

**NOMINATIONS OF THE 113TH
CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION**

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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**NOMINATIONS OF LUIS MORENO, JOHN
ESTRADA, AND NOAH MAMET**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2014

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

Luis G. Moreno, of Texas, to be Ambassador to Jamaica
John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago
Noah Bryson Mamet, of California, to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez and Rubio.

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

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Thank you for your patience. As I think some of you may know, we were on the floor voting, including voting for the next U.S. Ambassador to China. So we appreciate your forbearance.

We have three nominees before us. They are Luis Moreno to be Ambassador to Jamaica; John Estrada, nominated to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; and Noah Bryson Mamet to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic.

Mr. Moreno is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, as the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. embassy in Madrid, Spain. From 2010 to 2011, he served as Political Military Affairs Minister Counselor, as well as Force Strategic Engagement Cell Director, at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in Iraq. He has also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Tel Aviv, Israel; Counselor General Principle Officer in Monterey, Mexico; Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and a list of other experiences. And we appreciate your service.

John Estrada is senior manager for Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Incorporated. Prior to this career in the private sector, Sergeant Major Estrada served in the United States Marine Corps for 34 years, rising to become the 15th sergeant major of the

United States Marine Corps, the Nation's highest ranking enlisted marine. And so we are pleased to have you here, Sergeant Major, to be the President's nominee as Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago.

Our third nominee is Noah Bryson Mamet. Mr. Mamet is founder and president of Noah Mamet and Associates. He serves as a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, the American Council of Young Political Leaders. He also sits on the boards of the Los Angeles-based Green Dot Public Schools and NatureBridge. And we appreciate having him here as well.

We welcome you all to the committee. We welcome any family, friends who may be joining us today to offer their support. And we know how proud you all must be. We also recognize the sacrifice of families who are willing to share their loved one in the service of the Nation, and we understand that it is an equal sacrifice to them as well. So we thank you for your support and your service.

I understand that our distinguished colleague from Colorado is here to join in the introduction of Mr. Mamet, and I would like to recognize him at this time. Senator Bennet?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL F. BENNET,
U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO**

Senator BENNET. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and it is a privilege to be here with these nominees. And congratulations to you and the committee on the successful vote on our next Ambassador to China.

It is also a privilege to introduce Noah Mamet, the President's nominee to serve as the Ambassador to the Argentine Republic. I have known Noah for a number of years, and I enthusiastically support his nomination.

Throughout his career, Noah has worked to build democracy abroad and support international economic development. He represented the National Democratic Institute in monitoring the first democratic elections in Sierra Leone since the country's civil war.

Noah was instrumental in helping to establish the Clinton Foundation. His work was critical in developing and producing the first Clinton Global Initiative, which has convened leaders from across the globe to create and implement practical, innovative solutions to some of the most pressing challenges our world faces.

Noah's involvement with the U.S. Institute of Peace has helped bolster that organization's ability and reach its mission to help manage and resolve international conflicts through nonviolent means.

He is also a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy. This association's focus on addressing global transformation from an eastern Pacific Ocean perspective I think will serve Noah well in this new role.

These experiences have given him a deep understanding and appreciation of our Nation's role in the world and the challenges that we face abroad.

Just another small point, but Noah also shares my commitment on the question of education and the need to improve outcomes for children living in poverty in this country. He has served on the board of the largest and most prominent public charter school operator in the country, Green Dot Public Schools.

And, Mr. Chairman, with that, I can say I think we will be very well served by Noah Mamet.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Bennet. I appreciate you making the introduction before the committee.

I know your schedule, so please feel free to be excused at any time.

Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection. I would ask you to summarize your statement in about 5 minutes or so so that the members of the committee can engage in a dialogue with you. We will start off with Mr. Moreno and then Mr. Estrada, as I introduced you, and Mr. Mamet.

Mr. Moreno.

**STATEMENT OF LUIS G. MORENO, OF TEXAS,
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO JAMAICA**

Mr. MORENO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica. I want to express my gratitude to the President and Secretary Kerry, as well as to Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson, for their trust and confidence.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Gloria, who is here with me. Without her patience, unconditional support, and loving understanding, I certainly would not be sitting here in front of you. My oldest daughter, Sabina, is following online from Florida and my youngest daughter, Denise, along with my friends and colleagues from the Embassy, are also following online from Spain.

As I acknowledge the support of my family, I would be remiss not to mention my parents, both deceased, who played a major role in my choice of career. My dad was a refugee, a medical doctor who fled the political violence in his native born Colombia and found refuge in New York City. His medical degree was not recognized and he did not speak a word of English. What followed was a classic American success story. During his career, he became the head of orthopedic surgery at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and helped develop the artificial hip replacement. With my mom, a nursing student born in Cuba, he raised two boys in the United States, both of whom ended up in the senior ranks of the Department of State and in whom he ingrained a passion for service to their country. My brother Ed recently retired after 25 years of service from Diplomatic Security where he last served as the Assistant Director for Diplomatic Security, Domestic Operations. I know that both our parents would be very proud of the service of both of their sons if they were here today.

I have been privileged to serve my country for 31 years in postings in the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, Europe, and Washington, including three postings as Deputy Chief of Mission in Port-au-Prince, Tel Aviv, and most recently and presently in Madrid. In fact, in my 28 years of overseas postings, Madrid has been my only nondanger, nonhardship post. I have covered a wide range of issues throughout my career: narcotics and law enforcement, refugee issues in Haiti, and Kurds from northern Iraq that were re-

settled in the United States via Guam, political-military and transitional issues in Iraq, as well as playing a small role in the Middle East peace process while in Israel.

While my assignments have afforded me a diverse and multifaceted background, there is a clear commonality among most of my assignments. I work toward team-building and finding solutions to challenges in tough places. If confirmed as Ambassador, it will be along those same lines that I will lead our mission in Jamaica. I will lead the Embassy team to find solutions to the toughest problems this close friend and neighbor is currently experiencing.

The United States and Jamaica enjoy a strong, cooperative relationship that crosses many spheres, including citizen security, law enforcement, strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights, energy, climate change, and economic development. Jamaica has a well-earned reputation as a tourist destination, hosting over 2 million American visitors every year. The safety and security of these visitors and the 40,000 Americans who currently live in Jamaica will be my highest priority.

Despite this reputation as a tropical paradise, a well-earned one, Jamaica, a mere 51 years after independence, is facing severe challenges which could have a long-lasting impact if we do not help Jamaica mitigate them now. I would like to highlight two of the most daunting challenges we have: the economic reform Jamaica has agreed to undertake as of last year, and ensuring the safety and security of both our nations and citizens. Jamaica, along with much of the Caribbean, is particularly vulnerable not only to these man-made risks but also to natural disasters such as devastating hurricanes or earthquakes.

Mr. Chairman, ensuring stability abroad, both in terms of citizen security and economic development, in countries like Jamaica increases our own security at home. Our current assistance to Jamaica, including through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative and USAID's bilateral assistance, seeks to partner with Jamaica to address shared regional challenges that affect the everyday concerns of Jamaica's citizens. If confirmed, I will work as Ambassador to most efficiently use the available resources to ensure Jamaica continues on the path of sustainable economic and social development. This is in the interest of both Jamaica and the United States.

Last May, Jamaica signed an economic reform package with the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, to help tackle its huge public debt, almost 1½ times its annual gross domestic product, one of the highest ratios in the world. This package, together with loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, adds up to nearly \$2 billion. Approximately 3 years of this agreement remain for Jamaica to get its financial house in order and to begin to grow its economy, something it has not been able to do in three decades. If confirmed—most likely I will be there for the majority of that time—let me reassure you that this issue will be among my highest priorities. I will work with our Jamaican partners to encourage them through the difficult economic times that will, no doubt, take place while reminding them about the enduring and sustainable benefits of partnership with the United

States and prospects that will emerge as a result of reform and more economic stability.

I will skip ahead to the end, Senator, in the interest of time.

This is a historic opportunity for Jamaicans to build a stronger, more prosperous country. If confirmed, I pledge to serve our country, just as I have for the past three decades, and to work with our Jamaican friends to continue to strengthen the partnership between our two countries.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I certainly welcome your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moreno follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LUIS G. MORENO

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Jamaica. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry, as well as to Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson for their trust and confidence.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Gloria, who is here with me today. Without her patience, unconditional support and understanding, I would not be sitting here in front of you. My oldest daughter, Sabina, is following online from Florida and my youngest daughter, Denise, along with my friends and colleagues from the Embassy are also following online from Spain. As I acknowledge the support of my family, I would be remiss not to mention my parents, both deceased, and who played a major role in my choice of career. My dad was a refugee, a medical doctor who fled the political violence in his native born Colombia and found refuge in New York City. Naturally, his medical degree was not recognized and he did not speak a word of English. What followed was a classic American success story. During his career he became the head of orthopedic surgery at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and helped develop the artificial hip replacement procedures. With my mom, a nursing student born in Cuba, he raised two boys born in the United States, both of whom ended up in the senior ranks of the Department of State, and in whom he ingrained a passion for service to their country. My brother, Ed recently retired after 25 years of service from Diplomatic Security where he last served as the Assistant Director of DS for Domestic Operations. I know our parents would be very proud of the service of both their sons if they were here today.

I have been privileged to serve my country for 31 years in postings in the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, Europe, and in Washington, including three postings as Deputy Chief of Mission in Port-au-Prince, Tel Aviv, and most recently, Madrid. In fact, in my 28 years of overseas postings, Madrid has been my only nondanger, nonhardship posting. I have covered a wide range of issues throughout my career: narcotics and law enforcement in Colombia, Peru, and Panama; refugee issues in Haiti and with Kurds from Northern Iraq that were resettled in the U.S. via Guam; political-military, and transitional issues in Iraq, as well as playing a small role in the Middle East peace process while in Israel. While my assignments have afforded me a diverse and multifaceted background, there is a clear commonality among most of my assignments—I work toward team-building and finding solutions to challenges in tough places. If confirmed as Ambassador, it will be along those same lines that I will lead our mission in Jamaica. I will lead the Embassy team to find solutions to the toughest problems this close friend and neighbor is currently experiencing.

The United States and Jamaica enjoy a strong, cooperative relationship that crosses many spheres, including citizen security, law enforcement, strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights, energy, climate change, and economic development. Jamaica has a well-earned reputation as a tourist destination, hosting over 2 million American visitors every year. The safety and security of these visitors and the 40,000 Americans who currently live in Jamaica, will be my highest priority. Despite this reputation as a tropical paradise for tourists, Jamaica, a mere 51 years after independence, is facing severe challenges which could have a long-lasting impact if we don't act to help Jamaica mitigate them now. I would like to highlight two of the most daunting challenges: the economic reform Jamaica agreed to undertake last year ensuring the security of both our nations and our citizens. Jamaica, along with much of the Caribbean, is particularly vulnerable

to not only these man-made risks but also to natural disasters such as devastating hurricanes or earthquakes.

Mr. Chairman, since 9/11 the U.S. has emphasized the need to strengthen our borders. The Caribbean is our third border. Ensuring stability abroad, both in terms of citizen security and economic development in countries like Jamaica, increases our own security at home. Our current assistance to Jamaica, including through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and USAID's bilateral assistance, seeks to partner with Jamaica to address shared regional challenges that affect the everyday concerns of Jamaica's citizens. If confirmed, I will work as Ambassador to most efficiently use the available resources to ensure Jamaica continues on the path of sustainable economic and social development. This is in the interest of both Jamaica and the United States.

Last May, Jamaica signed an economic reform package with the International Monetary Fund to help tackle its huge public debt—almost 1½ times its annual Gross Domestic Product, one of the highest ratios in the world. This package, together with loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, adds up to almost \$2 billion. Approximately 3 years of this agreement remain for Jamaica to get its financial house in order and begin to grow its economy—something it hasn't been able to do in nearly three decades. If confirmed, I will likely be there during most of that time. Let me reassure you that this issue will be among my highest priorities. I will work with our Jamaican partners to encourage them through the difficult economic times that will no doubt take place, while reminding them about the enduring and sustainable benefits of partnership with the U.S. and the prospects that will emerge as a result of reform and more economic stability. The ingredients for success are evident. For example, through a USAID activity supporting Jamaica's Tax Administration, the Government of Jamaica has identified and recouped over \$100 million in unpaid taxes, thereby increasing its revenue base and creating a foundation for sound, transparent, and self-sustaining revenue forecasting and collections.

This is a historic opportunity for Jamaicans to build a stronger, more prosperous country. If confirmed, I pledge to serve our country just as I have been doing for the past three decades and to work with our Jamaican friends to continue to strengthen the partnership between our two countries.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Let me, before I turn to Mr. Estrada, recognize the former United States Ambassador to Haiti and Croatia, James Foley. I appreciate you being here, Mr. Ambassador. I understand Mr. Moreno was your Deputy Chief of Mission in Haiti. So you are still backing him up here. So I appreciate it.

Mr. Estrada.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN L. ESTRADA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Mr. ESTRADA. Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio, good afternoon.

It is an honor to appear before you today. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me with this nomination to represent my country as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Dr. Elizabeth Cote Estrada, who is here with me today.

