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**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

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**NOMINATIONS OF MATTHEW TUELLER,
DOUGLAS SILLIMAN, MARK GILBERT, AND
JOSEPH WESTPHAL**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2014

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

Matthew Tueller, of Utah, to be Ambassador of the Republic of
Yemen
Douglas Alan Silliman, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the State of
Kuwait
Mark Gilbert, of Florida, to be Ambassador to New Zealand and to
serve concurrently as Ambassador to Samoa
Joseph William Westphal, of New York, to be Ambassador to the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:01 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine, Risch, and Barrasso.
Also present: Senator Susan M. Collins.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA**

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is called to order. I want to thank all who are attending on this day, when both the Federal Government and the Senate are shut down. But this is an important hearing and I am glad we were able to hold it, and I especially appreciate my ranking member, Senator Risch's, willingness to do this hearing today.

The hearing is about ambassadorial nominees to four critical allies and partners of the United States: Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Yemen, and Kuwait. Some of the nominees have waited for a bit and so we wanted to make sure that we could do this today, and I appreciate everyone making this happen.

I will make a few introductory comments about each of our four nominees today. I will ask Senator Risch as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Near East, South and Central Asian Affairs to make opening comments as well. At that point, we are fortunate

to have with us Senator Collins of Maine, who will introduce one of our nominees, Secretary Westphal.

After that introduction—and we would understand if the Senator—everybody is making moves—might need to leave at that point. We would certainly understand that. I will ask each of the nominees, beginning with Ambassador Tueller and just moving across the line, to make opening statements. At that point we will move into 7-minute rounds of questions and we may do that for a bit. But nevertheless, welcome to all.

A word about each of the four nominees in no particular order. Dr. Westphal, welcome, nominated to be the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, a very, very important partner of the United States in the Middle East. Dr. Westphal was appointed Under Secretary of the Army in 2009, has quite a bit of experience across the Federal Government both in the Department of Defense and in other agencies, including the EPA, as well as an extensive academic background.

Dr. Westphal's background as a scholar and public servant will come in handy, and especially his work at the DOD will be important in his position with Saudi Arabia, one of our critical military partners in terms of so many important issues in the Middle East.

Dr. Westphal goes to Riyadh at a very critical time, when there has been some at least public strain in the narrative or friction in the relationship. Dr. Westphal's skills will help us find ways where our countries, who are partners, but who will nevertheless have differences, as all partners do, find ways to communicate those differences and continue to work in partnership. Dr. Westphal, we are glad to have you with us today.

Mark Gilbert is the President's nominee to be Ambassador to New Zealand. I said to Mr. Gilbert, who is a friend: You are kind of—if they look at the lineup of countries, who does not belong here? Well, we have three Middle Eastern countries and New Zealand. But we are rearranging geography because it is important that Mark, whose nomination has been up for a while, is here today, and we are glad to have you and your family.

Mark has an interesting background: a long-time business background in the financial sector for a number of companies—Goldman Sachs, currently Barclay's, where he has done a lot of important economic development work, and with the New Zealand trade relationship that will come in handy. But one of the interesting things about Mark is he also played pro baseball for the Chicago White Sox and other minor league teams, and Mark is somebody who has been a very, very good friend and would bring a lot to bear. He and his family will be wonderful representatives of the country.

Senator Nelson was going to be here to introduce Mark today and was not able to come because of the weather, but submitted a statement. The entire statement will be included in the record, but let me just read an excerpt from Senator Nelson's statement: "I'm very pleased to introduce to the committee an outstanding Floridian, Mr. Mark Gilbert, to be our next Ambassador to New Zealand. Mark has been a friend of mine for many years and is without a doubt a terrific candidate for this important post. Mark has a background in economics, having served as a director of Barclay's Wealth in West Palm Beach, senior vice president of Goldman

Sachs in Miami, and senior vice president, sales manager, of Drexel Burnham Lambert in Boca Raton. Before his successful career in finance, Mark was a professional baseball player for several years, even playing in the major leagues with the Chicago White Sox in 1985.

"Mark's combined skills and professional experience make him an excellent nominee to serve as our next U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand. A major trade and regional partner, New Zealand will continue to pay a crucial role in U.S. efforts.

"I am so pleased that the President has recognized Mark and named him to this important post and I look forward to supporting his speedy confirmation by the full Senate."

The entire statement will be included in the record, but I wanted you to know that Senator Nelson thinks so highly of the nomination.

[The prepared statement of Senator Nelson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BILL NELSON
INTRODUCING NOMINEE MARK GILBERT

I am very pleased to introduce to the committee an outstanding Floridian—Mr. Mark Gilbert—to be our next Ambassador to New Zealand.

Mark has been a friend of mine for many years and is, without a doubt, a terrific candidate for this important post.

Mark has a background in economics—having served as a director at Barclays Wealth in West Palm Beach; senior vice president of Goldman Sachs in Miami; and the senior vice president sales manager of Drexel Burnham Lambert in Boca Raton.

Before his successful career in finance, Mark was a professional baseball player for several years—even playing in the major leagues with the Chicago White Sox in 1985.

Mark's combined skills and professional experiences make him an excellent nominee to serve as our next U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand.

A major trade and regional partner, New Zealand will continue to play a crucial role in U.S. rebalance efforts toward Asia.

In addition to being a strong economic partner, helping to forge the Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement, we have a significant bilateral trade relationship—totaling \$11 billion in 2011.

And while New Zealand is currently our 56th-largest trading partner, I'm certain that Mark will help lower that number once he has settled in the post.

Mark will also represent the United States to a crucial military partner. Like its neighbor Australia, New Zealand has fought alongside the United States time and again.

New Zealand's military commitment in Afghanistan has been vastly important. Their special forces have been deployed there since 2001, contributing to ISAF headquarters and the U.N. mission in Afghanistan. They've also contributed to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan province, strengthening security and stability there.

During the last few years, I've been pleased to see a new chapter in our bilateral, defense cooperation. Joint operations in the region now include maritime security, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

New Zealand's participation in recent, multinational military exercises has greatly increased our interoperability throughout the Pacific.

Our continued security and economic cooperation with New Zealand will continue to be very important. I'm certain that as Ambassador, Mark will reinforce and build upon this strong and mutually beneficial relationship.

I'm so pleased that the President has recognized Mark and named him to this important post, and I look forward to supporting his speedy confirmation by the full Senate.

Senator Kaine. In Kuwait, the nominee we will hear from today is Mr. Doug Silliman of Texas, who has had a superb and an extensive record as a career Foreign Service officer. Both he and the next nominee, Ambassador Tueller, have served in very difficult

and challenging environments, sometimes able to take their families, sometimes not able to take their families. But they relish challenges, and Kuwait is a very important position.

Mr. Silliman embodies a wonderful tradition within the Foreign Service. He speaks Arabic, French, and Turkish and he has years of experience in the Middle East. During a time of growing security tension across the Middle East and concerns over Iran and Syria, our close partnership with Kuwait, formed both in peace and in war, is more crucial than ever.

A career diplomat like Mr. Silliman, who represents the best of our Foreign Service, who is just returning from a posting in Baghdad, where he was able to see what a lot of people thought would not be possible, the reestablishment and actually formation of very strong relations between Iraq and Kuwait, gives him exactly the kinds of experiences necessary to handle our important relationship with our ally in Kuwait.

You follow in the footsteps of an illustrious predecessor, the next man I will introduce, Ambassador Tueller. Ambassador Tueller is just completing service in Kuwait and has been nominated for the important, challenging position of U.S. Ambassador to Yemen. Mr. Tueller is also a career Foreign Service officer. Actually, he had a career before he had a career, because he grew up as the son of a Foreign Service officer and served with his family originally as a child in Latin America.

His career in the Foreign Service has been in both Latin America and in the Middle East, and he has served with distinction, most recently in Kuwait, and is now assuming, upon confirmation, upon vote of the Senate, this position in Yemen.

Every day American diplomats risk their lives around the world and nowhere is that more true than Yemen, a country where political and economic normalization is in the direct security interests of the United States. Mr. Tueller, who most recently served in Kuwait, was previously posted in Yemen at a time in the early 2000s, has familiarity with the country, and brings a great deal of experience to this important task, where there is an ongoing national dialogue about the formation of a new government that might be a federal government—these were just announced earlier in the week—where there are potential issues from the U.S. security and counterintelligence programs to Guantanamo. All impact this mission in Yemen.

We are pleased to have you here, and all the nominees, congratulations on your recommendations, nominations by the President, and we look forward to this hearing today.

With that, I will turn the meeting over to my ranking member, Senator Risch, for his comments as well.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. From what I can tell, this must be an extremely important hearing, inasmuch from what I can tell everybody left in Washington, DC, is in this room. [Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. Thank you for holding the hearing. Certainly some of these countries are real challenges. I look forward to hear-

ing the testimony of the three nominees and I suspect we will have some exhilarating questions after that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator Kaine. Thank you. I also appreciate Senator Barrasso for joining us today.

Senator Collins is here, Senator from Maine, to offer a word of recommendation about the nominee to be Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Westphal. Senator Collins, great to have you here.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SUSAN M. COLLINS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE**

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would expect that your two colleagues and I, because of the States we come from, would be able to brave this weather and think nothing of it. But I am particularly impressed that someone from Virginia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, is able to be with us today and to preside over this hearing. So with that, I will begin my formal comments.

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, I am pleased to appear before you today to introduce Dr. Joseph Westphal, who has been nominated to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I have known and worked with Dr. Westphal in two different capacities, both here in Washington, where he serves as Under Secretary of the Army, and back home in Maine, where he was Chancellor of the University of Maine System from 2006 to 2009.

Dr. Westphal has a reputation as a talented leader and manager in both the Federal and State government. His extensive experience and knowledge of national security policy are just two of the essential skills that he will bring to the task of strengthening our bilateral relationships with the Saudis during what is a turbulent, complicated time in the Middle East.

Dr. Westphal's long career in academia and public service began when he received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Missouri and then taught for 12 years at Oklahoma State University. His career took a turn toward public policy when he went to work for one of our colleagues, Senator Thad Cochran, from 1995 through 1997. He also served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency, before becoming an Assistant Secretary of the Army in 1998. In 2001 he served as Acting Secretary of the Army, responsible for organizing, training, and equipping the 1.1 million men and women serving in that branch of our military services.

Since being nominated and confirmed as Under Secretary of the Army in 2009, Joe has dedicated his considerable energy to keeping our country safe. I have worked very closely with him on several issues affecting military readiness and personnel and I can attest to his dedication to public service, his pragmatic approach to solving problems, and his unwavering commitment to our troops.

Secretary Westphal is also a charter member of the Deputy Secretary of Defense Advisory Group, which deals with all matters related to strategy, policy, budgeting, acquisition, personnel, and readiness in the Department. This group also provides advice to the Secretary of Defense on matters related to Department activities in support of operations in the Middle East and gulf region,

and it has focused on issues related to Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and other countries in the Central Command area of responsibility.

Secretary Westphal has been heavily involved in this group and as a result has a deep understanding of the strategic challenges faced by the United States in this region.

Mr. Chairman, again thank you for this opportunity to introduce Dr. Joseph Westphal. I am confident that if confirmed he will carry out the duties of this important position with the same commitment and unique set of practical and policy skills that he has brought to every position that he has held in his extensive previous public service.

Thank you very much, and I thank the members of this committee.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Senator Collins. We understand that you may need to depart, but we appreciate you being here today to offer those words on behalf of Dr. Westphal.

Senator Collins. Thank you.

Senator Kaine. We will now move into opening statements by our nominees. I think we will start with Ambassador Tueller and move across the table. Your entire written statement will be included in the record. I would like to ask you to make your opening comments to about 5 minutes. The entire written statement will be included.

Ambassador Tueller, welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. MATTHEW TUELLER, OF UTAH, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Ambassador TUELLER. Thank you. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, let me first extend my personal gratitude, and I think I can speak on behalf of all my fellow nominees, for your dedication in ensuring that this hearing goes ahead today despite the weather conditions.

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen. I am grateful to the President for his nomination and to Secretary Kerry for his continued trust and confidence. I am sorry that my wife Denise and our five children are unable to attend today's session, but thank them for their continued love and support.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss Yemen today and ask that my full testimony be submitted for the record.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed I will work to advance critical U.S. foreign policy and national security interests in Yemen. My top priorities will be to support the people of Yemen in their ongoing transition to democracy, to bolster U.S. security cooperation with the Yemeni Government, to foster greater regional and global security, and ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and embassy employees.

The United States has a strong and growing partnership with Yemen. Since the November 2011 signing of Yemen's transition agreement, the people of Yemen have accomplished what many thought impossible. Under the leadership of President Hadi, Yemen has embarked on a serious reform effort to better meet the political, economic, security, and social aspirations of its citizens.

