laundering and corruption schemes in Venezuela, many of them with connections to the Maduro regime. The Administration continues to share, in real time, intelligence and evidence about such cases, in the hopes that this information can be used for investment screening and can lead to law enforcement actions, including indictments and property seizures.

*Answer [revised 10/18/2021].—The United States has shared with our Spanish partners information about a number of individuals and their relatives who reside in Spain and who benefitted from money laundering and corruption schemes in Venezuela, many of them with connections to the Maduro regime. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to share intelligence and evidence about such cases and encourage this information be used to support law enforcement actions, including indictments and property seizures. I will advocate for multilateral and bilateral pressure on Maduro, and all manners of accountability, and appropriate sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption or human rights abuses.*

*Answer [revised 10/28/2021].—While I am not currently responsible for this issue and not involved in current policy formulation or implementation, nor privy to classified information on the subject, it is my understanding from public reporting that the United States has shared with our Spanish partners information about a number of individuals, Venezuelan and Spanish, and their relatives who reside in Spain, who benefitted from money laundering and corruption schemes in Venezuela. Many of these money laundering and corruption schemes implicate individuals with connections to the Maduro regime. I also understand that there are ongoing efforts to share intelligence and evidence about such cases and if confirmed I will work to encourage this information be used to support law enforcement actions, including indictments and property seizures. I will also advocate with the Government of Spain for multilateral and bilateral pressure on Maduro to allow for free and fair elections, as well as all manners of accountability, and appropriate law enforcement actions and sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption or human rights abuses.*

*Question.* In your view, does Spain share our objective of advancing a negotiated and peaceful solution to Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis?

*Answer.* Yes. Spain shares our overarching goal to support a peaceful democratic transition in Venezuela, through free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections, and to help the Venezuelan people rebuild their lives and their country. If confirmed, I will look for ways to strengthen our coordination with Spain to ensure we are making progress on our shared objectives in Venezuela.

*Question.* On January 23, 2020, then-Minister of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda Jose Luis Abalos met with Maduro official Delcy Rodriguez for ninety minutes at the Barajas Airport in Madrid. Rodriguez has been sanctioned by the United



States and is barred from entering Spanish and European territory per EU sanctions.

- Do you agree that robust enforcement of EU sanctions by Spain is fundamental to achieve a negotiated and peaceful solution to Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis?

Answer. I agree that robust enforcement of EU sanctions by Spain, and all EU members, is fundamental to a peaceful solution to the crisis in Venezuela. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Spanish Government to ensure we remain closely aligned on sanctions enforcement and that our actions are consistent with the message those sanctions are intended to send.

*Question.* Do you commit to pushing Spain to enforce those sanctions?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will emphasize to Spanish officials, including together with EU representatives in Madrid, the importance of enforcing EU sanctions to promote accountability for those who engage in human rights abuses, corruption, and undermining democracy.

*Question.* In February 2020, the US imposed sanctions on Rosneft Trading SA for their role in facilitating Venezuelan oil exports. If confirmed, what would be your message to Spanish companies, such as Repsol, on their current activities in Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed, I will highlight that our sanctions policy targets those who provide economic and material support to the Maduro regime. Our goal is a peaceful, stable, and democratic Venezuela through free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections. I will encourage Spanish companies operating in Venezuela to support efforts toward that goal.

*Question.* Please explain how the United States could work more closely with the European Union—and specifically Spain—to increase economic pressure on Maduro.

Answer. The United States should maintain multilateral pressure on the Maduro Government and its enablers, hold regime officials accountable for their illicit activities, implement appropriate sanctions against corrupt officials who undermine democracy or abuse human rights, and provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people. Because sanctions policy is within EU competency, I will work with Spain, as a key member state focused on Venezuela, to drive EU sanctions policy to put pressure on the Maduro Government to allow for free and fair elections.

