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**NOMINATIONS OF JANE HARTLEY, JOHN
BASS, KEVIN O'MALLEY, BRENT HARTLEY,
AND JAMES PETTIT**

TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2014

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

Hon. John R. Bass, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey
Jane D. Hartley, of New York, to be Ambassador to the French Republic and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Principality of Monaco
Kevin F. O'Malley, of Missouri, to be Ambassador to Ireland
Brent Robert Hartley, of Oregon, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia
James D. Pettit, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Murphy presiding.

Present: Senators Murphy, Shaheen, Kaine, Johnson, and McCain.

Also present: Senators Clair McCaskill and Roy Blunt.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator MURPHY. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will now come to order. I am pleased to welcome all of our nominees and their friends and family who have come here today to support them. We have two panels today. The committee is going to be considering the nominations of John Bass to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, Jane Hartley to be the U.S. Ambassador to France, and Kevin O'Malley to be our Ambassador to Ireland. Then on the second panel we are going to consider the nomination of James Pettit to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Moldova and Brent Hartley to be the United States Ambassador to Slovenia.

Suffice it to say this is probably one of the busiest days we have had in our subcommittee. The three nominees before us represent three of the iconic diplomatic posts for the United States around

the world. Our second panel will have as its subject two countries that are no less important to U.S. security interests.

So we will begin with introductions of the nominees, you will be invited to give your opening statements, and then answer questions from the panel.

We are blessed to have with us Senator McCaskill, who is here but has to leave for other obligations, to introduce Mr. O'Malley. We may be joined by Senator Blunt as well, but at this point I will recognize Senator McCaskill for the purposes of an introduction.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSOURI**

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Johnson and the other Senators who are here this morning, for giving me a few minutes to talk about an extraordinarily American story. Kevin O'Malley is a second generation Irish American. He is a direct descendant from Irish grandparents on both sides of his family, and up until this confirmation process actually held dual citizenship in Ireland and the United States. Of course, he gave up that dual citizenship as part of this confirmation process.

He has got a wonderful wife and two great sons, and he has been the kind of guy that everyone would want to call their friend. He is smart, strong, loyal, hardworking. I think one of the things that I want to point out to the committee is that he is one of the very few lawyers that I know that is comfortable on either side of the table. There is a tendency in the legal practice to get biased and decide that you are going to be in one area or the other in terms of how you represent clients. Kevin has been a lawyer who has steadfastly maintained that part of being a lawyer is to defend people who have been sued and also sometimes to sue people for causes he believes is just.

So I think that is a good preparation for the job of Ambassador, because he does see both sides and he has been able to work hard on both sides of the table. As evidence of how well he is respected for that, in 2013—the highest award you can receive from your peers in St. Louis is the Award of Honor by the Lawyers Association of St. Louis. This award is given annually to a trial attorney whose service to the profession and community merits special recognition. He was honored for 10 years of his service as a Federal prosecutor to the Department of Justice and a record of defending physicians and hospitals in medical malpractice suits and also as his role in representing plaintiffs in some other matters, and also as a senior author for the nine-volume Federal Jury Practice and Instruction treatise that is actually used in Federal trials.

So he has academic chops, he has community involvement, he has great professional expertise, and he loves his country, but he also cares deeply for Ireland, which I think is a great combination. I also should point out that he served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve, so he has that military background also, which I think is essential as he represents our interests in one of our important allies. Especially at this time of conflict around the world, cementing our relationships with our colleagues that are our allies, the NATO allies, are very, very important.

And that's why I hope, for all of these nominees, these three and the two that follow, I hope that the committee can move quickly, because clearly it is a time in the world that we need the voice of America at every table, in all of these countries. That is why these ambassadorships are in fact so critical.

I know my colleague Senator Blunt is very supportive of this nominee. I am sure he will be here some time during the hearing this morning. He has expressed his enthusiastic support for Kevin O'Malley's nomination to this important position, and I know that you will be kind enough to give him a chance to say a word when he does arrive.

And I thank you all for giving me a few minutes to introduce my friend and somebody who I think will be the essence of a great public servant to the Nation we love. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator McCaskill. Thank you for taking time to join us this morning.

I believe that Senator Blunt is on his way, so while we are waiting why do I not introduce our other two nominees. In doing so, I will say just a quick word about the countries to which you are being nominated for by way of my opening remarks. Then when Senator Blunt comes, we can introduce him, have Senator Johnson make some opening remarks, and then get to your testimony.

I am really pleased first to introduce Jane Hartley to the committee. She has got a rather impressive career in both the public and private sector, but it all pales in comparison to the most important thing on her resume, which is that she grew up in Waterbury, CT.

She is currently the chief executive officer of the Manhattan-based Observatory Group, where she advises multinational corporations and financial institutions about policy developments and investment. She is a graduate of Boston College. She began her career here in Washington, where she worked as the White House public liaison in the White House Public Liaison's Office and as the director of congressional relations at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

She is an experienced leader both in the private and public sector, with significant experience in the global economy, including the bulk of her experience in and around Europe. She will bring a range of all of this experience to serve her well as she faces a number of challenges and opportunities if confirmed to be our next Ambassador to France.

A word on France. Our friendship, of course, dates back to the very beginning of our Republic and indeed our Nation's first diplomatic, Benjamin Franklin, who served with distinction as our first Ambassador to France. Today France remains a steadfast partner of the United States, grounded in our shared values and our rich communal history. France and the United States collaborate on every arena, from commerce, where commercial transactions between our two countries reach a billion dollars every day, to defense and security, where we cooperate to counter the terrorism of extremist groups in Africa to the Middle East, to diplomacy, where our diplomats are working side by side right now in the P5+1.

But even amongst the closest of friends, some challenges remain. One example is France's decision to go ahead with sales of the am-

prohibitory assault Mistral warships to Russia even after Russia's belligerent and illegal actions against Crimea in Ukraine.

Ms. Hartley, we look forward to hearing your thoughts on these and other important issues.

Let me introduce John Bass and then we will go to Senator Blunt. We are pleased to have with us Ambassador John Bass, a distinguished career member of the Foreign Service with deep knowledge of Europe and Eurasia and extensive crisis management experience. He is currently the Executive Secretary of the Department of State, a position he has held since 2012.

I got to know him as our Ambassador to Georgia, and previous to that he was a leader of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad. He has demonstrated over and over again an ability to lead challenging missions to promote U.S. interests. Back in Washington he has held numerous leadership roles within the State Department. He is the recipient of three Meritorious Honor Awards and five Superior Honor Awards, in addition to his Group Honor Awards.

He graduated from Syracuse University, speaks fluent Italian and French. I am sure his Turkish is improving by the day.

I am confident that Mr. Bass is going to bring all of his talent to strengthening our bilateral relations with Turkey. As you know, Turkey is one of our most important and complex relationships. So this nomination is an honor and a challenge even for the most experienced of our diplomats. It is a NATO ally of the United States and Europe since 1952, but the ongoing crises in Iraq and Syria are at the top of our agenda with Turkey. I have been to the refugee camps that they are hosting on the Syrian border and personally witnessed the extraordinary generosity of the Turkish people and their government.

We also continue to value Turkey's contributions to ISAF in Afghanistan and other NATO operations, including their agreement to host a U.S. early warning radar system.

But we hope that you do not neglect, if you serve in this post, the stalled rapprochement with Israel and peace negotiations with Cyprus. Resolutions of these conflicts could bring some much-needed stability to the region.

Turkey is holding its first direct Presidential election next month and I strongly believe that we need an ambassador in place by the first round of voting. I urge my colleagues to agree to consider this nomination of our Ambassador to Turkey and all of our nominees before the August recess.

We welcome you to the committee as well.

Let me now thank Senator Blunt for joining us. Senator McCaskill gave us some opening words on Mr. O'Malley and we welcome yours as well.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROY BLUNT,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSOURI**

Senator BLUNT. Well, thank you, Chairman, and thank you for your indulgence in letting me come a little late. Chairman Murphy, Senator Johnson, Senator McCain, Senator Kaine, I am glad to be here joining Senator McCaskill as we have an opportunity to introduce Kevin O'Malley to be the United States Ambassador to Ire-

land. I may say a few things that Senator McCaskill has already said, but we have probably waited long enough to have an Ambassador to Ireland that things can be repeated here with somebody as qualified as Mr. O'Malley is for this job.

He really comes here with 40 years of public service and private service, including service in the United States Army. I think he is a very qualified nominee. He understands our country and understands the country that he will represent our country in.

He was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. He is highly respected in that community and in our State. He is a second generation Irish American, capable of representing the values and the understanding of our country in that country in a significant way. He served as a special attorney for the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section of the United States Department of Justice from 1973 to 1979, and then became the Assistant United States Attorney in St. Louis.

He currently serves in a number of capacities, both as part of the litigation practice group at Greensfelder Attorneys in St. Louis, but also working in a number of capacities to help other attorneys better understand their responsibilities. He serves as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and is continually recognized as one of the best lawyers in America.

In 2009 our Governor, Jay Nixon, appointed him to be the only nonphysician member of the Missouri Board of Healing Arts. This is a group that licenses and disciplines in that area of health care, and he was recently selected to serve as the president of that board.