If confirmed, I will work to promote the various reforms underpinning this transition. A successful transition will also bolster our domestic security as the Yemeni Government develops its capacity to directly counter the threat of terrorism and root out the underlying causes of violent extremism.

President Obama underscored last May that AQAP is the most active organization plotting against the United States. This threat emanates from Yemen. The Yemeni people have borne the brunt of AQAP's vicious attacks. President Hadi and the Yemeni people stand strongly committed to stamping out this threat to the peace and security of their country. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our two nations' commitment to close coordination in this shared fight by continuing strong United States support for programs that develop the capability of Yemen's security forces, counter violent extremism, and build the capacity of law enforcement.

Despite Yemen's transition accomplishments, significant humanitarian challenges remain. The gains in political and security sector reforms have not yet translated into large-scale improvements in the daily life of average Yemenis and over half of the population is in need of some form of humanitarian assistance.

Yemen's transitional government is working to address these issues, but the support of the international community will remain critical to prevent these acute needs from derailing the transition process. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to address Yemen's most pressing needs while assisting Yemen on its path to sustainability and self-sufficiency through economic reform and development.

Above all, if confirmed my most important responsibility will be to protect our Embassy and our mission staff. We must continue to have a strong presence in Yemen despite the threat environment.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as a Foreign Service officer for nearly 30 years now, currently as Ambassador to Kuwait. Growing up as the child of a Foreign Service officer, I learned early of both the privileges and responsibilities that come from a commitment to service to one's country. My formative years in North Africa, Europe, and Latin America inspired a desire to pursue a career building ties between the United States and our partners around the world. My service in Baghdad, Riyadh, Cairo, among other challenging posts, has helped prepare me to represent our country in Yemen.

In October 2000 after the attack on the USS *COLE*, I was given the task of opening and heading a U.S. office in Aden in support of the investigation. For me that was an early indicator of the pressing need to develop partnerships across the region so that the United States could meet the threat posed by violent extremists. It is gratifying to see how much progress has been made in this respect in our counterterrorism cooperation with the Government of Yemen. If confirmed, I pledge to continue this important work, furthering United States interests in Yemen and in the region.

Again, I am honored by this nomination and greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Tueller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MATTHEW H. TUELLER

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen. I am grateful to the President for his nomination and to Secretary Kerry for his continued trust and confidence. If confirmed, I will work steadfastly to advance critical U.S. foreign policy and national security interests in Yemen. In service of those U.S. interests, my top priorities will be to support the people of Yemen in their ongoing transition to democracy, bolster U.S. security cooperation with the Yemeni Government to foster greater regional and global stability and combat the threat posed by al-Qaeda, and, of course, ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and Embassy employees.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a strong and growing partnership with Yemen. Yemen, itself, is in the midst of a historic transition. Since the November 2011 signing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered political transition initiative, the people of Yemen have accomplished what many thought impossible. Under the leadership of President Hadi, Yemen has embarked on a serious reform effort to better meet the needs of its citizens, facilitate a democratic process, and participate more fully as a partner in supporting regional security. If confirmed, I will work to expand our broad engagement to continue promoting the various political, economic, and security sector reforms underpinning this transition, which support our U.S. foreign policy and national security interests of a stable, secure, and democratic Yemen. The ultimate success of Yemen's transition will not only impact our interests in the region, but also our domestic security as the Yemeni Government develops its capacity to directly counter the significant threat from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and root out the underlying causes of violent extremism, in part, through a bolstered ability to meet Yemeni citizens' economic, humanitarian, and political needs.

On January 25, the people of Yemen achieved a critical milestone in their ongoing transition process, with the conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference. The dialogue marked the first time representatives from diverse segments of Yemeni society—including political elites, tribal elders, women, youth, civil society, former disenfranchised southerners, and religious minorities—met for substantive discussions about the country's political future. This conversation represented a sea-change in Yemeni politics. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these varied groups continue to have a voice in the political process—particularly since it is these voices that call most loudly for equality, for prosperity, and for the rights of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. In addition to working to ensure that these groups have a voice in the political process, I will also work to ensure that the rights of women, children, and all individuals in Yemen are respected and protected.

As Yemen works to shape its future, I will work to guarantee that the United States and the international community—particularly Yemen's GCC neighbors—remain firmly supportive of Yemen's efforts, despite the myriad hot-spots in the region. U.S. and international engagement will continue to be essential as Yemen moves forward with the next steps in the transition process, including constitutional reform, a constitutional referendum, and, ultimately, national elections, expected within the next year.

A democratic, unified, and stable Yemen will also be able to participate more fully as a partner in supporting regional security and combating terrorism. Yemen continues to face frequent terrorist attacks by AQAP operating within its borders. President Obama underscored in May that AQAP is the most active organization plotting against the United States—and that this threat emanates from Yemen. The Yemeni people have borne the brunt of AQAP's vicious attacks. The assault on the Ministry of Defense hospital in December 2013 underscored the deplorable tactics employed against civilians by this terrorist group. The Yemeni people and the international community were horrified at video footage of terrorists shooting unarmed patients in their beds, viciously murdering doctors and nurses, and stalking through hallways to kill survivors. President Hadi and the Yemeni people stand strongly committed to stamping out this threat to the safety of their families, the peace and security of their country, and the citizens of its international partners.

If confirmed, I will work to deepen our two nations' commitment to close coordination in this shared fight against terrorism. To this end, our assistance programs to Yemen seek to develop the capacity of Yemen's security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations and to secure maritime and land borders and territorial waters. We also support programs to counter violent extremism in Yemen, including a focus on the role that civil society can play in speaking out against violence. And we are assisting Yemeni efforts to build the capacity of law enforcement to better respond to the security concerns of Yemeni communities. The United States will continue to

employ the full range of counterterrorism tools to support Yemen's fight against AQAP.

With U.S. support, President Hadi has also taken important steps toward restructuring the military and security services and to enhance the professionalism and capacity of Yemen's Armed Forces. If confirmed, I will encourage the Yemeni Government to continue progress on this important aspect of the transition, which will strengthen Yemeni capacity to secure the country against threats and enhance regional security. I will also support international efforts to assist the Yemenis in countering the spread of violent extremism. The establishment of a credible, sustainable extremist rehabilitation program would be an important step for the Yemeni Government toward bolstering its counterterrorism capabilities.

Finally, there still remains the significant challenge posed by the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. More than half of the remaining detainees at Guantanamo are Yemeni nationals. If confirmed, I will work with the administration and with Congress to support efforts to responsibly close the facility while protecting our U.S. national security interests.

Despite Yemen's transition accomplishments to date, significant challenges remain. The gains in political and security sector reform have not yet translated into large-scale improvements in the daily life of average Yemenis. Almost 15 million Yemenis—over half the population—are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance. More than 13 million do not have access to safe water and sanitation, 10.5 million are food-insecure, and more than 1 million children do not have access to education. As the result of years of conflict, there are also more than 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are in desperate need of assistance. Large-scale migration will continue to present humanitarian and security challenges. There are nearly a quarter million refugees and 147,500 migrants, mostly from the Horn of Africa, many of whom arrive destitute and in poor health. In addition, Yemen is now coping with the return of approximately 400,000 Yemeni laborers recently deported from Saudi Arabia.

Yemen's transitional government is working to address these issues, but the support of the international community will remain critical in the near-term to help meet acute needs and prevent them from overwhelming the transition process. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to address Yemen's most pressing needs to create the space for the transition to succeed, through bilateral assistance and partnership with the international community through the Friends of Yemen and the U.N. Humanitarian Response Plan. Focusing on the longer term, I will also work to assist Yemen on its path to sustainability and self-sufficiency through economic reform and development.

Economic reform will be an essential underpinning of the ongoing transition's ultimate success. Without significant structural reform and the development of a sustainable private sector, many of the Yemeni citizens' key economic demands will not be met. These key reforms will include rebalancing government spending priorities, transitioning toward a more targeted and efficient social safety net, and increasing investments in long-term growth. The development of a robust private sector will also be critical to addressing Yemenis' demands for jobs and economic development. I will steadfastly support the President and Secretary's agenda in bolstering regional economic integration and reform. I will build on my predecessor's successful efforts at expanding ties between the Yemeni and American business communities. I will also look for ways to maximize the benefit from Yemen's WTO accession as an opportunity to boost regional economic development cooperation. Economic development and reform will not only help the Yemeni Government meet the needs of all Yemeni citizens, but it will also empower Yemenis to build better lives for themselves through private enterprise while developing long-term relationships with American and international partners across the fields of science, health, technology, and commerce.

I take seriously our obligation to protect our embassies and embassy staff abroad and am satisfied to know that, if confirmed, I would lead an embassy with an excellent security team. We must continue to have a strong presence in Yemen, despite the threat environment, and remain firmly committed to our comprehensive partnership with President Hadi and the Yemeni people.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as a Foreign Service officer for nearly 30 years, currently as Ambassador to Kuwait. Growing up as the dependent of a Foreign Service officer, I learned early of both the privileges and responsibilities that come from a commitment to service to one's country. My formative years growing up in North Africa, Europe, and Latin America inspired a strong desire to pursue a career building ties between the United States and partners around the world. Service in Baghdad, Riyadh, and Cairo, among other challenging posts, has helped prepare me to represent our country in Yemen.

In October 2000 after the attack on the USS *Cole* in the Port of Aden, I was given the task of opening and leading a U.S. Office in Aden in support of the investigation into the attack. For me, that was an early indicator of the pressing need to develop partnerships across the region so that the U.S. could meet the threat posed by violent extremists. Serving in Riyadh on September 11, 2001, highlighted for me that the threat to our interests and our citizens posed by terrorists was a critical foreign policy priority and that our ability to counter this threat would be enhanced by the extent to which we could engage our partners in the region in standing with us against the threat. It is gratifying to see how much progress has been made in this respect in our counterterrorism cooperation with the Government of Yemen. I am proud to say we enjoy a close partnership with President Hadi and the Yemeni Government, and we share a commitment to a democratic transition and regional security. If confirmed, I pledge to continue this important work in Yemen, furthering U.S. interests there and in the region.

Again, I am honored by this nomination and greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Tueller.

Mr. Silliman.

**STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS ALAN SILLIMAN, OF TEXAS,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF KUWAIT**

Mr. SILLIMAN. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, I am honored to appear before the committee today and gratified by the trust that the President has placed in me by nominating me as the Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. I have submitted my full written testimony to the committee for the record and welcome this opportunity to say a few short words.

I would like to start by thanking my family for their love and support as I have dragged them across North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia over my career. My wife, Catherine, and my younger son, Zachary, are here with me. My older son, Benjamin, as the chairman knows, is at William and Mary University and could not be with us. I also want to thank my father, who supported me in this career from the very beginning, when others had some doubts whether this was the right path.

I also want to acknowledge Ambassador Matt Tueller, sitting next to me at the table, for his exemplary service as the Ambassador in Kuwait over the past 2½ years. I hope that I can fill his very large shoes.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and with the entire Congress, and I look forward to seeing you and your staffs in Kuwait, and to consulting with you and your staffs whenever I am back in Washington.

If confirmed, foremost among my priorities will be the safety of American citizens, those in the Embassy, deployed U.S. service members, and the many private Americans who live in and visit Kuwait.

Mr. Chairman, there are few U.S. friends or allies as steadfast as Kuwait. This strong relationship was forged in the heat of battle during the first gulf war as brave Americans and Kuwaitis fought to liberate Kuwait from occupation. One of those Americans was my father-in-law, Doctor and retired Army Medical Corps Colonel, Ted Raia, who led a combat support hospital during the war.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen United States-Kuwait cooperation on defense and security. This includes continued strong American support for the defense of Kuwait, for the security of the wider region, and the fight against terrorism and terrorism financing.

Our U.S. military presence in Kuwait is concrete proof of our country's commitment to these principles.

The regional security is more than just military relations. As President Obama said during the visit of Emir Sheikh Zaballah to Washington this past September, Kuwait is one of our most important partners in the region, working together on a whole range of economic and social and security issues. In particular, Kuwait has led international assistance efforts for Syrian refugees, hosting United Nations humanitarian pledging conferences for Syria in 2013 and 2014 and itself donating \$500 million in assistance this year alone.

United States-Kuwait economic and energy ties are strong, but can grow stronger. If confirmed, I will vigorously pursue opportunities for United States businesses in Kuwait and work to attract Kuwaiti investment into the United States.

Kuwait has a vibrant political system with strong constitutional traditions. Women vote and run for office and currently serve in the Kuwaiti Parliament and the Cabinet. If confirmed, I will engage with Kuwaitis to explore how Kuwait might expand human rights and protections for vulnerable populations.