I am particularly thrilled at the prospect of representing the United States in the country of my birth, if confirmed. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, and at age 14, I immigrated to the United States to forge a new life. I brought with me a respect for diversity and an inherent sense of the equal value of all people. I served with honor in the United States Marine Corps, attaining the Corps' highest enlisted rank, 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. After retiring from the Marine Corps, I continued service to my

country as a presidential appointed commissioner on the American Battle Monuments Commission and as a committee member on the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services. In the private sector, I led Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Incorporated, a company specializing in flight training and logistics solutions for our military.

I firmly believe that one of the greatest aspirations of all free people is to live their lives to the fullest without limitations based on their ethnicity, class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. If confirmed as Ambassador, with that ideal as my guide, I would seek to strengthen the ties between the citizens and elected representatives of our two great nations.

Trinidad and Tobago is an important Caribbean partner of the United States. The relationship between our countries rests on a strong foundation. We share a common language and a firm commitment to democratic principles, the rule of law, and a free market system.

The United States mission to Trinidad and Tobago has three strategic objectives. On security, the mission works with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to improve the capacity of Trinidadian law enforcement and justice sector institutions to reduce violent crime and illicit trafficking, safeguard human rights, and create safer communities. The mission promotes increased commerce and a transparent investment climate to enhance our mutual prosperity. On social inclusion, the mission conducts extensive outreach and encourages regional leadership by Trinidad and Tobago to protect vulnerable populations, including at-risk youth. If confirmed, I look forward to leading our efforts in these crucial areas.

The United States and Caribbean partners have developed the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, an ongoing, multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean, of which Trinidad and Tobago is a key player. In creating the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the United States and Caribbean partners prioritized three pillars: substantially reducing illicit trafficking of narcotics and arms, increasing public safety and security, and promoting social justice. I will do my utmost, if confirmed, to increase cooperation and encourage Trinidad and Tobago to become a leader in security in the Caribbean.

As a resource-rich country, Trinidad and Tobago is full of opportunities for energy companies. The United States works closely with Trinidad and Tobago to develop new avenues for regional energy and conservation. I am excited Trinidad and Tobago is playing a growing role in the region and promoting business relationships in the hemisphere. If confirmed, I would advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and commercial interests to assure a level playing field and support their engagement with Trinidad and Tobago.

I firmly believe that my service in the Marine Corps and my experience in the private sector, coupled with my personal history, have prepared me to represent the government and the people of the United States to the government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance our objectives in the Caribbean.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Estrada follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY JOHN LEARIE ESTRADA

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee, good afternoon. It is an honor to appear before you today. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me with this nomination to represent my country as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Elizabeth Anne Coté Estrada, who is with me here today.

I am particularly thrilled at the prospect of representing the United States in the country of my birth, if confirmed. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, and at age 14, I immigrated to the United States to forge a new life. I brought with me a respect for diversity and an inherent sense of the equal value of all people. I served with honor in the U.S. Marine Corps—attaining the Corps' highest enlisted rank as the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. After retiring from the Marine Corps, I continued serving my country as a Presidential-appointed Commission member of the American Battle Monuments Commission and as a committee member on the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services. In the private sector, I led Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary company specializing in flight training and logistics solutions.

I firmly believe that one of the greatest aspirations of all free people is to live their lives to the fullest without limitations based on their ethnicity, class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. If confirmed as Ambassador, with that ideal as my guide, I would seek to strengthen the ties between the citizens and elected representatives of our two great nations.

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The United States and Caribbean partners have developed the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), an ongoing, multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean, of which Trinidad and Tobago is a key player. In creating CBSI, the United States and Caribbean partners prioritized three pillars: substantially reducing illicit trafficking of narcotics and arms, increasing public safety and security, and promoting social justice. I will do my utmost, if confirmed, to increase cooperation and encourage Trinidad and Tobago to become a leader in security in the Caribbean.

As a resource-rich country, Trinidad and Tobago is full of opportunity for energy companies. The United States works cooperatively with Trinidad and Tobago to develop new avenues for regional energy security and conservation. I am excited Trinidad and Tobago is playing a growing role in regional integration and promoting business relationships in the hemisphere, including by hosting the upcoming 2014 Americas Competitiveness Forum. The United States welcomes and supports Trinidad and Tobago's membership in and chairmanship of the Pathways to Prosperity initiative. If confirmed, I would advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and commercial interests to assure a level playing field and support their engagement with Trinidad and Tobago.

Education is the foundation for economic growth. If confirmed, I will work with the government of Trinidad and Tobago to explore ways in which we can provide

at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations with tools that can help them succeed.

I firmly believe that my service in the Marine Corps and my experience in the private sector, coupled with my personal history, have prepared me to represent the government and people of the United States to the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance our objectives in the Caribbean. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Estrada. I am thankful that you did not put us through a Marine Corps drill. [Laughter.]

That is a plus.

Mr. Mamet.

**STATEMENT OF NOAH BRYSON MAMET, OF CALIFORNIA,
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC**

Mr. MAMET. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio, and members of the committee.

It is a privilege and an honor to be here today as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador of the United States to the Argentine Republic. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and trust and for sending my name to the Senate for your consideration. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to work closely with you, Mr. Chairman, this committee, and your distinguished colleagues on our partnership with Argentina.

I would like to thank Senator Bennet for his kind introduction. I believe he is one of the great public servants in the country today.

On a personal note, growing up in California, I was fortunate enough to have two wonderful and supportive parents, Bryan and Millie, who instilled in me the values of hard work, dedication, and love of country. I am thrilled that my mother was able to fly here today and is visiting the U.S. Senate for the very first time.

Although my father is no longer with us, he would be proud beyond belief that I am here today in front of this distinguished committee. Rather uniquely, both my father and grandfather volunteered and served as enlisted men together in World War II. In fact, I believe my grandfather was one of the oldest enlisted men in the Navy at one point. Through them, I was raised to believe that public service in any capacity is the highest calling, so I am deeply honored to be here today.

After spending many years in Washington, I founded my own company a decade ago. I have built a successful business, consulting for many companies, organizations, and NGOs, including the Clinton Global Initiative, the National Democratic Institute, as well as numerous national political leaders such as President Clinton and Secretary Albright. This experience has taught me the power of partnership, that no one sector alone can be as effective as the combined efforts of the public sector, the private sector, and civil society. If confirmed, I look forward to putting all of my experience into furthering our bilateral relationship with Argentina.

The people of the United States and Argentina have a long history of friendship and close collaboration that stretches back nearly two centuries. The guiding principles for today's relationship are based on core democratic values, shared interests, and a natural af-

finity between two societies. If confirmed, I will work to expand cooperation with Argentina on mutually important issues, including energy, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, and educational exchanges.

Considering that nearly half of Argentina's population is under the age of 35, I will be committed to expanding educational exchange programs for students from both Argentina as well as the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to drawing on my extensive experience working with NGOs in the United States to strengthen our current relationships and build new ones with a vibrant Argentine civil society.

Expanding scientific discovery and technological innovations is another promising area for greater cooperation. Our two countries have more than 60 joint projects underway in energy, health, science, and technology. In fact, a successful trip to Argentina by NASA Administrator Charles Bolden highlighted our longstanding cooperation on earth observation satellites.

In addition to our bilateral partnership, the United States has a strong cooperation with Argentina in multilateral fora such as the U.N. and the IAEA, where Argentina is a strong voice in support of human rights and nuclear nonproliferation.

Argentina's highly educated population and diversified industrial base have attracted more than 500 U.S. companies. The United States is strongly committed to working with Argentina to increase two-way trade that creates jobs in both countries. However, the United States and other governments remain concerned over some protectionist policies. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to address these concerns. I will also urge Argentine officials at the highest levels to resolve such economic legacy issues as Argentina's Paris Club arrears and to normalize relations with all of its creditors, both public and private.

Although there are some challenges, I am optimistic that the future of our relationship with Argentina is bright. As Secretary Kerry has expressed, the United States has a vested and shared interest in a vibrant, strong, and prosperous Argentina. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Argentine Government, their officials, as well as the private sector and civil society, as we further our bilateral relationship and strengthen longstanding ties between our two great nations.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and your distinguished colleagues and staff to advance U.S. interests in Argentina.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mamet follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NOAH B. MAMET

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to be here today, as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador of the United States to the Argentine Republic. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and trust, and for sending my name to the Senate for your consideration. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to work closely with this committee and with your distinguished colleagues on our partnership with Argentina.

I'd like to thank Senator Bennet for his kind introduction. On a personal note, growing up in California, I was lucky to have two wonderful and supportive parents, Bryan and Millie, who instilled in me the values of hard work, dedication, and love

of country. I'm thrilled my mother was able to fly here today and is visiting the U.S. Senate for the first time. Although my father is no longer with us, he would be proud beyond belief that I am here today in front of this distinguished committee. Rather uniquely, both my father and grandfather volunteered and served together as enlisted servicemen in WWII at the same time. In fact, I believe my grandfather was one of the oldest enlisted men in the Navy at one point. Through them, I was raised to believe that public service, in any capacity, is the highest calling, so I am deeply honored to be here today.

After spending many years in Washington, I founded my own company a decade ago. During these years, I've built a successful business, consulting for many companies and leaders in various sectors. I've also worked with many NGOs including the Clinton Global Initiative and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), as well as with numerous national and international political leaders, including President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This experience has taught me the power of partnership, the truth that no one sector alone can be as effective as the combined efforts of the public sector, the private sector, and civil society. If confirmed, I look forward to putting all of my experience into furthering our bilateral relationship with Argentina.

The people of the United States and Argentina have a long history of friendship and close collaboration that stretches back nearly two centuries. The guiding principles for today's relationship are based on core democratic values, shared interests, and natural affinity between two societies. In fact, just over a month ago, Argentina celebrated the 30th anniversary of its return to democracy, a very important milestone for the people of Argentina. If confirmed, I will work to expand cooperation with Argentina on mutually important issues, including energy, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, and educational exchanges.

I have always believed in the importance of public diplomacy and people-to-people relationships. Like much of the world, many Argentines maintain a great interest in American culture, and if confirmed, I look forward to drawing on my extensive experience working with NGOs in the United States to strengthen current relationships and build new ones with a vibrant Argentine civil society.

Considering that nearly half of Argentina's population is under the age of 35, I will be committed to expanding educational exchange programs for students from both Argentina and the United States. If confirmed, I will broaden our ties through our 14 Binational Centers, English language programs, and exchanges.

Expanding scientific discovery and technological innovations is another promising area for greater cooperation. Our two countries have more than 60 joint projects under way in energy, health, science, and technology. In fact, a successful trip to Argentina by NASA Administrator Charles Bolden highlighted our longstanding cooperation on earth observation satellites.

In addition to our bilateral partnership, the United States has strong cooperation with Argentina in multilateral fora such as the U.N. and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), where Argentina is a strong voice in support of human rights and nuclear nonproliferation. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing cooperation with Argentina on these critical issues of mutual concern.

Argentina's highly educated population and diversified industrial base have attracted more than 500 U.S. companies. The United States is strongly committed to working with Argentina to increase two-way trade that creates jobs in both countries. However, the United States and other governments remain concerned over some protectionist policies. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to address these concerns. I will also urge Argentine officials at the highest levels to resolve such economic legacy issues as Argentina's Paris Club arrears and its remaining debts to U.S. bondholders.

Although there are some challenges that have been well documented in the media recently, I am optimistic and confident that the future of our relationship with Argentina is bright. As Secretary Kerry has expressed, the United States has a vested and shared interest in a vibrant, strong, and prosperous Argentina. If confirmed, I look forward to a productive dialogue with Argentine Government officials, as well as the private sector and civil society as we seek to further our bilateral relationship and strengthen the longstanding ties between our two great nations.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your distinguished colleagues and staff to advance U.S. objectives in Argentina.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you all.

Let me start off with a question I ask of all of our nominees, and I would like each of you to answer simply yes or no, if you can. If

you feel you have to equivocate, we will start off on a difficult process.

Do each of you commit to this committee that, if confirmed, you will be responsive to inquiries and questions that the committee poses as you are in your posts?

Mr. Estrada.

Mr. ESTRADA. Mr. Chairman, most definitely. I look forward to working very closely with this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moreno.

Mr. MORENO. Unequivocally, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Mamet.

Mr. MAMET. Absolutely, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. So we are starting off well. [Laughter.]

In recent years, Mr. Moreno, there has been a high level of concern about the increasing use of the Caribbean as a drug transit zone. According to the Department of State in its 2013 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Jamaica is the Caribbean's largest supplier of marijuana to the United States and reportedly an emerging transit point for cocaine passing through Central America destined to the United States.

What is your assessment—I know you are not in post yet, but I am sure you have had discussions with the State Department—of the Jamaican Government's cooperation with the United States on antinarcotic efforts? And if confirmed, will you make this one of your significant issues at your post?

Mr. MORENO. Certainly, Mr. Chairman. With my background, it is kind of a natural that it would be one of my priorities.

I think that there is increasing analytical and anecdotal evidence that, in fact, as a transshipment point, the Jamaican corridor has really picked up. That is due, in a way, to the success we have had with the Merida Initiative, the success we have had in Colombia, and as you know, the balloon effect is now branching out.