Again as the only nonphysician on the board, his colleagues on that board chose him to lead the board.

In 1968 he was a community ambassador in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Later, in the 1990s he served as an instructor for the American Bar Association Central and European Law Initiative in Moscow and later in Warsaw. He is a leading advocate of education. He brings to this nomination an incredible background and even, in visiting with him, a more incredible enthusiasm for this job, for our State, his State and my State, for our country, a great appreciation for the country where he will serve.

I certainly think the President has made a great choice in nominating him for this job and look forward to seeing the committee action and hopefully soon to see him serving as our Ambassador to Ireland.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Blunt. I know you have a busy morning, but thank you for lending your voice to introduce Mr. O'Malley.

Now let me turn it over to Senator Johnson for opening remarks.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank Senator Blunt for coming here and introducing Mr. O'Malley.

Just to keep it brief, I want to thank the nominees for taking time to visit with me in my office. I want to thank you for your coming here to testify today and certainly your willingness to serve, and just look forward to your testimony. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. All right, let us get to it. We will start from my left to right, so let me introduce Jane Hartley to begin with testimony.

STATEMENT OF JANE D. HARTLEY, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee. It is a great honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco. Before I begin, please allow me to introduce you to my dear husband, Ralph Schlosstein, who has been so supportive in this process. If you do me the honor of confirming me, Ralph is looking forward to coming with me to Paris. My daughter, Kate, and my son, Jamie, are not able to be present, but they are here with us in my heart and they make me proud every day of my life.

I am deeply grateful to both the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me to serve as chief of mission to our oldest friend and ally. I am also grateful to the Senators and staff members who took the time to meet with me. I appreciated those meetings and I learned from them, and I hope that dialogue will continue.

Some 60 Americans have served as our Nation's highest representative to France. Our first two Ambassadors, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, arrived in Paris 235 years ago. In this century, the list is an honor roll of patriotism and accomplishment: Bruce, Dillon, Shriver, Rohatyn, and many, many others. It is humbling to be nominated to join that company. The honor is magnified because, if confirmed, I will become only the second woman to serve in this position, after the late Ambassador Hariman.

Last month on June 6, D-Day, President Obama and President Hollande stood side by side at Omaha Beach in Normandy and paid a tribute to the Americans who fought to liberate France. When Hollande visited Washington in February, he went to Arlington and presented the Legion of Honor to the Unknown Soldier. France remembers and deeply values our sacrifice.

Today France is a key NATO ally and stands by our side on almost every major issue. Our work together on counterterrorism activities is intense and growing, especially in Africa. France is an indispensable partner in the Middle East. It remains absolutely committed to preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I will remind French leaders that this is not the time for companies to engage in business as usual with Iran.

France has been a forward-leaning partner on Syria, trying to increase pressure against the Assad regime, and France has played an important role in responding to the crisis in Ukraine, rallying the European partners to keep up pressure on Russia, including through sanctions. As the members of the committee are aware, France signed a contract with Russia years ago to deliver two *Mis-*

tral-class ships. If confirmed, I will press French leaders to make the right decision regarding delivery of these ships.

While our work together on political and security issues commands the headlines, our economic ties are no less important. We want to ensure that any U.S. firm can take advantage of export opportunities to France. We must keep engaging France on the benefits of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and we want to encourage French investment in the United States that creates jobs. French firms already employ 500,000 Americans. If confirmed, I will build on these already strong trade links that bind our countries.

I believe that my experience as a private sector business executive has especially qualified me for this opportunity. For 20 years, I have been the CEO of a global macroeconomic and political consulting firm. Also, as a board member of a public company and as former vice chair of the Economic Club of New York, I have developed relationships with central bankers, finance ministers, and business leaders throughout Europe and particularly in France.

If confirmed, I will apply my experience running organizations to managing our large, diverse mission to France. This talented, dedicated team advances our national interests and protects U.S. citizens every day. It would be an honor to lead them and to serve with them.

My father ingrained in his children a deep belief that we were lucky to be living in the greatest country on Earth. He believed deeply and taught us that the highest honor anyone could attain was to serve our country. I still remember my parents' pride when I began my public service career 35 years ago, first as director of congressional relations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where I learned firsthand the importance of the legislative branch, and then serving on President Carter's staff at the White House.

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the distinguished committee, if confirmed by the United States Senate, I will do everything in my power to strengthen and deepen the ties that have bound France and America together since the birth of our great country.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hartley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JANE D. HARTLEY

Thank you, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee. It is a great honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco.

Before I begin, please allow me to introduce to you my dear husband, Ralph Schlosstein, who has been so supportive in this process. If you do me the honor of confirming me, Ralph is looking forward to coming with me to Paris. My daughter, Kate, and my son, Jamie, are not able to be present. But they're here with us in my heart and they make me proud every day of my life.

I am deeply grateful to both the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me to serve as chief of mission to our oldest friend and ally. I hope that you will consider that trust well placed, and that the committee and the Senate will award me the great honor of your confirmation.

Only some 60 Americans have served as our Nation's highest representative to France since our first Ambassador, Benjamin Franklin, arrived in Paris over 235 years ago. Franklin was succeeded by another American Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson.

In this century, the list is an honor roll of patriotism and accomplishment—Bruce, Dillon, Shriver, Rohatyn, and so many others. It is humbling—and challenging—to be nominated to join that company.

The honor is magnified because, if confirmed, I would become only the second woman to serve in this position, after the late Pamela Harriman.

This year's events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings during World War II offered a special reminder of the long and close relationship America has had with France over almost two and a half centuries.

Last month, on June 6, President Obama and President Hollande stood side-by-side at Omaha Beach in Normandy and paid tribute to the Americans who fought to liberate France. Nine of your colleagues attended with the Presidents that morning at the American cemetery. Our sacrifice is remembered and deeply valued in France.

When President Hollande was here in Washington last February, he went to Arlington and presented the Legion d'Honneur to the Unknown Soldier—as the representative of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II.

Today, France stands by our side on almost every major issue. France is a unique ally in terms of its military capability and political willingness to deploy force in harm's way in pursuit of our common foreign policy interests. Our operational cooperation within NATO—and beyond—has vastly improved since France's 2009 reintegration into the Alliance's military command structure. Our work together on counterterrorism activities is intense and growing, especially in Africa.

Twice in the past 18 months France has led the international community's response to crises in Africa. Its troops and airstrikes halted the advance of al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups in Mali. Another large deployment prevented humanitarian catastrophe in the Central African Republic. France's facilities, relationships, and expertise are a significant capability multiplier for U.S. efforts in the region.

France is an indispensable ally in the Middle East. President Hollande has been unequivocal that Iran must not acquire a nuclear weapon, and France remains resolutely committed to the P5+1 negotiations. If confirmed, I will also remind French leaders this is not the time for our companies to engage in "business as usual" with Iran.

France has been a forward-leaning partner on Syria, working closely with us to increase pressure against the Assad regime. France has helped lead efforts to support the Syrian opposition, remove the regime's chemical weapons, provide humanitarian assistance, and reach a political solution. The French Government takes the threat of foreign fighters returning from Syria very seriously and its authorities have made several arrests in recent months. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government works closely with France on this emerging threat to our common security.

France has played an important role in responding to the crisis in Ukraine, rallying its European partners to keep up pressure on Russia, including through sanctions. We support President Hollande joining forces with Chancellor Merkel to push for a diplomatic breakthrough between Russia and Ukraine. As members of the committee are well aware, France signed a contract with Russia in 2009 to deliver two "Mistral-class" helicopter carrier ships to Russia. President Obama has made clear we have concerns about "continuing significant defense deals with Russia" given its actions to destabilize its neighbors. At the same time, the President said the U.S.-French relationship "has never been stronger," which means we can discuss this issue frankly. U.S. officials repeatedly stress our strong concerns to the French. If confirmed, I will continue to press French leaders to make the right decision regarding delivery of these ships.

The leaders of our two countries are in constant dialogue. President Obama hosted President Hollande in February for the White House's only state visit since early 2012—a reflection of the vitality of the U.S.-French relationship. During that visit, the President took Hollande to see Monticello—the home of our third President, who had been our second Ambassador to France. Secretary Kerry's dozen visits to France during the past 17 months also underscore the robust health of our cooperation.

While our work together on political and security issues commands the headlines, our economic ties are no less important. France is the world's fifth-largest economy and remains one of our top economic partners.

Drawing on my decades of experience as a CEO and a business executive, if you do me the honor of confirming me, I will focus on building on the trade links that bind our countries together—links that, as you know, are already very strong.

Our transatlantic commerce creates jobs on both sides, for enterprises large and small. We want to ensure that any U.S. firm can take advantage of opportunities to export to France. In 2013, the United States exported \$32 billion worth of goods

to France, and we are France's top trading partner outside of the European Union. We must keep engaging France on the benefits of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, making the case that an ambitious agreement can create more economic growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

French investment in the United States creates jobs. U.S. affiliates of 2,300 French firms employ half a million Americans at an average annual wage of nearly \$80,000. And many French firms are looking at the U.S. rather than France for future investments. In fact, the total stock of French foreign direct investment in the United States is 10 times the combined FDI of the BRICS countries.