*Answer [revised 10/18/2021].—Nicolas Maduro's repression, corruption, and mismanagement have created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will ensure we use every tool available to the United States to hold the Maduro Government accountable. The United States must maintain multilateral and bilateral pressure on the Maduro regime and its enablers, hold regime officials accountable for their illicit activities, implement appropriate sanctions against corrupt officials who undermine democracy or abuse human rights, and provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people. The United States and the EU agree that there must be a negotiated solution to the crisis precipitated by Maduro, and there must be free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections in Venezuela.*

*Answer [revised 10/28/2021].—While I am not currently responsible for this issue and have not had access to policy formulation or implementation in this regard, it is my view that close, open diplomatic relations with both the European Union and Spain are key to bringing greater economic pressure on the Maduro regime to change its antidemocratic behavior and ongoing human rights abuses. Nicolas Maduro's repression, corruption, and mismanagement have created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will ensure we use every tool available to the United States to hold the Maduro Government accountable. In my view, these tools should include pursuit of criminal cases against regime actors where they have violated laws and concerted sanctions by the U.S., EU, and the U.N. against the regime and individuals in the regime. In my view, the United States must maintain concerted and coordinated multilateral and bilateral economic pressure on the Maduro regime and its enablers, including holding regime officials legally accountable for their illicit activities.*

*Question.* Please explain your views on the effectiveness of activating Title III of the 1996 Helms-Burton Act. Under what conditions would you advise the President to suspend its activation?

Answer. I understand some provisions of the Helms-Burton Act have long been controversial, both with our international partners, and with some Americans who

seek compensation for the Cuban Government's confiscation of their property. If confirmed, I will support the administration in carefully considering the best ways to support U.S. nationals' claims.

*Answer [revised 10/18/2021].—Americans who seek compensation for the Cuban Government's illegal confiscation of their property should be supported in their efforts to get justice. If confirmed, as U.S. Ambassador to Spain, I would defer to the administration on Cuba policy, but as a principal I believe U.S. citizens should be protected from illegal seizure of property wherever that might be.*

*Answer [revised 10/28/2021].—While I am not currently responsible for the implementation of the Helms-Burton Act nor involved in policy deliberations about it, it is my view that the Act, properly understood and administered, can play a legitimate role in our foreign affairs policies in this area. I also understand the administration is carefully considering the best ways to support U.S. nationals' claims. If confirmed, I know this will be a challenging issue in my work with the Government of Spain and commit to defending the rights of U.S. persons and entities under the Act.*

#### *State Department Management*

*Question.* Mission Spain has been under enormous stress over the past few years due to COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Spain?

*Answer.* While the pandemic has taken a toll on all of us, my understanding is that morale at Mission Spain is generally high. Mission Spain has a very experienced and motivated team of Americans from across the interagency and excellent local staff working at Mission Spain. The entire team showed enormous flexibility during the worst of the pandemic. Mission personnel are now enjoying fairly normal living and working conditions as Spain's infection rates have dropped and Spain's vaccination rate is now among the highest in the world.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve morale across all of Mission Spain?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I intend to continue the good work of our current leadership team, including the development of a plan to maintain some of the workplace flexibilities introduced because of the pandemic. I will reach out to members of the team at all levels, including local staff, contractors, and the family members of all the U.S. Government agencies represented at the Mission to learn about their concerns.

*Question.* How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Spain?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Country Team and seek their input to update the Integrated Country Strategy. I will share our mission and vision widely and frequently to the entire team. I will create opportunities for frequent messaging and dialogue through events targeting the entire community, such as Town Halls, awards/promotion ceremonies, community events, and other forms of active outreach.

*Question.* Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission.

- How would you describe your management style?

*Answer.* My career is rooted in public service, and I have demonstrated an ability to work with colleagues of all backgrounds in a constructive manner. I regularly engage with members of my team and always seek to create a space for open dialogue and diversity of thought. If confirmed, I will work hard to foster an environment of respect as Mission Spain carries out important work on behalf of the American people. I believe in setting high standards and leading by example. Our employees are our most important asset. I am dedicated to professional development and helping employees grow and advance.