I want to take a very close look at resource allocation on our side as well. I want to make sure that we have the right resources pointed in the right direction and doing the right thing. We have a very big INL program, which is bolstered by funding from the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. We work with the constabulary force. We work with the Jamaican defense forces. We have an FMF program that works on small ships and patrol boats that the Jamaican Coast Guard and Navy use.

The cooperation has been good. We are seeing an increase of quite a high percentage, almost double the amount of cocaine seized in 2013 versus 2012, and I think they are probably at a record-setting margin this year.

As you know, from my service in Colombia and Mexico, I have personally witnessed the damage that drug trafficking does to societies. Corruption including—as a matter of fact, many Jamaican politicians and leaders recognize that corruption perhaps is the most destructive facet of drug trafficking, and we are seeing that. But we are seeing the Jamaican Government address that. We have seen a commitment on their part to move with us. We work with the anticorruption force and the constabulary force. We work, along with the British and with the Canadians. We work with the major organized crime task force. We even set up a 1-800 corrupt

cop number that INL pays for. We are also really urging the Jamaicans to move forward and create an independent commission that addresses corruption specifically.

So we are engaged and the Jamaicans are engaged, but it is a tough battle and one which, as we can see what happened in Mexico, as we see the struggles that Colombia went through, that this is a very serious issue. And I think we need to address it and we need to look at resources and the way we allocate them.

The CHAIRMAN. And in that regard, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative that you alluded to—we have spent about \$35 million in Jamaica in that respect. I hope that you will look at how Jamaica has used that money and what our evaluation of it is.

One of the things that I am concerned about is law enforcement capacity-building. The other thing is ports and the security at ports and the screening and scanning, I should say, at ports because ultimately we trade with these countries, but they have access to our ports and those drugs end up here.

Mr. MORENO. Yes, sir, absolutely. As a matter of fact, we are using antiterrorist funds administered by the Diplomatic Security to work with the port security program in Jamaica. I started the port security program in Cartagena, Colombia and in Barranquilla. So I am pretty familiar with how port security programs should work.

We are addressing that, and the Caribbean, as you know, Basin Security Initiative, \$263 million in total, of which Jamaica, as you mentioned—I am really anxious, if confirmed, to get down on the ground and see, as I said, about how resources are being allocated, how the Jamaicans have used their resources, and how we can continue to be more effective and more efficient in this because this is the kind of problem that once it starts—you will recall back in the 1980s and early 1990s when we put the above-the-horizon radars in and then we forced the traffickers again to go through the Central America-Mexico route, and we are seeing the consequences of that now. Now, as we apply pressure, I think we have to really pay close attention to that and really take a look at our resource allocation.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that. I am very concerned as we squeeze elsewhere that the Caribbean becomes an increasingly large traffic point.

And so that brings me to Mr. Estrada. With Venezuela increasingly becoming a primary transit point for the trafficking of drugs to markets in Europe and the United States, do you have a sense—and I recognize again you are not in post. But do you have a sense of what Trinidad and Tobago's proximity to the Venezuelan coast has made it vulnerable to trafficking operations?

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, I definitely agree because of the proximity. As you know, the closest point is about 7 miles off the coast of Venezuela. It has become a transshipment point. Just last month, there was a large cocaine bust in the port of Norfolk that originated in Trinidad and Tobago being transported in juice cans. So it shows that they do have a key challenge, and we are partnering with them to address this issue. We will continue to engage. And if confirmed, I will continue to lead our efforts in sup-

porting the improvement of the Trinidad and Tobago law enforcement capacity to address this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, your example, an example of why I care so much about port security, is an example of how drugs end up on the streets of our community. And having the largest port in the Northeast, the Port of Elizabeth in Newark, I can see what, in fact, happens in our communities.

Let me ask you. Also according to U.N. statistics, more than 13,000 people in Trinidad and Tobago are estimated to be living with HIV. In an effort to combat that, the country has received assistance under the President's PEPFAR program, which we recently reauthorized. How would you assess these efforts and the support the United States has provided to Trinidad and Tobago?

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, thank you for the question.

The assistance that Trinidad has received thus far—a lot of it has to do with their prevention, strengthening their laboratory efforts, public outreach. And the CDC is on the ground in Trinidad and Tobago. Yes, there is a 1.5-percent prevalence in adult HIV rate. And this program thus far—again, through this assistance, it does seem to be working and with the embassy doing the outreach via social media and through other avenues that are available.

The CHAIRMAN. And then finally, I will have questions for Mr. Mamet, but my time has expired. So I am going to turn to Senator Rubio.

How is it going to feel to go back as the United States Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago which was originally your native country?

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, a great question, and I am glad you asked. As you very well know, I left as a 14-year-old.

The CHAIRMAN. We only ask great questions. [Laughter.]

Mr. ESTRADA. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. At least members here think so.

Mr. ESTRADA. I have been back to Trinidad probably four times since I left in March 1970. The first time I went back to Trinidad was in 2004 as a guest speaker for the Marine Corps Ball. I was a sitting sergeant major for the Marine Corps then. So I had not been.

Yes, I do have family members—small family members still in the country. I respect Trinidad. It is a beautiful country. I look forward to working with the government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago and getting to know them very well. Obviously, I do not know them as much as I did when I left as a 14-year-old.

My loyalty with my distinguished service in the United States Marine Corps—there should be no doubt in anyone's mind where it stands. I am American and I represent the United States of America's interests.

The CHAIRMAN. We have no doubt about that. I just wanted to have the emotional element of it.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Thanks to the chairman.

Thank you all for being here, particularly Mr. Estrada and Moreno for your longtime service to our country. We are very grateful for that, and we are sure you will do a great job at these posts.

Let me just overlay my questions with a general observation that in the Western Hemisphere in general there is this emerging trend, which I find as a direct threat, and that is the growing authoritarianism that really poses a risk to both free markets and the democratic consensus that we find throughout the region. One of the countries that will be discussed here today, unfortunately—Argentina—perhaps falls in that camp.

I thought that situation, by the way, was on full display in Havana a few weeks ago when all these heads of state met under the auspices of the sole totalitarian regime and state sponsor of terrorism in our hemisphere and which yesterday, by the way, arrested, as you know, Mr. Chairman, a well-known dissident. We call him Antunez who had actually met with us. He traveled here to Washington. He was arrested, along with his wife I believe, yesterday.

So for anyone who has fantasies about what Cuba is and to these heads of state that travel there, particularly the President of Argentina about 2 weeks ago, to gain advice from Fidel and Raul Castro, well, I am not sure what you are going to get advice in unless you are looking to become a totalitarian government because that is the only thing they are good at.

And by the way, it is a tremendous hypocrisy. The only head of state in the Western Hemisphere that had the dignity to meet with members of the beleaguered democratic opposition was the President of Chile, Pinera—and I wanted to publicly acknowledge that—as he has done many times in the past as well.

I am also concerned—and I am no longer the ranking member of this subcommittee, but I am glad I am here today—by what best can be characterized as an indifferent foreign policy—and both parties are guilty of this—toward the hemisphere and its issues and at worst is quite frankly negligence, this rising tide of authoritarianism that we find in the region.

There are some issues as well largely focused on Argentina in the time that is permitted here today.

But I did want to ask you, Mr. Moreno. You are an expert in counternarcotics. Jamaica is believed to be potentially the largest Caribbean supplier of marijuana to the United States. Is there any evidence that recent efforts to legalize the use of marijuana in certain States here have had an impact on the situation?

Mr. MORENO. In fact, it has had an impact. There had been movement both in the Jamaican Parliament and in the press to argue for either legalization for medical reasons, religious reasons, or to decriminalize personal possession of small quantities. We have been very clear on what our position is, that marijuana is considered a category 3 dangerous drug and as such, we will continue to enforce all Federal statutes involving marijuana.

Also, the Embassy has been instructed to—and they followed up magnificently in reporting all these developments.

There is a pending piece of legislation in the Jamaican parliament—we are not sure how far that could possibly go—that would decriminalize certain aspects of possession of marijuana. They make the argument that, oh, that is going to improve tourism, that it is going to help the small farmer, et cetera, et cetera. We, of course, reject those arguments and we maintain that mari-

juana is still a dangerous drug and we are going to enforce our Federal statutes.

Senator RUBIO. Marijuana-improved tourism. Will that be in their promotion material?

Mr. MORENO. Not my argument, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. No, I understand. I know that is their argument.

Anyway, more in the form of a statement than a question, the 2003 reporting period for the Trafficking in Persons report found that the Government of Jamaica did not convict any trafficking offenders or any officials complicit in human trafficking. And I would just encourage you, when you are in that post, to be a strong voice on behalf of those victims because Jamaica, I believe it is Tier 2. But in any event, there is a human trafficking problem there as there is here. And I hope that you will be a strong voice.

Mr. MORENO. Absolutely. As a veteran Foreign Service officer I am well aware of how important that is. In the many posts that I have served, it has become a very serious issue.

Senator RUBIO. And then, Mr. Estrada, on the issue of Trinidad and Tobago, there was a citizen from there that was convicted and received a life sentence in U.S. Federal court for a 2007 plot to bomb a jet fuel pipeline at John F. Kennedy International Airport. The individual had ties to Trinidad's militant group that attempted to overthrow the government there back in the 1990s.

By the way, the individual has also been linked by Argentina's special prosecutor to the 1994 terrorist attack that many believe Iran was behind. In fact, there is strong evidence that Iran was behind it.

So my question is, do we have concerns that Islamic radicalism is a problem in Trinidad and Tobago?

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

The United States Government considers the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to be a committed partner in combating terrorism in the Caribbean and preventing terrorist attacks against the United States. If confirmed, I will continue to work the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to strengthen this partnership.

As of now, there are no known indigenous terrorist groups based in Trinidad and Tobago, but we continue to monitor the situation.

Senator RUBIO. Along the lines of the statement that I made just a moment ago, in the same Trafficking in Persons report, Trinidad and Tobago is a Tier 2 Watch List country for trafficking. It means it is a destination and a transit country for adults and children that are subjected to both forced labor and to sex trafficking. There has been information that public officials there have been complicit in trafficking-related incidents. In fact, the 2013 report states that although the government had infrastructure to screen for trafficking victims, law enforcement officials repeatedly treated victims as criminals and charged them with solicitation charges.

There has also been, by the way, certain public officials that have been identified as severely hampering the government's efforts to combat trafficking.

So I would hope that—and I expect that you will, when you are in that post, be a strong voice on behalf of those victims and be willing to—I know it makes the operating space uncomfortable, but to be willing to be a forceful voice in condemning these actions to

the extent that there is the unwillingness of these government officials to address this very serious human tragedy.

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, I fully concur. Like all countries, Trinidad and Tobago does face some challenges, but they have shown the will to try to address this issue. We will continue to partner with them. I will lead our efforts. I will be a strong advocate on behalf of human rights for all people in that area.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Mamet, let me ask you. What is our national interest in Argentina?

Mr. MAMET. Thank you, Senator.

I think we have a number of national interests. As you know, number one, there are over 500 U.S. companies that are doing business in Argentina. Some have been there for nearly a century. They have, by all accounts, continued to do relatively well, but they have had issues I mentioned in my opening statement on regulation, on import-export controls, and other areas around that.

I think it is very important to note, as you well know, that they are on the U.N. Security Council. They are at the IAEA and they have been a good, constructive partner with us on nuclear non-proliferation, as well as human rights, antihuman trafficking. So there is, I think, a range of international issues we work well on.

There are a number of issues that we do not have the best relationship with, but as Ambassador, Senator, if I can work with you, work with this committee, and have the full force of the White House behind me, I will bring tough messages, when needed, to allies. I think that it is important to tell the truth. And we obviously have some irritants in our relationship largely around a number of economic issues and financial issues.

The administration has strongly urged the Argentine Government to clear its arrears, both public and private, as well as to normalize its relations with the international financial community, as well as its creditors and investors.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I would have wanted to hear from you, although you alluded to it at the end there, that part of our national interest is having a country that meets its Paris Club debt, of which we hold a significant amount, that we have a series of bondholders that have not been paid and they have done nothing to not merit payment, that we have a real concern about judicial independence and press freedom in Argentina. So I think our national interests are broader, and I hope that you will think about it in that context.

You know, last week, referring to mounting challenges stemming from currency depreciation, rising inflation, recent nationalizations and broader signs of macroeconomic instability, a New York Times editorial stated that Argentina was facing a financial crisis caused largely by misguided government policies. And a Washington Post editorial stated that Argentina is headed for another stretch of economic and perhaps political turmoil.

Do you agree with that assessment?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Senator, as you know, the administration follows very closely economic activity in the country. The Department of the Treasury obviously monitors this very closely.

I agree with what you say. There are a number of issues that are irritants in our relationship. I think they have made some

progress, not nearly as much as we would hope, on a number of fronts, whether that is presenting at least an outline of a payment plan to the Paris Club, which I think just last night, the Paris Club came back and said they want to have those negotiations and have those discussions. It has been a long time coming. No question about it, but that is one of the issues that we have pushed the government on, and I think it is too early. I do not want to prejudge how that comes out. We will see.