If confirmed, I will be able to use my decades of professional experience with running organizations to lead our large, diverse Mission to France. Around 900 U.S. and locally employed staff work at our Paris Embassy and six constituent posts. This talented, dedicated team advances our national interests and protects U.S. citizens every day. It would be a true honor to serve with them.

For 20 years I have been the CEO of a global macroeconomic and political consulting firm, with a particular focus on Europe. I am a member of the Board of Directors of Heidrick & Struggles, a large global executive search firm with a substantial European presence. As the former Vice-Chairman of the Economic Club of New York, I have moderated many sessions with key European policymakers.

I have served on the Executive Committee of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. And I have been an active member of the Committee on Foreign Relations for over 10 years.

My family and I have a deep and abiding respect for the importance of public service. I still remember my parents' pride when I began my public service career 35 years ago. First, as Director of Congressional Relations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development—where I learned first hand the vital role of the legislative branch. And, later on, serving on President Carter's staff at the White House.

My father ingrained in his children a deep belief that we were lucky to be living in the greatest country on earth. He believed deeply, and taught us, that the highest honor anyone could attain was to serve our country.

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of this distinguished committee, if confirmed by the United States Senate, I will do everything in my power to strengthen and deepen the ties that have bound France and America together since the birth of our great country. I look forward to this extraordinary challenge and hope to have the chance to serve the United States of America at this important moment in history.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Ms. Hartley.
Ambassador Bass.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN R. BASS, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Ambassador BASS. Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would like to submit my full statement for the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and all the members of the committee. I am honored to come before you to be considered for the position of Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and I am grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work with all of you to protect and advance our interests by promoting security, prosperity, democracy, and human rights in Turkey and in the many places where we work together.

I am joined today by members of my family: my wife, Holly, who also serves the Nation as a career officer; my sister, Kristin Bass, my mother-in-law, Mary Holzer. I am also joined by colleagues who served with me in Baghdad and became family during my time there.

I have spent much of my career working to achieve a cornerstone of U.S. policy—completing the project of building a Europe whole, free, and at peace. In each chapter of that process, Turkey has fig-

ured prominently. As you noted, Mr. Chairman, our partnership has never been more important or more complex. A NATO ally for 62 years, Turkey is an important security partner, helping us foster stability from Kosovo to Afghanistan and from Libya to the Horn of Africa.

Turkey faces very real threats from conflict in Iraq and Syria. ISIL's gains in Iraq indeed pose dangers for all of us, as its seizures of Turkish citizens demonstrate, and we continue to urge their immediate release. Turkey has borne a significant burden from hosting more than one million Syrians displaced by the conflict.

Turkey is a key member of the Friends of Syria Core Group and we work together to support the moderate opposition and to pursue a political solution to the conflict. We also work with Turkey to address risks from terrorists and foreign fighters exploiting Turkey's geography.

Turkey is acutely aware of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran and understands the importance of supporting the sanctions regimes in place.

The instability in the region means Ankara needs to renew or to build stronger relations with Israel, Cyprus, and Armenia. We encourage Turkey and Israel to normalize their official relations. In Cyprus, Turkey's role in support of the peace process is vital to reunifying the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation. There is a real chance for a just and lasting resolution of this long-standing conflict and, if confirmed, I will work closely with you and your colleagues and support the U.N.-facilitated settlement talks to help Cypriots achieve this vital goal.

We continue to encourage Turkey and Armenia to move toward normalization, to create the peaceful, productive relationship the people of both countries deserve. On this year's Remembrance Day, Prime Minister Erdogan's condolences to descendants of those Armenians killed indicates that the space for dialogue is opening. But more can and must be done.

As President Obama said before the Turkish Parliament in 2009, democracies "must move forward. Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society." If confirmed, I will stand by these principles and urge the Turkish Government to continue efforts to more fully integrate its Kurdish and other minority populations and to reopen the Halki Seminary.

The United States will continue to uphold our values and urge transparency, accountability, and full respect for the rule of law. Turkey's citizens are having a robust conversation on these issues. Success in these areas would be a strong signal that Turkey's democracy is moving forward.

Mr. Chairman, Turkey's strong growth has tripled its economy in recent years and our exports to Turkey have tripled over the last decade. But we can do more, and if confirmed I will be an advocate for U.S. business and find new ways to expand educational, technology, and other exchanges.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I pledge to safeguard those Americans in my mission and to provide great service to all American citizens in Turkey.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to continuing our work together if confirmed and to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bass follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and all the members of the committee. I am honored to come before you to be considered for the position of Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and I am grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work with all of you to protect and advance our interests by promoting security, prosperity, democracy and human rights—both in Turkey and in the many places beyond its borders where we work together.

I'm grateful to be joined today by members of my family—my wife, Holly, who also serves the Nation as a career officer; my sister, Kristin Bass; and my mother-in-law, Mary Holzer. I also want to recognize colleagues here today who became my family during our work on the front lines of diplomacy in Baghdad.

I have spent much of my career working to achieve a cornerstone of U.S. policy—completing the project of building a Europe whole, free, and at peace. In each chapter of my efforts—from conventional arms reductions across the former Soviet bloc, through the bloody wars in Bosnia and Kosovo and the enlargement of NATO and the EU, to our work with European friends to address new threats further afield from terrorism, violent extremism and a prospective nuclear Iran, Turkey has figured prominently. I've watched Turkey's transformation into a modernized G20 economy and a confident partner of the United States in many new areas of the world. Our partnership has never been more important—or more complex.

Our core security partnership has anchored our relationship for decades—and with good reason. A NATO ally for 62 years, Turkey has bordered potential or active conflicts for that entire period. In recent years, it has stood with us in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya. It hosts key elements of NATO's missile defense architecture. Turkey has joined fellow allies in rejecting Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and encouraging de-escalation of the ongoing crisis. It also is contributing military assets to reassurance activities in Central and Eastern Europe.

At the same time it supports collective security, Turkey faces very real challenges on its own borders. ISIL's gains in Iraq pose significant dangers for regional and international security, as the group's seizure of Turkish citizens and diplomats demonstrates; we continue to urge their immediate release. Turkey is working closely with us and other partners to help Iraqis achieve the objective of a federal, democratic, pluralistic, and unified Iraq.

Even before ISIL's metastasis into Iraq, Turkey was grappling with the spillover of terrorism and violence from the war in Syria. Over 70 Turks have died as a result of cross-border fire or terrorism emanating from Syria. Just as the United States has provided more than \$2 billion in humanitarian assistance for Syrians affected by this conflict, Turkey has also borne a significant burden from hosting more than 1 million displaced Syrians. The Turkish Government has dedicated enormous resources to operating 22 refugee camps, while facing ongoing challenges in providing services to the many Syrians who struggle to survive in urban areas.

Turkey has been a critical facilitator of U.S. assistance to Syrian people in need and to the moderate Syrian opposition. Turkey is a key member of the Friends of Syria Core Group, and we are working closely with Turkey to find a political solution to the conflict and reinforce support for the moderate opposition. Concurrently, we are working with the Turkish Government to mitigate the risk posed by violent extremists and foreign fighters exploiting Turkey's geography. If confirmed, I will work closely with Turkey and other regional partners to stem the flow of fighters, money, and expertise to and from Syria.

Our cooperation has been similarly important on Iran, with respect to non-proliferation matters generally and on sanctions specifically. As a neighbor, Turkey is acutely aware of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran, and understands the importance of supporting the sanctions regime to spur Iran to meet international obligations on its nuclear program.

The instability along Turkey's southern border gives renewed urgency for Ankara to build stronger relationships with other neighbors—Israel, Armenia, and Cyprus. We continue to encourage Turkey and Israel to restore positive official relations by completing the normalization process, which would enhance regional stability and complement their continued strong trade and investment relationship. In Cyprus,

Turkey—along with Greece—is playing an important and constructive role in supporting the peace process. As Vice President Biden reiterated during his historic May visit to Cyprus, the United States remains committed to supporting the U.N.-led effort to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation. After four decades of division, there is a real chance for a lasting settlement that would bring positive benefits to the entire Eastern Mediterranean. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work closely with you and your colleagues to help the parties achieve this vital goal.

One issue that confronts all democracies as they look to the future is how they deal with the past. We continue to encourage Turkey and Armenia to move toward normalization as a means of creating the peaceful, productive, and prosperous relationship that the people of both countries deserve. On this year's Remembrance Day, Prime Minister Erdogan expressed his condolences to the grandchildren of those Armenians killed during World War I. That gesture and other positive efforts by the Turkish Government in recent months indicate that the space for dialogue is opening. But more can be done, and we encourage both sides to pursue a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts surrounding the tragic events of 1915.

Turkey is one of the oldest democracies in the region. But as President Obama noted when visiting Ankara in 2009, "Democracies cannot be static—they must move forward. Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like reopening the Halki Seminary will send such an important signal inside Turkey and beyond." Five years later, events have led to questions—including from members of this committee—about the trajectory of Turkish democracy: whether media and online freedoms are adequately guaranteed; whether rule of law is sufficiently protected; whether citizens have the right to free assembly and expression; whether the judicial system is free from political interference; and whether the voices of all minorities are being heard.