*Question.* How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

*Answer.* My career in public service includes previously serving as an ambassador. If confirmed, I will ensure everyone on my team is treated professionally, their rights are respected, they are safe and secure, and they have the resources necessary to perform their jobs. My commitment will be to ensure we use our available resources as effectively as possible to advance our top policy priorities. I believe that all members of U.S. Mission Spain are one team working for the good of the U.S.-Spain and U.S.-Andorra relationships and the interests of the United States and the American people.

*Question.* What lessons did you learn from your tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay?

*Answer.* As U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay, I saw firsthand the importance of good communication and close coordination within the U.S. interagency. I learned to invest heavily in building and deepening our relationships both inside and outside the embassy. If confirmed, I will collaborate with my counterparts in the State Department, as well as other government agencies, to ensure Mission Spain successfully advances U.S. policies.

*Question.* As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* If yes, how do you intend to do so?

*Answer.* If confirmed, one of my first actions as ambassador will be to meet the entire team at the Mission and work closely with the Deputy Chief of Mission, as well as at our Consulate General in Barcelona and in our consular agencies around Spain to ensure the smoothest of processes and transitions.

*Question.* Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

*Answer.* No.

*Question.* How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work closely with the Deputy Chief of Mission to advance U.S. priorities in Spain, including: protecting the safety and security of Americans, growing our economic relationship, and advancing shared political priorities. I expect to have a positive working relationship and to work together closely.

*Question.* If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

*Answer.* If confirmed, one of my first actions as ambassador will be to meet the entire team at our Embassy in Madrid and our Consulate in Barcelona, including the Deputy Chief of Mission. I will consult closely with the Deputy Chief of Mission on a range of issues and value the institutional knowledge provided.

*Question.* It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- In your experience, do U.S. diplomats get outside of our embassy walls enough to accomplish fully their missions?

*Answer.* Yes. In my experience with the Department, U.S. diplomats have done a remarkable job to get outside our embassy walls and advance U.S. objectives to accomplish our Mission by meeting local actors in diverse settings and environments. I will encourage the Embassy team to maximize opportunities to advance our interests with all sectors of the Spanish populace.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve the ability of U.S. diplomats to access all local populations?

*Answer.* U.S. diplomats in Spain face no restrictions on their movement or interactions with the local population. I will encourage them to take full advantage of this environment to advance our interests with all sectors of the Spanish populace.

*Question.* Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Spain? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face?

*Answer.* Public diplomacy is a vital part of our mission. The Fulbright program in Spain is one of the largest in the world with hundreds of American and Spanish scholars and students benefiting every year. Spain also has over 140 different daily newspapers in circulation, and newswire EFE is one of the biggest media organizations in the world. These outlets are constantly seeking commentary and clarification from the U.S. Embassy. Other international players like Xinhua, Sputnik, and Russia Today also compete for influence in the Spanish media space, making media monitoring and skilled engagement to push back against disinformation even more important. Our digital engagement efforts are key to engaging Spain's current and future opinion leaders.

*Question.* How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

*Answer.* Unity of message is important in foreign policy, so when it comes to public messaging on policy issues, the Embassy should and does depend on guidance from Main State. However, it is up to the in-country team members to more robustly understand the local audiences and context, build key bilateral and multilateral partnerships, and effectively tailor Washington's messages for the local context. Embassy Madrid's public diplomacy team does that very well, and if I am confirmed, I'll make sure that we keep up that caliber of work.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. JULISSA REYNOSO PANTALEON BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

*U.S. Citizen Detained in Spain*

*Question.* U.S. citizen and Virginia resident Victor John Stemberger has been incarcerated in Spain since July 2019 on drug trafficking charges. Mr. Stemberger and his family maintain that he knew nothing about the drugs and was in fact duped into acting as an unwitting courier for a West African cartel. The family has also noted that Mr. Stemberger suffered a medically-documented brain aneurysm in 2005 that greatly diminished his logic and decision-making abilities, for which a medical expert provided documentation at his trial. On July 30, 2020, a Spanish court found Mr. Stemberger guilty of drug smuggling and sentenced him to seven years in prison. The Spanish Supreme Court denied hearing his appeal on April 9, 2021. Given Mr. Stemberger's age (78) and prior health complications, as well as risks associated with COVID-19 for those over the age of 60, there is even greater urgency in having Mr. Stemberger return to the United States as soon as possible.