I think later this month the Argentine Government is going to present to the IMF a new inflation index, a new CPI, and so obviously, we need to see how that plays out as well.

The ICSID agreements, which you know are the final arbitral ICSID awards that they paid—I believe it was \$667 million to three American companies.

So those are, I think, at least positive steps in the right direction. There is a lot more to do. And although I know the Spanish company Repsol is not a U.S. company, that has been an issue on the docket that we have talked to them about. We have urged them, as other governments have as well, because unfortunately when they nationalized that, they did not deal with it for a long time. But now it does look like they are in final stages of a deal with that company.

The CHAIRMAN. I know you mentioned the Paris Club. The offer to negotiate its Paris Club debt—is that any different than past offers? They have made past offers, but they have not followed through.

Mr. MAMET. That is exactly why I said I did not want to prejudge yet to see what happens. I think we are right in the middle of that. I completely agree, Senator. It is an ongoing issue, as I called it an irritant in our relationship, that we need to deal with. I think that is exactly why we need to have an ambassador there to dialogue at the highest levels and deliver those tough messages.

The CHAIRMAN. How does Argentina's default on U.S. Government debt affect other aspects of U.S. relations with the country?

Mr. MAMET. On the Paris Club, among other things?

I think there is that basket of issues, IMF, Paris Club. The ICSID agreements I think did actually move forward the relationship a little bit. But, unfortunately, I think we have to be vigilant and keep an eye every single day on what is going on. I think these import controls, export controls, some of the regulation I think has made it a very difficult place at times to do business, although U.S. businesses, as I understand it, Chairman, are doing OK. But at the same time, I think we really need to be engaged with the country every single day, have the full force of this committee and the White House pushing Argentina to do what is in their own best interest.

The CHAIRMAN. How do you see Argentina aligned within that Western Hemisphere?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Mr. Chairman, as you know, they are the third-largest economy in Latin America. They obviously are a major player on all sorts of issues. Internationally, as I said, they work pretty well with us on a number of issues, nuclear non-proliferation, human rights, antihuman trafficking. So they are a

major country with a major economy that we work with at the U.N., the IAEA, and a number of other multilateral fora.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, to piggyback on Senator Rubio, not only in Cuba, but President Kirchner has taken the country in alliance with those in many respects who do not share our values with Venezuela, with Bolivia, with Ecuador. It seems to be aligned in the universe of those who are willing to change their constitutions in order to perpetuate their existence in government and reelection even beyond the constitutional mandate. So they arbitrarily and capriciously change constitutions. As a matter of fact, is it not true that President Kirchner was looking to do exactly that in Argentina?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Senator, in regards to Cuba, if I can just say that the administration, as you know, respects the rights of all countries to have their own bilateral relations, but this is a very important point. As you know, in my background, I have worked on democracy issues. This is something that is very important to me personally.

And working with this committee, I think that we need to continue to encourage Argentina to show a strong commitment to democracy, the rule of law, freedom of expression, and to hold their partners and their neighbors in the region accountable to the same basic standards that they believe in. As you know, they just had a 30th anniversary of return to democracy. They know, as well as anybody I think, the benefits of democracy, but we have to hold them accountable to make sure they push their neighbors, push their partners on those issues that we cherish that I personally hold dear and I know you do as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, beyond Cuba, certainly the countries they are engaging with and seem to align themselves with are generally not within the universe of U.S. national interests.

I also get concerned at someone who is willing to change the constitution and may have only been thwarted because they did not win the majorities necessary in the Congress to ultimately change the constitution. Otherwise they likely would have.

And then I look at last year's leading human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges, which expressed deep concern about reforms passed by the Argentine Congress and moves taken by the Kirchner administration that pose a risk to the independence of the judiciary in Argentina.

And then I see what has happened with press freedom in Argentina with the Clarin, which is one of the few media outlets to challenge Ms. Fernandez's policies, being besieged by the Kirchner administration.

So I have a larger view about what is happening in Argentina. And just a rosy view that we have business, yes, we have business there, but we have bondholders who do not get paid. We have debt to the United States that they keep playing with by saying we are going to renegotiate and never get to that renegotiation. We have judges that are being interfered with. We have freedom of the press that is being violated. And we have a currency crisis that is going on. So our national interest universe here is much broader.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. I just wanted to take off on that point and say—I think you have stated it accurately, Mr. Chairman. Here is what I would add. Mr. Mamet, have you been to Argentina?

Mr. MAMET. Senator, I have not had the opportunity yet to be there. I have traveled pretty extensively around the world, but I have not yet had a chance.

Senator RUBIO. Well, here is why I ask—and this is with all due respect. You have an impressive resume of work and so forth, and obviously, we are very interested in your testimony and what we learn in the days to come leading up to your nomination. I think this is a very significant post because I think Argentina is right where the chairman is describing. We have this trend in Latin America of people who get elected but then do not govern democratically, and Argentina is an example of this. Now, are they where Venezuela is? Cuba did not even try to have elections. But Venezuela or Nicaragua or Bolivia or Ecuador? That is where they are headed and that is who they align with.

The chairman talked for a moment about the government-sanctioned censorship that you are seeing going on there. For example, Kirchner has replaced independent media regulators with a board charged with overseeing the distribution of media licenses. This was put in effect basically in order to repress opposition media outlets by imposing ridiculous restrictions upon them. You have an antiterrorism law passed in 2011 that now holds the media liable for reporting on issues that could, “terrorize the public.” This is a trend throughout the region, and now Argentina is at the forefront of these sorts of things.

I will bring another point up to you. In January 2013, the President of Argentina announced a memorandum of understanding with Iran to create what she calls a truth commission to reinvestigate the 1994 terrorist attack on the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association. This understanding is a reversal of years of work and of exhaustive reporting on that attack by a special prosecutor, whom I have met, Alberto Nisman, who concluded that the attacks were approved by the Supreme Leader of Iran himself and by senior officials in the Iranian Government.

Again, these are things that are very concerning to us, and I bring these things to light because in your answer to the chairman’s question a moment ago, you identified Argentina as an ally. Is Argentina truly an ally? I should not say the people of Argentina or even the nation. Is this government under this President in Argentina—is that country an ally of the United States?

Mr. MAMET. Senator, in my perspective, they are an ally who we disagree with and have fundamental disagreements about certain policies. I think mature democracies can disagree and do it very directly and forcefully when needed, either publicly or privately. And I think that is all the more reason that we need to engage. We need to be down there talking to them at the very highest levels.

Senator RUBIO. Well, again, I do not disagree that we should not talk at the highest levels, but again, I take issue with the idea that Argentina is a mature democracy. Mature democracies do not target newspaper and media outlets. Mature democracies do not interfere with the judicial branch. Mature democracies do not take the sort of actions that they are taking. They certainly have elections.

I am not disputing they have elections. But elections alone do not make you a democracy.

Let me give you another example. The Argentine-United States security cooperation between our countries is virtually nonexistent and it is nonexistent because of their unwillingness to work with us. And as I am sure you are aware, even in the agreements that we had with them in the past—I think it was 3 years ago—led by the Foreign Minister himself—they seized American equipment. Those are not the actions of an ally. I do not recall the last time that Canada seized our equipment. I do not recall the last time that Mexico seized our equipment. I do not recall the last time Israel, South Korea, Japan, or any of our other real allies seized our equipment.

Again, this is not a reflection on the people of Argentina or even on the national character of a country that I do believe has strong affinities to our shared culture. But I do take issue with this government who I do not consider an ally of the United States, nor an enemy either. But they need to make a decision about who they are and where they are headed government-wise. And I can just tell you that these signals that we are getting are not the signals of a mature democracy and they are not the actions of an ally.

I did want to raise one more point in particular, and I know the chairman has already raised it, but I have people in Florida that have been impacted by this. And that is, for more than a decade, they have refused to honor their bond obligations. They have repeatedly defied U.S. courts, and they refuse to negotiate in good faith with its foreign stakeholders, including U.S. creditors who hold bonds with a face value of \$8.7 billion at the time of the 2001 default.

And by the way, it looks like they are headed for another default because all the actions they are taking today seem to be designed to avoid a short-term default. But long term, their structural problems are extraordinary, which is that I anticipate, quite frankly, that there is a very high likelihood that, if you are confirmed, while you are in that post, you are going to have another similar collapse in Argentina to what you saw economically just a decade ago. This is a very serious problem.

So let me ask you. If you are confirmed as an Ambassador, will you send a clear message to that government in Argentina that it must engage? If it wants to be an ally, if it wants to have a better relationship with the United States, it must engage in good faith negotiations with its creditors, and it must honor its international financial obligations.

Mr. MAMET. Absolutely, Senator, I will do that, and I will have the backing of this committee, this chairman, and the White House as we go in and we talk about the exact issues that you mentioned. The JCET incident from a couple years ago obviously was—it was a very difficult part in our relationship—a very difficult time in our relationship between the two countries. They have been, though—Argentina has twice been a victim of a major terrorist attack. They understand. They are committed to fighting terrorism, and the administration does stand ready to increase cooperation on a number of fronts, if asked. So I think absolutely we need to be engaged. If

you want, we can talk about the AMIA bombing or Iran. There are a lot of other things I know you brought up.

But the answer to your question, whether it is debt to U.S. bondholders or the debt to the Paris Club or whether it is incidents like the JCET incident that you referenced, I think we absolutely have to have a frank and tough discussion. But I think allies can disagree, but at the same time, we need to be in there fighting for our interests. And if confirmed, Senator, that will be my top priority, working with you, to absolutely fight for our interests and, at the same time, look for those areas that we can cooperate on.

Senator RUBIO. This is the most unique ally I think we have in the world then because Argentina is an ally that, according to what you have said, Argentina is an ally that does not pay American bondholders the money they owe them, does not cooperate with our military, and basically is open to reinvestigating and in my opinion potentially reinterpreting the fact that a terrorist attack authorized—according to their own special prosecutor who found this evidence—authorized by the Supreme Leader of Iran was carried out against the Jewish community in Buenos Aires. I mean, if it was not Iran, who else was behind it? And the evidence is pretty compelling. And instead of taking the advice of their own special prosecutor, this ally of ours has now decided to reopen it in the hopes of reinterpreting it. These are, in my opinion, not the actions of an ally. It could change. There could be a new President and a new direction for their government.

But last but not least, I would just say that the antidemocratic direction that Argentina is going reminds me a lot more of Ecuador and Bolivia and Venezuela than it does of Mexico and Chile and Peru and Colombia. Those are allies. I think the Argentinean Government needs to make up its mind what they are toward the United States.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. One final set of questions.

This assignment for which you have been nominated is a big country in terms of the access of—with all due respect to the other two nominees, those are important countries as well. But this is a big to-do about, in my opinion as someone who has followed the hemisphere for 21 years, where the hemisphere goes.

How would you define Argentina's positions vis-a-vis intellectual property and narcotics trafficking and money laundering?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Senator, as I mentioned earlier, we have had a good relationship over the years working with them on a number of fronts. Ever since the JCET incident, we have scaled back and there is little cooperation on whether it is defense-related training exercises or other issues. The administration stands ready to increase cooperation, if asked, on that particular note.

The CHAIRMAN. And on intellectual property rights?

Mr. MAMET. Senator, on that, I do not have a full answer on that, but I would be happy to—because you deserve a full, complete answer on intellectual property. Obviously, it is very important for our companies that are doing business down there. And if I may get back to you on intellectual property, I would be happy to do that.

[The written response submitted by Mr. Mamet to the requested information follows:]

The United States carefully monitors intellectual property rights protection in Argentina and presses for more effective enforcement. Areas of concern include counterfeiting, online piracy, and the unfair commercial use and unauthorized disclosure of data submitted to regulatory agencies to obtain approval for the sale of pharmaceuticals. In these and related matters, Argentine courts have not provided adequate protection. Argentina also does not efficiently address patent issues and applications. For these and other reasons, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative includes Argentina on its Priority Watch List.

Argentina is making progress to better protect intellectual property rights, albeit slowly. In 2012, the number of enforcement raids increased and regulatory officials improved cooperation with industry actors. The judiciary granted a civil injunction related to the online distribution of pirated content, though criminal action has been lacking. We urge Argentina to devote more attention and investigative and prosecutorial resources to this issue. As a consultant to corporations that operate overseas, I recognize the vital role the U.S. Government plays in advocating for the protection of U.S. intellectual property. If confirmed, I would be a vigorous advocate for U.S. companies in Argentina, working closely with the local American Chamber of Commerce to identify and address the most serious intellectual property concerns.

Argentina also should do more to curtail money laundering, which facilitates narcotics trafficking, corruption, and tax evasion. The United States is not alone in making this observation; since 2009, the Financial Action Task Force has been working with Argentina to address deficiencies in its legal framework and enforcement approach.

I recognize the challenge Argentine authorities face in a country where cash is commonly used for transactions and a high percentage of economic activity occurs in the informal sector. Argentina has made progress implementing legislation and building its capacity to address technical deficiencies.

Nevertheless, problems persist. If confirmed, I would urge Argentine officials to pay greater attention to this issue, improve regulatory coordination, and ensure that the appropriate laws and regulations are established and enforced. The Financial Action Task Force recommends that, in addition to technical compliance, effectiveness must be considered when evaluating a national antimoney laundering strategy.