About 60 percent of Kuwaitis are under the age of 30 and the United States must stay connected to this new generation, mostly born since the liberation of Kuwait. If confirmed, I will prioritize outreach to younger Kuwaitis, emphasizing the fundamental American values of education and tolerance.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Barrasso, I have had the privilege of serving the American people as a diplomat for nearly three decades. During my career, including as deputy chief of mission in Iraq and in Turkey, I have encouraged democracy and human rights, defended the homeland and my posts against terrorism, advocated for American companies, developed the professional skills of my staff, promoted entrepreneurship, and even sponsored the teaching of American jazz. And through it all I have done my best to shepherd American taxpayers' dollars wisely.

I am confident that I have the skills necessary to succeed as our next Ambassador to Kuwait and I hope that this committee and the full Senate concur.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to be here today, especially under these conditions. I would be very pleased to answer any questions the committee has.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Silliman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS A. SILLIMAN

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before this committee today, and gratified by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown by nominating me to serve as Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. If you will permit me, I would also like to thank my family for their support throughout my career. My wife, Catherine, and younger son, Zachary, are here with us today.

I would also like to express my thanks to my friends and to the many colleagues across the U.S. Government with whom I have worked during my nearly 30 years in the Foreign Service. I particularly want to acknowledge Ambassador Matt Tueller, sitting here at the table with me today, for his exemplary service as the U.S. Ambassador in Kuwait over the past 2½ years. If confirmed, I will strive to follow his example as I pursue U.S. national interests. I also pledge to work closely with this committee and others in the Congress to sustain and enhance relations

with Kuwait, and of course, we would welcome the opportunity to see you and your staff in Kuwait.

There are few U.S. friends or allies in the world as steadfast as Kuwait, particularly in the strategically important and always dynamic Middle East. Of course, the strong foundation of this relationship was forged in the heat of battle during the first Gulf War and in the sacrifices of the brave men and women from the U.S. military and Kuwait who fought to liberate Kuwait from occupation. If confirmed, my mission will be to continue to deepen and broaden the strategic U.S.-Kuwait partnership, to include not just military-to-military ties but also substantial academic, commercial and cultural relations.

Foremost among my priorities will be the protection of American citizens in Kuwait—those working in the U.S. mission, U.S. military personnel deployed forward, and the numerous private Americans who live in, work in, or visit Kuwait.

If confirmed, I will also seek to deepen U.S.-Kuwaiti cooperation on defense and security. This includes continued strong and concrete American support for the defense of Kuwait and the stability of the wider region, as evidenced by the presence of U.S. military personnel in Kuwait.

Of course, regional security is not only about military-to-military relations but also about ensuring strong diplomatic coordination. Fortunately, the United States and Kuwait share a very similar outlook on regional developments. During the visit of Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Washington this past September, he reviewed with President Obama and Vice President Biden the full range of regional issues that affect both of our nations—including Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and efforts to secure Middle East peace. The two leaders agreed to continue to pursue shared objectives on these issues. Kuwait has also played a globally important role as a leading contributor to humanitarian assistance efforts for conflict victims and refugees fleeing the brutal war in Syria: in January it hosted for the second time a U.N. assistance conference that raised \$2.6 billion in new assistance for the humanitarian response, including a new Kuwaiti pledge of \$500 million.

I was fortunate to observe first-hand from Baghdad the courageous steps that Iraq and Kuwait took to finally and fully normalize relations, and Kuwait's rapprochement with Iraq now serves as the model for reintegrating Iraq into the immediate neighborhood, from which it was so long estranged, and the wider Arab world. Meanwhile, Kuwait's financial assistance to Yemen and support for its political transition have been important factors in our ongoing efforts to ensure long-term stability throughout the region. Significantly, our two governments are also working to strengthen our joint efforts to fight against terrorism and terrorism financing throughout the region.

Energy is another important issue in Kuwait. Kuwait holds about 7 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and will remain a significant producer of hydrocarbons for many years to come. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. technical assistance as an important tool to help Kuwait protect and modernize its oil and gas infrastructure. There are also realizable opportunities to improve Kuwait's energy efficiency through simple steps such as further reducing the flaring of natural gas and increasing the energy efficiency of new buildings.

These priorities should also provide new commercial opportunities for American companies in Kuwait. According to the International Monetary Fund, Kuwait has run regular and large budget surpluses for more than a decade—including more than \$50 billion last year. At the same time, Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund is the region's oldest, controlling more than \$400 billion in assets. If confirmed, I will vigorously pursue commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses in Kuwait, particularly in Kuwait's rapidly expanding infrastructure and housing sectors. I will also work to attract more Kuwaiti investment into the United States, where Kuwait represents one of our country's fast growing sources of incoming foreign direct investment.

Kuwait stands out in the region for its vibrant politics and its outspoken press and I look forward to witnessing Kuwaiti politics first hand. The Kuwaiti Constitution remains the framework for political discussion in all its forms, and Kuwait's National Assembly is an empowered legislative body with significant oversight authorities. Women have voted and run for office since 2006, and women currently sit in both the Cabinet and Parliament. If confirmed, I will continue the regular engagement we have long enjoyed with Kuwaiti politicians, opinion leaders and the full range of Kuwaitis to highlight democracy in the United States and its impact on civil and human rights, increased protection for vulnerable populations, improved labor standards and providing better economic opportunities for all.

I will also devote my attention to Kuwait's important youth population. With nearly half of the country's population under the age of 25, many Kuwaitis coming of age today were not yet born when U.S. forces helped liberate their country.

Because they are growing up in a fundamentally different world than previous generations, the United States must strive to tell these Kuwaitis our story and continue to establish new relationships that will last far into the future.

That is a task we can accomplish. American culture is as popular among Kuwaiti youth as it is elsewhere around the globe. They love to visit the United States, and they understand that speaking English and getting an American education teaches them how to connect, how to solve problems and how to be a world citizen in the new era of globalization. Right now, there are at least 6,500 Kuwaiti students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities, with plans to expand their presence, and tens of thousands more Kuwaitis visit each year for tourism, medical, and business reasons, bringing with them billions of dollars to be injected into the U.S. economy.

The United States uses exchange programs, English language scholarships, and other opportunities to engage the rising generation of Kuwaitis. If confirmed, I will prioritize mission engagement with younger Kuwaitis, emphasizing the fundamental American values of education, tolerance, and inclusion that are the backbone of U.S. success.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving the American people as a diplomat for nearly three decades. I began my career adjudicating visas in Haiti, where I quickly learned how fortunate we are to be American citizens. My time in the Middle East and South Asia taught me how compelling American values truly are. Throughout my career I have promoted human rights, countered terrorism, strengthened military-to-military ties and advocated on behalf of U.S. companies. Most recently, I served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Iraq during the withdrawal of our troops and scaling-down of our Embassy; prior to that I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Turkey. In these positions I was responsible for thousands of American direct hire personnel and many more thousands of contractors and locally engaged staff. Through it all, I have experienced first-hand the strong returns of investing in people, ensuring their personal security and that of their families, and prioritizing career development and mission morale. I am confident that during these past 30 years I have acquired the skills necessary to succeed as a chief of mission.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Silliman.
Mr. Gilbert.

STATEMENT OF MARK GILBERT, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO NEW ZEALAND AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AS AMBASSADOR TO SAMOA

Mr. GILBERT. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Barrasso, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the independent state of Samoa. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in nominating me, and I am equally grateful to receive this committee's consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my wife, Nancy, and daughter, Danielle, who are with me today, and also acknowledge my daughter, Elizabeth, who unfortunately because of the weather was not able to be here. They are the driving force behind everything that I do.

Mr. Chairman, I can imagine no higher honor than to be asked to serve my country as Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. Connected by the Pacific Ocean, we are partners committed to expanding global trade, promoting democratic values, while pursuing peace and security. With almost three decades of experience in global finance and investment, I appreciate our enduring economic ties to New Zealand and the economic opportunities in Samoa and the Pacific region as a whole. If confirmed, I will strive to advance

our Nation's interests, nurture those economic ties, and build on our growing relationships.

The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners. We have collaborated closely on the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. If confirmed, I will work to promote an even stronger economic link between our countries, capitalizing on opportunities to not only increase U.S. investment in New Zealand, but to also expand New Zealand investment here at home.

New Zealand is an active partner in the United Nations, committed to resolving conflict through negotiation. It plays a far larger role on the world stage than the country size would suggest. Its Armed Forces have led and participated in numerous peacekeeping missions around the globe and have worked side by side with our troops in Afghanistan.

In 2010 our nations signed the Wellington Declaration, pledging increased diplomatic ties and regional cooperation. In 2012 we laid the foundation for the strengthened defense cooperation in the Washington Declaration.

New Zealand is an integral link in the global effort against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and actively works in the Asia-Pacific region on counterterrorism issues as well. As an island nation with a culture and an economy deeply rooted in its natural resources, New Zealand understands the seriousness of global scientific and public policy challenges, including greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Fifty years ago we forged a scientific partnership with New Zealand and Antarctica. Christchurch serves as the U.S. Antarctic program's gateway for operations, including vital environmental research at McMurdo Station and our South Pole Base. We closely cooperate in multilateral settings, working to provide technical assistance to Pacific Island economies in education, in energy policy, and the training of the local workforce.

As the first independent country to be formed out of island territories in the Pacific, Samoa is a leader in security and economic stability in the Pacific region. Its commitment to free trade was enhanced by its entry to the World Trade Organization, where it has exhibited unique leadership in forging a stronger partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum. In our bilateral relationship, the Peace Corps has deepened our ties between Samoans and the people of the United States by sending volunteers for more than four decades to work in communities throughout Samoa.

Its capital, Apia, is the home of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, which cooperates with our scientists and researchers on projects like climate change and the protection of vital marine habitats and resources.

The United States conducted the first exercise of the 2012 Shiprider Agreement between Samoa and the U.S. Coast Guard to achieve sustainable fisheries and to combat illegal fishing.

Mr. Chairman, I have been incredibly fortunate to have had a diverse and interesting career in business, community engagement, and professional athletics. I am humbled to be nominated to represent the United States to countries as diverse as New Zealand and Samoa. If confirmed, it will be my great honor to lead a strong team of Foreign Service, civil service, military experts, and local

staff. I also look forward to working closely with this committee and other Members of Congress to promote and protect the interests of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for being here today, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gilbert follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK GILBERT

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the Independent State of Samoa. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in nominating me, and I am equally grateful to receive this committee's consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my family: my wife, Nancy, and daughters, Danielle and Elizabeth. They are the driving force behind everything I do. I'm so delighted that they are here today.

Mr. Chairman, I can imagine no higher honor than to be asked to serve my country as Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. Connected by the Pacific Ocean, we have partners committed to expanding global trade and promoting democratic values while pursuing peace and security.

With almost three decades of experience in global finance and investment, I appreciate our enduring economic ties to New Zealand and economic opportunities in Samoa, and the Pacific region as a whole. If confirmed, I will strive to advance our nation's interests, nurture those economic ties, and build on our growing relationships.

Our relationship with New Zealand is stronger now than it has been in nearly three decades. In 2010, our nations signed the Wellington Declaration, pledging increased diplomatic ties and regional cooperation, and in 2012 laid the foundation for strengthened defense cooperation in the Washington Declaration. Over the past few years, we have initiated senior-level policy and military dialogues and resumed joint military training exercises. Despite being separated by thousands of miles of Pacific Ocean, our two countries share the values of democracy, fair economic opportunity, and a more open global community. We actively collaborate in advancing those shared values. In Wellington, we have a partner committed to expanding global trade and promoting democratic values while pursuing peace and security. These are exactly the sort of diplomatic relationships we seek to forge around the globe, and we will continue to expand our connections to the next generation of New Zealanders of all backgrounds to renew and strengthen our partnership.

The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners and we have collaborated closely on the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. If confirmed, I will work to promote an even stronger economic link between our countries—capitalizing on opportunities not only to increase U.S. investment in New Zealand, but also to expand New Zealand investment here at home.

New Zealand is an active partner in the United Nations, committed to resolving conflict through negotiation. It plays a far larger role on the world stage than the country's size would suggest. Its armed forces have led and participated in numerous peacekeeping missions around the globe and have worked side by side with our troops in Afghanistan.

New Zealand is an integral link in the global effort against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and actively works in the Asia-Pacific region on counterterrorism issues as well.

As an island nation with a culture and economy deeply rooted in its natural resources, New Zealand understands the seriousness of global scientific and public policy challenges, including greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Fifty years ago we forged a scientific partnership with New Zealand in Antarctica. Christchurch serves as the U.S. Antarctic Program's gateway city for operations—conducting vital environmental research at McMurdo Station and our South Pole Base.