These are, ultimately, questions Turks will answer through the choices they make, but we will continue to advocate—as we do around the world—for transparent and accountable government. As Turkey prepares for its first direct Presidential election in August, the ongoing debates in Turkey could lead to an even stronger and more successful democracy—if Turks embrace tolerance and respect for a diversity of viewpoints. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will urge Turkey to live up to all the universal democratic principles, enshrined in its own foundational documents and international commitments, that undergird true national strength. Allowing space for free and independent media, strengthening the rule of law and checks and balances, empowering women, and encouraging a robust role for civil society—these steps not only make countries freer, but also help them grow. In the same vein, we commend the important steps to advance peace talks between the government and Turkey's Kurds, which could bring an end to 30 years of armed conflict and lead to a more stable and prosperous Turkey.

Mr. Chairman, Turkey's democratic progress over the past decade has spurred strong growth, tripling the size of its economy. U.S. exports to Turkey also tripled in the last decade. But for all the growth in bilateral trade, Turkey is still just our 34th-largest trade partner, at about \$18 billion in total trade in 2013. We can, and should, do much better than this. If confirmed, I will be an advocate for U.S. business who leads our mission in Turkey to strengthen business-to-business ties, identify opportunities for Turkish investment in the U.S., and promote the National Export Initiative. I further expect that my work promoting the integrity of independent institutions, the rule of law, and respect for fundamental freedoms will serve to bolster Turkey's reputation as a country with which U.S. companies want to do more and better business.

Investment in our political, security, and economic ties with Turkey and the surrounding region would yield little without the ties between our two peoples and societies that are so fundamental to U.S.-Turkey relations. In 2012–2013, Turkey sent more students to American universities than any other European country. If confirmed, I will sustain and amplify our public outreach in Turkey, finding new ways to connect our two societies through education exchange programs, science and technology partnerships, and entrepreneurship programs.

And finally, a word about a core purpose of our overseas missions: service to Americans—whether they are your constituents with an interest in Turkey, or our fellow citizens visiting or living in Turkey. I pledge to provide the highest level of service to all of them with the same focus and energy which I and my colleagues will apply to promoting American interests and values. Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Ambassador.
Mr. O'Malley.

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN F. O'MALLEY, OF MISSOURI,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND**

Mr. O'MALLEY. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored and pleased to be here as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Ireland. I would like to publicly thank the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and their trust, and I am grateful to Senators McCaskill and Blunt for their support and for being here with me today.

I am so fortunate to be able to be here today as an American asked to represent my country, one that I love and that has given so much to me, in Ireland, a land and a people that has given so much to America and that so many of us hold so dear. Both of my parents were Irish, and I trace my most recent Irish roots to my grandparents and my aunts and my uncles, who came from Westport in County Mayo at the beginning of the 20th century. I have always enjoyed traveling in their footsteps, crisscrossing Ireland from Dublin to Galway, from Cork to Mayo. I found there is an unbreakable bond and a deep kinship between the people of the United States and the people of Ireland.

From the time of our Nation's founding, thousands of courageous Irish men and women came to the New World. They signed our Declaration of Independence, they fought in our Revolutionary War, and they drafted our Constitution. The sons and the daughters of Ireland are etched into the cornerstone of the United States of America.

I learned to love Ireland and all things Irish initially seated at the feet of my parents and my aunts and my uncles and both sets of grandparents. But Ireland, I learned, was more than just a place; it was a way of life—hard work, spiritual values, family, determination, and wit.

Today, to no one's surprise, Ireland is one of our closest friends and most stable trading partners. More than \$38 billion in trade passes between the United States and Ireland each year. The United States exports more than \$6 billion of goods to Ireland each year. I am confident that even that can be improved upon. Trade and investment ties between the United States and Ireland will be further strengthened if we can reach agreement on the ambitious Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

While always adhering to its neutrality, Ireland is our constant partner in dangerous peacekeeping missions throughout the world. Irish troops participate, for example, in the NATO mission in Afghanistan, and it has sent much-needed troops to the Golan Heights and has given millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to Syria's refugees.

But the United States and Ireland also face several challenges together. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 has brought years of reduced strife and reduced bloodshed to Northern Ireland, but this work is not yet done. Very courageous people were willing to take the first steps toward peace and reconciliation 16 years ago. While real tangible progress has been made, much more needs to be done in order to completely devolve the government, to achieve a vibrant

economy, and to create a pluralistic shared society in Northern Ireland.

President Obama has asked me, a trial lawyer, a writer, and an educator, to firmly represent our values in Ireland. But he has also asked me to listen to our friends there. In dealing with the peace process, for example, he trusts that I will be both steadfast and flexible, standing by our convictions while seeking conciliation.

Another issue affecting the special kinship between our two countries is the changing face of Ireland. Today Ireland looks very different from what President Kennedy saw when he visited 50 years ago. We must be careful not to rely only upon our historical friendships, but must constantly renew our alliance to keep it healthy and vital. For example, 30 percent of Ireland's population today is under the age of 24 and one in six is born outside of Ireland. As Ireland transforms into a more multicultural society, we must include Irish citizens with ancestry in Asia and Africa and the Middle East in that special bond shared between previous generations of Irish and Americans.

The new generation of Irish seeks connection to the United States through business and technology partnerships, music, and the arts. We must therefore build bridges to ensure that our special friendship remains timeless. Both the young and the old in Ireland should understand that they have no better friend in the world than the United States of America. It is my intention, if confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Ireland, to broaden and strengthen our special bonds, to increase the opportunities for trade and prosperity, and to work for a just and a permanent peace. No American, and particularly no Irish-American, could ask for a more meaningful undertaking.

Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would like to submit my complete statement for the record and I will be happy to answer any questions that the committee might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. O'Malley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEVIN F. O'MALLEY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to be here today as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Ireland. I would like to publicly express my gratitude to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have shown in me by this nomination. I also thank you and this committee for considering the nomination.

I am so fortunate to be before you today as an American asked to represent the United States—a country that I love and that has given so much to me—and to represent my country in Ireland—a land and a people that has given so much to us and that so many of us hold so dear. Personally, I trace my Irish roots to my grandparents who came from Westport, County Mayo, in the beginning of the 20th century. I have enjoyed discovering the land of my grandparents, crisscrossing Ireland from Dublin to Galway, from Cork to Mayo. There is an unbreakable bond and a deep kinship between the people of United States and the people of Ireland. How did this come to pass? What makes this relationship so very special?

The United States is, of course, a nation of immigrants. From the time of our Nation's founding, thousands of Irish men and women came to the new world. This legacy is forged into the very cornerstone of the United States of America. Nine of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Irish. Six of the 36 delegates to the convention which drafted our Constitution were Irish. An estimated 30 percent of the soldiers in the Revolutionary Army were Irish. These immigrants from Ireland were not just looking for a better life; they were prepared to build one in the new world. From this start, Irish immigrants made contributions to the United States in construction, railroads, and commerce. They contributed to our Nation as

policemen, firefighters, politicians, educators, as well as winners of Oscars, Emmys, Grammys, Pulitzer, and Nobel Prizes.

I learned to love Ireland and all things Irish seated at the feet of my parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Ireland, I learned, was more than just a place—it was a way of life: Hard work; Spiritual values; Determination, and Wit.

When Ireland won its independence, the United States was one of the first nations to recognize its status as a country and to send an ambassador. We have been with Ireland and Ireland has been with us ever since.

Ireland is today one of our most reliable allies and stable trading partners. More than \$38 billion of trade passes between United States and Ireland each year, with the United States exporting more than \$6 billion worth of goods to Ireland. I am confident we can build on that. Irish companies employ over 120,000 persons in the United States. Some 700 U.S. firms employ approximately 115,000 people in Ireland. These U.S. companies generate approximately 26 percent of Ireland's GDP. Ireland is one of the largest sources of direct foreign investment in the United States. Last year Forbes Magazine listed Ireland as the best country in the world within which to do business. Trade and investment ties between the United States and Ireland will be further strengthened if we can reach agreement on an ambitious Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Although always adhering to its neutrality, Ireland is our constant partner in peacekeeping missions throughout the world. Irish troops participate in the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Ireland also sent much-needed troops to the dangerous Golan Heights during the Syrian crisis, when no other developed country answered the call. They also send peacekeepers to places like Lebanon, Mali, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kosovo.

As a meaningful way to honor the victims of its own famine, Ireland provides nutritional assistance to infants and mothers in Zambia. And recalling its own efforts to emerge from its own economic crisis, Ireland has offered millions of dollars of humanitarian assistance to those suffering in Syria's crisis.

The United States and Ireland face several challenges together. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 ended years of strife and bloodshed to Northern Ireland, but this work is not done. Courageous people were willing to take the first steps toward peace and reconciliation 16 years ago. While there has been real progress, more must be done to fully devolve government and achieve a vibrant economy and pluralistic, shared society. As President Obama said in his speech to Northern Ireland youth in Belfast last June, the people of Northern Ireland will "have to choose whether to keep going forward." The United States will be there to help.

