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**NOMINATIONS OF MARK LIPPERT, JONATHAN
STIVERS, THEODORE OSIUS, AND JOAN
POLASCHIK**

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2014

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

Mark William Lippert, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to the Republic
of Korea
Jonathan Nicholas Stivers, of the District of Columbia, to be an As-
sistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia, United States
Agency for International Development
Theodore G. Osius III, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the So-
cialist Republic of Vietnam
Joan A. Polaschik, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the People's
Democratic Republic of Algeria

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3 p.m., in room SD-
419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin pre-
siding.

Present: Senators Cardin, Murphy, Kaine, Rubio, and McCain.
Also present: Senator Patrick J. Leahy.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator CARDIN. First, let me welcome you all to the Senate For-
eign Relations Committee hearing on four very important nominees
to represent the United States in diplomacy and in our foreign as-
sistance.

We thank each one of our nominees for their willingness to serve
our country, and I particularly want to thank their families. We
will ask that you introduce the members of your family before you
start your formal presentations, but we recognize that this is a
family commitment and we thank you very much for your willing-
ness to serve our country.

So today we will hear from the President's nominees: Mark
Lippert to the Republic of Korea to be Ambassador; Theodore Osius
to be Ambassador in Vietnam; Jonathan Stivers, Assistant Admin-
istrator of the Bureau for Asia at USAID; and Joan Polaschik, Am-
bassador to Algeria. We welcome all of you to our committee.

I have the honor of chairing the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs. In three of the cases here, your direct responsibility will be in that region. So it is a particular pleasure that Senator Menendez has allowed me to chair this hearing.

I notice that we do have the distinguished President Pro Tem of the United States Senate, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Leahy, with us. It is always a pleasure to have Senator Leahy in our midst. He is one of the great Members of the U.S. Senate. And I am going to allow him to introduce Mr. Lippert.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICK J. LEAHY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VERMONT**

Senator LEAHY. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Of course, you and I have been friends for so many years both in your previous service and as a Senator. And I appreciate you doing this. I also appreciate the work of Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker.

I do not do this very often, but today I really wanted to be here to introduce Mark Lippert, President Obama's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I have talked to an awful lot of Senators over the years about Mark's character and intellect, but I also just want to say on the record my admiration for his dedication as a public servant, not only as a former member of my staff, but as a naval officer, as a senior staff member of the National Security Council and Department of Defense, but also because he and his wife, Robyn, are dear friends.

His qualification to serve as Ambassador to South Korea is extensive. He worked on foreign policy on the Appropriations Committee. He worked for me and advised me and helped our committee. And he has military service. He worked at the Pentagon, the White House. His breadth of knowledge and perspective on security, economic, humanitarian challenges we face in East Asia and the Pacific are significant.

He is a graduate of Stanford University. He earned a masters degree in international relations.

While I will put my whole statement in the record, I remember when he was here in the Appropriations Committee focusing on U.S. policy in East Asia where he has traveled many times.

While he was serving in my office, he decided to join the Navy, which was a lifetime goal of his. Now, it was not required. We do not have a draft. He just wanted to do that and did and did it very, very well. And I just want to dwell on this just for a moment because I advocate for members of the National Guard and Reserves with Senator Lindsey Graham. Mark is an example of a true citizen soldier. He deployed twice, once to Iraq, once to Afghanistan. This is not somebody who just reads about it. He does it.

When he left my office, he was working for a former colleague of ours, a first-term Senator from Illinois, who was racking up some frequent flyer miles to Iowa. But he helped that former Senator, but then that Senator left us and went on to an executive position, some would say the executive position. But I have heard then-Senator, now President Obama, speak so highly of Mark Lippert.

Now, Mark, like I, married above himself, married a Vermonter, his wife, Robyn. And both of them have achieved so much in their life.

So I just think at a time—I just came back from a trip not in Korea but in China and in Vietnam, and I know how important that area is. I will now add South Korea to my agenda once we have the new Ambassador there.

Mr. Chairman, I am just going to be so pleased when I can cast my vote for him on the floor.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Senator Leahy. I just really want to join you in thanking Mr. Lippert for his willingness to come forward.

You have a very impressive resume of public service, including in our military. We had a chance to talk and I am very impressed with your command of the subject and your knowledge of the complexities of our relationship with the Republic of Korea and how important that bilateral relationship is for our interests in the region and globally.

Senator Leahy, thank you very much for joining us. I appreciate it.

Let me introduce the other three of our nominees.

I know that Senator Rubio will be joining us shortly as the ranking member of this hearing, and I will yield to him when he is here.

Jonathan Stivers, I have known you since your days with David Bonior when I was in the House of Representatives, and I have always been impressed by your commitment to public service and your competency. I am very proud of what you have been able to accomplish and your being prepared for this important nomination as an Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia at USAID.

Jonathan is currently a senior advisor to the House Democratic Leader, Nancy Pelosi, a position he has held since 2011. Mr. Stivers has also served as senior advisor to Leader Pelosi in the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Office of the House Democratic Leader, and the Office of the House Democratic Whip. Previously, he served as Leader Pelosi's senior legislative assistant and press secretary. Prior to this, he was a staff assistant in the Office of the Democratic Whip David Bonior and a campaign assistant for David Bonior for the U.S. Congress.

He received his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and a Masters in international policy and practice from the George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs.

Welcome, and we appreciate your coming forward.

The next person is Mr. Theodore Osius from my home State of Maryland. I should have read that first because I would have introduced you first, if I realized you were the only Marylander on the panel. [Laughter.]

But you certainly have priority as the President's nominee to represent us in Vietnam. I was just recently in Vietnam and I had a chance to meet with our Embassy personnel, and it is a critically important partnership for the United States, both in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City where we have a consulate office. The United States is very much valued by Vietnam and the opportunities there are incredible.

Mr. Osius is a career member of the Foreign Service, class of minister and counselor, and is an Assistant Professor at the National War College, a position he has held since 2013. He was a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies from 2012 to 2013. Prior to that, Mr. Osius served as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia; Political Minister, Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India; Deputy Director of the Office of Korean Affairs in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs; and Regional Environmental Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok. He has also served as a senior advisor in International Affairs in the Office of the Vice President at the White House.

Mr. Osius received his degrees from Harvard University and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He knows Vietnam well. He speaks the language and has served in Vietnam in both our consulate in Ho Chi Minh City and our Embassy in Hanoi. Perhaps most importantly, he is a Marylander well prepared for this position, and we thank you for your long, distinguished service to our country.

We are also pleased to be joined by Ms. Joan Polaschik, the nominee for Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Ms. Polaschik is a career member of the Foreign Service, class of counselor, and currently serves as the Director of the Office of Egypt and Levant Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. She has also served as Acting Director in the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs; deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, Libya; counselor for the political and economic affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan; and Regional Refugee Coordinator based at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan. You have a long and distinguished career serving our country.

You also served as the Iran Desk Officer and Staff Assistant in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Your other assignments have included political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia; and counselor and general service officer at the United States Embassy in Tashkent, Azerbaijan. So you have really gotten around the entire region.

You received your B.A. from the University of Virginia and M.S. from Georgetown University.

It is a pleasure to have all four of you here.

We will start with Mr. Lippert. If you have members of your family that are with you today, we would welcome your introductions, and then you may proceed as you wish. As is the tradition of this committee, your formal written statements will be made part of our record. You may proceed as you so desire.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARK WILLIAM LIPPERT, OF OHIO, TO
BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Mr. LIPPERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My wife, Robyn, is right there, if she can stand up. She is a former Hill staffer herself, worked for Senator Leahy on the Judiciary Committee, and we actually met up here on the Hill.

Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief here and will ask consent to put my full statement in the record.

I will just simply say I am deeply honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I am humbled by the confidence the President and the Secretary of State have shown in putting me forward for this nomination.

Having proudly served as a personal representative of the member to this committee, it is very meaningful to be back in this committee room today. In large part through my service on Capitol Hill, which spanned nearly a decade, I am keenly aware that the close partnership with Congress is critically important to success in diplomacy, and if confirmed, I pledge always to be a strong partner and friend of this committee.

I would also like to thank my former boss, Senator Leahy, for his gracious introduction. I know how busy he is juggling his many important responsibilities.

Please also let me say a few words about my lovely wife. She has been the best partner that anyone could ask for and has patiently put up with years of military deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, long hours at the Pentagon and the National Security Council, and the intensity of work at the Senate Foreign Relations and Appropriations Committees.

Mr. Chairman, simply put, the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea is one of the most important relationships that we have in the world. Through my many visits to the Republic of Korea, I have come to greatly respect the people and culture of South Korea. Our two countries share deeply held values of free markets, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. And we share a common history of fighting together to uphold these values and to defend our security.

I am proud to say that our ties between the two countries have never been stronger. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly in close partnership with this committee to make our alliance even stronger.

As the former Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Asia-Pacific, I have had the opportunity to work closely with our South Korean allies, commanding generals of the United States Forces Korea, and senior members of our diplomatic team. I have seen the enduring strength of this relationship firsthand.

Mr. Chairman, my statement goes on to talk about the shared threats of North Korea, the economic challenges, and the great men and women who work at the U.S. Embassy. And with consent, I would ask to put my full statement in the record.

Senator CARDIN. Without objection, your entire statement will be made part of the record, as will, as I indicated a little bit earlier, the statements of the other three nominees.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lippert follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK WILLIAM LIPPERT

Chairman Cardin, Senator Rubio, distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I am humbled by the confidence the President and the Secretary of State have shown in putting me forward for this nomination.

Having proudly served as a personal representative of the member to this committee, it is very meaningful to be back in this committee room today. In large part through my service on Capitol Hill, which spanned nearly a decade, I am keenly aware that close partnership with Congress is critically important to success in

diplomacy. And if confirmed, I pledge to always be a strong partner and friend to this committee.

I would also like to thank my former boss, Senator Leahy, for his gracious introduction. I know just how busy he is juggling his many important responsibilities.

Please let me also say a few words about my wife. As Senator Leahy mentioned, I met Robyn when we worked together on Capitol Hill. She has been the best partner that anyone could ask for and has patiently put up with years of military deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, long hours at the Pentagon and the National Security Council, and the intensity of work for the Senate Foreign Relations and Appropriations Committees.