And we closely cooperate in multilateral settings—working to provide technical assistance to Pacific Island economies—in education, in energy policy, and in training of the local workforce.

As the first independent country to be formed out of island territories in the Pacific, Samoa is a leader in security and economic stability in the Pacific region. Its commitment to free trade was enhanced by its entry into the World Trade Orga-

nization, where it has exhibited unique leadership in forging a stronger partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum. In our bilateral relationship, the Peace Corps has deepened our ties between Samoans and the people of the United States by sending volunteers for more than four decades to work in communities throughout Samoa.

Its capital, Apia, is the home of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, which cooperates with our scientists and researchers on projects like climate change and the protection of vital marine habitats and resources.

The United States is committed to engagement with Samoa. Last year, the U.S. Navy was in Samoa for 10 days, working with our Samoan and international partners through the Pacific Partnership to provide a range of assistance. And just a short time ago, we opened a brand new U.S. funded medical center there. We also work closely with Samoa in protecting important natural resources. In fiscal year 2013, we conducted the first exercise of our 2012 Shiprider Agreement between the U.S. Coast Guard and Samoa to achieve sustainable management of Pacific fisheries resources and combat illegal fishing.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to have had a diverse and interesting career in business, community engagement, and professional athletics. I am humbled to be nominated to represent the United States to countries as diverse as New Zealand and Samoa. If confirmed, it will be my great honor to lead a strong team of Foreign Service, civil service, military experts, and local staff. I also look forward to working closely with this committee and other Members of Congress to promote and protect the interests of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you might have.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Gilbert.
Secretary Westphal.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL, PH.D., OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Dr. Westphal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ranking Member Risch, Senator Risch, thank you for being here. Senator Barrasso, thank you for being here. It is a great honor to be here. It is somewhat humbling to sit next to Senator Collins and have her say all those really elegant things about me, especially since I had the temerity to ask her to do it a second time. She did it when I was nominated to be the Under Secretary of the Army. So I am especially grateful for her. She called me this morning and I thought she was in Maine, and I asked her how the weather was in Maine. She said: "Well, I am in Washington and it is probably the same as it is in Maine." So I am very grateful to her, and I am very grateful to sit with these great three colleagues here who are before you today.

I am honored to be the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and I am also deeply thankful to Senator Kerry for his support and confidence that he has shown in my nomination. Serving as the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia would be a great honor and I am humbled by the opportunity to continue my career of public service.

If confirmed, I will represent the United States and the American people to the best of my ability, advancing American political, security, and economic interests with a key ally in the region, and continue to strengthen our strategic relationship.

I should also, Mr. Chairman, like my colleagues, introduce my wife, my wife of 45 years who has put up with all of these different positions that I have had. I feel like we have moved so many times I should have been in the Army. My wife, Linda, Linda Westphal, behind me here. We have four kids and six grandkids and I think

they are probably all tuning in right now to watch this hearing. I thank them for their support and their love. They are all married, they all have kids, and they all have jobs, which is really good.

Most recently I have had the great honor and privilege of working to support our brave men and women in uniform as they serve our Nation at home and abroad. In my current position as the Under Secretary of the Army and its Chief Management Officer, I am responsible for managing one of the world's largest organizations during a period of significant change, great budget uncertainty, and continued threats to our national security. Managing the globally deployed U.S. Army and the large number of our forces serving in the Middle East has given me a great insight into the complexity of this region's strategic environment.

This vital area is beset by change and turmoil, and it is undergoing historical transformations in its social, economic, and political development.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, the United States and Saudi Arabia enjoy a long and enduring partnership which, contrary to some press reports, continues to be strong and resilient. Saudi Arabia is a crucially important partner in the region with whom we share important interests in confronting regional challenges.

The United States is committed to political transition in Syria, a new government that is representative of the Syrian people. The Saudi Government shares that goal. Saudi Arabia shares our commitment to ensuring that international assistance does not fail—does not fall into the hands of violent extremists, including groups connected to al-Qaeda. The Saudis have publicly endorsed the international efforts to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons in accordance with the U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118 and the related OPCW Executive Council decision, while emphasizing the need to hold the Assad regime accountable for barbarically using these weapons against the Syrian people.

The United States and Saudi Arabia both are committed to ensuring that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons. We share the long-term goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The administration has made clear to Saudi Arabia and to our other gulf allies that progress on the nuclear issue means a comprehensive solution and the ability to verify that Iran will not be able to produce nuclear weapons. In addition, we both recognize Iran's destabilizing activities in support of the Assad regime and terrorist groups in such countries as Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon.

We continue to engage the Saudi Government on how best to build Egypt's economy, while emphasizing to all parties that Egypt's economic success requires stability that only will be achieved by inclusive democratic institutions. In Egypt, we believe that the Egyptian people should be represented by an inclusive democratically elected civilian government.

Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, and other senior administration officials continue regular high-level discussions with Saudi leaders about how best to influence progress toward this objective.

On Middle East peace, Secretary Kerry noted recently in meetings with King Abdullah that we value Saudi Arabia's support for

continuing negotiations to achieve the administration's goals of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a permanent status agreement and bringing stability to region.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would conclude by summarizing that our longstanding friendship with Saudi Arabia includes a durable and critically important security and counterterrorism partnership, significant economic and commercial ties, with strong interest in maintaining stability of energy markets and prices. We are the educational hub for more than 74,000 Saudi students studying in this country, thereby increasing employment and development opportunities for young Saudi men and women.

Finally, we have had a very strong and enduring military and security partnership. Our security assistance efforts to train, advise, and assist the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces and the Saudi Arabian National Guard are only two large aspects of one of our most robust foreign military sales in the world, valued at approximately \$97 billion.

If you confirm me to be our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, I would work to strengthen and sustain these important interests, but I would also work to promote universal rights, including religious freedom and the rights of women. But the first thing I would turn upon and I would do upon arriving in country would be to review our security procedures and get fully briefed on the security environment from our Embassy team, since my first priority will always be the security and protection of our citizens.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Risch, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Barrasso, I commit to keeping the committee and this Congress informed and engaged and seek your counsel in matters important to this committee and to the Congress.

I thank you all for your service to our country and if confirmed I thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Westphal follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. JOSEPH WESTPHAL

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am honored by President Obama's nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I also would like to thank Secretary Kerry for his support and the confidence he has shown in my nomination. Serving as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia would be a great honor and I am humbled by the opportunity to continue my career of public service. If confirmed, I will represent the United States and the American people to the best of my ability, advancing American political, security, and economic interests with a key ally in the region and continue to strengthen our strategic relationship.

I have devoted my career to public service, both in government and academia. Most recently, I have had the great honor and privilege of working to support our brave men and women in uniform as they serve our Nation at home and abroad. In my current position as the Under Secretary of the Army and its Chief Management Officer, I am responsible for managing one of the world's largest organizations during a period of significant change, great budget uncertainty and continued threats to our national security. Managing the globally deployed U.S. Army and the large number of our forces serving in the Middle East has given me insights into the complexity of this strategic region's environment. This vital area is beset by change and turmoil, and is undergoing historical transformations in its social, economic and political development.

As the Chief of Mission in Saudi Arabia, I will prioritize taking care of our people. Only 9 years ago, our consulate general in Jeddah suffered a terrorist attack in which five local staff members lost their lives. The safety and security of our mission, its employees and family members in Riyadh, Dhahran, and Jeddah will be

my top priority, as it is for President Obama and Secretary Kerry. I will work with you and my colleagues at the Department to ensure that our mission personnel have the correct security posture and necessary resources to do their jobs safely and effectively. To that end, the safety and security of all Americans will be my uncompromising priority.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have a long and enduring partnership which, contrary to some press reports, continues to be strong and resilient. In addition to numerous visits by senior administration officials and members of this committee, the President now plans a visit in March to reinforce our broad cooperation. If confirmed, I will work across the wide set of our national priorities to advance critical U.S. interests through our diplomatic, security, and commercial engagements.

Saudi Arabia is a crucially important partner in the region. We share important interests in confronting regional challenges, including the crisis in Syria, Iran's nuclear program and regional aspirations, and providing support for democratic and economic development in Yemen. Saudi Arabia's important role in the Gulf Cooperation Council and our strong desire to see the Council be "an anchor for regional stability," as Secretary Hagel stated in his Manama Dialogue speech, means that if I am confirmed by the Senate, I will work to reinforce this important multilateral framework.

We also have a critical security partnership; Saudi Arabia is our largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer, with 338 active and open cases valued at \$96.8 billion dollars, all supporting American skilled manufacturing jobs, while increasing interoperability between our forces for training and any potential operations. We saw the importance of this as our forces stood together during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. On counterterrorism, our countries are very aware through tragic experience of the threat posed by al-Qaeda terrorists, and we have forged a critical partnership with the Saudis on this issue, which I will discuss further.

Apart from political and security cooperation, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia enjoy robust commercial and business relationships, and I look forward to further strengthening trade and promoting American exports. On energy, the United States and Saudi Arabia share an interest in maintaining stable, reliable sources of oil and price stability. We also are committed to working with the Government of Saudi Arabia on its efforts to diversify energy sources and reduce domestic oil consumption. If confirmed, I will engage proactively in all aspects of energy policy and sustainability of mutual interest to the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Secretary Kerry in his speech of January 24 in Davos stated, "you cannot find another country . . . not one country . . . that is as proactively engaged, that is partnering with so many Middle Eastern countries as constructively as we are on so many high stake fronts. And, I want to emphasize that last point: partnering." I will emulate the Secretary's active approach in strengthening our partnership with Saudi Arabia, engaging Saudi officials and the Saudi people to advance the policy objectives of the administration and the Congress.

Earlier in this statement, I mentioned Saudi Arabia's importance in regional politics. This is a region beset by change and great turmoil but also great opportunity. If confirmed, I will work closely with governmental and nongovernmental entities in Saudi Arabia to find constructive and collaborative means to achieve security, peace, economic prosperity, and the advancement of human rights. This includes expanding opportunities for women to participate fully in society, politics, and the economy. I will promote transparency, friendship, and proactive engagement in the relationship while working with my colleagues in the region to safeguard U.S. interests.

There are many ways our mutual interests converge and I will briefly explain our coordination with the Saudi leadership as we advance U.S. policy priorities.

First, the United States is committed to political transition in Syria and a new government that is representative of the Syrian people. The Saudi Government shares this goal and has contributed over a billion dollars to support Syrian civilian and refugee needs, while supporting nonextremist opposition groups under the political umbrella of the Syrian National Coalition. The Saudis share our commitment to ensuring that international assistance does not fall into the hands of violent extremists, including groups connected to al-Qaeda. We may have tactical differences in our approaches to Syria at times, but Saudi Arabia shares our goal of ending the horrible violence in Syria through a political transition to a representative government, and has exercised positive influence in Geneva as we strive to achieve common goals. Additionally, the Saudis have publically endorsed the international effort to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118 and the related OPCW Executive Council decision, while empha-

sizing the need to hold the Assad regime accountable for barbarically using these weapons against the Syrian people.

Similarly, the United States and Saudi Arabia are both committed to ensuring that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. We share the long-term goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Saudi Arabia remains as concerned as we are about Iranian activities in the region. The administration has made it clear to Saudi Arabia and our other Gulf allies that progress on the nuclear issue will not lead to a decrease in U.S. concern about, or in action to deter and combat, Iran's destabilizing activities, whether its support for the Assad regime in Syria, or its lethal aid and training of militants in Yemen and Bahrain. The United States and Saudi Arabia also want to counter Hezbollah's attempts to undermine the Lebanese Government; we both support building up the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

In Egypt, we believe that the Egyptian people should be represented by an inclusive, democratically elected, civilian government. Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel and other senior administration officials continue regular high-level discussions with Saudi leaders about how best to influence progress toward this objective. In the last year, Saudi Arabia has provided Egypt's interim government with over \$2 billion in grants, deposits, and energy credits, and billions more in investments, while encouraging large contributions from other Gulf States. We continue to engage the Saudi Government on how best to build Egypt's economy, while emphasizing to all parties that Egypt's economic success requires stability that only will be achieved by inclusive democratic institutions.

On Middle East Peace, as Secretary Kerry noted in recent meetings with King Abdullah, we value Saudi Arabia's support for continuing negotiations to achieve the administration's goal of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a permanent status agreement, and to bring stability to the region. We are counting on Saudi Arabia to help build support for our shared efforts, and to continue financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

Saudi Arabia also has played a critical role in stabilizing, launching and promoting a successful political transition in Yemen. Saudi Arabia is the largest international assistance contributor to Yemen, and shares our important interest in combating Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and other violent extremists groups, while assisting efforts to provide security, support economic development, and address critical humanitarian challenges.