- My office has continued to push for his release with both U.S. federal agencies and Spanish authorities. If confirmed, what will you do as Ambassador to press for Mr. Stemberger's expedited and safe return to his family in Virginia?

*Answer.* There is no higher priority than the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens, and I know the U.S. Embassy in Madrid is tracking this case closely. If confirmed, I will urge Spain to consider all options in accordance with Spanish laws for letting Mr. Stemberger serve his sentence in his home in the United States. The embassy will continue providing support to him, his lawyers, and family members in their requests for appeals and release.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO HON. JULISSA REYNOSO PANTALEON BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* Spain has close historical ties with countries throughout Latin America. Unfortunately, we have seen this relationship abused by the authoritarian regimes in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Leaders in these countries have reportedly hidden away some of their ill-gotten gains via the Spanish financial system to avoid U.S. sanctions. We have not seen Spanish leadership within the European Union to resolve these crises as we would have hoped. If confirmed, how would you engage with the Government of Spain to better coordinate in support of democracy, human rights, and transparency in Latin America?

*Answer.* The United States and Spain are in broad agreement about promoting democracy, the rule of law, and economic prosperity in Latin America. Spain actively influences debates in the EU on Latin America and has led international efforts to provide assistance to countries in the region, including by hosting the millions of Venezuelans who have fled the crisis caused by the Maduro regime, as well as Cubans and Nicaraguans who have fled those repressive regimes. If confirmed, I will seek opportunities to expand our coordination with Spain on these efforts.

*Question.* From your perspective, what is preventing greater U.S.-Spanish coordination on Latin American policies? Given both of our country's deep strategic interests in the region, what steps could be taken to jointly take actions to hold despotic leaders in Latin America accountable through sanctions, travel restrictions, or other actions?

*Answer.* Spanish officials assert that their policy objectives are the same as those of the United States, but they believe the best path to achieve economic and demo-

cratic reforms is through engagement and dialogue. Economic and commercial concerns are an important element of Spanish relations with the region. The U.S.-Spain bilateral relationship is an important building block for increasing cooperation on Latin America, and if confirmed, I will seek to expand our coordination with Spain on these efforts.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* Austria has so far remained committed to EU sanctions against Russia for its illegal annexation of Crimea. However, Austria has close economic and energy ties with Russia. How do you assess the Austrian Government's continued commitment to these sanctions? How will you engage the Government to ensure its continued commitment?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would continue to emphasize to the Austrian Government the importance of maintaining U.S.-EU unity on sanctions, emphasizing that any reduction of sanctions must be contingent on Russian actions—beginning with the withdrawal of its forces from eastern Ukraine, combined with the implementation of Russia's commitments under the Minsk agreements, and, finally, return of control of the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine.

*Question.* Chancellor Kurz recently hosted leaders from the Western Balkans, expressing that the EU would only be complete once all Western Balkan countries have joined the bloc. How will you work with Austrian partners to highlight the benefits of EU enlargement, including its potential to combat Chinese influence in Europe?

*Answer.* Austria supports U.S. goals for a stable, secure, and prosperous Western Balkans. Austria also supports the transformation of the Western Balkans into a zone of stability through the EU accession process. Steps toward accession advance our mutual interest in protecting democracy, stability, and the rule of law, while promoting prosperity and integration of the Western Balkans in transatlantic institutions. These steps and relationships would allow the aspirants to deal with the PRC from a position of strength.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question.* In the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Austria was identified as Tier 1 but has room for improvement regarding convictions of more traffickers and remedying gaps in the referral process for potential victims.