Members of the committee, simply put: the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea is one of the most important relationships that we have in the world. Through my many visits to the Republic of Korea, I have come to greatly respect the people and culture of the Republic of Korea. Our two countries share deeply held values of free markets, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. And we share a common history of fighting together to uphold these values and to defend our security.

I am proud to say that the ties between our two countries have never been stronger. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly, in close partnership with this committee, to make our alliance even stronger.

As the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Asia-Pacific, I have had the opportunity to work closely with our South Korean allies, Commanding Generals of United States Forces Korea, and senior members of our diplomatic team. I have seen the enduring strength of this alliance firsthand.

I continue to be vigilant about the stark threat that North Korea poses the U.S. homeland, to security on the peninsula, in the region, and around the world—including through its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology, its worldwide proliferation activities, and egregious human rights violations against its own citizens.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the leadership of the Republic of Korea to ensure we are fully aligned in our efforts to achieve the complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea and prevent proliferation of key technologies. I have built a good working relationship with General Scaparrotti, the Commander of U.S. Forces Korea, and if confirmed, look forward to partnering closely with him and the Department of Defense as they work to strengthen our deterrence on the peninsula and ensure that the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed there are ready to "fight tonight," if necessary.

Although our alliance was established with a mutual commitment to security, our nations have built deep and growing economic ties. The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, or KORUS FTA, is now in its 3rd year, and American and Korean consumers, businesses, and workers have benefited from it. Last year, the United States achieved a large investment surplus with the Republic of Korea, and U.S. goods exports are up 11.7 percent this year so far. That said, the full potential of the FTA has yet to be fully realized; more tariff cuts and additional provisions will come into force in the years to come. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the KORUS FTA is fully implemented so that American exporters, entrepreneurs, and workers can receive the benefits for which this administration negotiated so hard.

This alliance is also increasingly tackling global challenges as well. Our global partnership includes cooperation on everything from counterterrorism and counterpiracy to climate change and development. The United States is also negotiating a successor 123 civil nuclear cooperation agreement with South Korea that will allow us to continue our cooperation in this field, while maintaining our strong non-proliferation standards.

Finally, our strong people-to-people ties reinforce our shared values and interests. Each year, the Republic of Korea sends more university students to the United States per capita than any other major country. We have innovative exchange programs between our students and our science experts. If confirmed, I will make public diplomacy a top priority and work to foster these exchanges and bring more Korean education and tourism dollars to the United States. And if confirmed, I will be proud to also represent the over 1.7 million U.S. citizens that are of Korean descent and who contribute vitally to the deepening ties between our peoples.

Our Embassy in Seoul has a talented team comprised of career diplomats, civil servants from a range of U.S. agencies, and local Korean staff who are dedicated to advancing U.S. interests every day. If confirmed, I will work to ensure my team has the resources, training, and guidance to strengthen and broaden our alliance with the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S.-ROK alliance is the linchpin of security and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, in the Asia-Pacific, and around the world. Being nomi-

nated to represent the United States in Seoul is the honor of my lifetime, and if confirmed I will work night and day to advance this critical relationship.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my nomination, and I look forward to taking your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Stivers.

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN NICHOLAS STIVERS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE BUREAU FOR ASIA, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. STIVERS. Chairman Cardin, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for the Assistant Administrator for Asia at USAID. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Administrator Shah.

I am joined today by my wife, Ramsey Alwin, and my daughters, Josephine and Parker, who were making a little bit of noise back there.

Senator CARDIN. I did not know who it was, but it is perfectly OK. She is adorable.

Mr. STIVERS. The best decision I made in my life was convincing Ramsey to marry me. Her support is my bedrock, and everything I do professionally is in the hope that someday my daughters will be proud of their father.

I would also like to thank my family who could not be here today: my father, Richard Stivers; my mother, Sharon Stivers; and my siblings, Adam and Emily Stivers.

I would also like to recognize Denise Rollins, the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau, who has served our country for 25 years with great distinction, and Nisha Biswal, who previously served as the Assistant Administrator for Asia.

I am particularly honored to be appearing before you, Chairman Cardin. I had the opportunity to see your work behind the scenes and up close in the House of Representatives, promoting human rights on the Helsinki Commission and promoting free and fair trade on the Ways and Means Committee.

For the last 15 years, it has been a privilege to work on Asia policy and our foreign assistance initiatives. I believe that this experience in the legislative branch and my background in Asia have prepared me well for the responsibilities of USAID's Asia Bureau. I will always be grateful that Leader Nancy Pelosi placed her faith and trust in me to lead on foreign policy priorities in her office.

USAID's Asia Bureau works in 32 countries—excluding Afghanistan and Pakistan—with a program budget of approximately \$1.1 billion.

In a time of budget constraint, USAID is effectively leveraging funding by building public-private partnerships and taking advantage of science and innovation. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that U.S. taxpayer money is spent effectively and wisely in the pursuit of our national interests.

The President's Asia Rebalance recognizes that our future prosperity and security are inextricably tied to this region. It is a pivotal time for U.S. policy in Asia. It is a vibrant, diverse region with some of the strongest and fastest growing economies in the world. The region has enormous development challenges with over a ma-

majority of the world's poor and hungry, susceptibility to natural disasters, and democracy and human rights concerns.

If confirmed, I will place a premium on four key priorities: promoting resilient democratic societies; institutionalizing the Presidential Initiatives, Feed the Future, Global Health, and Global Climate Change; supporting basic education and empowerment for women and girls; and fostering greater regional economic connectivity.

First, we know that government by the people offers the best chance for freedom and prosperity. I believe that the solutions to the challenges facing Asia will ultimately come from the people of Asia themselves, and our best chance in promoting democratic change is to empower the reformers by helping them build institutions that can withstand nondemocratic events.

Second, Administrator Shah has provided exemplary leadership in promoting President Obama's three initiatives. We have seen tremendous development gains in the Asia region, and if confirmed, I will make it a priority to build upon these gains in food security, health, and the environment.

Third, the empowerment of women and girls through education is one of the most effective development tools to boost economic growth and to provide for a fair society. I have promoted basic education in my current position, and if confirmed, this will continue to be a key priority.

And finally, we must continue to promote an effective regional architecture that strengthens regional stability, connectivity, and economic growth through regional initiatives such as USAID's Almaty Consensus and the Lower Mekong Initiative.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new vision of results-driven development, and USAID has risen to this challenge. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will tirelessly pursue policy solutions that make our foreign assistance more effective in line with this new model.

During my almost two decades of working in the legislative branch, I have learned the importance of engagement with Congress, and if confirmed, I can assure you that I will seek out, early and often, advice and guidance from you and your staff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any and all questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stivers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JONATHAN NICHOLAS STIVERS

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Rubio, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Administrator for Asia at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Administrator Shah.

I am joined today by my wife, Ramsey Alwin, and my daughters, Josephine and Parker. The best decision I made in life was convincing Ramsey to marry me. Her encouragement and support is my bedrock. Everything I do in my professional life is in the hope that someday my daughters will look back and be proud of their father. I also would like to thank my family who could not be here today, my father, Richard Stivers, my mother, Sharon Stivers, and my siblings, Adam and Emily Stivers.

I would like to also recognize Denise Rollins, the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau who has served our country with great distinction for over 25 years, and Nisha Biswal, the current Assistant Secretary of State for South and

Central Asia, who previously served as USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia, for her advice and guidance throughout the process.

For the last 15 years, it has been a privilege to work on Asia policy and our foreign assistance initiatives at the highest levels of the U.S. Congress. I believe that my experience in the legislative branch and my background in Asia have prepared me well for the responsibilities of leading USAID's Asia Bureau. I will always be grateful that Leader Nancy Pelosi placed her faith and trust in me to lead on foreign policy priorities in her office. I am proud to have played a leadership role on numerous legislative initiatives including the landmark reauthorization of PEPFAR that tripled funding levels to fight global AIDS, the JADE Act that tightened sanctions on the Burmese Government after the Saffron Revolution, and the initial development assistance inside Tibet and to the then newly created country of East Timor.

For almost two decades, my second home has been in Congress. Over the years I have learned that initiatives are strongest when they are bipartisan, that open communication, transparency, and trust are crucial between the administration and Congress, and that making the case for foreign assistance in a manner that relates to the everyday lives of the American people is essential. I can assure you that, if confirmed, I will proactively reach out to Congress to ensure that we are working together to promote our national interests and our values.

I believe deeply in USAID's mission of partnering to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. The moral case alone is reason to address these global challenges, but in a more interdependent world, we are preventing instability, fighting extremism, stopping the spread of infectious diseases while promoting economic and job growth at home.

Administrator Shah's strong leadership is rebuilding USAID as the world's premier development agency. In a time of budget constraint, USAID is effectively leveraging funding by building public-private partnerships, utilizing multilateral and regional approaches, and taking advantage of science and innovation. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly with the dedicated men and women of USAID to ensure that U.S. taxpayer money is spent effectively and wisely.

USAID's Asia Bureau works in 32 countries—excluding Afghanistan and Pakistan—with a program budget of approximately \$1.1 billion. It is an exciting and pivotal time for U.S. policy in Asia. Asia is a vibrant, diverse region with some of the strongest and fastest growing economies in the world. The region includes mature, consolidating, budding, and troubled democracies, along with authoritarian governments, struggling post-conflict nations, and emerging regional powers—all in the shadow of the rise of a great power.

The development challenges in Asia are enormous. Home to half of the world's population, the Asia region also struggles with 60 percent of the world's hungry and 70 percent of the world's malnourished children. The region is susceptible to natural disasters and the effects of climate change, pollution, and pandemics. It has a vast array of governance difficulties including fragile institutions, human rights concerns, gender inequality, and human trafficking challenges that hold back the region from achieving its full potential. At the same time, trade volume in Asia is expected to double in the next decade, and by 2050, the region's share of global GDP is predicted to almost double.

The President's Asia Rebalance recognizes that our future prosperity and security are inextricably tied to this region. At its core, the rebalance policy is about strengthening our relationships with countries, and more specifically the people of the region. If confirmed, I will place a premium on four key priorities: promoting resilient, democratic societies; institutionalizing the Presidential Initiatives—Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative; supporting basic education and empowerment for women and girls; and fostering greater regional economic connectivity.