The reemergence of violent extremism in Iraq also is a critical concern for the United States, and one for which we believe Saudi Arabia can play a constructive role. As Ambassador, I will encourage productive relationships and open dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, including support for Iraq's efforts to flush the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) out of Anbar province—a conflict that has broader implications for the region. I will reinforce our message that progress on current problems is not gained through rehashing conflicts of the past or drawing sectarian lines, but by finding areas of mutual interest, and that violent extremist groups are a threat to us all.

The Syrian crisis, turmoil in Iraq, transition in Yemen, and the role of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups demand stronger, coordinated efforts to combat terrorism in the region. The Government of Saudi Arabia values our combined efforts in counterterrorism, and sees al-Qaeda as just as much a threat to Saudi Arabia as to the United States. I note that the Saudi Government actively discourages its citizens from participating in foreign conflicts, and issued a new law in early February that provides for long prison sentences for those who join jihadist groups in Syria or elsewhere. If confirmed, I will work diligently through our interagency process to strengthen further our counterterrorism cooperation and our overall security relationship.

We have built durable and critically important security and counterterrorism ties with Saudi Arabia, with a range of programs that protect the citizens and institutions of both of our countries. These include coordination to stem the abuse of financial and charitable channels that fund terrorism in the region and beyond, and cooperation on combating violent extremist messages. If confirmed, I intend to work with the leadership of Saudi Arabia to further build our partnerships in these areas.

As mentioned, another key priority I will work toward is growing U.S.-Saudi economic and commercial ties. Saudi Arabia is our 10th-largest trading partner; in the first three quarters of last year, bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia amounted to approximately \$52 billion. I will work to expand and diversify our bilateral trade and help create new opportunities for American business in Saudi Arabia.

We also have a significant interest in stable energy markets and prices. Today we import approximately about 1.3 million barrels per day of crude oil from Saudi Arabia which represents 15 percent of Saudi Arabia's total global exports. This

makes Saudi Arabia our second-largest oil supplier, after Canada. As the world's only current oil producer with significant spare production capacity, Saudi Arabia plays a critical global role in price stability. The price our trucking companies and airlines pay for fuel, and the price the American consumer pays at the pump, are heavily influenced by trends in global oil markets. As two of the largest oil producers in the world, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a mutual interest in ensuring that energy markets remain sufficiently supplied and support global economic growth.

Shifting to education, I first observe that the quality of American educational institutions is well-known and highly prized among Saudis. I note that over 74,000 students from Saudi Arabia now study in the United States. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of U.S. education in developing the skills and perceptions of the next generation of Saudi leaders. Students will return home with a better understanding of the United States and our people, and will bring back American ideals that can be an important influence as Saudi society develops.

Saudi Arabia is a young country, with nearly two-thirds of the population under 25. Saudi youth expect their leadership to adapt and respond to the whole population's needs, including the 50 percent that's female. I believe the Saudi leadership understands these challenges. King Abdullah has taken important steps, such as scheduling another round of municipal elections for 2015 in which women can vote and run as candidates, and decreeing that at least 20 percent of appointees to the national consultative council should be women. I look forward to monitoring these developments with my team. The Saudi leadership also has expanded scholarship opportunities, including for women, and sponsored interreligious dialogue. More than 40 percent of students receiving the King Abdullah Scholarship for study abroad are women. However, much more needs to be done to ensure expanded opportunities for Saudi young people, for women, and to increase citizens' roles in government affairs. I look forward to working with the Saudi leadership to help them provide these opportunities.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will not shy away from topics where we disagree, such as promoting women's full participation in society, supporting the rights to religious freedom and free association, or encouraging greater respect for labor rights and protections for the country's foreign workers. As Ambassador, I will support home-grown reform efforts and will be an advocate for full respect for the basic rights of all citizens and residents. I will provide public support for Saudis' rights to freely associate, to report corruption, wrongdoing, or abuse by public officials, and to petition their government for redress of grievances. We will make it clear that basic human rights are universal and we advocate that Saudi Arabia meet its international commitments.

Allow me to close by noting that, although American society differs greatly from that of Saudi Arabia, we cannot allow our differences to prevent solid continuing cooperation on political, security, and economic challenges and opportunities. The ties between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are deep and historic, and serve core American interests. I look forward to strengthening these relationships while maintaining frank and productive dialogue for issues where our views do not fully align.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Secretary Westphal.

We will now begin rounds of questioning. It would be our intent to do questions in 7-minute rounds. Because there are four of you, we might not get to all of you in the first round. If that happens, do not breathe a sigh of relief and do not feel offended because we will likely have second rounds because of the number of nominees on the panel.

Senator Risch. And do not leave.

Senator Kaine. And do not waive.

Senator Risch. Do not leave.

Senator Kaine. Oh, do not leave. Yes, do not leave. Do not leave.

[Laughter.]

Senator Kaine. Especially since we have stayed here, do not leave.

To begin, I will start actually. Secretary Westphal, I have some questions about Saudi Arabia. This is a very important partnership

and yet it is a partnership that has some challenges right now. On the United States side, we have concerns about the treatment of women, we have concerns about the funding of particular elements within the Syrian opposition. We have concerns about some human rights issues with respect to journalists or freedom of religion.

On the Saudi Arabia side, they have expressed some concerns about actions that we have taken even as they have supported with us the role of a nonnuclear Iran. They have expressed concern about the degree to which we have communicated with them about our strategy. They were concerned about United States action in Egypt. They have been concerned about United States action in Syria.

So it is a partnership that has been an important one, but there are also a number of rifts, perceived rifts in the partnership. How would you as Ambassador try to deal with these issues? Without ceding any issue important to us, even on issues where there are differences, how would you work to kind of get over the little friction that has been pretty obvious in the relationship in recent years?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Mr. Chairman, I think, first of all, I think within the context of the broader strategy that we have, that the President has laid down for this region, to continue to fight the threat of violent extremism, counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, eliminate terrorist networks, and of course keep energy flowing, energy prices stable, important to all our economies, in the framework of that context all of these issues are issues of policy where generally speaking on the issues of strategy we agree on, we may disagree on tactics about some of the solutions to those problems.

On the issues of human rights and religious tolerance, those are issues that we will need to continue to engage with the Saudi Government to ensure that they can move forward.

I think King Abdullah has done a remarkable thing since he came the ruler of Saudi Arabia. He has moved this country—I will admit that by us it seems like a glacial pace. But he has moved this country toward a series of reforms. They are small in scale, but they are significant. I mentioned that we had 74,000 students studying here from Saudi Arabia on scholarship from him. There are almost 100,000 worldwide and I am told that about 40 percent of those are women.

So there is a movement going forward to address this. But I will say that our relationship is robust, it is resilient, it is strong. It is evidenced by the multiple engagements that we have had just this year alone, conversations between the King and the President, the visit by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, a number of other leaders who have been there recently, visits by them. Muhammed bin Nayef is here right now, the Minister of Interior, engaged in very, very important conversations with us on counterterrorism and all the issues you mentioned.

So I think that is a very strong relationship and partnership. They want to be partners with us. We want to be partners with them and we will make that relationship continue to work. If I am confirmed, I will do my utmost to engage very proactively, very

openly, with every element of the Saudi Government to address these issues that you mentioned.

Senator KAINÉ. Secretary Westphal, obviously defense is a leading pillar of the relationship, as you indicated. You come into this nomination from the Department of Defense in your role with the Army. What do you intend to do to further this particular aspect of the relationship, the defense partnership, and what major platforms, if any, do you see Saudi Arabia potentially purchasing in the near future, given your background on acquisition issues?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Thank you, Senator. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think there are a number of things that one can do there. One of the most important foreign military sales pieces that we have with Saudi Arabia and we have had for a number of years is the training mission. We train their defense forces and we train their national guard. That is a huge, huge undertaking by us because it means that we can calibrate the way in which their professionalism, their military, and their security forces can really become more professional and do the jobs that sustain the ability of Saudi Arabia to transform itself into a more open society.

I think we need to fortify that. We need to pay more attention to that and engage more deeply with them in how to do that. They are looking to do more work on fortifying their facilities, their energy facilities. They are looking to grow, to your question on what foreign military sales could be in the future, they are really looking to build, strengthen their navy, build a coast guard.

Those are all areas where we are going to compete with other foreign countries. We must be energized. We must work with our defense industry. We must work to build support from them to look our way, because we think we have the best in the world in all these categories.

Senator KAINÉ. Last question. Since the Eisenhower administration we have had a partnership with Saudi Arabia very heavily focused on petroleum. There has been some speculation that the great developments in the United States domestically produced energy just by themselves really could cause a significant change in the relationship with Saudi Arabia. Do you see the growing U.S. energy economy as a big game-changer in the relationship with Saudi Arabia or is that maybe overplayed a bit?

Dr. WESTPHAL. I do not see it as a big game-changer, under the following conditions. First of all, I think, wisely, the King and the Government of Saudi Arabia do see that they need to diversify their economic portfolio, that they are consuming too much of their own product. So it is very incumbent on us to help them transition to other forms of energy, whether it's solar, wind, and nuclear.

Nuclear is going to be the next step and we have got lots of opportunities there to help them generate nuclear in a peaceful way to sustain their economy.

That being said, world energy prices are what could become the worst problem for us. So we have to be very careful in working with them to continue to make sure that the markets are open and that they can freely export their oil to keep prices level, because for us domestically as we improve our domestic production it is the increase in prices that could affect us negatively. So if I am confirmed that is what I would engage in very seriously.

Senator KATNE. Thank you.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Westphal—first of all, to all four of you: Thank you for your service to America. I think probably one of the most underappreciated functions of the Federal Government is what you people in the State Department do in representing Americans all over the world.

Mr. Westphal, I am going to be critical here for a second. I want to say this in the kindest and gentlest way. I read your testimony very carefully and I have got to tell you I am disappointed in not addressing really what I think are some serious, serious fractures in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States.

There is no doubt that your description is a great description of what traditionally our relationship has been with Saudi Arabia. They have been a great partner, they have been a great friend. We have pulled the wagon together. We have serious differences with them and have had over the years over issues, particularly women's rights issues, and they have tolerated us nudging them in the direction we think that they ought to go.

They have become angry with us over the last 6 to 12 months, and particularly with this arrangement that the administration has chosen to enter into with Iran. I know you are well aware of it. I am sure you have read all the things that have come out of Saudi Arabia. They have taken action which is adverse to the United States. They make no bones about it. They were very public about it.

I was hoping you would address that a bit more. We all hope that the agreement that was put on the table as far as Iran is concerned will work, that the people in Iran will change their ways, that they will slap themselves on the forehead and say: Gee, we have been bad actors over the years, but we are going to change our ways. To be honest with you, I do not think that is going to happen. I have been very critical of it. Other members of this body have been critical of it. The Saudis have been as critical as we have, if not more so. As I said, they have taken actions that are adverse to us.

How are you going to handle that? Let us assume for a moment that the administration is wrong, Iran does not change its ways, that it is the same old same old, that they use us in order to take the time to further develop their nuclear ambitions. I do not think we will ever get the genie back in the bottle again as far as the sanctions are concerned. I hope we do, but I think that is going to be very difficult.

What is going to happen? What are you going to say when you have to walk up to the palace and talk to the King and tell him, well, this has not worked out? How are you going to handle that?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Well, Senator, I think that is going to evolve from our decision that what the Iranians are doing is not verifiable, they are not committing to the terms of any agreement that we may have with them in the near future, that they are simply not abiding by the terms. And the Secretary of State and the President, of course, will make that decision to take a different route.

I think the evidence that the Saudis would like to see this whole situation be, the tension be reduced, is marked by their participation in the London 11, by their participation in Geneva. They agree with us that Iran should not, cannot have a nuclear weapon. So I think we agree on the terms. We agree on the conditions. We agree on the end result. The question is will the terms of any agreement be verifiable, and that is something that we have to wait to see what the administration finds on that.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Westphal, I agree with you that we are, I think, in full sync with them as far as the objective. The Saudis really, really do not want the Iranians to have a nuclear weapon. They agree with us on that objective.

I think that they were badly offended by, first of all, the process and the way they were kept in the loop, or lack of being kept in the loop; and secondly was the finality of where we wound up in this first step of trusting them to do something and giving them something before they performed, as opposed to reversing that. For the life of me, I cannot understand why anyone would do that when you are dealing with the Iranians. But the administration did it.