Another issue affecting the kinship between our two countries is the changing face of Ireland. We must be careful not to rely only upon the historical friendship, but must constantly renew our alliance to keep it healthy and vital. We must continue to build new connections, to and with young American and Irish leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

Today's Ireland, after all, looks very different from the one President John F. Kennedy visited 50 years ago. Among the 28 countries of the European Union, Ireland has the fastest growing population due to both increased immigration and higher birthrates. Approximately 33 percent of the population of Ireland is under the age of 24. One in six people residing in Ireland today was born elsewhere. In just a few years, our fond memories and family ties, although a strong historic foundation for relations, will simply not be enough. The new generation of Irish seeks connections to the United States through business and technology collaboration, music, and the arts, too. As Ireland transforms into a more multicultural society, we must include Irish citizens with ancestry in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in the special bonds shared between previous generations. We must, build new bridges to ensure this friendship remains timeless.

I believe that the relationship between United States and Ireland is truly unique—molded in cultural and family ties, strengthened by trade and commercial successes, and celebrated through politics, music, literature, the arts, and shared concern for peoples beyond our own borders. It is my intention, if confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Ireland, to represent our great country to one of our greatest and closest friends, to broaden and strengthen our bonds, to work for a just and permanent peace, and to increase opportunities for better lives. No American, and particularly no Irish-American, could ask for a more meaningful undertaking.

Thank you for considering this nomination. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you all three of our panelists. We will now engage in a round of 7-minute question periods.

First let me start with you, Ambassador Bass. There is a real story to be told about Turkish impressions and opinions of the United States before the war in Iraq and after the war in Iraq. We have almost come to accept that there is going to be a general negative feeling about the United States in the Middle East, but in a place like Turkey, under the Clinton administration the Pew polling work that is done on an intermittent basis in countries around the world showed a fairly robust reservoir of goodwill for the United States. Things are very different today, to the point that your predecessor, the Ambassador that you are going to be replacing, has been at times roughed up pretty badly by the Erdogan administration and the press, being accused of several outlandish conspiracy theories.

Our ability to work with the Turks on, let us say, something as important as the new NATO missile shield is dependent in part about what the people of Turkey feel about the United States. It is a long time since we made the decision to invade Iraq and so what are the things that need to be done that you can help work on that will improve the opinion of Turks with respect to the United States? What is the underlying reasons for the level of distrust? How can we make it better so as to give Erdogan or whoever is going to be the follow-on leader of that country more political impetus to cooperate with us?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, thank you for that question. I think we have to do several things simultaneously. I would characterize it as investing in the long aspects of this relationship, the important pieces of the relationship, and not simply the urgent pieces. We have to be able to do both and we have to expand, even as we address the urgent issues of the day, our work together on those other deep, important pieces.

Historically, there has long been suspicion of United States or western motives in Turkey that come out of its creation as a modern state, as you know. It is clear that there on top of those potential cultural predispositions is a degree of either lack of information or misinformation about the United States and its policy. I think one of the things we need to be focused intently on is intensifying our efforts to tell our story and reach more populations in Turkey, and particularly the generation that is now coming of age that will inherit whatever relationship we have.

Senator MURPHY. You spoke a little bit about the Kurdish population there. We tend to talk about the conflicts in Syria and Iraq as binary, Shia and Sunni, and yet in both there is a very complicated question about the future of the Kurdish populations in both of those places. What is the ability to work with the Turks as leaders to try to figure out the future of Kurdish Government, autonomy, other related issues, not just within Turkey itself, but within Iraq and Syria?

Ambassador BASS. First off, let me say we are pleased by the degree to which the government in Ankara is working to continue and reinforce the ongoing peace talks with those of its Kurdish citizens who have been engaged in conflict over the past 30 years. To the extent that conflict can be brought to a final close, that is good for the region, it is good for Turkish stability. Only recently, we

have seen some good steps forward to legalize the ongoing peace talks so that folks can negotiate freely.

With respect to the broader Kurdish populations in neighboring states, I think it is important that the Turks continue to have a strong, productive relationship, particularly with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq, but to do so in a way that reflects our overarching commitment to the unity and stability of Iraq. That is something we have been working quite closely with Ankara on as we have been trying to help the Iraqis develop and put in place a new government.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Hartley, let me turn to you. The name of the company today is the Observatory Group, but it was previously the G7 Group, which speaks to the focus of a lot of your work, primarily anchored in Europe and G7 nations. As you mentioned in your opening statement, you know a lot about some of the economic calculus made in France. There is a worry that as we move forward on the TTIP negotiations that France is going to have some special considerations that will make it difficult for them to sign on to a final agreement. At the outset, they were a little bit nervous about, for instance, the protections they traditionally enjoy when it comes to their audio-visual industry.

So maybe you can give us a little bit of insight as to what the French disposition is as we head into the more serious rounds of negotiations on a free trade agreement with Europe and potentially whether there is reason to worry about their commitment to an ultimate deal.

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question. As we know, right now the French economy is fairly weak. President Hollande actually has said publicly that he is supportive of the trade deal. There are issues. You are right, there are specific areas where we still disagree, where we are still discussing, where we are still in discussions.

I think in terms of the mission one of the things that would be very important in terms of public diplomacy would be to make sure the public knew what a trade deal would do for the economy of France, because even right now if you look at polling in France the public supports the trade deal. It is only when you get down to the specifics.

So I look forward to working with you and I look forward very much to reinforcing the message that trade is actually good for jobs in both countries.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. O'Malley, when we talked in my office last week we were looking forward to the July 12 marches to see if they came off in a peaceful manner. By and large, they did. What does that say about the prospects for continued discussions with respect to Northern Ireland, in particular the Haass proposals which have been sort of the standing foundation of the potential settlement moving forward?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Thank you, Senator. I think everyone is relieved that so far the marching season has gone relatively well. There have been, as you know, far worse periods during these particular summer marching seasons. But we are not through with the marching season yet.

I think we should point out the good and try to protect against the bad. I think it is important to recognize the courage that people exercised in renouncing violence and stepping forward and attempting to make a new life for the people in Northern Ireland and the border counties. But there still remains work to be done. Dr. Haass and Dr. O'Sullivan when they were in Ireland just recently really laid out proposals which could make this whole marching season issue—could resolve it in a permanent way, so that every year everybody would not be on edge when the summer marching season came.

So if confirmed, I would urge all parties to return to the table and to try to adopt an agreement along the lines that Dr. Haass recommended recently.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me pick up on that point, because it is exactly where I was going to go to out of your testimony. You said: "More must be done to fully devolve government and achieve a vibrant economy and a pluralistic, shared society." Can you get into the specifics of what that Haass agreement really is talking about? What is the "much more" that needs to be done?

Mr. O'MALLEY. What needs to be done is to follow the Haass recommendations. Dr. Haass recommended several things. There were agreements that were reached about dealing with the past, but they were not fully resolved. There were issues regarding how to deal with flags and emblems, but they were not fully resolved. There were issues dealing with how the government was going to interact, but they were not fully resolved.

I think that it is important to get to—if confirmed, to be able to meet with all of the parties involved in these talks and find out precisely where all the sticking points were, why this agreement, which was widely, widely praised, did not go through.

Senator JOHNSON. You mentioned agreement on flags. It seems like there has got to be more significant issues than that.

Mr. O'MALLEY. To the Northern Irish, those are significant issues. They have a resonance there that you or I may not fully, fully appreciate or fully feel. But that is very important to a segment of the population, and that has to be dealt with.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate that.

Northern Ireland has a 12.5 percent tax on business and as a result there have been a number of American companies that have started operations there, certainly part of the process of trade between the two countries. Certainly in the political realm here in this country it seems like there is a resentment about that fact in some cases. I just kind of want to get your views on, what do you think about that American investment in Ireland taking advantage of that 12.5 percent tax rate? I just want your views on that.

Mr. O'MALLEY. Sure. I think you meant Ireland has a 12.5 rate.

Senator JOHNSON. What did I say?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Northern Ireland.

Senator JOHNSON. Oh, I am sorry. Ireland.

Mr. O'MALLEY. I think it is a little bit higher in Northern Ireland at the moment.

There are a number of reasons why American companies have found Ireland to be an attractive place to do business in Europe, and those are some of the compelling reasons. It is an English-speaking country. It is a country that has a well-educated and dedicated workforce. It is a country that appreciates America and American goods. Ireland is in the euro zone and is in the EU, and it is strategically located at the entrance to Europe. I think all of those considerations and probably many more have to do with Ireland's success in attracting American business.

Senator JOHNSON. I realize there are more factors to it. But again, addressing the 12.5 percent, there seems to be some resentment. Do you share that resentment? Do you think that is an appropriate thing, for governments to compete with tax structures and regulatory structures to attract investment? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mr. O'MALLEY. I know, Senator, that both the United States and the European Union are having discussions with Ireland about that tax rate. If confirmed, I would participate in those discussions with them.

Senator JOHNSON. Is your knowledge that the administration is opposed to that 12.5 percent rate? Are they trying to entice or induce Ireland to increase that tax rate?