First, we know that government by the people offers the best chance for freedom and prosperity. The United States also has stronger partnerships with stable, democratic countries that respect human rights. Fighting extreme poverty is often less a question of funding but in effectively addressing the underlying structural problems of governance that hold back many developing countries from becoming resilient, democratic societies.

I believe that the solutions to the challenges facing Asia will ultimately come from the people of Asia themselves and that our best chance in promoting democratic change is to empower the reformers by helping them build institutions that can withstand nondemocratic events.

Over the next 3 years we will learn a lot about democracy in Asia as many countries will hold national elections. Already this year, India has experienced the largest democratic exercise in human history, and next month, Indonesia, the most pop-

ulous Muslim-majority country, will mark another significant democratic milestone with the expected transfer of political power. While the recent elections in Bangladesh, unrest in Thailand, and unrealized democratic hopes in Cambodia represent challenges for democracy, the expected national elections in Burma, Nepal, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Philippines will further determine the future of democracy in Asia.

But democracy promotion is more than elections. USAID has been active in the region doing the difficult work strengthening civil society, providing technical support for good governance, combating corruption and promoting human rights.

Second, Administrator Shah has provided exemplary leadership in promoting President Obama's three initiatives—Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative.

Through Feed the Future, USAID is supporting country driven approaches that address the root causes of poverty and hunger by focusing on agricultural productivity. We know that growth in agriculture is at least twice as effective at reducing poverty as other sectors. For example, in Bangladesh, a country with one of the highest malnutrition rates in the region, USAID has trained hundreds of thousands of small farmers on improved technologies and increased crop yields by 20 percent through a fertilizer deep placement project. In Cambodia, new horticulture techniques have raised household incomes of over 7,000 farmers by an average of 250 percent. This type of assistance is particularly valuable because it promotes economic growth while at the same time feeding hungry and malnourished men, women, and children.

The Global Health Initiative is aimed at addressing regional health priorities, including ending preventable child and maternal deaths, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as improving surveillance and response capacity for pandemic influenza and other emerging threats.

In February 2014, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change. In a region of the world that experiences over 60 percent of the world's natural disasters, and with more than 10 billion pounds of airborne pollutants from Asia reaching the United States annually, it is imperative that we continue to reduce emissions from deforestation, promote sustainable and resilient societies, and foster clean energy in the Asia through the Global Climate Change Initiative.

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to build upon these gains in food security, health, and environmental well-being for both the people of Asia and the United States.

Third, the empowerment of women and girls through education is one of the most effective development tools and one of the best strategies to boost economic growth. While many Asian countries have recently made progress, nearly 20 million children in Asia—a third of the world's children—do not have access to primary school. Millions of children in Asia lack basic reading and writing skills thereby holding back the region for reaching its full potential. I am proud to have promoted basic education while in Congress and, if confirmed, this will continue to be a key priority. As Administrator Shah noted on International Women's Day, "If we are going to truly achieve the goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030, we cannot leave behind half of the global population. We have to invest in women and girls as champions of development who can lift their families out of extreme poverty."

And finally, we must continue to promote an effective regional architecture that strengthens regional stability, connectivity and economic growth through regional initiatives such as USAID's Almaty Consensus which supports the New Silk Road Initiative by increasing regional economic connectivity between South and Central Asia to bolster Afghanistan's stability; the Lower Mekong Initiative that provides a regional forum the development challenges that cross national boundaries; and by working with regional institutions such as ASEAN and APEC.

I would like to highlight a few priority countries where USAID operates.

In Bangladesh, the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse sparked outrage all over the world. Members of Congress led the way in calling for action to address labor and building safety conditions in the country. I played a role in this effort on a staff level working to call on corporations to improve building safety standards in Bangladesh and asking the administration to suspend the Generalized System of Preferences program until reforms are made. Please be assured that, if confirmed, workers' rights and safety will be a high priority for me throughout the region.

In Burma, we have seen historic political and economic reforms during this critical period of transition. The country faces a long and difficult road ahead, as transitions are never smooth nor are they ever easy. The next 2 years will be challenging in regards to national reconciliation and the national election in 2015. The USAID mission in Burma—which was reopened in 2012—is committed to supporting reform

that will bring lasting peace, stability, justice and improve the welfare of the people of Burma. If confirmed, my priorities in Burma will be to deepen USAID's engagement with civil society, expand economic opportunity, support reconciliation efforts, help the country prepare for the 2015 national elections, and continue providing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in the country.

In India, USAID helped secure a major success in the battle against polio when the World Health Organization officially removed India from the list of countries where the disease was active. In the coming years, USAID hopes to move more toward a 21st century partnership where USAID and India join together in tackling development challenges both in India and in the region.

When Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, USAID had already been working for decades to strengthen disaster management and response capabilities. A USAID team was prepositioned, enabling an immediate response and ensuring a coordinated relationship between USAID, the Department of Defense, and other USG actors. Through relief efforts, USAID provided food assistance to more than 3 million people and helped save countless lives. If confirmed, I will continue to make both short- and long-term assistance to the Philippines a top priority.

While Vietnam is an emerging power with a high economic growth rate and a strategic position in the region, it is also a country with serious human rights concerns. USAID is continuing to focus its assistance to support the Vietnamese people as they confront the significant challenges they face related to health, susceptibility to climate change, and natural disasters. USAID also supports programs focused on economic governance and trade, and addressing legacies of the war between our two countries through the remediation of dioxin contamination.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new vision of results-driven development focused on achieving measureable results. Under the visionary leadership of Administrator Shah, USAID has risen to this challenge, pioneering a new model of development that brings a greater emphasis on partnerships, innovation, and results. In conclusion, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed to this position, I will tirelessly pursue policy solutions that make our foreign assistance more effective in line with this new model.

During my almost two decades working in the legislative branch, I have learned the importance of engagement with Congress and, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will seek out, early and often, advice and guidance from you and your staff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any and all questions you might have.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Osius.

STATEMENT OF THEODORE G. OSIUS III, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Mr. OSIUS. Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Vietnam.

I am very pleased that members of my family, including my mother, Nancy Zimmerman; my spouse, Clayton Bond; our 6-month-old son, Taybo; my sister Meg; cousin Deborah; cousins, Dick and Kate; and dear friends, Louise, David and Sam and Amy have all been able to join us here today.

I am very grateful to you, the Senator from Maryland, for chairing this hearing.

This, sir, is a dream come true for me. Early in my career, I had the privilege of supporting Pete Peterson, the first U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam following normalization, as he laid the foundation for a new relationship between our two nations. I represented Al Gore on the team that prepared a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. And I accompanied President Bill Clinton on his historic visit there.

I have served in Asia for most of my 25 years in the Foreign Service. A highlight was helping lead the small team that opened our post in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. I relished the

chance to make friends for America in a land that once reminded Americans only of conflict.

I traveled all over Vietnam, once riding a bicycle 1,200 miles from Hanoi to Saigon. In the former demilitarized zone, I stood on a bridge gazing at what appeared to be ponds dotting the landscape. An older woman said in Vietnamese that those were not ponds, but places where bombs had been dropped, including on her village. When I told her that I represented the Government and people of the United States, she replied using the familial terms that make Vietnamese such an intimate language: "Hom nay, chung ta la anh chi em." Today you and I are brother and sister.

From those beginnings, I witnessed our relationship with Vietnam grow into an important partnership, founded on mutual respect and shared strategic interests.

As Secretary Kerry said, "A strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that respects the rule of law and human rights will be a critical partner for the United States." While in the Senate, John Kerry joined with Senator John McCain to ensure that Americans could see Vietnam not just as a war, but as a nation and a people the United States could work with peacefully. They looked beyond the bomb craters and they saw hope for the future.

Their work included ensuring the fullest possible accounting of servicemen we lost in Vietnam, and we must complete that process honorably. Our history with Vietnam is a tough one, and even today we face real differences. If confirmed, I will face those differences squarely and directly with the leaders in Hanoi. I will say that when Vietnam's Government respects human rights, it will grow stronger, not weaker, and our partnership's potential will grow as well. I will press the government to protect universal human rights, including by releasing prisoners of conscience and by making systemic changes so that Vietnam can fully integrate within the world community because even as in families, differences can be worked out and history can be overcome.

If confirmed, I will strive to strengthen the ties that bind our peoples. Those linkages between people are central to the comprehensive partnership launched by President Obama and President Sang last year. Educational exchange is a good example. Already 16,000 Vietnamese study in the United States.

Trade is another key element of the relationship. Two-way trade continues to grow from \$451 million in 1995 to nearly \$30 billion last year. The successful conclusion of the high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will further deepen this trade and strategic relationship, bringing Vietnam into a community of nations that comprises 40 percent of world GDP.

If confirmed, I will also maintain a firm commitment to the safety and security of all staff working for our mission.

Half of the world's ship-based cargo passes through the South China Sea. The United States has a national interest in the unfettered flow of commerce and in freedom of navigation and overflight in these waters. We have a deep stake in ensuring that the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea are solved without coercion, force, or intimidation, and in accordance with international law. Unfortunately, we have seen lately a pattern of

unilateral steps by China to advance its territorial and maritime claims.

The U.S. Congress plays a vital role in turning our difficult past with Vietnam into a promising future. If confirmed, I look forward to hosting many of you, I hope, in Hanoi.

Thank you once again for considering my nomination for this challenging and rewarding opportunity to continue to serve the United States of America.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Osius follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THEODORE G. OSIUS III

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Vietnam.

I am very pleased that members of my family and dear friends are able to join us today. I am grateful to the Senator from Maryland for chairing this hearing, and grateful to all of you for considering my nomination.

This is a dream come true for me. Early in my career I had the privilege of supporting Pete Peterson, the first U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam following normalization, as he laid the foundation for a new relationship between our two nations. I represented Vice President Al Gore on the team that prepared a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam, and I accompanied President Bill Clinton on his historic visit there.

I have served in Asia for most of my 25 years in the Foreign Service. A highlight was helping lead the small team that opened our post in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. I relished the chance to make friends for America in a land that once only reminded Americans of conflict.

I traveled all over Vietnam, once riding a bicycle 1,200 miles from Hanoi to Saigon. In the former demilitarized zone, I stood on a bridge, gazing at what appeared to be ponds dotting the landscape. An older woman said in Vietnamese that those were not ponds, but places where bombs had been dropped, including on her village. When I told her that I represented the government and people of the United States, she replied using the familial terms that make Vietnamese such an intimate language: "Hom nay, chung ta la anh chi em." You and I are now brother and sister.