So you have got your work cut out for you there. You have been around long enough that I know that you know that there are serious problems here, and it is going to take substantially more work than it has taken in the past, because, again, this relationship is drifting in the wrong direction. I hope you are the right guy to bring it back. Certainly the President needs to work on that. The Saudis are critical partners in the region.

Thank you for your service and thank you for your willingness to do that.

Dr. WESTPHAL. May I?

Senator RISCH. Certainly, please.

Dr. WESTPHAL. Senator, I agree with what you said. And I also want to say, and I said this at the end of my remarks and I mean this very sincerely, we are a representative democracy, so we ourselves are having a large and broad debate on this issue openly and in a very clear fashion. So I do believe that you play a role. I do intend to be very connected to this committee and to the Congress to understand what your sensibilities are on this, and translate that to the Saudi Government.

But in addition to that, I would say that the relationships, like any good relationship, you are going to have disagreements, you are going to have issues where perhaps we did not consult them early enough, perhaps we did not engage with them in this way and that way. But we are very transparent in our conversations with them. Everything that I have been briefed about and come to know at this point in time—I have not been in these conversations, so I cannot tell you exactly what has transpired. But I am confident that from the President on down we are deeply and very seriously and very openly and very, very clear about our direction and our policies with them.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Tueller, on a personal note, will you be taking your family to Yemen, your wife and your five children?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, at the moment we do not have accompanied status in Yemen. So employees are there without families.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. It is probably wise under the circumstances on the ground. You have your work cut out for you.

Mr. Gilbert, I am almost out of time. But Mr. Gilbert, I have gone all through this, all through the papers you have given me, and somehow you missed it. We do not seem to have your lifetime batting average here with the Cubs and with the Reds and the White Sox. So maybe if you could submit that for the record it would be helpful as we move forward on your confirmation.

Mr. GILBERT. Of course, sir. I could tell you now that in the major leagues it was .273. My career average for 8 years playing was .284.

Senator RISCH. Respectable. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. My time is up, and you are going to have to excuse me.

Senator KAINE. Yes, thank you.

Senator BARRASSO.

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

I would like to follow up, Mr. Chairman, on some of your comments as well as Senator Risch's just about the important relationship and partnership with Saudi Arabia, and talk about things that are happening there, because it is key to the stability of the region. The relationship between our two countries has been strained. In the past, I think as you have said, Mr. Westphal, perhaps we did not consult them early enough on things.

I look at this and say King Abdullah's going to be 90 years old this year. At the end of the King's reign, it is anticipated there is going to be a leadership change to the next generation. So in trying to get ahead of this, in trying to consult them early enough, can you talk about what individuals in the line of succession to the King are there, how that next King is going to be selected, and how this may play a role as we look to the future?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Well, what I know, given my limited insight into the inner workings of the royal family, is that there is a crown prince and he is the successor to the King. Apart from that, that is how we are operating. I think as a government we expect that to be the case, and from that will emanate other changes as he takes over at some eventual point in time.

King Abdullah to my knowledge is very engaged, even at his age. He is about to receive a visit from our President. I think this is an important meeting. I think that the King is very much aware of all of the issues that are taking place. So we are operating with that government, with that crown prince, and with those ministries as they are today.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, the reason I ask is that former Ambassador James Smith, who was our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 2009 to 2013, he warned that Saudi Arabia may become, as he said, a kingdom of different heads and a decentralized monarchy, he said, consisting of multiple fiefdoms. That is what makes me concerned.

So I am just wondering, in your analysis of this division of the various ministries and the possibility of decentralization, how do

we deal with that, because it is entirely possible that that would happen on your watch.

Dr. WESTPHAL. Senator, I do know he said that, but I have not seen any evidence of that in anything that I have read or anything that I have seen from anybody else. So I am loath to speak to that because I am assuming that they have a succession plan that right now is what it is. If I am confirmed as the Ambassador, I will certainly be very focused on making sure that we are very well connected within all of the ministries and all of the agencies of that government, that we are engaged with what we perceive will be future leadership.

I think people do that when they come to this country. They look at who the future leaders of this you will be and engage with them. I think that is incumbent for me to do that.

I appreciate your question. Just I believe that responsibly we must deal with the government that we are dealing with today.

Senator BARRASSO. I have been to the region a couple times in the last 3 months. Last year Saudi Arabia was elected to a 2-year term as a rotating temporary member of the United Nations Security Council. They then announced that they were rejecting the Security Council seat just this past October, after months of actually engaging in the lobbying. As a founding member of the U.N., the Kingdom declared it would renounce the Security Council seat.

I just wonder if you could have a little discussion about what you thought the reasons were that they declined the seat in the United Nations Security Council, and then how they view their role with the international community?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Senator, a good question. I think part of this is going to be my own sort of personal view of this. I think that as they looked at the situation in Syria and in other parts of the world becoming much more critical, a seat, a permanent seat—excuse me—a seat in the Security Council for them would not have been a permanent seat, so they would have to be involved in casting votes for which they would have no ability to follow through on in the future.

In turn, they took a seat in the U.N. Human Rights Commission. I think that is an important, really important seat for them and for us for them to hold that seat. I think that means that they are looking, and they have made some very positive statements about addressing human rights issues. It helps us, I think, to move that agenda forward, not just in Saudi Arabia, but with them throughout the world.

Senator BARRASSO. What do you believe is the greatest threat to Saudi Arabian national security today?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Well, I think certainly terrorism. They are doing a great deal. We are working very closely with them to stop the movement of their citizens into Syria and into Iraq and other parts, into Yemen. They are looking very hard at rehabilitating people who come back from those wars.

But the spillover of terrorist activities into Saudi Arabia is always a great danger that they are concerned with. So one of our strongest elements of our relationship with them is counterterrorism. We do not have as strong a relationship with almost any other country in the gulf region than with them on this matter. We

certainly have one very strong in the Middle East with Israel and other countries, but with this particular threat we have a great relationship with them. We exchange a great deal of information.

Again, the Minister was here. He was engaged in conversations with our government on these matters. They have done a lot to curb the flow of money into Syria and into Iraq. They have the banking rules that limit some of that. They are a little bit more advanced, I think, than other gulf countries in prohibiting and limiting and regulating that. We are working closely with them.

So I think we have all the tools with them to engage in what is their biggest threat, but it is also our biggest threat. It is certainly in our national interest to ensure that that counterterrorism piece is strong and viable and supported.

Senator BARRASSO. I think it was interesting, Reuters reported just a couple days ago a decree by King Abdullah imposing prison terms of from 3 to 20 years on Saudis who go abroad to fight, and the concerns there. So it is interesting. I think there is a significant impact of the conflict in Syria and how it is impacting the security in Saudi Arabia. So we will see what happens in terms of shifts in the future.

I am out of time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

We will move to a second round of questions. In this and any subsequent rounds if necessary, we will move with 5 minutes.

Secretary Westphal, one last item. Senator Durbin had hoped to ask some questions, if here, concerning human rights issues, imprisonment of activists, journalists, folks persecuted under concerns around religious freedom. We are going to keep the record open for written submission of questions until the end of the day tomorrow, and there may be a written question submitted on that issue to you about how you would intend to deal with those issues. So I will just give you that heads up.

Mr. Gilbert, with respect to New Zealand, New Zealand has been a key supporter of expanded international trade and a partner with the United States as we work for the Trans-Pacific Partnership process. Obviously, with your financial background and expertise, trade and commerce between New Zealand and the United States will be a key issue. Talk to me a little bit about what your priorities will be in advancing United States trade interests with New Zealand?

Mr. GILBERT. Thank you, Senator. Next week is the next working group and then ministerial group meetings in Singapore regarding TPP. The work on TPP done by the U.S. Trade Representative, they are trying to get to a final agreement, a high-level, high-quality, very comprehensive agreement between the 12 nations that are currently negotiating on TPP.

Our relationship with New Zealand has been a very strong one and has increased with trade. This is an agreement that we believe that will benefit not only our two countries, but all 12 countries. Earlier today their Trade Minister Groser was speaking to a business group, talking about the predictions for TPP. He quoted the Peterson Institute here. He talked about their internal numbers and believes that these numbers could be dramatically understated.

They signed a free trade agreement with China a few years back and all the projections there were greatly underestimated. As a matter of fact, their trade has grown 10 times faster than they believe that it would. So they have been a great partner in working on TPP and if TPP is concluded and if I am confirmed I look forward to working with them in helping execute the agreement.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Gilbert.

One of the major defense policy adjustments in the last few years has been the President's announcement of the rebalancing, shift, pivot, toward Asia. While a lot of people who are not in Asia hear that and they get nervous, and particularly maybe some real estate for the rest of the panel, New Zealand has been a strong supporter of this announced strategy and the reestablishment of military-to-military ties with New Zealand has been a real positive during the last few years as our bilateral working relationships are increasing.

Talk a little bit about what you would intend to do in your role as Ambassador to further the growing military-to-mil cooperation between the United States and New Zealand?

Mr. GILBERT. Thank you. As I mentioned in my opening statement, on the back of both the Wellington Declaration and the Washington Declaration we have seen both our diplomatic and our military relationship with New Zealand strengthen. That is something that we believe that will continue.

Secretary Mabus was just in New Zealand at the beginning of this month meeting with his counterparts there. He also, while he was there, met with Prime Minister Key and Foreign Affairs McCully. We have been doing joint military exercises for the first time and the Royal New Zealand Frigate, the TE MANA, is serving with a multinational force in the Gulf of Aden and in the Indian Ocean on antipiracy patrols. The TE MANA also docked in Guam last year and it was the first time that a Royal New Zealand ship had docked in a United States port in many decades.

We believe that this relationship continues to move forward. Secretary of Defense Hagel has already given prepermission for the Royal New Zealand Navy to dock at Pearl for the Rim of Pacific fleet exercises this summer. So we are seeing more exercises with them. We have seen the mil-to-mil relationship grow, and if confirmed I look forward to being part of keeping that momentum going.

Senator KAINE. One last question. My time has expired, but there is no one here to stop me, so I am just going to run wild. There is an interesting issue about the United States and New Zealand working together to establish a marine-protected reserve in the Ross Sea. But that is currently opposed—that proposal is currently opposed by Russia and China. Do you have any thoughts on that particular item? I found that interesting. It sounds like a good idea to me.

Mr. GILBERT. I believe that both countries were a little disappointed. They had dramatically reduced the size of the MPA, by almost 40 percent, because they thought that that was a number that they would do to—actually, to have Russia and the Ukraine sign off on the agreement. So they were disappointed, both countries, we were disappointed, New Zealand was disappointed.

We are continuing to work on that and there will be meetings later this fall that will continue that discussion. But it is something that the United States and New Zealand both believe is critically important.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Gilbert.

Mr. Silliman, first I just—it is so interesting, you going from Baghdad to Kuwait. When we discussed this in my office recently, the reestablishment of fairly strong relationships between Iraq and Kuwait might have been something that I think I would have and others might have predicted would be pretty difficult. Talk a little bit about that effort and what that positive relationship does for Kuwait at this moment?

Mr. Silliman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is in fact one of the few things that I have been able to accomplish within my tenure while in the Foreign Service. I have started many projects, but this was one that I think we were able to begin and execute fairly well.

At the end of 2011, we at the Embassy in Baghdad, Ambassador Tueller in the Embassy in Kuwait, and the United States Mission to the United Nations in New York tried to find ways to spark an improved relationship between Iraq and Kuwait. It was actually the visit of the Kuwaiti emir, Sheikh Sabah, to the Arab League summit in Baghdad in early 2012 that really broke this open. It started a chain of events that permitted us, in coordination with the U.N., to demarcate the border, work through claims on air transport and airlines going back to the 1990s, and to work through the last pieces of the U.N. Security Council structure that was meant to protect Kuwait and make sure that all of the bad effects of the war were addressed.

We were able last June to get through the Security Council a Security Council resolution essentially closing the chapter on most of the parts of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. All that remains is Iraqi payment of some war reparations, which they have been doing regularly. This has opened up a Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad, possibly Kuwaiti consulates in other parts of the country, and the possibility of new trade and cooperation in the region.

Kuwait has been in some ways a bridge between Iraq and other countries in the region, and one of the best results of this has been the resumption of air flights between Kuwait City and Baghdad last year. So it has been very positive for regional security.

Senator Kaine. We have been having a number of hearings about the destabilizing or sort of decreasing security situation in Iraq. But as I gather from our discussion so far, that has not really affected the Iraq-Kuwait relationship or border issues in north Kuwait?

Mr. Silliman. Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is correct. It really has not had any impact on Kuwait. I think they watch nervously the developments in their much larger neighbors in all directions, but they have been very careful to maintain an excellent relationship with the Iraqi Government and have been consulting closely. We have been consulting closely with them as well, and thus far there has been no spillover into Kuwait, and we frankly do not expect any spillover into Kuwait.