- How will you work with the host government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

*Answer.* Austria continues to take trafficking in persons issues seriously and has been a steadfast partner in coordinating on the issue with the United States. If confirmed, I will engage with U.S. and Austrian authorities to encourage cooperation and regularly raise trafficking in persons at the highest levels of the Austrian Government. I will urge the Austrian Government to take further concrete actions to address the recommendations from this year's Trafficking in Persons Report. Specifically, I will encourage the Government of Austria to increase efforts to identify victims among vulnerable groups, ensure all victims have access to services, and increase efforts to identify victims of labor trafficking.

*Question.* In the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Austria was identified as having community issues regarding religious freedom. The U.S. Embassy during the reporting period did good work on the ground to support programs to combat Anti-Semitism and promote religious dialogue.

- What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador-at-Large to bolster religious freedom in-country?

*Answer.* Austria takes religious freedom seriously and respects the rights and freedoms of its population. Austria's constitution provides for freedom of religion; other laws and policies contribute to the generally free practice of religion in Austria. There are, unfortunately, increasing reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, including an increase in anti-Se-

mitic incidents in 2020. If confirmed, I look forward to working together with the Ambassador At Large, as well as the Department's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, to bolster respect for the freedom of religion or belief and the rights of members of religious minority groups.

*Question.* In the 2020 Human Rights Report, significant human rights issues in Austria were identified as violence or threats of violence motivated by anti-Semitism.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

*Answer.* The Austrian Government is dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism and has been quick to condemn words and acts of anti-Semitism. The Government announced a strategy to combat anti-Semitism in January 2021. There was an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2020, including violence targeting Austria's Jewish community and online hate and incitement. If confirmed, I will publicly and privately reiterate to the Government the importance of this issue and identify areas where the United States can cooperate with the Government and with Austria's Jewish community to combat anti-Semitism, working in coordination with U.S. Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism.

*Question.* How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work closely with civil society organizations to help us assess human rights issues, develop programs, and advocate for stronger policies and reforms. The U.S. Embassy in Vienna enjoys strong and longstanding relationships with civil society on human rights and democracy issues. Civil society has played an important role in promoting accountability of elected leaders, driving meaningful reform, supporting the rights of members of minority groups and access to justice for vulnerable communities, and strengthening independent media.

*Question.* Mission Austria has been under enormous stress over the past few years due to COVID.

- What is your understanding of morale throughout Mission Austria?

*Answer.* Austria has enforced three strict national lockdowns. The American and local employees at Embassy Vienna have dealt with significant challenges posed by COVID-19. I am grateful for their service, despite the difficulties. If confirmed, I will prioritize meeting with and supporting Embassy employees, including the Deputy Chief of Mission, to understand the impact of the pandemic on the mission.

*Question.* How do you intend to improve morale across all of Mission Austria?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with my Deputy Chief of Mission to ensure that we create an atmosphere in which our staff knows that they can bring serious issues to us and know that they are being heard at the highest level. I will do personal outreach to the staff when I arrive at Post and will ensure that everyone in the Mission understands that my highest priority is the safety and security of the team. If confirmed, I will promote training and professional development, and ensure that all staff members are aware of the employee and family support resources that the Department offers to assist employees.

*Question.* How do you intend to create a unified mission and vision across Mission Austria?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I plan to establish a strong team with a clear understanding of our goals and objectives, maintain open and transparent communications throughout the Mission by sharing information, and seek ways to support and ensure the safety and community of the Mission the community—both American and local staff. I will treat the team with respect and professionalism and give them the tools they need to do their jobs. I believe that all members of U.S. Embassy Vienna are one team working for the good of the U.S.-Austria relationship and the interests of the United States and the American people, and, if confirmed, my goal will be to have everyone inspired to work in that direction.

*Question.* Management is a key responsibility for chiefs of mission.

- How would you describe your management style?