From those beginnings, I witnessed our relationship with Vietnam grow into an important partnership, founded on mutual respect and shared strategic interests.

As Secretary Kerry said last year in Hanoi, "a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that respects the rule of law and human rights will be a critical partner for the United States on many regional and global challenges." While in the Senate, John Kerry joined with Senator John McCain to ensure that Americans could see Vietnam not just as a war, but as a nation and a people the United States could work with peacefully. They looked beyond the bomb craters and saw hope for the future.

Their work included ensuring the fullest possible accounting of servicemen we lost in Vietnam, and we must complete that process honorably. Our history with Vietnam is a tough one, and even today we face real differences. If confirmed, I will face those differences squarely and directly with the leaders in Hanoi. I will say that when Vietnam's Government respects human rights it will grow stronger, not weaker, and our partnership's potential will grow as well. I will press the government to protect universal human rights, including by releasing prisoners of conscience and by making systemic changes, so that Vietnam can fully integrate with the world community. Because even as in families, among brothers and sisters, differences can be worked out, and history can be overcome.

If confirmed, I will strive to strengthen the ties that bind our peoples. Those linkages between people are central to the Comprehensive Partnership launched by President Obama and President Sang last year. Educational exchange is a good example; already 16,000 Vietnamese study in the United States, and others attend the Fulbright Economics Training Program in Ho Chi Minh City.

Trade is another key element of the relationship. Two-way trade continues to grow—from \$451 million in 1995 to nearly \$30 billion last year. The successful conclusion of the high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will further deepen this trade and strategic relationship, bringing Vietnam into a community of nations that contributes 40 percent of world GDP.

Under the Comprehensive Partnership, our two nations are working to support peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific. We have expanded our work with Vietnam in areas such as security, nonproliferation, and law enforce-

ment. If confirmed, I intend to continue the efforts of my predecessors to broaden and deepen our engagement. I will also maintain a firm commitment to the safety and security of all staff working for our mission.

Half of the world's ship-based cargo passes through the South China Sea. The United States has a national interest in the unfettered flow of commerce and in freedom of navigation and overflight in these waters.

We have a deep stake in ensuring that the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea are solved without coercion, force, or intimidation and in accordance with international law. Unfortunately, we have seen lately a pattern of unilateral steps by China to advance its territorial and maritime claims, the latest of which is China's introduction of an oil rig into disputed waters near Vietnam.

The U.S. Congress plays a vital role in turning our difficult past with Vietnam into a promising future. If confirmed, I look forward to hosting many of you in Hanoi. Thank you, once again, for considering my nomination for this challenging and rewarding opportunity to continue to serve the United States of America.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much for your testimony.
Ms. Polaschik.

STATEMENT OF JOAN A. POLASCHIK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Ms. POLASCHIK. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence that he and Secretary Kerry have shown by making this nomination.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take a moment to thank my family: my mom, Marion Polaschik; my sister, Anne; her husband and son, Keith and Grant, are here today. They have been a tremendous support throughout my career, and I am very grateful to them.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a robust partnership with Algeria. If confirmed by the Senate, I will advance the following policy priorities: working with the Government of Algeria to counter the threat of terrorism and strengthen regional stability; increasing commercial ties; boosting civil society and democratic institutions; and working with the Algerian Government to support the reforms necessary to Algeria's long-term stability.

As Ambassador, I will make my top priority the protection of the people who serve in U.S. Embassy Algiers and all Americans who live and work in Algeria.

The Government of Algeria is a steadfast partner in our counterterrorism efforts. It is a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Partnership and is working with its neighbors to stabilize the broader Maghreb and Sahel region, including through training programs in Mali and Niger and close cooperation with Tunisia. If confirmed, I will work to support and expand these efforts.

Algeria is a critical supplier of energy to global markets. It has potentially vast untapped shale gas reserves, and its government is eager to partner with U.S. firms to develop them.

Beyond oil and gas, Algeria is working to diversify its economy, and there is significant potential for U.S. companies, particularly in the energy generation, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and machinery sectors. If confirmed, I will advocate for American companies in all of these areas.

Algeria has an important role to play in strengthening relations between North and sub-Saharan Africa and its mediating role in conflicts around the continent remains vital. Algeria would gain from increasing trade within the region, and its willingness to lead in this area will be critical to realizing regional integration, including with Morocco. To that end, we appreciate Algeria's support for the U.N.-led negotiations over the disputed territory of the Western Sahara.

Unlike other countries in the region, Algeria did not experience the upheaval of the Arab Spring. President Bouteflika introduced political reforms in 2011 and recently announced a series of constitutional amendments to further develop Algeria's political system. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the Algerian Government and people as they take the next steps in negotiating, adopting, and implementing reforms that will strengthen Algeria's long-term stability.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for this opportunity to address you. I am deeply honored to have been selected to lead the team at U.S. Embassy Algiers, a dynamic, hardworking, and dedicated group working on the front lines of U.S. policy. If confirmed, I hope I will have many opportunities to host you and your colleagues in Congress in Algiers. I would be pleased to address any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Polaschik follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOAN A. POLASCHIK

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Rubio, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Kerry have shown by making this nomination.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take a moment to thank my family, which has been a tremendous support throughout my career. My mother, Marion Polaschik, and my sister, Anne, and her husband and son, Keith and Grant Barcal, have provided love, support, and a place to stay no matter where I was in the world and no matter how much worry I caused them by pursuing challenging assignments. I'm very grateful to them.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a robust and multifaceted partnership with the people and Government of Algeria. I am fortunate to be nominated at a time when the potential for expanding that bilateral relationship has never been stronger. In April 2014 we completed the latest round of our Strategic Dialogue, and just 2 weeks ago the Secretary of Energy visited Algeria to lead the U.S. delegation to the Algeria International Trade Fair—where the United States was the guest of honor for the first time. If confirmed by the Senate, I will continue to advance our key U.S. foreign policy interests in Algeria. They are: (1) working with the Government of Algeria to counter the threat of terrorism and strengthen the stability of the Maghreb and Sahel regions; (2) increasing commercial ties between the United States and Algeria; (3) boosting civil society and democratic institutions; and (4) working with the Algerian Government to support the political and economic reforms necessary to ensure Algeria's long-term stability. And as Ambassador, I will make my priority the protection of the people who serve in U.S. Embassy Algiers, and all Americans who live and work in Algeria.

We know that we work in a dangerous part of the world, and I am pleased to report that the Algerian Government is deeply committed to the safety and security of our personnel and facilities, and has been extremely responsive to our requests for security support.

Mr. Chairman, the relationship between the United States and Algeria continues to grow stronger. Since 9/11, our nations have joined together in the struggle against violent extremism. Algeria is on the front lines of the battle against violent extremism, having suffered the scourge of terrorism since the 1990s, and most recently in the attack on the gas-production facility near In Amenas in January 2013. The Government of Algeria understands the need to remain vigilant against those

who wish to do us harm and is a steadfast partner in our counterterrorism efforts including as an active participant in the Global Counter-terrorism Forum and the Trans-Sahel Counter-terrorism Partnership. While terrorist activity in Algeria has decreased since the dark decade of the 1990s, the Algerian Government knows as well as the United States that violent extremism remains a threat. President Bouteflika was the first Arab leader to call President Bush following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, reflecting our shared view of the dangers posed by terrorism. This call was an expression of support that led to even greater cooperation.

Today, Algeria is working with its neighbors to stabilize the broader Maghreb and Sahel region. Algeria has taken positive steps to help train security forces in countries like Mali and Niger in the Sahel. Algeria has also provided airlift support to African peacekeeping troops. The Algerian military has taken action to secure its eastern border to combat smuggling and weapons proliferation. Tunisia and Algeria have formed a close security relationship to aggressively confront violent extremists. We continue to engage with Algeria about the security situation in Libya and the challenge of foreign fighters in Syria as well. If confirmed, I will work to support these efforts.

While counterterrorism and security remain the cornerstone of our relationship, in recent years we have expanded beyond CT to form a robust diplomatic, political, and economic partnership as well. In recent years, we have held two bilateral Strategic Dialogues, former Secretary Clinton visited Algeria twice, Secretary Kerry just visited in April 2014, and Energy Secretary Moniz opened the U.S. pavilion of the Algerian International Trade Fair—where 80 companies and organizations represented our commercial and economic interests in Algeria. These visits and dialogues are indicative of our rapidly expanding commercial and social ties.

As one of the largest oil and gas producers in the Middle East and Africa, Algeria is a critical supplier of energy to Europe and global markets. Algeria has significant remaining energy resources and potentially vast untapped unconventional hydrocarbon resources, and its government is eager to partner with U.S. firms, whose expertise in this sector is unparalleled in the world. If confirmed, I will advocate for U.S. companies who can partner with Algeria to safely develop shale gas and other resources to ensure stability in global energy markets and bring further development and prosperity to the people of Algeria.

Beyond oil and gas, Algeria is interested in diversifying its economy, and there is significant potential in the Algerian market for U.S. companies. Last year General Electric won a contract worth several billion dollars to develop Algeria's electricity sector. U.S. companies in the fields of pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and machinery are investing in Algeria and have won multimillion dollar deals in recent years.

Algeria has long had a significant political and diplomatic role in Middle Eastern and African affairs—it is literally at the confluence of Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Arab world. Algeria is a key player in the Arab League, the African Union, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is a long-standing member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and a founding member of the New Economic Partnership for African Development. Algeria is also active in the Arab Maghreb Union, which has the potential to bring the Maghreb states closer together.

Algeria has an important role to play in strengthening relations between North and sub-Saharan Africa, and its mediating role in conflicts around the continent will remain vital to finding peaceful solutions there. Algeria has forgiven the debt of multiple African countries, and is looking for ways to boost economic development of its neighbors to the south. Algeria would gain from increasing trade within the region, and its willingness to lead in this area will be critical to realizing long-held dreams of regional integration, including with Morocco. To that end, we appreciate Algeria's support for the U.N.-led negotiations over the disputed territory of the Western Sahara. We also welcome Algeria's participation in the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit later this summer. I know the President looks forward to genuine dialogue with leaders of African nations, and we look forward to hearing from Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal—who will represent Algeria—about the many ways that Algeria stands ready to partner with and support its neighbors on the continent.