Mr. O'MALLEY. I do not know, Senator, the precise answer to that question. I would be happy to get back with you on that. I do not know that the administration has taken a position one way or the other on another country's tax rate.

Senator JOHNSON. OK.

Mr. O'MALLEY. And I do not know that anyone else has taken a position on our tax rate.

Senator JOHNSON. Fair enough.

Mr. Bass, talking earlier about the issues between the Kurds and Turkey. Certainly I have been in contact with citizens of the Kurdish region, and they are certainly pressing for independence. Reading the press, it is sounding like Turkey may be more open to that prospect, even though they have been utterly opposed to it in the past. Am I reading that right? Is there a growing possible acceptance on the part of Turkey to have an independent state of Kurdistan?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, in our conversations with the Turkish Government they have continued to advocate the importance to Turkey and its interests of a stable, unified, federal Iraq. We are continuing to work closely with them to try to bring that about.

It has been very painful for those of us who invested parts of our professional lives in Iraq over the last 10, 11 years to see the recent turn of events. If I am confirmed, I will certainly continue to work to bring that result about in partnership with our Turkish friends and to stay in a close dialogue with them about their interaction and relationship with the officials and the citizens in the KRG.

Senator JOHNSON. What are the current pressing issues between the Kurdistan region and the Turkish Government?

Ambassador BASS. There is a variety of cross-border issues of interest. Obviously, the rebels in southeastern Turkey over the 30 years of their insurgency have crossed back and forth from north-

ern Iraq, so the Government of Turkey worked very closely with the authorities in northern Iraq to enable them to address some of those flows in both directions.

There is quite a strong trade and economic relationship as a result of the KRG's increased self-reliance on its own resources and there is an energy relationship between them as well.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you speak to the transportation of oil from Kurdistan through Turkey and what our policy is toward that, and then really how Turkey is viewing that?

Ambassador BASS. We do not take a position on the merits of the specific sales. We have expressed to both parties concerns that the disputes within Iraq about legal title to that commodity may wrap those cargoes up in ongoing litigation once they are out.

I think the most important thing from our perspective is to help stabilize oil exports from Iraq, to make sure those revenues are available to all the citizens of Iraq and shared equitably within a Federal unified state.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all very much for being here this morning and for your willingness to serve this country. This is a particularly turbulent time in the world and I think it is a time where working with our allies is particularly important. So you will be in critical places at a time in our history which will really be important.

I am also especially pleased to see my friend Jane Hartley here and share in your enthusiasm at being only the second woman nominated to be Ambassador to France and hopefully to serve in that position. So thank you.

I am going to begin with you. It was very interesting to see the recent elections in the European Parliament and France's anti-EU party, the National Front, won the most seats with 25 percent of the vote. I wonder if you could speak to what you think the implications of that election and the changes might be for French policy toward the European Union?

Ms. HARTLEY. Well, as we spoke before, France is having a difficult time. The economy is quite tough over there right now. Unemployment is running at about 10 percent. That was an issue during the parliamentary elections. The one thing I would note on the parliamentary elections, there was low turnout, so it is unclear what that may mean for the general elections that are coming up in 2017. But the National Front is a force and they will continue to be a force in French politics.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Bass, July 20 marks the 40th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. I am sure we are always concerned when a country is invaded, and particularly here where Cyprus has been partitioned since that time, basically. I wonder if you see any indications that Turkey may be ready to try and play a constructive role in looking at reunifying Cyprus and if there is more that we can do to encourage that kind of a role.

Ambassador BASS. Thank you, Senator. We continue to support very strongly the ongoing discussions between both communities on

the island under the auspices of the U.N., with the goal of a lasting settlement on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. In recent months, I think we have seen the government in Ankara, as well as the government in Athens, both contributing to that process of helping these two communities talk through the differences and try to identify the ways forward to a lasting settlement.

It is something that has been quite a high priority. As you know, Vice President Biden was in Cyprus in May; Secretary Kerry very focused on this. I have been in a couple of conversations with him of late where he has wanted very much to turn to this in the coming months. If I am confirmed, I certainly will help to the greatest extent possible my colleagues working in Cyprus, in Greece, and here in Washington to continue to support the efforts under way to bring this to a lasting settlement.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Obviously, Turkey is in a critical place, not only in terms of their influence throughout the greater Middle East, but also in terms of their geography. As we look at conflicts in Syria, as we look at what is happening in northern Africa, can you talk about how we can—maybe what we are already doing to work with Turkey to address some of those conflict areas?

Ambassador BASS. Thank you. We are already doing quite a bit of work. Turkey cochairs with us the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which is a group of about 30 like-minded countries who are working together to help other countries develop their own capacity to address some of these challenges at home before they become much bigger problems for a wider region. The Turks have taken a particular focus on the Horn of Africa and have been doing quite a bit of work with the Somali Government.

Within their more immediate neighborhood, of course, we have had very good cooperation in recent months in addressing some of the consequences of the conflict in Syria and the increase in fighters, money, exploiting Turkey's geography in and out of those conflict zones. Our belief is that the Turks understand this is an acute threat for all of us and we have seen some important steps from them to address some of the issues that were potentially making their geography more attractive.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. O'Malley, Ireland was one of the countries hardest hit by the financial crisis in 2008. It is my understanding that the IMF and the EU is relatively pleased with the progress that Ireland has made with some of the austerity measures that have been put in place. I wonder if you can speak to whether they are in a position now to begin to do more investing and to roll back some of those austerity measures and what the future for the Irish economy is based on where they are now?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Yes, Senator, thank you. The Irish were hit terribly, as you correctly point out. To their credit, they undertook very painful austerity measures in order to recover. All of the signs, as you pointed out, have indicated that Ireland is on its way back and has arrived at a place where they are, for example, now their long-term sovereign debt has been upgraded from BBB-plus to A-minus. Ireland is now—has returned back into the bond market, where it can sell bonds.

So I think all of the indicators are that the austerity measures have worked. What precisely the Irish are going to do from now on I think is really a matter of internal Irish politics. They had an election recently. They have had a cabinet reshuffle and my guess is that they are discussing those measures as we speak.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you and congratulations to all of the witnesses for your nominations. Mr. Bass, Ambassador Bass, let me begin with you. I had visited the refugee camps, Syrian refugee camps, in Adona. I have been very impressed, as you pointed out, with the degree to which Turkey is doing yeoman's work to take care of nearly a million refugees from Syria. In a population of 75 million people, a million refugees is a big chunk of people. Similar generosity is being shown by Jordan and Lebanon in the region.

I remember being there and wondering how the U.S. would respond to refugees fleeing violence coming to the United States and have not been particularly proud of recent response to refugees fleeing violence in Central America coming to the United States. So that should make us even appreciate what Turkey does even more.

Yesterday the U.N. Security Council took a step that was a positive. This committee had passed a resolution that was passed out of the floor of the Senate in March calling for unfettered cross-border humanitarian aid deliveries even without the Syrian Government's approval. That had been blocked in the U.N. Security Council by Russia and China, but yesterday they acceded to a resolution that was passed unanimously to basically allow cross-border aid under a U.N. sanction.

Two of the border crossings identified for this aid to be delivered are in Turkey. I would like you, if you would, just to talk about what you might be able to do as an ambassador, representative of the United States, the Nation that is the largest provider of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees, what you can do together with the Turkish Government to facilitate greater humanitarian aid deliveries inside Syria?

Ambassador BASS. Thanks very much for raising that. We have had a very good, close, collaborative relationship with the Government of Turkey, both to address those refugee outflows that you identified, but also to work to get more assistance into Syria to support the moderate opposition and to enable them to try to provide a degree of governance and services to the populations within those areas that are under their control.

We have a pretty extensive group of experts in and around Adona who work directly with other relief-providing agencies and with the Government of Turkey on these issues, and we will certainly be looking for additional opportunities to expand and intensify that work.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Ambassador Bass.

Ms. Hartley, in your opening testimony you talked about a concern that I just want to follow up on. The French Government has been a very strong partner with the U.S. in the P5+1 discussions to find an end to any nuclear weaponization program in Iran,

sometimes even really playing the bad cop in the negotiations, and we appreciate it. But at the same time, there seems to be a little bit of a double standard, whereas the French Government has been strong, but French businesses have been seen to really want to get back into the investment game with Iran.

You commented upon that as something that you might be able to do as Ambassador, is to really point out that there should not be a back door to allow French corporations to evade sanctions. Talk a little bit about that challenge and how you would intend to address it in your capacity?

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you, Senator. I share your concern. As you know, recently a group of French businessmen did go to Iran. Secretary Kerry voiced his opposition, and I was pleased to see the French Government back us up, and no business deals were done.

I will make that very clear, that—I will reinforce that statement and while I am Ambassador, until the situation with Iran is resolved, there will be no business as usual.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I really encourage you in that. I think it is important to do this diplomacy, but I do worry about companies trying to race ahead of whether—we will know soon whether we are going to be able to find a meaningful path forward with Iran. So I would encourage you to make that a primary area of focus.