*Answer.* I have a collaborative management style. I believe in sharing information and empowering my team, being open to ideas and suggestions from throughout the mission, and providing clear guidance and decisions as needed to lead. I regularly engage with members of my team and always seek to create a space for open dialogue and diversity of thought.

*Question.* How do you believe your management style will translate to an embassy setting, where resources may not be readily available and your diplomatic workforce are career employees?

*Answer.* As I understand it, the State Department continuously reviews its priorities, organization, and staffing relevant to the needs of each mission. If confirmed, my commitment will be to ensure we use our available resources as effectively as possible to advance our top policy priorities. If necessary, I would advocate for additional resources to carry out our mission.

*Question.* As a political appointee rather than career diplomat, do you believe it is incumbent on new chiefs of mission to integrate themselves into embassy operations and culture? If yes, how do you intend to do so?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, one of my first actions as ambassador will be to meet the entire team at our Embassy in Vienna and to schedule opportunities for regular coordination and planning of Embassy operations. I will also create opportunities for more informal meetings and events with members from across the Embassy community, so that I have a strong awareness of community concerns and the state of Embassy morale.

*Question.* Do you believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private?

*Answer.* I do not believe it is ever acceptable or constructive to berate subordinates, either in public or private.

*Question.* How do you envision your relationship with your deputy chief of mission?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I hope to establish a positive relationship where my Deputy Chief of Mission will be my trusted partner, confidante, and alter ego in managing and leading the Mission.

*Question.* If confirmed, what leadership responsibilities do you intend to entrust to your deputy chief of mission?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I look forward to having a close working relationship with my Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). The DCM must be fully engaged on and informed about all aspects of policy and Mission management should the Deputy need to step in to lead. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my DCM once I arrive in Vienna to collaboratively work through the best division of labor in managing the Mission.

*Question.* It is imperative that U.S. diplomats get outside of posts abroad to meet with local actors, including host government officials, non-government organizations, and everyday citizens.

- How do you intend to increase the ability of U.S. diplomats to access all local populations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would stress the importance of getting outside of our Embassy by example. Access to and engagement with local contacts and populations is an important part of our work overseas. If confirmed, I look forward to participating in public outreach to all parts of society, from students to non-governmental organizations to the media, and will encourage the diplomats of Embassy Vienna to do the same.

*Question.* Public diplomacy is an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy efforts.

- What is the public diplomacy environment like in Austria? What public diplomacy challenges do U.S. diplomats face?

*Answer.* In Austria, as has happened everywhere, COVID has affected in-person public diplomacy programming. Recently announced new travel rules, once implemented, should help alleviate increased skepticism about the perceived imbalance between measures that make travel to the United States very restrictive for Austrians. U.S. public diplomacy programming supports Mission goals through student and scholarly exchanges; media engagement; educational outreach; speaker series; support for culture and the arts; and entrepreneurship, bilateral trade and investment ties. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the Austrian public to increase dialogue about a range of issues and support for our policies.

*Question.* How do you balance the importance of Main State versus the in-country mission when it comes to tailoring public diplomacy messages for foreign audiences?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Public Diplomacy Section to closely coordinate the efforts of Washington and Vienna-based public diplomacy professionals to ensure that there is a unified approach to highlighting the key U.S. messages

and policies in Austria and around the world. The Public Diplomacy Section engages on six different social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Flickr to deliver tailored messages on U.S. foreign policy priorities, promote Embassy activities and events, provide information on security, voting, and other topics to U.S. citizens, and communicate with the Austrian public.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

*Question.* As Ambassador to Austria, how would you respond to the September 23rd report in the Washington Post alleging that dozens of U.S. personnel, including diplomats, intelligence officials, and in some cases their children, have reported “Havana Syndrome” symptoms?