Senator KAINÉ. It appears that domestic political unrest in Kuwait has quieted in recent months. Some of that may be economic in nature. Those of us working on budget issues were envious when we saw that Kuwait was announcing a surplus that was 40 percent of its GDP, a budgetary surplus. But what do you think the future is of political system reform in Kuwait going forward?

Mr. SILLIMAN. Senator, that is an excellent question and this is a question on which there is a very lively debate in Kuwait itself. Kuwait already has a political system that stands out in the region. As I said, women are full participants in the political system. There is a very lively press. There is very lively participation in social media, although with some controls from the government that we wish they did not try to impose.

I believe that it is the openness of the political system that makes it possible for Kuwaitis to move forward more rationally and calmly than many other countries that do not have such an open system. It is one of the great benefits of democracy that we have here and I think Kuwait benefits from that.

We will continue, I will continue if confirmed, to encourage expanded freedom of expression, freedom of association and other ways, so that Kuwaitis themselves can have open discussions and decide what their political future ought to be.

Senator KAINÉ. One of the issues we also frequently discuss in both Foreign Relations and Armed Services is sort of the growing sectarian nature of conflict in this region between Sunni and Shia Islamic populations. Yet Kuwait has been a little bit immune from that, and I wonder if you would talk about why?

Mr. SILLIMAN. Certainly, Senator. Kuwait is fortunate in the region in that they do not have the same social or economic differences tied to sect or religion that other countries in the region do. About 30 percent of the Kuwaiti population is Shia. It is a minority, but it is very well integrated socially and economically. Kuwait Shia to my understanding do not feel themselves second-class citizens. They participate fully in political life and in social life. So I think this is one of the reasons that you have not seen spillover from other sectarian conflicts in the region.

Again, if confirmed we will watch this very carefully. But I think that the situation in Kuwait is much more optimistic, or I am more optimistic about the situation in Kuwait than in many other places in the region.

Senator KAINÉ. One last question. What is the current state of the Kuwaiti reaction to the United States-Iran negotiations, the P5+1 discussions?

Mr. SILLIMAN. An excellent question. The Kuwaiti has publicly welcomed the joint plan of action and said also that they hope that the joint plan of action leads to a permanent agreement that will resolve the nuclear issues of Iran, because they believe it will increase regional security in this region and other parts of the world. That said, they are still nervous about some of the other activities of Iran that we too are nervous about, support of terrorism and revolutionary movements elsewhere in the region and the world.

So the Kuwaitis are not being Pollyannish when they are in favor of the joint plan of action. But thus far they have been supportive, and we have consulted with them closely.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Silliman.

Ambassador Tueller, in news of the week there was news this week about Yemen considering or on the path to adopt a six-region federal structure. Based on your experience, including your earlier posting in Yemen, do you think this structure make sense and will hold? Is there lingering possibility that southerners will not see this as a viable structure? What has been the initial kind of response to this in Yemen and what are your thoughts about it?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, that is an important step that has taken place in this continuing process that began with the GCC initiative. The national dialogue brought together representatives from political elites, from different regions of the country, the different parties, included women, representatives of broad swaths of society, including of course southerners. In the process of the national dialogue, of course these issues were discussed. There were recommendations made.

It is clear that there is still a need for further discussion on this. But the national dialogue concluded quite recently, January 25. The next phase of the process called for a study and the recommendations for a federal system, devolution of power from the center. So the recommendations that have come out for a six-region federal system are consistent with the national dialogue process.

The issues are still very much alive. We expect that President Hadi is going to have to continue to exercise the type of leadership that he has over the course of this process as the country moves to the next phases of drafting the constitution, having a referendum to approve the constitution. I expect that there will be challenges and we will have to be continuously engaged along with other partners to ensure that the process is not derailed or spoiled by those who would like to oppose it.

Senator KAINE. Just on that point, there has been an ongoing Houthi rebellion in a portion of Yemen and that rebellion has received, revolt has received support from Iran and has been a serious threat to security in Yemen. Is the political process as it is working sort of responding to grievances and dampening them, or is there likely to be an effort by this revolt to unwind or attack the political process that is ongoing?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, first on the question of the Houthi rebellion. There are legitimate grievances. The Houthis participated in the national dialogue, so that was a positive step. Nonetheless, the conflict continues.

As you mention, there is strong evidence that Iran has been providing support to the elements of the Houthi rebellion, including last year Yemen seized a dhow with weapons, referred the case to the U.N., and the U.N. concluded that Iran was likely behind the shipment of weapons to the Houthis.

We and Yemen share a strong interest in preventing Iran from meddling in and exerting its influence inside Yemen. So if confirmed one of my major efforts will be to assist the Yemeni Government both in addressing on the political, social, and economic level grievances that will allow the rebellion to be fought back, but also in preventing Iran from exploiting those tensions inside Yemen.

Senator KAINE. You testified a bit about AQAP and how it has been such a significant challenge. One of the issues really raised

as you dig into this is the success of counterterrorism in one country can create problems in a neighbor. So much of the AQAP membership has been Saudi natives who, because of Saudi efforts to crack down on terrorism, have found it easier to move across borders into Yemen and created problems in Yemen.

Talk a little bit about the current status of the Yemen-Saudi security cooperation in dealing with AQAP and what the United States is doing to try to help facilitate that?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, you have touched exactly on the issue behind AQAP's growth. It of course was formed in 2009 as a result of the unification, putting one banner over both the al-Qaeda elements in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, with Yemen providing, because of ungoverned spaces and weak central government authority, the opportunity for elements of Saudi Arabia to take root inside Yemen.

The question of how we combat that, of course, really goes to creating conditions where the Government in Yemen can begin to exert control in those ungoverned spaces, that it can begin to counter extremism, and that it can, with our assistance and the assistance of others, have the type of law enforcement security services that can counter the threat posed by terrorists.

Saudi Arabia has actually played a very, very constructive role in Yemen. It played a very important part in bringing about the GCC initiative that brought the country back from the brink of civil war. So we believe also that continued involvement with Saudi Arabia as a partner in addressing the issues in Yemen is going to be important to the success of our efforts there.

Senator KAINE. In the aftermath of the horrific bombing of the hospital in Yemen in December, AQAP took the unusual step of apologizing and saying they had made a mistake and that there was sort of a really just acknowledging that they had done wrong. Has the horrific nature of that particular crime weakened any attachment or support that they would receive from elements within the Yemeni population?

Ambassador TUELLER. Sir, again and again the primary victims of AQAP have been Yemenis. They have attacked Yemeni civilians, Yemeni infrastructure. The attack on the hospital and I believe the statement that you are referring to afterward is indicative of the type of challenge we face in countering their propaganda efforts. To carry out that sort of vicious attack and then come out afterward and try to apologize, while that may have some appeal to some people, I believe that we will be able to counter that and, with the help of the government that is engaged in the fight with us, to make sure that that extremist message, the lies they tell, do not take hold amongst the Yemeni people.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit about the security challenge for your personnel in Yemen. I think Senator Risch's question to you about would your family be attending was getting at that issue. Yemen might be one of the most challenging assignments in the United States Foreign Service because of security. I understand all the employees of the Embassy, U.S. employees, live in a single building that is a converted hotel. If you would just talk a bit about the security challenges and how you will tackle them when you are there.

Ambassador TUELLER. Yes, Senator. It is something that, it is a dynamic situation, one that I believe we constantly have to evaluate, look and see what the nature of the threat is, what are effective countermeasures, what is the nature of the footprint on the ground, are we doing everything possible.

Senator, if confirmed I will spend every morning and every evening giving serious thought to whether we are doing the things in Yemen that make sense, that we have got the right mix of people there, that we are taking all the appropriate countermeasures. I am confident with the experience that we have gained and continue to gain that we are putting in place best practices to protect our facilities and our people. But I am not going to rest for one moment and feel complacent about the steps in place and will be constantly evaluating whether we are doing the right thing.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Ambassador, I was struck when we talked privately, based on your experiences in being in Yemen earlier, but you pointed out that in the Arab world, in this part of the world, Yemen is the poorest country. So in terms of resources to deal with the challenges, from a physical resource standpoint, they are very, very stressed. And yet you really seem to convey that, given the level of resources they have, there are reasons for optimism about how they are handling the challenges that they face, with AQAP notwithstanding. Have I fairly characterized your thoughts?

Ambassador TUELLER. Yes, Senator, I do feel optimistic about that. I think the level of economic assistance that we are providing is enabling the Yemeni Government to begin to improve its ability to deliver services, to exert its influence into ungoverned areas, to create jobs, to foster private enterprise. Frankly, there are a number of other very committed partners also, including Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries.

So if together we can move that, there is great potential for Yemen to move from where it is now or has been over the past decades to a country, particularly as we see the political process begin to allow a government to function properly and be responsive to the needs of its citizens. I am optimistic about where that is headed.

Senator KAINE. A last question. In the National Defense Authorizing Act that we passed at the end of 2013, the language that was hammered out between the House and the Senate with respect to Guantanamo opened up the prospect for more transfers of Guantanamo detainees back to countries of origin, with sort of two components: transfers to countries of origin, transfers to the United States for trial in Article 3 courts.

We did not change the fundamental law with respect to the Article 3 courts, but we did open up more prospects for transfers back to countries of origin. A huge number of the remaining detainees, a sizeable percentage of the remaining detainees at Guantanamo, are Yemenis. Talk a little bit about, with greater congressional authority for such transfers, talk a bit about the important goal of returning to Yemen those who have been cleared for return at this point?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, the administration is very grateful for the greater flexibility that the legislation has provided the President, who has made clear that it is the policy of this administration to close Guantanamo. It has not been effective. It has not

served our national security interests. So that flexibility that allows the administration to look at, in the case of Yemen, a case-by-case examination of each individual detainee to determine whether the conditions can be met to make a transfer either to Yemen or to a third country.

So we will continue to look at that process. Again, it is going to be a case-by-case basis, looking at the specific circumstances of each individual and what assurances would be required so that we make sure that our national security interests are taken care of before any return takes place.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Ambassador Tueller, for your testimony and to all the witnesses and all who are here in support of them. I am glad we were able to have this hearing today. Each of your countries are very, very important allies for the United States and it is important that we have our best representing us there.

The record of this hearing, and especially because of the timing of it, will remain open until the close of business next Thursday to allow members to submit questions for the record, and we ask your prompt response to such questions as they are submitted.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:24 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF DOUGLAS ALAN SILLIMAN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What are the vital U.S. national security interests in Kuwait? What are the other national security interests in Kuwait?

Answer. Kuwait is a steadfast ally in the strategically important gulf region and a valued partner in promoting policies that strengthen regional security and stability, including supporting efforts to reach a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, resolving the Syria crisis, including addressing the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people, and confronting Iran's destabilizing policies in the region. Our longstanding strategic partnership includes excellent military-to-military relations; Kuwait's proven track record as a supportive host of U.S. Army Central is critical to our ability to deter threats to our own homeland and to our allies. One of our highest priorities is sustaining and enhancing our security partnership, especially with respect to countering the threat of terrorism and violent extremism against the United States, U.S. personnel in the region and U.S. allies abroad. Kuwait, which holds the rotating Gulf Cooperation Council presidency for 2014 and will host the Arab League summit March 25-26, is increasingly assuming a regional leadership role on issues of shared importance such as the Syria humanitarian crisis and Iraq's regional reintegration. Finally, Kuwait holds roughly 7 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, and U.S. companies actively compete for massive contracts in Kuwait's transportation, health, and infrastructure sectors.

Question. What are the three most important goals of U.S. policy in Kuwait?

Answer. Sustaining and deepening our security partnership will continue to be our first priority, as it is essential to ensuring U.S. security, and the security and stability of the broader gulf and Middle East regions. This includes the protection of official U.S. personnel in Kuwait, as well as the more than 50,000 U.S. citizens living, working, and visiting Kuwait City; in that respect, the Government of Kuwait provides outstanding cooperation in both of these areas. Protecting access to energy resources is a second, critically important objective. Kuwait produces roughly 2.7 million barrels a day and exports more than 2 million barrels a day; it is in our mutual interest to help ensure that Kuwait remains a reliable supplier to global energy markets far into the future. A final objective involves strengthening U.S.-Kuwaiti commercial ties. Kuwait has consistently run large budget surpluses, and the Government of Kuwait is directing a sizeable portion of these funds into modernizing the country's infrastructure and improving the Kuwaiti health and education sectors, opportunities for which U.S. companies can expect to be excep-

tionally competitive. At the same, the government has also increased its yearly contributions to Kuwait's Future Generations Fund, an investment fund to which Kuwait contributes a percentage of annual oil revenues. If I am confirmed, I will work to sustain the recent increase in Kuwaiti investment in U.S. assets and companies, where Kuwait ranks as our 13th-fastest growing source of Foreign Direct Investment.