Unlike other countries in the region, Algeria did not experience the upheaval of the Arab Spring. President Bouteflika introduced political reforms in 2011, and recently announced a series of constitutional amendments to further develop Algeria's political system. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the Algerian Government and people as they take the next steps in negotiating, adopting, and implementing reforms that will strengthen Algeria's long-term stability.

The potential of the Algerian people is limitless. As Secretary Kerry saw firsthand during his recent trip, the people of Algeria are eager to partner with the United

States to develop people-to-people ties. We have expanded our cultural connections with Algeria, including boosting English Language Education, increasing opportunities for Algerians to study in the United States, and develop other educational exchange opportunities. Additionally, programs like those promoted by the Middle East Partnership Initiative help build civil society and will help bring our countries even closer together. If confirmed, I will work with the Algerian Government and people to continue and expand these programs.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the great honor of serving as a Foreign Service officer for the last 20 years. I have worked in and on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, focusing on countries that present some of the same challenges and rich opportunities that exist in Algeria. My previous assignments in Azerbaijan and Libya provided an extensive background in the counterterrorism and energy issues that are critical to our partnership with Algeria, while multiple tours in transitional and post-conflict countries have instilled a profound appreciation for the importance of political and economic reform to long-term stability, and for the power of people-to-people diplomacy to build lasting partnerships.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, ranking member Rubio, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to address you. I'm deeply honored to have been selected to lead the team in U.S. Embassy Algiers, a dynamic, hard-working, and dedicated group working on the front lines of U.S. policy. If confirmed, I hope I will have many occasions to host you and your colleagues in Congress in Algiers. I would be pleased to address any questions that you may have.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you and I thank again all four of you for your testimony and your appearance here.

As I said at the beginning of the hearing, this panel represents two of our three pillars of national defense, that is, diplomacy and development assistance. And that is by far the best return we get from the point of view of the dollars that are invested in our national security. So we look at each of you as critically important players in advancing the national security of the United States.

Mr. Osius, let me start with you. You and I have had a chance to chat, and I very much appreciate your career commitment to the Foreign Service and what you have been able to do to advance U.S. interests.

Vietnam is a very interesting country. They truly want to develop a much closer tie to the United States for many reasons. The security issue in the China Sea is one reason and their relationship with China, which is problematic right now because of the incident concerning the oil rig, is another reason. And they look at the United States as a reliable partner. So they were anxious to get into the TPP, which would be really revolutionary in the sense that we have a multilateral agreement that involves countries at different levels of development. And that issue was brought home to me in my conversations with the leaders of Vietnam.

I made it clear that there needs to be advancements in good governance and human rights in order to see the type of strategic partnerships between the United States and Vietnam that both countries would like to see.

Ambassador Shear has been very direct with the Vietnamese about this issue. As you and I have commented, he has that little card he points out with his checklist. I just would like to get your observations as to how you see your role, if confirmed, in advancing the U.S. objectives of improving the strategic ties between our two countries but doing it mindful that good governance and human rights must be improved.

Mr. OSIUS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And may I thank you very much for the time that you invested in traveling to Vietnam. It was very clear from the reception that you received

that they knew they were welcoming a heavyweight. They wanted very much to have constructive conversations with you, and by all reports, it was a terrific trip. So thank you so much for taking the time to travel there.

On TPP, as you mentioned, Vietnam is the least developed of the 12 countries that are negotiating. Along with Malaysia, it stands to benefit most should TPP succeed, should we conclude a TPP agreement. So I think that, as well as the strategic situation that the Vietnamese are facing in the South China Sea, means if we want to help advance good governance, respect for rule of law and for human rights, now is the time. There is really no better time than this year, given the Vietnamese interest in a deepening partnership with us.

Since the time that our two Presidents agreed on a comprehensive partnership, there have been some modest advances in human rights. You mentioned Ambassador Shear's little card. I have been carrying it around ever since my nomination. And by my calculation, one-third of the items that Ambassador Shear had listed on that card the Vietnamese have already dealt with. We would all like to see all of these issues dealt with, but I think we are making some progress.

I think some of that progress may be as a result of direct American engagement and the fact that the Congress is so much interested in this issue is a fact that is not at all lost upon Vietnamese leaders. Since the time the partnership was announced, the Vietnamese have signed the Convention Against Torture. They have published an ILO report on forced labor and child labor. They have released a small number of prisoners. The trick going forward will be to ensure that those prisons are not refilled but that the changes that are made are systemic. And I do believe we have a real opportunity to make those changes in the time ahead.

Senator CARDIN. Well, as you point out, they released a few of the prisoners of conscience, but there are still many more that are imprisoned. They will have on their law books crimes that under international standards should not be crimes, but people just expressing their peaceful disagreements with government and they should be able to do that. They still have a problem on the registration of religious organizations.

And what I think is the most challenging part is how they deal with corruption. As I pointed out, this is not a unique issue in Vietnam. Many countries have extreme challenges here. But Vietnam must be on a path to rid itself of the amount of corruption it has. We saw in Ukraine that the motivating force behind the populist uprising was a corrupt government more so than the philosophy of that government. And I think it is clear that that issue has to be high on our list for good governance reforms within Vietnam.

Mr. OSIUS. Yes, sir. Transparency International lists Vietnam as 116 out of 177 on its corruption index. I think the people of Vietnam would like to see that situation improve as well. And as you mentioned, there have been bloggers who have been imprisoned. Internet freedom is one of the issues that we have tried hard to advance and that, if confirmed, I would continue to work to advance.

Senator CARDIN. Do you have any recommendations in regards to the maritime security challenges? The relationship right now be-

tween Vietnam and China is dangerous in regards to the rhetoric we hear. The U.S. position is pretty clear. We want a peaceful resolution of the territorial issues. We do not take sides on who is right, but we do take sides on it being handled in a peaceful manner and not through unilateral actions such as what China did.

Any thoughts as to how you could be helpful in preserving a peaceful resolution of these issues and dealing with the commerce that goes through the China Seas?

Mr. OSIUS. First, I agree with your characterization. We have a great stake in how these issues are resolved and that they are resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law.

I would suggest that the strongest thing that we can do to send a signal in the region is continue to build powerful partnerships. We are building partnerships with ASEAN nations, including with Vietnam, over time. I think if there is a calculus that is being made by the Chinese, that calculus will be affected by the strength of our partnerships in the region.

With Vietnam in particular, we have strengthened our maritime relationship. Last December, Secretary Kerry announced a \$25 million program, \$18 million of which will go to Vietnam for strengthening collaboration between our two Coast Guards. I think we should explore further expansion of Vietnam's maritime domain awareness and how we can help Vietnam build its capacity to deal with the challenges in the South China Sea. And I think we should continue to stand by our allies. Here I am going beyond Vietnam—but to support our allies such as the Philippines and, of course, Japan as they deal with these challenges.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

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

Thank you to all of our witnesses today. I know you will serve the United States very well. I just have a few questions for a couple of our witnesses relative to our growing economic relationship, especially through the negotiation of TPP.

But, first, let me say, although I do not have any questions for Mr. Stivers, I had the chance to work with him as he was of great assistance and counsel to the House majority. I know you will serve USAID just as well as you did the House majority and then the House minority caucus.

I wanted just to talk a little bit, maybe direct the question to you, Mr. Lippert, regarding negotiations over TPP and where South Korea may fall into those negotiations. A lot of us were skeptical of the Korea FTA not necessarily because of the writing on the page but because of our concerns about how it would be enforced. Some of those concerns have been borne out. In particular, one of the primary selling points for the FTA was the potential boon to U.S. auto manufacturers with their ability to sell into the Korean market, and we have seen sort of this strange concoction of tax credit and tax penalty that has so far meant that we have not, I think, witnessed the benefit that some had predicted.

I would just be interested in your thoughts on how we can continue to work through the existing enforcement issues with our FTA that has been signed and whether that prevents us from moving Korea into a broader conversation about being part of TPP.

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, thanks for the question.

You make a good point, and I would just say that if confirmed, one of my top priorities would be full implementation of the KORUS FTA. As you rightly point out, there are some uneven implementation issues, autos origin. The origin issue is also a big one as well that we have to continue to sort through. We have made a little progress on the data issue, it seems to me, but I do think that the autos issue remains outstanding. We have seen some progress. I think the stats are something—there is an 80-percent increase in U.S. automobiles into the country, and there is some progress there.

But I think you are right. We do have to stay on this, and I think having dealt with the South Korean Government in a defense capacity, I do feel that sustained U.S. engagement and raising the issue in consultation with USTR is one prong of the issue, that we just have to stay on it.

The second issue that I have seen work is senior-level visits. We tend to make progress around visits by the President, by the Vice President, by the Secretary of State. So lining up those engagements to try to make progress on these key trade issues would also be a way ahead as well.

But I do take the point. I think there is more work left to be done.

Senator MURPHY. How important is it to bring them into the rubric of the TPP negotiations? We have our own FTA obviously, but what are the stakes with respect to that decision?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, I think two things. I think you raise an excellent question.

I think the first point I would make is that the priority, if confirmed, for me is KORUS implementation. I think we have just got to get that done, first and foremost.

Second is as Ambassador Froman will tell you, we have got to finish the round here at TPP and work with Congress to try to make progress on it. At that point, I think we have said we welcome South Koreans' interest in the TPP. We look forward to consulting with them in the standard mechanisms, but I do think that if you can bring South Korea down the road, get all the aforementioned issues taken care of, I think it would be a boon to TPP overall.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Osius, I may have missed this. I did not get to hear your prepared testimony, but some have suggested that Vietnam has the farthest to travel in terms of domestic economic reforms in order to be ready for TPP. We have always had serious concerns about the ability of their government to protect intellectual property rights. What do you think about their ability to make the necessary changes in order to be part of that agreement and, to the point that we were discussing with respect to Korea, be able to actually enforce U.S. companies' rights as part of that agreement?

Mr. OSIUS. Senator, I think TPP offers us the best opportunity to put the Vietnamese in a position where they must, in order to meet the terms that they have agreed to, do a much better job at enforcing intellectual property rights. One of the things that will be a challenge for the Vietnamese is meeting the very high labor

standards that are set by the TPP. If they accede to the agreement, they will have to support ILO fundamental labor rights such as freedom of association, collective bargaining. They will have to deal with child and forced labor and essentially uphold rule of law when it comes to labor in ways that they have not done in the past. It will be a hard road for them to travel. The United States has shown that we are willing to help them build capacity, including in the area of customs enforcement where it will also be very important for them to work harder than they have in the past to meet the high standards of the TPP.