Argentina is an important transit zone for South American cocaine being shipped to Europe. Argentina is also seeing increased domestic consumption and, with it, a rise in violent crime. In my work in impoverished neighborhoods in Los Angeles, I have seen the awful consequences of illegal drugs on communities, particularly on youth, and I support Argentina's efforts to address trafficking and addiction.

Argentina has focused its efforts in Greater Buenos Aires and in vulnerable, low-income communities. It has made new investments in demand reduction. Improved coordination among its federal and provincial law enforcement agencies and deployments in the country's north of additional equipment and personnel would bolster operational capacity. Additionally, Argentine courts face backlogs in drug cases that limit their ability to bring narcotics traffickers to justice and allow their punishments to serve as a deterrent.

Argentina and the United States share an important interest in confronting this alarming increase in illicit drug trafficking. If confirmed, I would urge Argentina to resume the more robust level of information-sharing and case coordination that occurred before Argentina seized a U.S. military plane and cargo in 2011 and subsequently reduced its security cooperation with the United States. Argentina's Ministry of Security reactivated some cooperation with U.S. authorities, including the Drug Enforcement Administration, in 2012. These limited joint efforts led to significant arrests, most notably of Colombian national Henry López Londoño in Buenos Aires in October 2012. However, far greater collaboration is possible given the scope of the challenge and, if confirmed, I would make this a priority.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me inform you a little bit. Argentina has been on the special 301 priority list of the United States for a number of years because of its deficiencies in intellectual property rights enforcement.

And with reference to drug trafficking and money laundering, it is pretty outrageous that our bilateral cooperation on counter-narcotics issues has decreased dramatically following Argentina's February 2011 seizure at the Buenos Aires airport of U.S. military

cargo and training materials, materials for an exercise that had been approved by the Argentine Government.

So this is why we have some real concerns about what this relationship is and what our nominee will do in this country because we love the Argentinean people. We think they deserve better, and we think that Americans who ultimately invest in Argentina deserve much better than what they have experienced.

With no other members before the committee and with our thanks to all of you for your testimony, the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow.

I would urge the nominees, if they receive questions from the committee members who may not have been here today but will submit questions for the record, for you to answer them expeditiously. The sooner you answer them, the more likely we can consider you for a business meeting.

And seeing no other member wishing to ask questions, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF LUIS G. MORENO TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What is your assessment of the Jamaican Government's cooperation with the U.S. on antinarcotics efforts? If confirmed, what efforts will you take to deepen this cooperation?

Answer. The United States has a history of close and fruitful law enforcement cooperation with the Jamaican Government. If confirmed, I would continue this partnership with the Jamaican Government, working closely with the many U.S. agencies represented in our Embassy, and Jamaican counterparts focused on counterterrorism and counternarcotics activities. I would support Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) funding for programs focusing on capacity-building for security forces and the criminal justice system.

Our joint efforts through the CBSI to counter the growing threat posed by narcotics and weapons trafficking to the security of our citizens and our economies have resulted in the arrest of lottery scammers, the extraditions of drug traffickers, and the seizure of illegal drugs and contraband. In 2013, Jamaican authorities, with U.S. support, seized 1,230 kg of cocaine, compared to 338 kg in 2012.

U.S. relationships with the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) are excellent. Ship container and airport interdiction initiatives have proven beneficial in seizing drugs, identifying targets, and developing leads to the United States and other countries. The Embassy is working to assemble joint training for Jamaicans customs and select law enforcement groups, coordinated by U.S. and British law enforcement/security agencies, particularly in the area of drug interdiction.

Question. What accounts for Jamaica's increased homicide rate in the past year? What is the Jamaican Government doing to curb violence? What role can U.S. assistance play?

Answer. Jamaica recorded 1,197 murders in CY 2013, a 9-percent increase over 2012. Jamaican officials, including National Security Minister Peter Bunting, attributed the 2013 spike in homicides to increased use of violence in robberies, the recent prison releases of alleged gang leaders, a general increase in intragang battles, and a return to Caribbean drug routes—owing to law enforcement efforts in Mexico and Central America that brought with it an increase in weapons and drug trafficking.

To curb this violence, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) launched Operation Resilience in October 2013, an antigang measure that resulted in hundreds of arrests and seized weapons. The Jamaican Government is building capacity by increasing the JCF's budget, and improving its organized crime and anticorruption task forces and its forensic capabilities.

Jamaica is a partner in the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), through which the U.S. Government has been working in Jamaica since 2010 to increase the capacity of its rule of law institutions as well as address the root causes of crime.

USAID's CBSI-funded Community Based Policing project provided a standard curriculum and training for every member of the JCF on improved interaction with community members and a partnership approach to policing. Other USAID CBSI activities focus on intervening with at-risk youth, who are highly susceptible to choosing a life of crime and violence and providing them with life and job skills training.

CBSI also provides nonlethal equipment and training, institutionalizes community-based policing, and supports the JCF's Anti-Corruption Branch. In 2012, with the assistance of INL-provided equipment the National Forensics Sciences Laboratory's ability to analyze and process ballistic evidence for the prosecution of gun crimes increased by 62 percent; firearms account for 70 percent of all murders in Jamaica.

Question. How would you assess the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative in Jamaica? In your opinion, is this assistance having an impact?

Answer. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) is positively contributing to improved Jamaican law enforcement responses to increasing transnational criminal activity throughout the region.

As a member of the Caribbean-U.S. Joint Working Group, Jamaica played a key role in developing this initiative and plays a critical leadership role in the region. The initiative is improving the safety of the United States and improving the security of all countries in the region. USAID's CBSI-funded Community Based Policing (CBP) project provides a standard curriculum and training for every member of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) on improved interaction with community members and a partnership approach to policing. The CBP project has also been used as a template for other countries within the region to develop their own CBP activities. The next phase of the CBP project will improve community safety by increasing the capacity of communities, police, and other stakeholders to address the root causes of crime and insecurity. USAID is working with Jamaica's at-risk communities to ensure they play an active role in the fight against crime and violence.

Other CBSI activities focus on intervening with at-risk youth who are highly susceptible to choosing a life of crime and violence, and providing them with life and job skills training. CBSI funding focused on law enforcement professionalization has provided 6,000 frontline JCF officers with nonlethal force equipment and training and supported the JCF internal affairs division.

Question. How would you assess U.S. assistance to Jamaica's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS? What progress has Jamaica made in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic?

Answer. The Government of Jamaica has been a robust partner with the United States in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic. While the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program began in FY 2008, Jamaica was making investments with its own limited resources to address HIV/AIDS as far back as FY 2000. However, Jamaica has one of the highest levels of HIV prevalence in the Caribbean. Still, there are fewer deaths due to HIV/AIDS in recent years due to universal access to antiretroviral drugs and the increase in treatment sites.

In 1999, the rate in the general population was 0.7 percent. In the 2012 Global AIDS response report, the figure is 1.7 percent. There has been significant under-reporting because it is estimated that 50 percent of the people living with HIV do not know their status as they are reluctant to be tested, even though testing is widely available in Jamaica. Stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS drives the epidemic underground and there are challenges to ensure people adhere to the treatment program.

The U.S. interagency PEPFAR team, along with UNAIDS, Global Fund, and the EU, consults with the Government of Jamaica to discuss strategy and avoid duplication of efforts. USAID works closely with the Ministry of Health to improve the capacity of civil society to respond to the epidemic and to enhance the sustainability of services and programs. The majority of resources and technical inputs have been in HIV prevention through behavioral changes targeting key populations (sex workers and out-of-school youth). The Jamaican Ministry of Health and key nongovernmental organizations are encouraging testing and counseling of the general population as well as supporting the reduction of stigma and discrimination among people living with HIV/AIDS and key populations.

Question. Jamaica has a law that in effect criminalizes homosexuality, and according to Jamaican human rights groups, LGBT people in Jamaica have been singled out and killed because of their sexual orientation. The Guardian newspaper reported that the British honorary consul in Montego Bay was found dead in 2009, with a

note on his body reading "This is what will happen to all gays." What specific steps will you take as the next U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica to promote greater tolerance and acceptance of LGBT rights? And, what specific U.S. programs and assistance will you prioritize to counter anti-LGBT sentiment in Jamaica and to support individuals and organizations working to build a safer environment for the Jamaican LGBT community?

Answer. U.S. support for protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons is grounded in our commitment to "the equal and unalienable" human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reflected in our Constitution. If confirmed, I would work closely with our Embassy team and Jamaican partners to advance LGBT rights.

Embassy Kingston maintains excellent access and strong relations with Jamaican officials, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and community leaders. If confirmed I will continue to engage with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice on human rights issues, including issues of specific concern to the LGBT community.

U.S. programs and activities seek to enhance and expand understanding and appreciation for the human rights of LGBT individuals through internal discussion and dialogue. One important aspect of embassy activity is to meet regularly with local NGOs that engage on LGBT issues to gain insight on issues of discrimination and discuss opportunities for greater U.S. involvement.

Priority programs include funding for "Panos Caribbean" that works to strengthen and improve the livelihoods of those in the gay community through public awareness campaigns. The program promotes tolerance and accountability for those impacted by HIV/AIDS. The Embassy also funded a "Respect and Tolerance" program with a local university that supports activities that promote a culture of respect and social tolerance for diversity.

If confirmed, I will speak out on the needs of LGBT youth, women, and racial and ethnic minorities who often face multiple forms of discrimination. I will also maintain regular contact with academic institutions to stay informed on LGBT issues; ensure that the Embassy's Law Enforcement Working Group addresses LGBT issues in the criminal justice system; and work with other diplomatic missions in Kingston to promote respect for LGBT persons.

RESPONSES OF JOHN L. ESTRADA TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEZES

Question. To what extent can Trinidad and Tobago supply its regional neighbors with natural gas and decrease the Caribbean's reliance on using oil and diesel for electricity generation? To what extent does Trinidad and Tobago have energy efficiency or renewable energy programs to improve environmental outcomes and free up more natural gas for export?

Answer. Trinidad provides significant energy resources, mostly oil, to its Caribbean neighbors and it will continue to play an important role. While oil can be shipped without significant capital investment, the same is not true for natural gas. The capital cost to develop the infrastructure to transport natural gas is an important factor in the Eastern Caribbean energy market. The administration is advocating on behalf of a U.S. company that is working with partners from Trinidad and Tobago to develop a pipeline to Barbados and the neighboring French islands. If feasible, this project could increase energy security in the Eastern Caribbean. As a result of the shale gas revolution in the United States, Trinidad, and Tobago has already shifted its export market for its gas from the United States to Latin America and Asia.

While Trinidad and Tobago is rich in oil and gas resources, its leaders recognize that renewable energy is critical to environmental protection and economic sustainability. They are considering how to expand renewables locally. Trinidad and Tobago has committed itself to renewable energy for the Caribbean region by signing a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Government to launch a regional renewable energy center under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas.

Question. How would you assess Trinidad and Tobago's cooperation with the United States on counternarcotics programs and what steps would you take as our Ambassador to strengthen this collaboration? To what degree has Trinidad and Tobago's proximity to the Venezuelan coast made it vulnerable to trafficking operations?

Answer. Trinidad and Tobago is an important partner in Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) efforts to stem the flow of illegal drugs from South America. Through CBSI, the United States has instituted a comprehensive interagency anticrime and counternarcotics strategy aimed at assisting local law enforcement agencies to detect and interdict narcotics and to develop the skills to effectively prosecute these crimes. In Trinidad and Tobago, the government has struggled to coordinate and adequately fund its counternarcotics efforts; seizures in 2012 were down from 2011. If confirmed, I would bolster our CBSI programs and those initiated by the Drug Enforcement Administration to disrupt the flow of narcotics to the United States and would work with Trinidad and Tobago to strengthen its capacity to fight transnational criminals. I would also work to support its efforts to convince its youth to turn their backs on the false promise of the drug trade.

Question. What factors account for the high level of violence in Trinidad and Tobago? How is the Trinidadian Government responding to the high murder rate? What steps would you take as U.S. Ambassador to help the Government of Trinidad and Tobago address violence in its country.

Answer. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes violent crime as a key challenge and is seeking taking steps to address it, including to procuring the necessary equipment, training, and personnel to address it. I understand that through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), the United States provides assistance to help the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to address the root causes of crime, which include the destabilizing effects of the illicit narcotics trade and lack of economic opportunity, and also by providing support to demand-reduction programs.

There is no greater priority for a U.S. Embassy than protecting its citizens, including from crime. The U.S. Government has focused its efforts to combat crime by building Trinidad and Tobago's law enforcement capacity. If confirmed, I would seek to bolster the existing U.S. Government interagency efforts to combat crime and build Trinidad and Tobago's law enforcement capacity. Law enforcement efforts targeting other specific types of crime have resulted in a marked decrease in some of those categories of crime, such as kidnappings for ransom. If confirmed, I would promote these existing programs and work for their expansion.

Question. According to U.N. statistics, more than 13,000 people in Trinidad and Tobago are estimated to be living with HIV and the adult prevalence rate in the country is 1.5 percent. In an effort to combat HIV/AIDS, Trinidad and Tobago receives assistance under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). How would you assess these efforts and the support that the United States has provided to Trinidad and Tobago to reduce the incidence and limit the spread of HIV/AIDS?