Question. How does achieving these goals in Kuwait align with a broader regional strategy?

Answer. Deepening our security, political, and economic partnership with Kuwait is a key component in advancing our regional goal of countering threats and promoting stability. As evidenced by the Kuwaiti Amir's September 2013 visit to Washington and Secretary Kerry's two trips to Kuwait in the last 9 months, our two nations work collaboratively on a range of bilateral, regional, and international issues of utmost importance to U.S. national security. For example, as the Gulf Cooperation Council president for 2014, Kuwait will facilitate our multilateral engagement with that entity, including on ballistic missile defense. Kuwait has also welcomed the Joint Plan of Action as an important first step toward a comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran, and Kuwaiti assistance has been critical to short-term economic stability in Egypt. To address the dire humanitarian needs stemming from the ongoing violence in Syria, meanwhile, Kuwait's Amir cohosted with U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon a second-annual high level donors' conference that spurred a collective \$4.2 billion in new pledges of humanitarian assistance. Finally, I had the privilege of personally working to advance the normalization of Iraq-Kuwait relations over the past 18 months, which greatly contributed to regional stability and continues to serve as a powerful example of the potential for Iraq's reintegration into the immediate neighborhood, from which it has been so long estranged.

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW TUELLER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What are the vital U.S. national security interests in Yemen? What are the other national security interests in Yemen?

Answer. Our vital U.S. national security interests in Yemen center on addressing near-term security threats to the United States and our regional interests by supporting President Hadi and the Yemeni Government's efforts to counter Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and to complete an historic democratic transition. In supporting Yemen's transition process, the U.S. thereby bolsters the Yemeni Government's ability to meet its citizens' economic, humanitarian, and political needs, undercutting the lure of extremist movements.

Our objectives include: enhancing the Yemeni Government's ability to protect its borders and coastlines; enabling Yemen to participate more fully as a regional security, political, and economic partner; supporting the Yemeni Government in extending control over its territory and ungoverned spaces to prevent use by terrorists and transnational criminals; facilitating Yemeni efforts to modernize its military and improve interoperability with U.S. and coalition forces; and, encouraging bolstered rule of law and human rights best practices.

Question. What are the three most important goals of U.S. policy in Yemen?

Answer. The three most important goals of U.S. policy in Yemen are to: (1) counter the threat from AQAP and other violent extremists, in partnership with President Hadi and the Yemeni Government; (2) support Yemen as it implements the political, economic, and social reforms underpinning the country's historic transition to democracy, fostering a more stable and prosperous Yemen; and, (3) protect and promote U.S. citizens, personnel, and interests in Yemen.

Question. How does achieving these goals in Yemen align with a broader regional strategy?

Answer. Achieving these goals in Yemen aligns with our broader regional strategy by promoting peace, security and stability, enhancing economic cooperation, expanding opportunities for broader trade and investment, and supporting aspirations for more inclusive, responsive governance which addresses basic universal rights and needs.

RESPONSES OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What are the vital U.S. national security interests in Saudi Arabia? What are the other national security interests in Saudi Arabia?

Answer. In his September 24, 2013 address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Obama outlined U.S. core interests in the region, which also define our vital interests in Saudi Arabia:

We will confront external aggression against our allies and partners, as we did in the gulf war . . .

We will ensure the free flow of energy from the region to the world . . .

We will dismantle terrorist networks that threaten our people.

If confirmed, I will work to advance our defense and security partnerships, energy coordination, and counterterrorism relationships, which truly are critical to our national security.

However, as President Obama also noted: [T]o say that these are America's core interests is not to say that they are our only interests. We deeply believe it is in our interests to see a Middle East and North Africa that is peaceful and prosperous, and will continue to promote democracy and human rights and open markets, because we believe these practices achieve peace and prosperity.

Building our commercial relationships, including increasing Saudi imports of American products and bolstering the success of American firms in winning Saudi contracts and forming successful business partnerships, will be a high Embassy priority during my tenure as Ambassador.

Likewise, if confirmed I will prioritize engagement with Saudi Arabia on affording opportunities for women to participate fully in the public and economic life of the country, and allowing citizens basic rights, such as freedom of association and assembly. I will not shy away from advocacy of Saudi reforms in these areas or from offering support to those fighting for protection of these rights.

Finally, the safety and security of the many American citizens in Saudi Arabia, both private and official, will be a first priority for me as Ambassador if confirmed.

Question. What are the three most important goals of U.S. policy in Saudi Arabia?

Answer. The most critical U.S. policy goals necessarily follow the U.S. core interests outlined above. We must continue to maintain our deep security partnership while continuing to sustain our robust Foreign Military Sales program with a current value of more than \$96 billion. Building Saudi defense capabilities and maintaining our partnerships in security and counterterrorism are essential matters of our national security strategy. We must also work closely with Saudi leaders on energy matters to ensure stability in global markets, and further enhance our cooperation on counterterrorism which is a critical policy goal that I will work to advance if confirmed, in whole-of-government fashion. I further look forward to visits from and consultation with members of the committee to discuss our approaches to these issues and how best to achieve our goals.

Question. How does achieving these goals in Saudi Arabia align with a broader regional strategy?

Answer. While our bilateral partnership with Saudi Arabia remains critical in its own right, it also is very much a component of the broader regional strategy that you reference. Saudi Arabia is an influential regional actor and plays a key role in every major issue confronting the region, from Syria to Iran. We need Saudi coordination and assistance to deal effectively with these complex regional challenges. As the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) collective, grows increasingly important as a political, security, and economic body, we must work with Saudi Arabia, the largest GCC member state, to strengthen our partnerships in the region and enhance regional economic and military ties. We must continue regular engagement with the GCC states through the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum to develop broader cooperative ties with the six GCC member states, including on matters such as gulf security and ballistic missile defense.

RESPONSES OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. As you are well aware, women in Saudi Arabia are effectively treated as legal minors due to the country's male guardianship system and are unable to do many of things that women here in the United States take for granted. In fact,

according to a recent report from the World Bank, the economic potential of Saudi women is the most limited in the world due to their legal status.

In recent years however, Saudi Arabia has made several advancements in women's rights. For example, in the upcoming Saudi election in 2015, women will, for the first time, be able to stand as candidates and vote in municipal elections. The majority of these advancements made by King Abdullah have been largely symbolic but I hope that they can at the very least represent a turning point for women in Saudi Arabia.

- ◆ What will you do to engage with the Saudi Government on women's issues and how will you work to advocate on behalf of women especially in light of the upcoming 2015 elections?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will engage Saudi leaders on the need to accelerate reforms that allow women to participate fully in the political and economic life of the country and that protect women and girls from abuse or discrimination. I will express the view that Saudi Arabia will never reach its full potential if it does not allow half of its citizens to contribute to the country's future and prosperity. The historic appointment of 30 women to the Kingdom's Consultative Council was a positive step in this direction; however, much more needs to be done for the full inclusion of women in Saudi public life. As Saudi women prepare to vote and to run for office for the first time in the upcoming 2015 municipal council elections, I will closely monitor these important elections and encourage the women of Saudi Arabia to seize this important opportunity to participate in their country's political life. I will also engage with key Saudi women leaders in business and government.

As I engage with Saudi officials, I will be clear that the U.S. Government supports women's freedom of movement and all opportunities afforded to men, including the removal of restrictions on women in transportation, employment, and public life. Saudi women are working hard to change social and government views inside their country, noting the illogic of current policies and practices, and they have generated vigorous public debate within Saudi Arabia about the role of women in Saudi society—a debate the Saudi leadership has at least tacitly supported. The recent driving campaign is just one example of the many home-grown campaigns that Saudis of both genders have initiated in recent years to press for increased opportunities and rights for Saudi women.

Question. Further, how do you believe the United States can best work to improve economic prospects for Saudi women?

Answer. Many women in Saudi Arabia have little ability to fulfill their talents and career and entrepreneurial ambitions because of societal and governmental strictures. If confirmed, I will examine ways to expand women's opportunities by showcasing Saudi women entrepreneurs through the use of social media and other mission resources and will facilitate networking among established women entrepreneurs and those just starting out so that others can gain from those with track records. I will also support increasing the number of Saudi students in the U.S. I will promote exchanges and training opportunities, and will examine partnerships for Saudi female entrepreneurs and professionals with peers in the U.S. I will also discuss with American companies operating in Saudi Arabia how they can help increase opportunities for women and youth and pave the way for more women to enter the labor force. Expanded U.S. educational offerings, network-building, and mentoring opportunities will benefit Saudi women just like they assist professionals everywhere, and over time will help expand the space available to women in Saudi Arabia to fully contribute to their country's success.

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW TUELLER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. The busiest liquefied natural gas import terminal in the country is in my home State of Massachusetts. In fact, over the last 5 years, 40 percent of all U.S. imports have come through Boston Harbor. Fourteen percent of the LNG brought into the port originates in Yemen. That figure is declining due to terrorists repeatedly blowing up the main gas pipeline in Yemen.

- ◆ What is your assessment of the current security situation as it relates to the country's oil and gas infrastructure? Do you believe Yemen is a reliable source of natural gas for Massachusetts consumers?

Answer. Yemen continues to face frequent attacks by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and other armed groups seeking to undermine the political transition. This has included attacks on the country's oil and gas infrastructure. Presi-

dent Hadi and the Yemeni Government remain committed to improving the security environment and to protecting—and developing—Yemen’s energy infrastructure. The Yemeni Government has made some progress reclaiming territory in the south previously under AQAP control, and is working to prevent attacks on Yemen’s oil infrastructure. However, AQAP and tribal militias still routinely launch small scale attacks, particularly in remote areas, which disrupt energy production.

The United States supports programs to help build the capacity of Yemen’s security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations and protect the Yemeni people, officials, and infrastructure from terrorist attacks. Our success in this initiative will contribute directly to Yemen’s reliability as a provider of LNG to the people of Massachusetts.

Question. The United States has not merely given military aid to Yemen since that country’s political transition began in 2011 we have also provided humanitarian and economic development assistance. In fact, over the previous 2 fiscal years, we have provided over \$100 million in economic aid. Yet, much more work is needed to transition Yemen’s political system and economy into the 21st century, particularly the country’s electric grid. Yemen suffers chronic blackouts, even in the capital. Reliable power is a cornerstone of stability.

◆ Is there anything we can do to improve the reliability and security of Yemen’s electric grid with our assistance, so that it can move further toward self-sustaining development?

Answer. Our security strategy in Yemen includes a strong focus on increasing Yemeni capacity to secure the country against AQAP and other threats, which will in turn build Yemeni capability to protect critical infrastructure. We seek to develop Yemen’s security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations, extend government control in ungoverned spaces to prevent use by terrorists, and to secure maritime and land borders.

We routinely engage with the Yemeni Government on discussions over critical infrastructure—particularly Yemen’s electric grid—and, in tandem with the international community, continue to support efforts to improve the reliability and safety of the energy grid, including through infrastructure development programs linked to the country’s Mutual Accountability Framework, which is critical to ensuring donor confidence and continued support.

We are also working with Yemen to develop more sustainable uses of energy and support the establishment of ties between Yemeni and American business communities to promote sustainable development, including in the areas of renewable energy.

Finally, we continue to advocate for U.S. businesses looking to work with the Yemeni Government to increase electricity generation capacity.

Question. In your opinion, what should be the focus of the United States economic development goals in Yemen?

Answer. The United States economic development goals in Yemen should continue to focus on supporting near-term development and growth as well as longer term macroeconomic reform to achieve stability and underpin the gains of the country’s ongoing transition process. In particular, our goals should include: (1) assisting the Yemenis in addressing economic reform priorities, which will set Yemen on a more sustainable path while increasing opportunities for private enterprise; (2) strengthening the capacity of the Yemeni Government, including the Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) Executive Bureau, to support the country’s efforts to implement reform commitments; (3) encouraging other international donors to fulfill assistance pledges which will enable the Yemeni Government to pursue meaningful reform and development; and, (4) assisting the Yemeni Government in meeting the critical humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people to foster the stability required to serve as a foundation for meaningful change.

Significant structural reform and the development of a sustainable private sector remain essential to addressing many of the Yemeni citizens’ key economic-focused demands. The Yemeni Government, however, has limited technical capacity to undertake sweeping institutional and economic reforms on its own. Our development goals in Yemen should focus on supporting Yemen’s transitional government as it works to advance much-needed economic and structural reforms, while coordinating with the international community to maximize the utility of our assistance.