Senator MURPHY. And switching gears, just one question for you, Ms. Polaschik. Can you talk about Algeria within a regional context? It is maddening, frankly, to see the lack of cooperation in particular between Algeria and Morocco when it comes to combating terrorism and AQIM. What is the ability of the United States State Department and the embassy to try to get a little bit more regional cooperation, especially between those two nations when it comes to counterterrorism activity?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, thank you for that question.

I think there are a couple of parts to that answer, and the first part is that Algeria is actually demonstrating quite impressive leadership on regional issues with respect to counterterrorism. Algeria, as you know, had its own long, difficult struggle with domestic terrorism and, with the growth of these new transnational groups, has been cooperating very, very closely with Tunisia to conduct operations against the extremists that are operating on their shared border. Algeria has put tens of thousands of military troops on its southeastern border to prevent the flow of weapons and terrorists from Mali and Libya and is working very, very closely with Mali and Niger to strengthen those two countries' capacity to combat transnational threats.

Yes, Senator, you are right. Algeria and Morocco do have a very complicated relationship, and we consistently urge both countries to work to improve them because they have shared interests in combating transnational terrorism, illegal migration, the smuggling of drugs. And we also share those interests. So we are doing everything possible to promote better relations between those two countries, and we urge them to delink the issue of western Sahara from their bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I certainly would reach out to my colleague, Ambassador Bush, in Morocco and his team to talk about ways that we could work together to improve this very critical relationship.

Senator MURPHY. Great.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of our nominees.

Senator CARDIN. Well, there is no country that has a more difficult relationship with one of its neighbors in the region, that are both closely aligned to the United States, than Korea with Japan. So, Mr. Lippert, what can you do representing our country? How do you intend to proceed with improving the relationship between Korea and Japan?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, thanks for that question.

As you know—and you have been out to the region many, many times and have dealt with this issue firsthand. So you are deeply

knowledgeable and steeped in this issue, having talked to you last week on this issue.

I think the first principle is that it is by far in U.S. national security interests that the Republic of Korea and Japan have a good relationship. There is a lot in common. They are both democracies, both free market economies. There is good trade back and forth, so on and so forth. And it is important for regional security that they do work together.

In terms of what I would do, if confirmed as Ambassador, is—you know, Ambassador Kennedy and the State Department team back in Washington—we would not play a mediation role. We obviously have conversations to encourage a better dialogue between the Japanese and South Koreans to work through some of these very difficult and painful historical issues. In my capacity as Assistant Secretary, for example, we worked very hard to add trilateral cooperation to the agenda at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2 successive years. We completed ministerial level talks that brought Japanese and Korean defense ministers closer together. The President at The Hague also had a trilateral session with the Japanese and South Korean leaders in order to find areas of common interest, common cooperation, and common security.

But at the end of the day, both sides, the Japanese and the South Koreans, are two great countries with two very effective foreign ministries and are capable of making progress on this issue. And we can play an important role in encouraging that dialogue back and forth.

Senator CARDIN. I think it is important to have an honest and open discussion about this. The sensitivities here are great and actions taken by one country are interpreted rather strongly by the other. So whatever you can do in that regard to make it clear that they really need to go at least halfway—each country—in order to resolve this—and to improve their bilateral relationship. I think it is very important.

I want to get to North Korea just for one moment and how you see the best way to try to advance the concerns we have with North Korea. And I want to just preface that. North Korea is more than a threat against the region because of its nuclear capacity. It is a threat against its region because of its total disregard for the rights of its people and its economy that is in shambles. How would you suggest that we try to deal with these risks against regional stability?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, thanks for the question.

You are right. North Korea does pose a serious threat to the United States and its allies because of its nuclear and missile programs, but also its gross human rights violations, as outlined in the United Nations Commission of Inquiry. If you read that document, the evidence is staggering against the regime and the abhorrent behavior that it has demonstrated to its own people.

In terms of moving forward on the North Korea issue, I would just say, if confirmed, there are sort of three lines by which primarily out of Washington. But obviously I would be helpful, if confirmed as Ambassador.

The first is continue to build the international consensus to isolate North Korea and its regime. And perhaps one of the best examples is to isolate them on the human rights issue.

The second is to continue the pressure and the sanctions, both multilateral sanctions and unilateral sanctions, as well as military exercises to keep the North Koreans in check and to send a strong signal that the United States is watching their behavior.

And finally, what I have been working on at the Defense Department, which is strong defense and deterrence, and that means increasing the number of ground-based interceptors in Alaska. That means adding a second TPY-2 radar in Japan to booster our missile defense, two new ballistic missile defense cruisers by 2017, and the movement of the THAAD on Guam to ensure that we stay one step ahead of the North Korean threat both in terms of our own homeland and our allies.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Mr. Stivers, I am a big fan of Administrator Shah's efforts to leverage our development assistance in countries by trying to do what we can to move toward self-sufficiency and country sustainability so that our foreign development assistance is not needed forever, and doing so by leveraging government efforts with private sector funds and local participation.

Asia is an interesting region. There are a lot of challenges that are there. Can you just share with us how you would carry out that goal that Administrator Shah has mentioned about leveraging our development assistance for sustainability and private partnerships?

Mr. STIVERS. Well, thank you, Senator, for that question, and thank you for your leadership on Asia issues.

USAID has implemented a new model of development that does focus more on public-private partnerships, regional solutions to regional challenges, and certainly with the advances in science and innovation. And I know you have been a leader on the Global Development Lab, and I think that is one way where USAID is working to promote science and innovation. And in particular in Asia, I know USAID has launched something called the Millennium Alliance in India which brings together university partners and corporation partners to support new innovations, new development challenges regarding education and health. And I think that is one way where it has been very successful.

We are in a tight budgetary era, and we want to do more in terms of the rebalance in terms of the emphasis on the region. And to the extent that we can leverage more resources in this new model of development, I think Administrator Shah has done an exemplary job of moving AID in that direction.

Senator CARDIN. I wanted to get your views on how you would use development assistance to advance good governance and human rights. You have already mentioned young women and girls, and I very much appreciate that. The gender equity issues have been a huge priority under Secretary Clinton and now under Secretary Kerry, and it is an area that we need to continue to advance.

I remember a hearing that we had several years ago with former President Clinton as a witness and talking about how he goes about development assistance in other countries, and that there is

zero tolerance for corruption. We are not doing a country any favors if we are participating in just feeding a corrupt regime.

I want to get your commitment that that will be the policy of USAID, that yes, we want to help countries, but they must be on a path toward improving good governance and that our development assistance will not fuel further corruption of regimes.

Mr. STIVERS. Absolutely. Thank you for that, Senator, and thank you for your longtime support on good governance and human rights issues.

There are certainly governance challenges and concerns throughout Asia in a number of countries that USAID provides assistance to. Good governance is central to development. It is hard to do other development initiatives, whether you are making advances in health or food, unless you are addressing the underlying structural problems that sometimes cause poverty, and a lot of times, that has to do with poor governance. And to the extent that USAID is in these countries strengthening civil society, training journalists, promoting citizen participation and oversight, I think AID's programs in many countries are very good in this regard. And it will be a top commitment for me if confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Ms. Polaschik, I want to come back. Senator Murphy covered somewhat terrorism and counterterrorism and what we have to do working with other countries. It is one of our highest priorities. I understand there is still a warning against U.S. visitors to that country about the threat of safety from terrorist activities. Obviously, that is unacceptable. So we need to do a more effective job.

But I want to get your view on how we can improve good governance in Algeria. It is an oil- and gas-rich country. It is questionable as to whether the wealth is getting to the people in the most efficient way. I would just like to get your assessment as to how we could be helpful in promoting good governance in Algeria.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. It is a very good one.

By all accounts, Algeria is a challenging place to do business. The World Bank's most recent Ease of Doing Business report, for example, lists it at number 153 of 187 of all countries worldwide. And American companies do raise concerns with us, in particular, about transparency in the decisionmaking process.

That said, the Algerian Government realizes that it needs to take steps to reform and particularly to diversify its economy. As you know, it is heavily dependent upon the hydrocarbon sector. And in order to diversify the economy, they are going to have to make some pretty marked improvements to their overall business climate. And I think there are some things that could be done pretty easily to improve that. One would be to improve their overall regulatory environment. Two would be to ease the administrative processing, like one-stop shopping for registering businesses, and improving access to decisionmakers.

The U.S. Government already is working in this area to support these efforts. We have some MEPI, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, assistance programs that are working with grassroots Algerian NGOs that are working to promote greater transparency.

So if confirmed, I certainly would continue and support these efforts to make the changes that are necessary.

Senator CARDIN. It is my understanding that the government is directly involved in the extractive industries in Algeria. Transparency is going to be critically important here. We found that in other countries. And I am not as familiar with Algeria as I would like to be, but I would like to get your commitment that we will make it clear that transparency is absolutely essential so that there can be a better tracing as to how the resources are being used in Algeria for its own development.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

I now yield to Senator Rubio who informs us he has been tied up in the Intelligence Committee. Not much going on around the world like Iraq, so I do not know why that would tie you up too long.

Senator RUBIO. I am just glad to be here.

I do not have extensive questions. I think a lot of it has probably already been asked and answered. But I wanted to revisit a couple points.

I am sure, Mr. Lippert, you have been asked about relations between Korea and Japan. Let me start with a separate question. It was an issue that I have confronted in Florida, which we actually raised during my visit to Korea in February of this year. As you know, the free trade agreement with Korea I believe was a win for them, as it is for us. But we have had some implementation issues regarding—for example, Florida citrus growers have had an issue. The fundamental issue is that the Koreans have disputed in the past or have asked questions about whether that citrus is truly being produced and packaged in Florida or maybe it is coming from Brazil and just being brought through. And we were able to use the Embassy to facilitate a visit by South Korean officials to Florida where they were able to confirm all of it.

So my question is, as we proceed with the implementation of this agreement, I anticipate there may be further instances of this in the future that may arise on either side. And I think I know the answer will be yes, but I just wanted to get a commitment that you will be actively engaged through your office and the Embassy to resolve any sort of disputes that might arise in this process because I think they are critical to the future of any other trade agreements, whether it is TPP or anything else.