Answer. Trinidad and Tobago has implemented a national program to combat HIV/AIDS. The country has a 1.5 percent adult HIV prevalence rate, with significantly higher rates among those engaged in high-risk behaviors.

Trinidad and Tobago, along with 11 partnering Caribbean countries, signed the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Partnership Framework in April 2010. The Framework guides the collaboration among the U.S. Government's PEPFAR implementing agencies and the participating host government partners. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the most active role of the U.S. Government's implementing agencies. CDC's programming focuses on improved data collection, prevention strategies, laboratory strengthening, and building public health capacity.

RESPONSES OF NOAH MAMET TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. A recent New York Times editorial stated that Argentina is "facing a financial crisis caused largely by misguided government policies" and a Washington Post editorial stated that Argentina is "headed for another stretch of economic and perhaps political turmoil." Do you agree with these assessments? Does the current economic situation in Argentina have the ability to potential to affect economies throughout the region?

Answer. A stable and prosperous Argentina is in the best interest of Argentina, the United States, and the region. Encouraging sound economic policies is one of the key U.S. objectives in Argentina, and it would be one of my top priorities if confirmed as Ambassador. I believe strongly in the power of free and fair rules-based trade and the importance of a market-led economy for economic development.

From 2003 to 2007, Argentina was buoyed by high demand and high prices for its agricultural exports. Government policies helped bring about fiscal and current account surpluses and the accumulation of international reserves. Recently, however, growth has slowed and Argentina has experienced imbalances in its fiscal and current accounts, due in part to increasing subsidies for energy. Many informed observers both inside and outside Argentina believe these imbalances must be addressed to put Argentina on a sustainable and prosperous trajectory.

If confirmed, I will encourage the maintenance of a stable, transparent, and predictable investment climate that promotes investment and fair and open competition. I would also ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires continues to serve as a strong advocate for the fair treatment of U.S. companies and investors.

Question. What are the United States primary national interests in its bilateral relationship with Argentina with regard to trade, investment, energy, military, and counternarcotics issues.

Answer. Notwithstanding important areas of disagreement in recent years, including Argentina's failure to honor its international obligations to public and private creditors and its inconsistent security cooperation, the United States and Argentina have a long history of cooperation. If confirmed, I will strongly advocate for U.S. interests in areas where our governments have not found common ground and in areas where we continue to cooperate.

Our countries share many values that provide the foundation for collaboration on peacekeeping, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, counterterrorism, education, and science. We do not always agree with Argentina's positions in international fora, but it has been a constructive partner at the International Atomic Energy Agency and the U.N. Human Rights Council. If confirmed, I will highlight the interests and values Americans and Argentines share, as well as the potential benefits of closer cooperation between our countries on the regional and global stages.

My emphasis on cooperation should not be mistaken for reluctance to engage in areas of disagreement. Argentina's 2011 seizure of classified U.S. cargo brought into Argentina by a U.S. Army Joint Combined Exercise Training team was completely unjustified and unacceptable. Since this regrettable incident, we have been working to restore the level of trust necessary for more fulsome cooperation on security and counternarcotics.

If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to highlight Argentina's responsibility to meet its international trade and financial obligations, including by removing trade barriers in accordance with WTO rules and addressing other impediments to business and investment.

Despite frustrations and difficulties, our economic relationship with Argentina is significant and mutually beneficial. More than 500 U.S. companies operate in Argentina and employ more than 170,000 Argentines. The United States is Argentina's largest foreign direct investor. The U.S. trade surplus with Argentina was \$9.4 billion in 2012. Given Argentina's educated workforce and natural resources, there is room for investment and trade to expand dramatically to the benefit of both economies.

If confirmed, I will strongly encourage Argentina to take all appropriate steps to strengthen our economic ties.

Question. What is your assessment of Argentina's participation in the Mercosur trade bloc and do you see Mercosur as an effective platform for economic integration and growth in South America?

Answer. The administration welcomes all efforts at regional integration that aim to reduce obstacles to trade, further economic development, and increase shared prosperity. We appreciate that support for democracy is enshrined in Mercosur's foundational documents, and its implicit commitment to promote those values in the region.

If confirmed, I would work to increase trade and investment with Argentina and ease market access for U.S. businesses.

Question. In your opinion, who are Argentina's major political allies in Latin America? What is your assessment of relations between Argentina and Chile? And, what is your view on Argentina's closeness with the ALBA countries (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Cuba).

Answer. Argentina is active in a variety of regional multilateral bodies, including the Organization of American States, and it participates in the Summits of the Americas. It is also an active member of the Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Argentina's relationship with neighboring Chile is cooperative, including participation in joint military exercises to coordinate potential joint peacekeeping deploy-

ments. Argentina and Chile are demonstrating their regional leadership on non-proliferation by organizing this year a joint exercise on response and mitigation to a potential terrorist attack involving the release of radioactive material.

The Argentine Government maintains close ties to Venezuela, whose President, Nicolas Maduro, visited Argentina in May 2013. Although not a member of the Bolivarian alliance, Argentina has at times associated itself with the group's positions and objectives.

Argentina and Cuba have had bilateral relations since 1973. In 2009, Argentine President Christina Fernandez de Kirchner visited Cuba and signed a range of agreements. She returned to Havana last month to participate in a CELAC summit. Like any country, Argentina is free to choose its bilateral partners. That said, if confirmed, I would urge Argentina to take a stronger and more consistent position internationally on behalf of democratic values and fundamental human rights, consistent with its own national history.

Question. What is your assessment as to why Argentina has been slow to settle its outstanding debts? As Ambassador, what tools will you have at your disposal to encourage the Argentine Government to settle its outstanding debts? Will you urge the Argentine Government to negotiate in good faith with its private creditors?

Answer. Resolution of Argentina's legacy debt issues has dragged on for more than a decade, tarnishing Argentina's reputation among current and potential investors, damaging its international relationships, and resulting in certain restrictions to U.S. assistance.

If confirmed, I will strongly urge Argentina to clear its arrears and normalize relations with all of its creditors, both public and private.

In my outreach to senior Argentine officials, I will strongly emphasize that the settlement of these longstanding financial disputes is in Argentina's interest, as it would send a strong signal that Argentina is a reliable and attractive destination for foreign and domestic investment.

Question. What is your assessment of Argentina's most recent offer to renegotiate its outstanding Paris Club arrears? How does Argentina's default on U.S. Government debt affect other aspects of U.S. relations with the country?

Answer. Argentina's unpaid debt to the U.S. Government is a chronic source of tension in our relationship. If confirmed, I will urge Argentina to clear its \$9 billion in outstanding arrears to the United States and other members of the Paris Club, and press Argentine officials to normalize relations with all of its creditors.

Argentina's failure to pay its Paris Club debt has had consequences. The impasse has tarnished Argentina's reputation among current and potential investors, damaged its international relationships, resulted in certain restrictions to U.S. assistance, and a change in U.S. policies toward Argentina at the multilateral development banks and at the Export-Import Bank of the United States. For these reasons, the U.S. and other members of the Paris Club regarded the restarting of negotiations with Argentina as a positive step and a basis for further discussion.

If confirmed, I will urge Argentina to reach an agreement with the Paris Club that brings about the prompt and full repayment of its debts.

Question. Do you believe that judicial independence is under threat in Argentina? What message would you deliver to the Argentine Government regarding the links between upholding judicial independence and its ability to attract international investment and resolve financial challenges in the country?

Answer. The separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and the protection of their independence, are fundamental components of democratic governance. The administration follows this issue closely throughout the hemisphere, including in Argentina.

In 2013, the Argentine Government took steps to alter the size and selection process of the country's Council of Magistrates, which oversees the judiciary. It also sought to limit the use of judicial injunctions against the government, and to establish new appellate courts. The proposals prompted concerns about judicial independence, and provoked criticism from Human Rights Watch and the U.N.'s Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Argentina's Supreme Court ultimately struck down as unconstitutional the controversial election process of the Council of Magistrates proposed by the executive branch and approved by the legislature.

In the Human Rights Report in 2011 and 2012, the United States cited risks to judicial independence in Argentina, noting in particular political pressure on judges to shape judicial outcomes. If confirmed, I will be steadfast in my defense of judicial independence, and emphasize that any future attempts at judicial reform not undermine its independence and the separation of powers.

Question. Do you believe that the Kirchner administration is taking steps to undermine press freedom in Argentina? If confirmed, will you make issues of press freedom and the defense of internationally recognized democratic principles one of your priorities? What message would you have for the Argentine Government regarding its actions against Grupo Clarin?

Answer. Freedom of expression, including for members of the press, is a fundamental right, and in the words of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, an "essential component" of a functioning democracy. Argentines enjoy a diverse media environment, which facilitates vibrant policy debates across the ideological and partisan spectrums. Journalists generally operate free of intimidation or violence. Criticism of the government is common in the most widely viewed print and electronic media.

In recent years, however, this media environment has come under threat, and journalism advocates have raised concerns about government actions that they believe pose a threat to free expression. A 2009 media law that reduced the concentration of TV and radio ownership was accompanied by a highly polarizing and intensified conflict between the government and certain private media groups, including Clarin. In 2011, counterterrorism legislation also raised concerns about potential constraints to the free exercise of journalism. The Argentine Government has defied local court orders to equitably distribute official advertising across all media outlets, instead favoring those sympathetic to government views. In 2013, the Argentine Government pressured major supermarkets and electronics retailers to cease advertising in certain newspapers, depriving critical outlets of an important revenue source. These and other actions led Freedom House to classify Argentina's media environment as only "partly free" in its 2013 report. The organization warned that the government had "hampered the public's ability to access unbiased information."

If confirmed, I will speak out both publicly and privately about the importance of free expression and the right of citizens to benefit from an independent and diverse media that operates without government interference.

Question. Is the Argentine Government adequately addressing the underlying causes of macroeconomic instability? Are you concerned how the current environment could impact U.S. investment, particularly U.S. companies already invested in Argentina?

Answer. The Obama administration closely monitors Argentina's economy and its macroeconomic policies, including actions related to the country's currency regime. In recent months, Argentina experienced rising inflation and a loss of reserves driven by imbalances in its fiscal and current accounts. As the third-largest economy in Latin America, its economic stability is critically important to the region. It is also important to the many U.S. companies with investments in Argentina; in 2012, two-way trade in goods and services totaled \$23 billion, and the U.S. trade surplus with Argentina was \$10.4 billion.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Argentine Government to adopt policies that will contribute to economic stability, including policies that promote a stable investment climate to encourage investment, both foreign and domestic. A stable and growing Argentine economy will help bring about shared prosperity in Argentina, while strengthening the 500 U.S. businesses that operate in the country.

Question. What is your understanding of the progress of negotiations between the Argentine Government and Spanish oil company Repsol? Do you believe that the nationalization of Repsol assets in Argentina has implications for U.S. companies seeking to invest in the country?

Answer. The Obama administration has repeatedly expressed its concerns about Argentina's nationalization of Repsol-YPF, which proceeded initially without fair compensation. The administration called it a "negative development" that dampened the investment climate in Argentina.

The administration has noted developments indicating that YPF and Repsol agreed in principle on a mutually satisfactory compensation arrangement. That appears to be a positive step for Argentina. Without question, an open and competitive market for commodities has proved the most successful path to modern, efficient, and innovative development of energy resources across the globe. In the United States, privately owned energy companies are global leaders that use advanced technologies and methods for energy exploration and production. U.S. firms have a lot to offer to countries that present a favorable investment environment.

In Argentina, oil and natural gas production have been declining in recent years, and Argentina has gone from being a net exporter of energy to a net importer. Despite these trends, Argentina has enormous potential to help supply world energy markets and contribute to global energy security. The Department of Energy esti-

mates that Argentina has some of the world's largest shale oil and gas resources. Attracting private investment, including from U.S. firms, will be essential for Argentina to regain energy self-sufficiency. The Argentine Government has demonstrated a clear interest in having U.S. companies act as partners in their efforts to re-invigorate their energy sector; several U.S. firms have begun to make sizable investments, including in Argentina's Vaca Muerta shale oil and shale gas field.

If confirmed, I will continue to raise the administration's concern at the highest levels of the Government of Argentina about actions that negatively affect the investment climate in Argentina. At the same time, I will seek to build a strong bilateral partnership on energy issues, including through our Bilateral Energy Working Group, to advance the common interests of our countries.

Question. How do you assess Argentina's IPR enforcement and what are the most significant efforts that Argentina could make that would take it off the Special 301 Priority Watch List?

Answer. The United States carefully monitors intellectual property rights protection in Argentina and presses for more effective enforcement. Concerns include counterfeiting, online piracy, and the unfair commercial use and unauthorized disclosure of data submitted to regulatory agencies to obtain approval for the sale of pharmaceuticals. Argentine courts have not provided adequate protection. Argentina also does not efficiently address patent issues and applications. For these and other reasons, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative includes Argentina on its Priority Watch List. On February 12, 2014, it singled out Argentina in its Notorious Markets report, noting that Buenos Aires is home to South America's "largest black market."