Mr. O'Malley, I was in Ireland during the local and EU parliamentary elections that took place at the end of May and the general interpretation when I was there was that the elections sort of were antiausterity and a little bit anti-Europe. Those were the impressions at the immediate time those elections took place. Now that the dust has settled and I know there has been some Cabinet reshuffling because the Taoiseach's party, Fine Gael, kind of took it on the chin in those elections, what is the current sort of internal politics in Ireland surrounding—you talked a little bit about the austerity, but even the relationships with the EU and Europe?

Mr. O'MALLEY. I think, Senator, that the dust really has not quite settled yet from the elections. The Cabinet reshuffling just took place last week and I think everyone is still examining where it is. We know that Ireland is very committed to the EU, and we know that Ireland is very committed to the austerity proposals that made their assent from their financial crisis so successful. So I do not anticipate that there would be any dramatic change in the Irish policy toward the austerity program.

I think there was a great deal of frustration expressed during the elections, but I think that the Irish have adopted a very firm course. That course has been proven to be successful, and I do not anticipate that there will be any dramatic changes. I look forward, if confirmed, to talking to the Taoiseach and to get a better internal view of exactly what the long-term plan is.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. O'Malley.

One final question. Another area of concern when I was recently in Ireland was the announced reopening of a potential criminal case against Gerry Adams over a very gruesome murder that took place many, many years ago. Now, the precipitating factor was the opening of an archive at Boston College that was oral histories given by folks who were connected with the IRA that were thought

to be closed until everyone passed away. But someone did pass away, the archive became available, at least with respect to that history, and then this notion of a criminal investigation has been restarted.

A lot of question about is that just an isolated incident or is there some desire to now spend more time looking in the rear view mirror than in the windshield and going back and relitigating all of these matters that were hopefully resolved to some significant degree in the Good Friday Accords. I know the younger generation in Ireland, the kids, they do not even remember anything about the Troubles. It is a pretty remarkable story and the U.S. has a lot at stake in trying to continue on the path forward.

Do you have any sense about that particular criminal matter? While that is domestic politics, do you think it suggests a broader unraveling of the Good Friday Accords and kind of a decision by some to start looking more backward than forward?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Senator, I have two thoughts on that. One, the first is that the Boston College study, which was a totally private academic interest here, the release of any more of the data in that I do not believe will affect the peace process. I think that the Accords are strong. I think there has been now 16 years of experience with them. So that the truth or whatever is found in the Boston College study will not cause anyone to repudiate the Accords or to go backward.

But I do think, and I feel strongly, that that incident with the detention of Mr. Adams and the whole look backward compels, compels us to urge the five parties to get back to the table and to adopt the proposals that Dr. Haass recommended not very many months ago, because there needs to be a system in place to deal with these issues as they are going to continue to arise. So, if confirmed, I will do my best to convince the parties to go back, to have a comprehensive, a cohesive way to deal with these very troubling emotional issues.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. O'Malley.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bass, do you think the Turkish Government is in favor of the establishment of safe areas protected by a no-fly zone inside Syria?

Ambassador BASS. I think the Turkish Government is looking for ways to push forward in promoting a solution to the conflict in Syria.

Senator MCCAIN. I would like the answer to the question.

Ambassador BASS. I would like to take that back, if I may.

[The written reply submitted by Ambassador Bass to the requested information follows:]

Turkish officials have expressed interest in the idea of a no-fly zone over the course of the conflict in Syria. For example, during his May 2013 visit to Washington, Prime Minister Erdogan stated publicly that the decision to establish such a zone would need to come through the U.N. Security Council, and if it did, Turkey would support the idea. Turkish officials also made clear their desire for close consultations with the United States and the international community to find the means for a negotiated, political transition in Syria. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with Turkey to coordinate support for the moderate Syrian opposition, to provide humanitarian support for refugees in Turkey and cross-border assistance

to Syrians in need, and to bolster our already-strong bilateral military ties with Turkey.

Senator MCCAIN. Turkey has been, I think you would agree, has been a principal channel for the flow of people, arms, and logistical assistance to the rebels. Has the Turkish Government changed its border policies in light of ISIS' so far successful campaign in Iraq?

Ambassador BASS. My understanding, Senator, is that the Turkish Government has been very careful about people flowing across those borders, and we have had good cooperation in recent months to address these challenges of additional fighters and potentially money flowing in and out of the conflict zones.

Senator MCCAIN. Are you concerned about Prime Minister Erdogan's desire to change the constitution and other actions that we have seen on the part of Erdogan as a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. Prime Minister Erdogan is the leader of a democratically elected parliamentary democracy.

Senator MCCAIN. I am aware, I am aware of that.

Ambassador BASS. We will obviously look closely at whatever steps he takes—

Senator MCCAIN. Do you believe that many of the things, actions that he has taken—suppressing the social media, YouTube and Twitter, restrictions on Internet freedom and independent media—is this a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. I would say they are inconsistent with our concept of a strong vibrant democracy.

Senator MCCAIN. I would like a yes or no. I would like a yes or no answer.

Ambassador BASS. I can tell you that we will continue to underscore our concerns—

Senator MCCAIN. I would like a yes or no answer, Mr. Bass. You are putting your nomination in jeopardy by not answering the question. Do you believe—it is a pretty simple, straightforward question—that, with his repression of social media, his desire to change the constitution to give more power to the Presidency, which he obviously will be, do you believe that that is a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. I think if those steps were taken without appropriate checks in place—

Senator MCCAIN. He is taking those steps, Mr. Bass. Again, this is really a little frustrating. I would like an honest answer. Do you believe that there is a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, I think if these possibilities become realities in law, then those would be—

Senator MCCAIN. You do not think they have become realities now?

Ambassador BASS. Well—

Senator MCCAIN. The suppression of YouTube, the suppression of Twitter.

Ambassador BASS. We have seen the constitutional court—

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to support this nominee's nomination and I will hold it until I get a straight answer.

I think it is a fairly straightforward, question, Mr. Bass. Is it a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. It is a drift in that direction, yes, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you. It took 3 minutes and 25 seconds of my 5-minute time.

Mr. O'Malley, there is a question of the Shannon Airport preclearance agreement. I do not know—for our men and women in uniform. I hope that you will have a look at that. We would like to facilitate that process as so many of our military personnel flow through the Shannon Airport, where they are, as you know, most hospitable and very nice people there, no matter what hour of the day or night we happen to arrive there on our CODELs.

Ms. Hartley, as you know, President Hollande has indicated his government plans to honor its contract to sell two *Mistral*-class amphibious warships to Russia. The first ship will arrive in October. Do you think that that is a good idea?

Ms. HARTLEY. No, I think it is a terrible idea. I share your concern. The President has communicated with President Hollande, has told him that we do not think this is the time to be doing defense deals with Russia. I completely agree with that and if I am confirmed I will reinforce that message when I arrive in France.

Senator MCCAIN. As you know—thank you. As you know, they have had significant involvement in Mali. In fact, we visited there and have seen the significant French and excellent professional capabilities. Do you think we ought to be assisting them and cooperating more in this effort in Mali?

Ms. HARTLEY. My impression is that we are working with them, providing technology and other things. They clearly are the boots on the ground. I think having France there, it is very sophisticated. It is a force multiplier for us. France has continued to spend I think 1.9 percent on its defense budget and that is a positive. So working with them helps both of us, and they help us a lot by being the boots on the ground in Africa.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

I just have one followup for you, Ambassador Bass. It is on this question that Senator McCain raised. Let me ask it in just a slightly different way. What are the U.S. levers to try to slow this march toward the suppression of speech. We have got a problem in that there is a pretty weak opposition in Turkey that should be doing a lot of that work by itself. Without it, it is left to the international community to put pressure on them. Senator Johnson and I have been very vocal, for instance, about the suppression of Twitter.

You are going to have a lot of irons in the fire when you are sitting with Erdogan and his deputies. How do you continue to raise these issues amidst all sorts of other very important diplomatic and military cooperation that are happening? And will you commit to us as a committee to make sure that these issues related to the suppression of free speech and free assembly are still top of mind for our Embassy there?

Ambassador BASS. Absolutely. It will be very important to continue to press the Turkish Government, to be clear about our beliefs, our values, our commitment to democratic values and human

rights, and to find ways to try to influence the discussion in Turkey in a way that shows the potential consequences for Turks if they continue down a path that would make Turkey less democratic. I do not think there is any question that that would be of enormous concern to us going forward.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Any further questions for this panel? [No response.]

If not, thank you very much for joining us today. We look forward to moving your nominations as quickly as possible through the committee. You are excused and we will now seat our second panel.

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. We are now pleased to welcome our two panelists in the second round, considering the nomination of James Pettit to be Ambassador to Moldova and Brent Hartley, our second Hartley of the morning, to be Ambassador to Slovenia.

Despite the recent ratification of an association agreement with the EU, Moldova finds itself in a tenuous position between the West and Russia. As the poorest country in Europe and a former Soviet state, Moldova's economy at times seems inextricably linked to that of Russia as it continues to struggle with Russian export bans, instability in Transnistria, and a crushing debt to Gazprom. While Moldova celebrates its newly signed agreement and visa-free travel to Europe, it also desires to regain a positive relationship with Russia. The two should not be mutually exclusive.