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, the answer is unequivocally yes.

Senator RUBIO. And then the second point—I am confident that you have been asked about it, but I was not here. So let me ask you about it as well.

When I was there, one of the issues that truly captured everyone's attention was the friction between the Abe government and South Korea, some of the issues that have arisen around that. In fact, I felt it was perhaps even more dominant than the concerns about China's illegitimate claims in the region or maybe not to the level of the risk posed by North Korea, but it was certainly one of the dominant features of our visit and for the United States, a very troubling one because both of these are critical alliances for us, in fact, perhaps the two most important alliances in that region.

Can you give us an update about where we stand with regard to that? Has there been improvement? Has that continued to degrade? Has there been any evidence that over the last few months the leadership of both countries have made efforts to try to bridge that divide and reestablish a cooperative working relationship? Because they have some mutually—they share some mutual defense concerns and economic ones.

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, it is an excellent question. And thanks for your travel out to the region. I did follow it closely and actually read one of your op-eds that you published on Asia recently.

To your point, I think it remains challenging. I will say that there has been some progress, especially on the United States engaging in a trilateral way. The President had a very good trilateral summit with the two leaders on the margins of The Hague. I actually hosted the Defense Trilateral Talks here in Washington at the Pentagon between the South Koreans and Japanese, and there was some very good exchanges and frank discussions that I think were helpful. Secretary Hagel had a trilateral meeting on the margins of the Shangri-La Dialogue that I think also helped move the ball forward, at least in terms of some of the security issues. And then Ambassador Davies also had a recent exchange with some of the six-party talks negotiators here both on the Japanese and South Korean side. So I think there has been progress, but I would say that a lot more work needs to be done.

Senator RUBIO. And the other point I would make—and I wanted your opinion on this. Of course, in Japan, there has been a lot of conversation about how they can reinterpret their existing constitutional provisions to allow them to engage in collective self-defense. For us, of course, we largely benefit from that because if in fact one of our ships or personnel came under attack right now, given the strictest definition of the constitutional provisions in Japan, a very capable Japanese defense force theoretically would not be able to come to our defense.

How is that goal of the Abe government to be a little bit more liberal in their application of that provision—how do they view that in Korea? Is there a sense there that there could be a defense partnership between those countries as a result of greater capabilities on the part of the Japanese?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, I think you outlined the up-sides of the reinterpretation of collective self-defense, as well as our own review that we do bilaterally with the Japanese called the Guidelines Review in helping instill greater capabilities to the U.S.-Japan alliance.

But to your precise question, what we have done at the Pentagon and elsewhere across the administration is encourage transparency and consultation with the South Korean Government on this issue. I still think it is a touchy subject. That is my own personal view. And we do have to do a good job, a better job of making sure that there is good outreach and information exchange. That was one of the focuses at the Shangri-La Dialogue where Secretary Hagel hosted his two counterparts to encourage that exchange on the reinterpretation of the constitution. It is what I did at the Defense Trilateral Talks as well here in Washington that preceded that in order to exchange information, demystify, get clarifying questions

answered because I think there are concerns that are still out there that we have to work through in a consultative manner.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

And I wanted to briefly pivot to Mr. Osius.

Thank you all for your service, by the way, and I congratulate you on your nomination and wish you all the best. Hopefully we will be able to visit some of you in your new posts.

I wanted to ask you two things. First, I am sure you have been asked already about the situation with regard to the conflict with the Chinese, and I missed that portion. Could you just update me on what you think our role is with regard to conflicts such as those where we do not have an existing defense agreement in the way we do with Japan or South Korea? But yet, we have an interest in territorial claims not being abused.

Mr. OSIUS. I agreed very much with the way the chairman characterized our position. We have a strong interest in the behavior of nations. Even if we have not taken a position on specific territorial disputes, we have a strong interest in the rule of law being observed. We have a strong interest in nations resolving territorial disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law.

My suggestion was that we can change the calculus of the Chinese in the South China Sea by forming powerful partnerships, and that partnerships with our allies, the Philippines and Japan and Thailand and others, but also with partners such as Indonesia and Vietnam can also change the calculus. And our partnership with Vietnam in the strategic areas is growing. We already have agreement on high-level dialogue on search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations. And where the relationship is growing fastest is in the area of maritime security.

Senator RUBIO. I have one brief question. Is that OK? I apologize.

This is a particular case that has arisen in Vietnam that I hope, when you are confirmed, that you will take up as a cause. In 2012, a Lutheran pastor, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, was sentenced to 11 years in prison for, "undermining national unity," under article 87 of Vietnam's penal code. In reality, Pastor Chin was arbitrarily detained, and he was jailed simply for practicing his faith. Reports indicate that the pastor was beaten while praying on two separate occasions.

If confirmed, would you advocate for the release of Pastor Chinh, as well as other prisoners of conscience?

Mr. OSIUS. I would, sir, absolutely.

Senator RUBIO. And how would you engage with the Vietnamese Government on issues of religious freedom? I ask that because I do believe that these sorts of abuses are an impediment to the sort of partnership that you have discussed that you think it would be wise for us to pursue with Vietnam and others. I think religious liberties is an important thing for us to clearly be on the side of. So how do you think we can most productively engage with the Vietnamese authorities on cases such as these?

Mr. OSIUS. Senator, I agree. Activities such as that are an impediment to the appropriate development of our partnership with Vietnam.

I think there is some good news and there is some not-so-good news. In the 18 years that I have been visiting Vietnam or serving in Vietnam, the trajectory is basically pretty good. In the central highlands, when I first went there, the monasteries, the churches—they were all empty. Now they are full and they are full of young people, and more than half of Vietnam's population is under 30 and those people want to be able to practice their religious beliefs freely. And so I think there is a possibility for systemic change, and if confirmed, I would push as hard as I could for that kind of systemic change.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the witnesses, thank you for your service and congratulations on your nominations.

I am going to apologize to the males on the panel. I am duty-bound by my jurisdiction to grill the University of Virginia graduate, Ms. Polaschik, and I am also the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Near East.

And I am very interested in relationship with Algeria. I recently met with the Algerian Ambassador to the United States. Forgive me. I am sure you have covered a bit of this in your testimony, possibly in an earlier question. But talk about the nature of the current U.S.-Algeria counterterrorism partnership.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Thank you, Senator, for that question. And wahoo-wa.

Overall, the state of the U.S.-Algerian relationship on counterterrorism is very, very good. Algeria, as you know, fought its own long and difficult battle with terrorism on its own soil and developed a very strong capacity. Algeria is now working with its neighbors to address the new transnational threats that are posed by the various Ansar al-Sharia groups throughout North Africa, MUJAO from Mali, and others. So Algeria is working with Tunisia to counter activity on their shared border. It has pushed out tens of thousands of soldiers to its southeastern border to stem the flow of terrorists and weapons coming out of Mali and Libya. And it is working very effectively with Mali and Niger to train their own security services. So it is a very good partner, and certainly, if confirmed, I would build on the excellent work that my predecessor, Henry Ensher, has done and seek to expand that further.

Senator Kaine. We have a very strong partnership—I am glad to hear you talk about that in some detail—with Algeria.

We also have a very strong partnership with Morocco, and yet those two nations have had their challenges. I think a question has been asked about that earlier. But I am just struck by a relationship where air travel between the two countries is common. Commercial traffic that way is common, but the border is closed.

What can the United States or what could you do as Ambassador that would hopefully help these two allies of ours continue to strengthen their own relationship and resolve difficulties?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, it is an excellent question and certainly one that we in the State Department are very concerned with because both Morocco and Algeria are good friends of the United States and they are very, very capable partners. So if confirmed, I would continue doing what we are doing all along, urging both

Morocco and Algeria to work together to address their issues of shared concern such as counterterrorism, illegal migration, drugs trafficking, et cetera. And I would urge the Algerians to delink the issue of Western Sahara from their relationship with Morocco.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that. Algeria has one of the largest energy reserves in the world and is one of the largest energy exporters in the world. Is there anything that Algeria can do to help Europe wean themselves away from over-dependence upon Russian energy? That was a topic that I talked about with the Ambassador last week, and I thought that might have some promise.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Absolutely, Senator. It is an excellent question.

Algeria is a significant and stable exporter of oil, natural gas, and liquefied natural gas, and its geographic location, right next to Europe, makes it critically important for European energy security. Algeria is Europe's number two supplier of natural gas. And Algeria has significant reserves of shale gas. They have the third-largest recoverable reserves of shale gas anywhere in the world. So this is a new and exciting area of great opportunity. And the Algerian Government has announced plans to exploit these resources, and it is also very interested in partnering with American companies to develop them. So there are great opportunities for American companies there and to further advance European energy security.

If confirmed, I certainly would make it a top priority to make sure that we support the Algerian efforts to develop their shale reserves and to work to get American companies a share of the market.

Senator KAINE. I continue to believe that with respect to Ukraine and other nations in Europe, one of the best things we can do for them is to help them obtain other sources of energy. And often the debate here is about U.S. exports or technical assistance to develop European energy, but an additional way to make this happen is to find other partners who can export more to Europe, and Algeria seems to be, because of historical background and the fact that they are already a significant exporter, a perfect partner. So if there are things that we can do diplomatically or through American companies to help them develop that shale gas capacity and export more, that would be for the good of Ukraine, for the good of Western Europe, and I would love to explore that with you.

How, if at all, is Algeria responding right now to this uprising by the anti-Islamist general Haftar in Libya?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, Libya very much shares the United States Government's concerns about the situation in Libya. It is very concerned about the spread of transnational extremists, the spread of weapons coming out of Libya and I think is willing to work with us and the neighbors to try to find a solution.

That said, nonintervention in other countries' internal affairs has been a long-standing pillar of Algerian foreign policy. So I do not expect that they would do anything rash. What I expect is that they would continue their very active diplomacy. And Algeria has been a leader in helping to resolve conflict throughout the continent, and we certainly welcome their role in that regard.