Argentina is making progress to better protect intellectual property rights, albeit slowly. In 2012, the number of enforcement raids increased and regulatory officials improved cooperation with industry actors. The judiciary granted a civil injunction related to the online distribution of pirated content, though criminal action has been lacking. If confirmed, I would urge Argentina to devote more attention and investigative and prosecutorial resources to this important issue.

Having been a consultant to corporations that operate overseas, I recognize the vital role the U.S. Government plays in advocating for the protection of U.S. intellectual property. If confirmed, I would be a vigorous advocate for U.S. companies in Argentina, working closely with the local American Chamber of Commerce to identify and address the most serious intellectual property concerns.

Question. What is your assessment of Argentina's efforts to confront illicit trafficking networks in the Tri-Border area? What is your assessment of U.S.-Argentine counternarcotics cooperation?

Answer. The Tri-Border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay remains an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human smuggling, counterfeiting, pirated goods, and money laundering—all potential funding sources for terrorist organizations. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to monitor this region closely and maintain close communication with this committee on this important issue.

Argentina recognizes the need for continued to focus on policing its remote northern and northeastern borders—including the Tri-Border area—against such threats as illicit drug and human trafficking, contraband smuggling, and other forms of transnational crime. In my work in impoverished neighborhoods in Los Angeles, I have seen the awful consequences of illegal drugs on communities, particularly on youth, and I support Argentina's efforts to address trafficking and addiction.

Argentina also focuses on Greater Buenos Aires and vulnerable, low-income communities. It made new investments in demand reduction. Improved coordination among its federal and provincial law enforcement agencies and deployments in the country's north of additional equipment and personnel would bolster operational capacity. Argentine courts face backlogs in drug cases that limit their ability to bring narcotics traffickers to justice and allow their punishments to serve as a deterrent.

Argentina and the United States share an important interest in confronting this alarming increase in illicit drug trafficking. The most consistent cooperation to date is Immigration and Customs Enforcement's work with Argentine customs. If confirmed, I would urge Argentina to resume the more robust level of information-sharing and case coordination that occurred before Argentina seized a U.S. military plane and cargo in 2011 that resulted in a subsequent reduction in effective security and law enforcement cooperation with the United States. Argentina's Ministry of Security reactivated some cooperation with U.S. authorities, including with the Drug Enforcement Administration, in 2012. These limited joint efforts led to signifi-

cant arrests, most notably of Colombian national Henry Lopez Londono in Buenos Aires in October 2012. However, far greater collaboration is possible given the scope of the challenge and, if confirmed, I would make this a priority.

Question. In your opinion, what are the factors contributing to money laundering in Argentina? What is the State Department's assessment of the extent of this problem and what steps would you take as Ambassador to develop greater bilateral cooperation to address these issues?

Answer. Argentina should take additional steps to curtail money laundering, which facilitates narcotics trafficking, corruption, and tax evasion. We are not alone in making this observation; since 2009, the Financial Action Task Force has been working with Argentina to address deficiencies in its legal framework and enforcement approach.

I recognize the challenge Argentine authorities face in a country where cash is commonly used for transactions and a high percentage of economic activity occurs in the informal sector. Argentina has made progress implementing legislation and building its capacity to address money laundering.

Nevertheless, serious problems persist. If confirmed, I would urge Argentine officials to pay greater attention to this issue, improve the capacity and coordination among regulatory, law enforcement and judicial elements to ensure that the appropriate laws and regulations are fully implemented and enforced. The Financial Action Task Force recommends that, in addition to technical compliance, effectiveness must be considered when evaluating a national antimoney laundering strategy.

Question. What is your assessment of special prosecutor Alberto Nisman's reports on Iranian involvement in the 1994 bombing of the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association? What is the State Department's position on the Argentina-Iran "truth commission?"

Answer. The U.S. position on the AMIA bombing is clear and consistent. For nearly 20 years, the United States and the international community have joined the Argentine Government and victims of this horrific terrorist attack in demanding justice. I am familiar with Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's findings, and I know that our Embassy personnel have met with Nisman on a number of occasions. If confirmed, I would reach out to Special Prosecutor Nisman as one of my first acts as Ambassador.

The Obama administration is highly skeptical that a solution can be found to the AMIA case through the January 2013 Argentina-Iran agreement, which includes the establishment of a truth commission. Jewish groups in Argentina share that perspective, and they have expressed concern that Argentina's cooperation with Iran will only cause further delays. In recent months, the Argentine Government itself has acknowledged a lack of progress, though it remains committed to the agreement.

If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government continues to support the AMIA investigation so that nearly two decades after the bombing in Buenos Aires killed 85 people and wounded 300, the perpetrators might finally be held accountable. I take this issue extremely seriously, and I will do all I can to help bring justice to the victims and their families.

Question. What is the State Department's assessment of Argentina's current nuclear power sector? Also, what is your assessment of U.S.-Argentine cooperation in the nuclear power sector, including issues of safety and research?

Answer. Argentina operates two nuclear power reactors capable of generating up to 10 percent of Argentina's total energy production. Argentina is expected to begin operating a third reactor this year. Both General Electric and Westinghouse are interested in supplying new reactors to Argentina. The United States and Argentina coordinate effectively on nuclear safety, nuclear security, nuclear research and development, nuclear safeguards, and nonproliferation through the U.S.-Argentina Binational Energy Working Group and the U.S.-Argentina Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and at the International Atomic Energy Agency, where Argentina has been a constructive and like-minded partner on issues related to Iran.

The United States and Argentina have long cooperated in addressing our shared energy needs and economic opportunities in the energy sector, and we continue to do so, including at the next meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation, to be held in Argentina later this year.

Question. What is your assessment of the Kirchner administration's claims that the Falklands are Argentine territory? Should President Kirchner seek to refer this

case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, what position would you recommend that the United States take?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges that there are conflicting claims of sovereignty between Argentina and the United Kingdom. As a matter of long-standing policy, the United States recognizes de facto British administration of the islands, but takes no position regarding sovereignty claims of either party.

If confirmed, I would encourage British and Argentine cooperation on practical matters related to the islands, while urging a peaceful resolution to the core issue.

RESPONSE OF NOAH MAMET TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. The Argentinian Government's ongoing failure to pay past debts remains a significant concern, undermining its credibility in the global marketplace.

The Republic of Argentina has refused to settle debts owed by Caja Nacional de Ahorra Y Seguro (CAJA) to the TIG Insurance Company (TIG) from my home State of New Hampshire. I have written a number of letters to the Argentinian authorities urging them to resolve these outstanding debts. The legitimacy of TIG's claim was validated by two final U.S. District Court judgments in 2001 and 2002, and the company has made five settlement offers to which the Argentine Government has never responded.

- ◆ Will you continue to emphasize the importance of resolving outstanding debt issues between the Argentinian Government and American debt holders? What are we doing to encourage Argentina to settle their obligations, including to TIG?

Answer. If confirmed, resolution of Argentina's outstanding debt issues will be a priority for me, just as it has been for the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires and U.S. agencies in Washington, who raise the issue with the Argentine Government at every appropriate opportunity. It is in Argentina's interest to normalize its relationship with the international financial and investment communities by clearing its arrears to the U.S. Government and other public and private creditors. Settling its disputes with U.S. and foreign firms is an important part of that process, and I would strongly urge senior Argentine officials to do so.

Argentina has taken positive steps in recent months, including the settlement of outstanding arbitral awards with three U.S. companies, and the resumption of discussions regarding the payment of Argentina's debts to Paris Club members. These preliminary steps are encouraging, but much more needs to be done. If confirmed, I will press Argentina to honor all of its international financial commitments. The resolution of long-standing financial disputes would improve Argentina's investment climate and strengthen our bilateral relationship.

RESPONSES OF NOAH MAMET TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. During your confirmation hearing on February 6, you repeatedly described the Government of Argentina as an ally of the United States. Please describe the status of our bilateral relations and U.S. interests in Argentina.

Answer. Notwithstanding important areas of disagreement in recent years, including Argentina's failure to honor its international obligations to public and private creditors, the United States and Argentina have a long history of cooperation. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen that partnership, while strongly advocating for U.S. interests in areas where our governments have not found common ground and delivering tough messages when necessary.

Our countries share many values that provide the foundation for important collaboration on areas of mutual interest, such as peacekeeping, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and science. We do not always agree with Argentina's positions in international fora, but they have often been a constructive partner on key issues at bodies like the IAEA in Vienna, and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

If confirmed, I will highlight the common interests and values Americans and Argentines share, as well as the potential benefits of closer cooperation between our countries on the regional and global stages.

People-to-people connections through education, tourism, science, and business are strong between our countries. During the 2011-2012 academic year, 1,800 Argentine students studied in the United States while 4,500 U.S. students did so in Argentina. U.S. tourism to Argentina has grown in recent years, and our consular section in

Buenos Aires is one of the top visa-issuing posts in the world with more than 600,000 Argentines having visited the United States in 2012. This interchange strengthens the U.S. economy while helping Argentines better understand U.S. culture.

If confirmed, I will seek to bring prominent Americans to Argentina to highlight the dynamism, diversity, and openness of our country. It is my hope that through these efforts, Argentines will increasingly look to the United States as a partner in nurturing a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable global community.

My emphasis on cooperation should not be mistaken for reluctance to engage in areas of disagreement. Argentina's 2011 seizure of classified U.S. cargo brought into Argentina by a U.S. Army Joint Combined Exercise Training team was completely unjustified and should never happen again. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to highlight Argentina's responsibility to meet its international financial obligations, as well as its need to remove trade barriers and address related policies. I will aggressively address these and other areas of disagreement, while finding opportunities to advance mutual interests.

Question. How would you characterize the current status of media freedom in Argentina?

Answer. Freedom of expression, including for members of the press, is fundamental and in the words of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, an "essential component" of a functioning democracy. I couldn't agree more.

Argentines enjoy a diverse and active media environment, which facilitates vibrant policy debates across the ideological and partisan spectrums. Journalists operate generally free of intimidation or violence. Criticism of the government is common in the most widely viewed print and electronic media.

In recent years, this media environment has come under threat, and journalism advocates have raised concerns about government actions that they believe are obstacles to free expression. A 2009 law reduced the concentration of TV and radio ownership, but was accompanied by a highly polarizing and intensified conflict between the government and certain specific private media groups. In 2011, counterterrorism legislation raised concerns about potential constraints to journalism. In recent years, the Argentine Government has defied local court orders to equitably distribute official advertising across all media outlets, instead favoring those more sympathetic to government views. In 2013, the Argentine Government pressured major supermarkets and electronics retailers to cease advertising in newspapers, thereby depriving critical outlets of yet another important revenue source. These and other actions led Freedom House to classify Argentina's media environment as only "partly free" in its 2013 report. The organization warned that the government had "hampered the public's ability to access unbiased information."

If confirmed, I will speak out both publicly and privately about the importance of free expression and the right of citizens to benefit from an independent and diverse media that operates without government interference.

Question. What is your view of efforts by the Argentine Government in 2013 to provide for the election of magistrates to oversee the judiciary?

Answer. The separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and the protection of their independence, are fundamental components of democratic governance. An independent judiciary provides a vital check on the powers of the other branches of government, and offers a venue for the peaceful and fair settlement of disputes. The administration follows these issues closely in the hemisphere, including in Argentina.

In 2013, the Argentine Government took steps to alter the size and selection process of the country's Council of Magistrates, which oversees the judiciary. It also sought to limit the use of judicial injunctions against the government, and to establish new appellate courts. The proposals prompted concerns about risks to judicial independence, and provoked criticism from Human Rights Watch and the U.N.'s Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Argentina's Supreme Court ultimately struck down as unconstitutional the controversial election process of the Council of Magistrates proposed by the executive branch and approved by the legislature.

In the Human Rights Report in 2011 and 2012, the U.S. administration cited the risks to judicial independence in Argentina, noting in particular political pressure on judges to shape judicial outcomes. If confirmed, I will be steadfast in my defense of judicial independence.

Question. What is your assessment of the current state of democracy in Argentina?

Answer. Throughout its history, Argentina has experienced episodes of economic turbulence and political instability, with only five Presidents completing their terms over the past seven decades.

Encouragingly, in 2013, Argentina celebrated the 30th anniversary of its return to democracy following a tragic period of dictatorship and civil conflict. In the so-called "dirty war," as many as 30,000 Argentines died at the hands of the country's security forces. That national trauma instilled in Argentines a deep appreciation for human rights and democratic norms, such as free and fair elections. Argentina has several well-established political parties and movements that hold office at various levels and compete vigorously in elections, most recently, in October 2013, Argentina held free and fair national mid-term elections. Argentina's democratic values are also evident in many of its positions the country has taken at international fora such as the Organization of American States and the U.N. Human Rights Council.

As in all democratic societies, maintaining the proper checks and balances between among Argentina's public government institutions requires vigilance. In recent years, some executive and legislative actions have been seen as providing unfair electoral advantages to the governing party, and in other cases in Argentina have threatened the independence of the judiciary. Democracy consists of more than holding elections. If confirmed, I will promote strong institutions that provide fair and impartial application of national law and citizen rights, supported by appropriate separation of powers that guarantees checks and balances among government branches.