*Answer.* This is a sensitive ongoing investigation and is a top priority for Secretary of State Antony Blinken. It is also an issue I take very seriously. If I am confirmed, the safety and well-being of Embassy personnel and their families will be my highest priority. If I receive information about individuals being affected by these incidents, I will ensure that they get the immediate, prompt medical attention they deserve and need. I understand a major interagency effort currently is underway to investigate the cause of the incidents and how the Embassy community can be protected. If confirmed, I will continue to urge investigation into the cause of the incidents and ways to prevent them.

*Question.* What additional steps would you take to ensure the safety of your staff?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that any employees or their family members who report a possible health incident will receive immediate and appropriate attention and care. If confirmed, I will communicate with our workforce to provide care for affected employees and their family members and work together with partners in Washington and the interagency to do what we can to protect against these incidents and, of course, to find the cause of what has been impacting these members of our Embassy team. I will also consider it my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Embassy community. If confirmed, I will work with my team to review the current procedures and modify them in collaboration with Washington if necessary.

*Austria and EU Integration*

*Question.* Some supporters of increased EU integration have criticized Chancellor Kurz for opposing proposals for migrants and refugees to be resettled across the EU, as well as proposals for more EU fiscal integration, including financial assistance to member states in economic difficulty.

- How would you characterize the Kurz Government’s approach to the EU?

*Answer.* Austria is an active and committed member of the EU and regularly supports initiatives in the multilateral field, such as disarmament, strengthening human rights and the rights of minorities, and arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Austria has been a strong supporter of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans. However, within the EU, there is not always unanimity of position on every issue. If I am confirmed, I will continue to speak with officials in the Austrian Government about issues upon which we may differ but where we might be able to find some common ground.

*Question.* As the Ambassador nominee to Austria, do you believe that Kurz’s vision for the EU aligns with the Biden Administration’s goals in Europe?

*Answer.* The President has emphasized the United States’ continued commitment to the goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. While former Chancellor Kurz stepped down from his position on October 11, 2021, I look forward to emphasizing this continued commitment with new Austrian Chancellor, Alexander Schallenberg.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO VICTORIA REGGIE KENNEDY BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* Given its central location, Austria has long positioned itself as a builder of bridges between the east and the west. But I worry about Russia using that bridge for its own purposes. For instance, the Austrian firm OMV is one of the main companies financing the Nordstream 2 pipeline. Austria reportedly has worked to



block robust EU sanctions in Belarus to protect some of its banks that have interests there and throughout Eastern Europe. Austria was one of the few EU countries that did not expel Russian diplomats in response to the poisoning of Sergei Skripal by Russian intelligence. What is the current relationship between Austria and Russia?

*Answer.* The concept of neutrality has shaped Austria's relations since its adoption of a constitutional law in 1955, allowing it to host many Cold War-era U.S.-Russia meetings. Current attitudes toward Russia, including public support for U.S.-Russia talks on strategic stability and nuclear disarmament and calls for high-level EU-Russia dialogue, remain influenced by these events. Austria supports EU sanctions against Russia over the 2014 invasion of Ukraine, and the ongoing occupation of Crimea and conflict in Ukraine. Austria supported four rounds of EU sanctions related to Belarus. Austria has supported sanctions against Russia in response to the imprisonment of Alexei Navalny and the repression of peaceful protesters.

*Question.* What are Russia's interests in Austria?

*Answer.* Russians invested \$25.9 billion in Austria in 2020, and Russia is the country's second-largest foreign investor. Most recent investments have been in real estate and gas storage infrastructure. Austrian banks established a strong presence in the Russian financial sector after the fall of the Berlin Wall, but with many banks consolidating their Eastern European portfolios, only Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI) remains active in Russia. The Russian market accounted for almost one third of RBI's total profits in 2020 (\$858 million).

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you engage the Austrian Government to better respond to Russian actions?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would continue to emphasize to the Austrian Government the importance of maintaining U.S.-EU unity on sanctions, emphasizing that any reduction of sanctions must be contingent on Russian actions—beginning with the withdrawal of its forces from eastern Ukraine, combined with the implementation of Russia's commitments under the Minsk agreements, and, finally, return of control of the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine.

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