Senator KAINE. The last question I will ask is President Bouteflika's election to a fourth 5-year term in 2014 sort of underscored a continuity and a stability in Algerian politics, and yet he

is elderly. He has had some physical challenges. Talk a little bit about what are the political prospects in the future given the fact that after 20 years of a very difficult challenge, I am sure there are thoughts about transitioning, et cetera. We do not have a favorite, but what is the current lineup of political parties in Algeria and thoughts about kind of next chapters in political leadership?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, Algeria since early 2011 has been pursuing a path of gradual reform, and just in the last couple of weeks President Bouteflika has announced some proposals to amend the constitution that would further open up the Algerian political system. For example, he would propose giving more power to the Parliament and to the Prime Minister, reimposing Presidential term limits and further liberalizing the media environment. And all of these steps we certainly welcome.

The Algerian Constitution has a very clear process for succession. In the event that the President is incapacitated, the speaker of the upper House of Parliament would serve as Acting President for 60 days, during which time elections would be organized. We fully anticipate that the Algerian authorities would abide by their constitutional procedures, and we would be prepared to work with whomever the Algerian people elect as their next President.

Senator Kaine. Thank you very much for those answers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lippert, the commander of U.S. Forces in Korea testified before the committee in March. He said that while the U.S. Forces that are on the peninsula are prepared to carry out their mission of fight tonight in the event of a conflict, that the follow-on force for reinforcing our troops is not ready to do so effectively due to sequestration. Do you share that view?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, I would have nothing to contradict General Scaparotti. So, yes.

Senator MCCAIN. You would agree with that.

That is of some concern.

Mr. Osius, the Vietnamese Government wants us to waive its ban on lethal arm sales or transfers. Obviously, the situation continues to become more tense in the South China Sea or the Asia Sea. Depending on which country you are from is whatever name you want to give it, but we know the area. Have we considered lifting that ban? And if so, what considerations do we have? And if not, I guess have we laid out for them the criteria that we would expect in order to have that arms transfer lifted?

Mr. OSIUS. Thank you, Senator.

We have made it clear that we cannot lift the ban absent significant progress on human rights, on the development of respect for rule of law and human rights in Vietnam. We have been quite clear on what we expect in terms of progress on human rights.

Senator MCCAIN. For example, what would be a criteria? A judgment of a human rights organization or judgment of the State Department? In other words, what are the criteria?

Mr. OSIUS. What we have done is we have listed nine areas for the Vietnamese where we would expect to see serious progress so that our partnership could achieve its full potential. I think at this

point there has been progress in a number of those areas, in three or maybe four of those areas. So that may mean it is time to begin exploring the possibility of lifting the ban. But it has to be done at a pace with which this committee is comfortable and with which the Vietnamese are comfortable.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, for the record, would you provide just for my information those areas where they have made progress and those areas where progress still needs to be made? But they have shown some progress.

Mr. OSIUS. There has been some progress. There has been some progress in the area of labor and labor rights. There has been some progress in the area of disabilities, treatment of people with disabilities. There has been some growth in the space for civil society to operate. There has been an increase in the number of churches that have been registered.

Now, as Americans, we have, I think, a discomfort with the idea of churches having to register in the first place, but there is more space for churches, evangelical churches, Catholic churches, to operate than there was in the past.

What we have not done is lay out a precise road map for what would get the Vietnamese to lifting the lethal weapons ban, and it may be time to consider that.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I hope we would do that given a whole lot of factors.

A question for you and Mr. Lippert. The Chinese, obviously, continue to stoke tensions in the South and East China Seas, and the situation certainly is worsening rather than better, which leads one to conclude that the actions taken so far have not braked Chinese behavior. I am wondering if you agree with that, and if you agree with that, what actions do you think we should contemplate, maybe beginning with you, Mr. Lippert?

Mr. LIPPERT. Thanks, Senator.

I think that we have spelled out a pretty robust strategy for pushing back against the Chinese starting in the East China Sea or east—

Senator MCCAIN. But you would agree that we have done so far has not had a deterrent effect.

Mr. LIPPERT. I would say it depends on which situation, Senator. For example, in the Senkakus situation, I think the clear statement of the article 5 commitment by Secretary Hagel and others has, I think, had some deterrent effect on the Chinese with the current situation.

I think in the South China Sea, the situation remains more challenging, as you point out. We have done some things in terms of help with our Filipino allies in terms of increased access. The access agreement I think was helpful. There has been a little bit more presence in the region that I think also has given a little bit of help to our allies in the region. But I think you are right. It is a very challenging situation and more needs to be done.

Senator MCCAIN. And for example, like what?

Mr. LIPPERT. Well, first, Senator, I do think we need to protect, where I sit currently in the Pentagon, robust defense spending in the Asia-Pacific region. We just have to have our maritime assets

out there in more force to give aid and comfort to our friends and allies in the region.

Second, I think stepped-up presence does help in terms of overflight, P-8's, so on and so forth.

And then, of course, our undersea assets I think also can play an important role as well.

Senator MCCAIN. Including joint operating bases such as we are moving forward—well, already done with Australia, moving forward with the Philippines and other countries in the region?

Mr. LIPPERT. Absolutely. I think the initiatives we have had in Singapore, Australia, Philippines—also, we are now getting increased access to parts of Malaysia that we have not seen before. I think those send very important and powerful signals as well.

Senator MCCAIN. Before I turn to Mr. Osius, the Camp Humphrey transition is proceeding okay?

Mr. LIPPERT. My sense is that things are generally on track. I think the HHOP issue, as you know, remains challenging. The amount of money we are asking U.S. service members to pay is very expensive. The outside-the-gate accommodations are not great, and I think that trying to get as many people as possible as our Commander of U.S. Forces Korea wants inside the gate is still a challenge. I know the Deputy Secretary of Defense a couple of months ago asked the Army to take another look at this to see what we could come up with because I think this is a very challenging issue and we need to sort of resolve this to move forward, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I hope we can because the movement obviously has to take place, and also this issue of operational control hangs out there as well. So I am sure you will do a great job.

I am not sure you will, Mr. Osius. [Laughter.]

Senator MCCAIN. I am confident that you will. It was a joke.

Mr. OSIUS. Thank you, sir.

First, in terms of security preparations, I would like to associate myself with what Mark Lippert said in terms of how we can strengthen our position in Asia. But I do not think we have exhausted the diplomatic route yet when it comes to the South China Sea. What the Chinese are doing both in Vietnam and the Philippines is actually making the job of the Filipinos and the Vietnamese easier in terms of taking their case to the world community. The Chinese in some ways are trying to have it both ways in the U.N., trying to keep the U.N. out, but also bringing the issue to the U.N. where they believe that they can control it. I think that is going to be a real challenge.

The New York Times today reported on island building in South Johnson Reef. It is one thing to put an oil rig into the Paracels. An oil rig can be removed. When you build an island, it becomes much harder to remove it. You can build runways on it, houses on it, and you have changed the status quo. And in 2002, the Chinese signed on to the Declaration of Conduct which said they would exercise self-restraint and not change the status quo. I think the nations of ASEAN certainly have taken notice that the Chinese are not living up to their obligations.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I think it is very clear in the exchange that Secretary Hagel had with the Chinese Deputy Defense Min-

ister in Shangri-La was not encouraging at all. Would you agree, Mr. Lippert?

Mr. LIPPERT. It was a testy exchange, Senator. I would agree.

Mr. OSIUS. Yes, sir. I agree.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank the witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Let me just follow up on one thing with Mr. Lippert. You mentioned the exchanges we are having between Japan and Korea and you mentioned the Shangri-La opportunities, and I agree with that. I would just call to your attention President Park's recommendation for using an OSCE type dialogue mechanism for northeast Asia, which I would just suggest that you may wish to follow through. In my conversations with Mr. Abe, he was supportive of that type of a mechanism. So there may be some way of strengthening the dialogue mechanisms between Japan and the Republic of Korea, along with other countries in northeast Asia.

The record of the committee will remain open until close of business Thursday. That will mean that if members have additional written questions, we would urge you all to try to complete them as quickly as possible so that we can take action on the nominations as quickly as possible.

Once again, thank you all for your attention to this committee.

And with that, the committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:25 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MARK WILLIAM LIPPERT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey recently testified in front of the House Armed Services Committee that "I consider land mines . . . to be an important tool in the arsenal of the Armed Forces of the United States." In separate testimony, General Scaparrotti, Commander of U.S. Forces Korea, testified that "it is my assessment that landmines are a critical element in the defense of the Republic of Korea and our interest there. And they are a critical element of our contingency plans, as well."

- ◆ Do you agree with these statements by Chairman Dempsey and General Scaparrotti?
- ◆ What is your assessment of the implications for the U.S.-ROK alliance if the United States were to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention?

Answer. I highly value, and take very seriously, the military advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander of United States Forces Korea with respect to the use of landmines on the Korean Peninsula.

Based on the above military advice, I believe that any consideration of the removal of antipersonnel landmines from our arsenal for the defense of Korea would raise serious and complex operational issues. These issues require careful review and consideration by policymakers in Washington to ensure that they are addressed.

If confirmed, I would work closely with the Government of the Republic of Korea, General Scaparrotti, and other relevant parties to ensure that these operational issues and their implications for the defense of Korea are brought to the attention of policymakers in Washington and addressed.

Question. As you know, the Republic of Korea has granted access to the Chinese telecommunications company Huawei for development of its wireless network.

- ◆ What is your view of this arrangement?
- ◆ If confirmed, what would you do as Ambassador to ensure that United States and Korean telecommunications networks are not compromised by this arrangement?

Answer. I share your concern about security of networks in the United States and among its partners and allies.

While serving at the Department of Defense, I have closely followed cyber issues relating to China and the Republic of Korea. I am concerned about the growing cyber threat to our national security and will continue to focus on this issue in the future.

As a sovereign country, the determination of criteria for foreign investment projects related to its nationwide LTE network is ultimately the decision of the Republic of Korea.

The Republic of Korea is a strong partner of the United States in cyber security issues. For example, the Department of Defense recently signed a formal agreement with the Republic of Korea military to jointly address cyber security threats. Additionally, the State Department uses the U.S.-Republic of Korea Cyber Dialogue and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy Forum to exchange views on our respective policies in cyber space.

If confirmed, I will continue to facilitate the close cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Korea on our respective cyber policies and practices, including on the subjects of cyber threats or areas of concern and security issues.

I will also work closely with the Commander of United States Forces in the Korea to ensure that our military continues to use a comprehensive risk mitigation approach to cyber security to ensure our military communications are secure in the Republic of Korea.