I would also hope that Argentina's national experience over the past three decades with the defense of democratic values would consistently translate into a defense of those same values internationally. Unfortunately, Argentina's foreign policy has not always reflected its domestic commitment to democracy. This is most notably evident in our hemisphere, where Argentina has steadfastly defended one-party rule and the denial of basic human rights for the people of Cuba. It has embraced the authoritarian regime in Havana. By expressing solidarity with that government, where citizens are denied the right to choose their leaders or express opinions on matters of national importance and journalists cannot operate freely, Argentina does a disservice to its own historical legacy and interest in strengthening democracy worldwide.

If confirmed, I would promote continued cooperation with Argentina both bilaterally and multilaterally to spread our shared democratic values, while urging Argentina to hold its neighbors in the region and countries around the world to the same standards for political freedoms and human rights.

Question. Is the Government of Argentina following a prudent economic model—the "modelo" as it is called?

Answer. A stable and prosperous Argentina is in the best interest of Argentina, the United States, and the entire region. Encouraging sound economic policies is one of the key objectives of U.S. policy in Argentina, and it would be one of my top priorities if confirmed as Ambassador. I believe strongly in the power of free and fair rules-based trade and the importance of a market-led economy for economic development.

From 2003 to 2007, Argentina was buoyed by high demand and high prices for its agricultural exports. Government policies helped bring about fiscal and current account surpluses and the accumulation of international reserves. Recently, however, growth has slowed and Argentina has experienced imbalances in its fiscal and current accounts, due in part to increasing subsidies for energy. Many economists believe these imbalances must be addressed to put Argentina on a sustainable and prosperous trajectory.

It is also important that Argentina normalize its relationship with the international financial and investment communities by clearing its arrears to the U.S. Government and other public and private creditors. The administration has raised these issues at high levels with the Government of Argentina for several years. Recently, Argentina has taken positive steps, including paying arbitral awards to U.S. companies; working toward implementation of a new consumer price index in coordination with the International Monetary Fund to improve its economic data; and resuming discussions regarding repaying Argentina's debts to Paris Club members.

These preliminary steps are encouraging, but if confirmed, I will urge Argentina to deepen its efforts to resolve these longstanding irritants in our relationship. I will encourage the maintenance of a stable, transparent, and predictable investment climate that promotes investment and fair and open competition. I would also ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires continues to serve as an advocate for the fair treatment of U.S. companies and investors.

Question. What will your message be to the Argentine Government relative to their interventionist economic policies and the impact that has had on inflation, business, trade, and commerce?

Answer. In any country, predictable and transparent economic policies offer the best environment for broadly inclusive national development and for attracting investment. Business investment, both local and foreign, generates economic opportunity and promotes shared prosperity.

If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Argentina to adopt transparent and predictable policies and regulations that promote fair and open competition. Policies that protect intellectual property are an important component of a favorable business climate, as is an independent judiciary.

The United States has expressed serious concern, both bilaterally and at the World Trade Organization (WTO), regarding Argentine measures that restrict imports in an arbitrary and nontransparent manner, including in a WTO complaint the United States filed against Argentina in August 2012.

More than 500 U.S. companies operate in Argentina and employ more than 170,000 Argentines. The United States is Argentina's largest foreign-direct investor. Meanwhile, the U.S. trade surplus with Argentina in goods and services reached approximately \$9.4 billion in 2012. Given Argentina's workforce and natural resources, there is room for this investment and trade to expand dramatically to the benefit of both national economies. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage Argentina to take all appropriate steps to strengthen our economic relationship.

Question. Argentina relies heavily on the sale of commodities like soy to support their economy. Should there be a decline in soy prices, or the Argentines ability to produce soy for soy hungry nations like China, what impact would that have on the Argentine economy?

Answer. Argentina has long benefited from its remarkably fertile and plentiful agricultural land. Led by agricultural production, including soy, its exports totaled \$75.2 billion in 2012.

Agricultural prices are often volatile, and all economies benefit from diversification in exports and trading partners. A decline in soy prices would have a negative impact on Argentina's revenue collection as well as its balance of payments. That said, the Argentine economy exports a range of other products and services, in agriculture, energy, and other sectors. The United States consumes more than 5 percent of Argentine exports; in 2012, it imported \$411 million in iron and steel products from Argentina, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in fresh fruit, wine, and aluminum. Argentina also exports oil and natural gas to the United States and other trading partners.

Question. With alarming government expansion into the private market expected to continue under President Fernandez de Kirchner, what impact do you foresee on the Argentine people and economy? If confirmed, how would you recommend the U.S. engage on these issues?

Answer. Argentines benefit when private economic activity serves as an engine of growth, creates jobs, and provides government revenue to address social needs. U.S. companies have long identified opportunities in Argentina, and more than 500 operate in that country today.

Businesses in Argentina, both domestic and foreign, have faced serious obstacles in recent years. These include nationalizations without prompt, fair, and effective compensation; restrictions on imports; limited access to foreign currency; barriers to the repatriation of profits; price controls; and inadequate protection of intellectual property. These policies discourage local and foreign investment.

If confirmed, I will be a tireless champion for the U.S. business community in Argentina and urge better cooperation between the private sector and the government. As I learned first-hand during my years working for Members of the U.S. Congress and later as a business consultant, an effective partnership between businesses and government is essential for countries to reach their full economic potential. I will work closely with my colleagues throughout the U.S. Government—including at the Departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, Agriculture, Energy, Labor, and Justice, and at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the U.S. Congress—to ensure that our national economic interests are promoted in Argentina and that Argentina honors its international obligations.

Question. In 2012, the Government of Argentina renationalized the country's largest oil company, YPF, which accounts for 35 percent of Argentina's oil and gas market. What impact is this likely to have on energy prices and production?

Answer. The administration has long expressed its concerns about the Government of Argentina's nationalization of Repsol-YPF, which proceeded initially without due compensation. At the time, we called it a "negative development," and we believe it clearly dampened the investment climate in Argentina. More recently, we have noted developments indicating that YPF and Repsol have agreed in principle on a mutually satisfactory compensation arrangement. Without question, an open and competitive market for energy and other commodities has proved the most successful path to modern, efficient and innovative development of energy resources across the globe.

Oil and natural gas production in Argentina are declining. Argentina has gone from being a net exporter of energy to a net importer. Despite these trends, Argentina has enormous potential to help supply world energy markets and contribute to global energy security. Attracting private investment will be essential for Argentina to regain energy self-sufficiency. The Argentine Government has demonstrated a clear interest in having U.S. companies be partners in their efforts to reinvigorate their energy sector.

If confirmed, I will continue to raise the administration's concern at the highest levels of the Government of Argentina about actions that negatively affect the investment climate in Argentina. At the same time, I will seek to build a strong bilateral partnership on energy issues, based upon the common interests of our countries.

Question. There are several failed models in Latin America of nationalized energy firms. How would you work with other agencies of the U.S. Government and American firms to try and prevent Argentina from duplicating mistakes made elsewhere in the region?

Answer. In the United States, privately owned energy companies are global leaders that use advanced technologies and methods for energy exploration and production. U.S. firms have a lot to offer to countries that present a favorable investment environment.

Every country has the sovereign right to decide how to best take advantage of its natural resource endowments. All policies need to adhere to requirements under local and international law. Regardless of the system, what matters most are transparency, efficiency, accountability, predictability, and responsible business practices.

If confirmed, I would encourage Argentina to adopt predictable and competitive policies to attract the level of investment it needs to meet the country's vast energy potential. I would work with U.S. Government agencies—including the Departments of Energy and Interior—to share U.S. best practices with Argentine counterparts on environmental and regulatory matters, including through our Bilateral Energy Working Group. There are several U.S. companies interested in investing and offering their services to develop Argentina's shale oil and gas fields, which are among the largest in the world. I would consult regularly with these and other U.S. firms and when appropriate, advocate with Argentine authorities on their behalf.

Question. U.S.-Argentine security cooperation, particularly between our militaries, has been nonexistent due to Argentine unwillingness to work with us.

- ◆ (a) If confirmed, what steps should the Argentine Government take to improve military-military relationship?
- ◆ (b) Is the Argentine Government a committed U.S. partner in the fight against terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will try to build renewed trust between our governments and reestablish a constructive partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect, and I will look for similar intent from the Argentine Government. After all, our countries share many security priorities. Defending national borders against the flow of illegal narcotics, for example, is a goal of both our nations. Argentina, twice a victim of major terrorist attacks in the 1990s, also shares the U.S. commitment to combat international terrorism, and cooperation in this area continues.

Security cooperation with Argentina has been limited since Argentina's 2011 seizure of classified U.S. cargo brought into Argentina by a U.S. Army Joint Combined Exercise Training team. The team had proper prior authorization from Argentine authorities, and there was no legitimate reason for the seizure. Differing perspectives in multilateral defense and security fora have further complicated our bilateral cooperation.

While many aspects of our defense relationship today remain challenging, U.S. security and defense cooperation and training are important goals for the administration, including for international peacekeeping capacity-building, emergency response preparedness, and for regional counternarcotics efforts. The United States engages the Argentine Armed Forces through commercial and foreign military sales.

Some exchange of students between our militaries also continues, including through the International Military Educational and Training program.

Question. The intelligence relationship between Argentina and the U.S. is important. The Tri-Border region between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay contains a large illicit trade and trafficking zone where foreign operators like Hezbollah are able to sell counterfeit goods, launder money, and raise funds for Shia groups and Iranian proxies like Hezbollah.

- ◆ If confirmed, will you pledge to focus on the Tri-Border area and work to commit the U.S. to monitor Islamic influence and activities in the Southern Cone and work with Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil on this matter?

Answer. The Tri-Border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay remains an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human smuggling, counterfeiting, pirated goods, and money laundering—all potential funding sources for terrorist organizations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to monitor this region closely and maintain close communication with this committee on this issue.

Ideological sympathizers in South America and the Caribbean continue to provide financial support to terrorist groups in the Middle East and South Asia. If confirmed, I will work with my U.S. Government colleagues and the Government of Argentina to expose and combat such activity. I will urge Argentine officials to improve domestic law enforcement and regulatory coordination, and to establish and enforce appropriate laws and regulations to curtail money laundering. I will emphasize to Argentina the importance of working with its neighbors, Brazil and Paraguay, as well as others in the region to adopt complementary measures.

If confirmed, I will make heightened cooperation a priority.

Question. In January 2013, President Fernandez de Kirchner announced a memorandum of understanding with Iran to create a so-called “truth commission” to re-investigate the 1994 terrorist attack on the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA).

The MOU is a reversal of years of work and exhaustive reporting on the AMIA attack by Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who has concluded that the attack was approved by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and senior officials in the Iranian Government.

- ◆ (a) What is the U.S. Government’s assessment of the work of Special Prosecutor Nisman?
- ◆ (b) Are you familiar with his 2006 and 2013 reports?
- ◆ (c) What are the administration’s views on this so-called “truth commission?”

Answer. The U.S. position on the AMIA bombing is clear and consistent. For 20 years, the United States and the international community have joined the Argentine Government and victims of this horrific terrorist attack in demanding justice. I am familiar with Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman’s findings, and I understand that our Embassy personnel have met with him on a number of occasions to discuss them.

The Obama administration is highly skeptical that a solution can be found to the AMIA case through the January 2013 Argentina-Iran agreement, which includes the establishment of a truth commission. Jewish groups in Argentina share that perspective, and they have expressed concern that Argentina’s cooperation with Iran will only cause further delays. In recent months, the Argentine Government itself has acknowledged a lack of progress, though it remains committed to the agreement.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. Government continues to support the AMIA investigation so that nearly two decades after the bombing in Buenos Aires killed 85 people and wounded 300, the perpetrators might finally be held accountable. I take this issue extremely seriously, and I will do all I can to help bring justice to the victims and their families.

Question. Argentina is a Tier 2 country for sex and labor trafficking according to the 2013 Trafficking in Persons report. Argentine women and children from the rural areas are often subjected to trafficking in the urban centers.

- ◆ (a) If confirmed, how will you engage with the government on the issue of trafficking?
- ◆ (b) What specific steps should the Argentine Government take to prevent the trafficking of rural citizens to urban centers?

Answer. As the Government of Argentina itself has recognized, far too many men, women, and children in Argentina are subjected to sex trafficking, forced labor in sweatshops and homes, and forced prostitution in cities. In spite of progress made

by the Government of Argentina in the fight against trafficking in persons during the past year, serious challenges remain.

Notable recent accomplishments include passage of a federal antitrafficking law, the conviction of 17 trafficking offenders in 2012, and law enforcement efforts to arrest trafficking suspects and rescue victims.

This has been an area of constructive bilateral engagement in recent years. The U.S. Government provided advanced training to national and provincial authorities, facilitated by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, to combat trafficking in persons. We have also provided material support to NGOs engaged in strengthening the protection and rights of victims of trafficking.

Argentina remains a Tier 2 country on the U.S. Government's annual Trafficking in Persons report. If confirmed, I will support the Government of Argentina in its efforts to strengthen its antitrafficking regime, including prevention activities, victim services, and the conviction of criminals who profit from this destructive activity.