If confirmed, Mr. Pettit, you will need to navigate these geopolitical challenges in find new ways in which the United States can support Moldova's important political and economic reform efforts.

Senator Shaheen and I, along with other members of the committee, recently introduced a bipartisan resolution outlining the United States commitment to Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we look forward to engaging in an open dialogue about U.S. support for Moldova.

Moving west geographically speaking, the United States has long considered Slovenia as important strategic NATO ally in the western Balkans. Like Moldova, Slovenia is also still grappling with its past as an ex-Communist state. While it is considered to be one of the most politically and economically stable countries in the EU, it is currently undergoing significant political upheaval as a result of alleged corruption and economic crises.

If confirmed, Mr. Hartley, you are going to be facing the challenge of navigating these domestic difficulties as well as broader European security challenges.

Let me quickly introduce our witnesses and then we will get right to your testimony. Mr. Pettit has been nominated to be Ambassador to Moldova. He is a career member of the Foreign Service, currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Consular Affairs at the Department of State. He has spent a third of his career living in the former Soviet Union, previously serving as deputy chief of mission in Kiev and as deputy general counsel and political officer in Moscow. He has served in Vienna, Taipei, Guadalajara, as well as back here in the State Department.

He speaks Russian, Spanish, German, Mandarin Chinese, received his B.A. from Iowa State University and a master's degree from the National War College.

Brent Hartley has been nominated to be Ambassador to Slovenia, as mentioned. He is a highly distinguished Foreign Service officer, currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of State.

We welcome both of you to the panel today, and we will start, Mr. Hartley, with your testimony, and then move to Mr. Pettit.

STATEMENT OF BRENT ROBERT HARTLEY, OF OREGON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Mr. HARTLEY. Thank you very much, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson. I would like to submit my full statement for the record if I may. I am honored to be here before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the eighth Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Slovenia. I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to justify their faith and yours in my ability to advance our strategic, economic, and political interests with Slovenia.

I am also grateful for the love and flexibility of my wife, Elizabeth Dickinson, who is here today with us, my daughter, Eleanor, and my son, Charlie. My 33-year Foreign Service career has been largely dedicated to strengthening our relations with European allies and partners, and my wife has been with me every step of the way.

If confirmed, I will seek to sustain and deepen our political and security cooperation with Slovenia. This year Slovenia is celebrating its 10-year anniversary of NATO and EU membership. Slovenian soldiers have served side by side with U.S. Forces in Afghanistan since 2003. Slovenians have served in international peacekeeping missions around the world, including Lebanon and Syria. It has also been a close U.S. partner in defending human rights, combating human trafficking, and safeguarding religious freedom around the globe.

We share a particular priority on promoting stability in the Balkans, including by encouraging the integration of Balkan States into NATO and the EU. Slovenian soldiers deployed in NATO stabilization operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and they continue to contribute to the EU successor mission in Bosnia and maintain over 300 soldiers in Kosovo in the KFOR operation. As a result of its Balkan experiences, Slovenia also remains dedicated to addressing the safety of civilians during conflict, demining, and conventional weapons destruction.

We welcome Slovenia's continued strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its implementation of international sanctions in the face of Russia's occupation of Crimea. We are also working together to address urgent humanitarian challenges in Syria, Iran's nuclear proliferation, and Libya's stability, and we are working with Slovenia, as we are doing throughout the EU, on energy security and diversification of energy resources.

Our military-to-military relations are excellent, characterized by hundreds of military exchanges, six codeployments with the Colorado National Guard in Afghanistan, and a rich foundation for future cooperation. Unfortunately, severe defense budget cuts resulting from recent economic difficulties have left Slovenia well below the NATO goal of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense. If confirmed, I will work to encourage the Slovenian Government to reverse cuts in defense and to address the structural challenges exposed by the country's economic downturn.

Outgoing Prime Minister Bratusek's government and the central bank took a positive step in 2013 to recapitalize Slovenia's banking sector and restore market confidence, and the euro zone recovery has brought some economic relief as well. Yet many challenges remain. The United States and European Union agree that the country's next leaders must stabilize the banking sector, rationalize public finances, and follow through on commitments to privatize state-owned enterprises.

We are looking forward to working with the new government, once it is formed following the July 13 elections, on these challenges. These vital economic reforms will help ensure a level playing field for U.S. business. If confirmed, I will seize every opportunity to build Slovenian support for the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and to open doors for U.S. trade and investment.

Even as Slovenia works to recognize its economic potential, it has only recently begun to deal with a complex and painful historical legacy concerning different narratives of violence during and after World War II. This legacy profoundly affects contemporary political, social, and even economic life. Some Slovenian leaders, most notably President Pahor, have stepped forward to urge dialogue and reconciliation. We support this effort because it is in both our interests. Slovenia will be a stronger ally and trade partner as it finds a way to deal with its past.

Finally, if confirmed, my Embassy team and I will continue to engage the Slovenian public on all levels. We will work to promote our top policy priorities through exchange and educational programs. We will advocate accurate reporting on the United States to a media often overly skeptical of U.S. policies. And we will go directly to the people to talk about U.S. policy and values through our ever-expanding social media toolkit.

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

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hartley follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRENT ROBERT HARTLEY

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I am honored to be here before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the eighth Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Slovenia.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my utmost to justify their faith in my ability to further enhance the strong U.S.-Slovenia relationship.

My 33-year Foreign Service career has been largely dedicated to advancing our relations with European Allies and Partners. If confirmed, I will work with the excellent Country Team at Embassy Ljubljana to promote our strategic, economic and political interests with Slovenia.

In its 23 years of independence, Slovenia has built a laudable record of international engagement and commitment. This year, Slovenia is celebrating its 10-year anniversary of NATO and EU membership. Slovenian soldiers have served side by side with U.S. and NATO Forces in Afghanistan since 2003. Slovenians have served in international peacekeeping missions in hot spots around the world, from Lebanon to Kosovo, from Syria to Mali. Slovenia has also been a close U.S. partner in the United Nations and other international venues to defend human rights, combat human trafficking, and safeguard religious freedom around the globe. In particular, Slovenia has raised the profile of the critical challenge of protecting civilian populations during conflict.

In this regard, Slovenia has placed a high priority on promoting stability and development in the Balkans by encouraging the integration of Balkan States in Euro-Atlantic structures such as NATO and the EU. From an operational standpoint, Slovenian soldiers deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) in 1997, and they continue to reinforce Bosnian stability by contributing to the EU's successor mission, ALTHEA. Slovenia has been a major KFOR contributor in Kosovo from the very beginning and still maintains a strong presence of over 300 soldiers. Slovenia also remains dedicated to addressing the safety of civilians and twin challenge of demining and conventional weapon destruction through ITF Enhancing Human Security initiative.

Our security relationship is only getting broader. We welcome Slovenia's continued strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its implementation of international sanctions in the face of Russia's occupation of Crimea. We are working together to address the urgent humanitarian challenges in Syria, respond to Iran's nuclear program, and to promote Libya's stability and prosperity. And we are working with Slovenia and throughout the EU on energy security issues, including the need to diversify energy sources to mitigate dependence on Russian gas.

Slovenia's relationships with the U.S. European Command and the Colorado National Guard through the State Partnership Program are excellent. In the context of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and NATO, Slovenia hosts several top-tier training exercises annually. The Slovenian Armed Forces' 21-year relationship with the Guardsmen of Colorado has resulted in hundreds of military exchanges, six codeployments in support of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, and a rich foundation for future cooperation.

Unfortunately, severe defense budget cuts resulting from the last several years of economic difficulties have left Slovenia well below the NATO goal of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense.

If confirmed, I will work with the Country Team to encourage the Slovenian Government to reverse this worrying trend in defense budget cuts and to address the structural economic challenges exposed by the country's economic downturn since 2009.

Outgoing Prime Minister Bratusek's government and the Slovenian Central Bank took a positive step in 2013 to recapitalize Slovenia's banking sector and restore market confidence. Yet many challenges remain. The United States and the European Union agree that Slovenia needs to reduce the public sector's role in the economy and repair significant fiscal imbalances.

Although the Eurozone recovery has brought some economic relief, the country's next leaders must take urgent action to stabilize the banking sector, rationalize public finances, and follow through on commitments to privatize state-owned enterprises. We are looking forward to working with the new government, once it is formed following the July 13 elections, on these challenges.

These vital economic reforms will help ensure a level playing field for U.S. business, a high priority for any chief of mission. If confirmed, I will seize every opportunity to build Slovenian support for the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and to open doors for U.S. trade and investment in an EU market with real untapped potential for U.S. companies. Approximately 60 U.S. companies already operate in Slovenia—including for example a significant Goodyear production facility. Through continued intensive commercial diplomacy, I am confident that Slovenia will become more open to American investments and a more attractive destination for American exports.

Even as Slovenia works to recognize its economic potential, it has only recently begun to deal with a complex and painful historical legacy—concerning different narratives of violence during and after World War II—that profoundly affects contemporary political, social, and even economic life. Some Slovenian leaders, most notably President Pahor, have stepped forward to urge dialogue and reconciliation. Embassy Ljubljana supports this effort because it is in both U.S. and Slovenian interests: open dialogue regarding these events can help create a political environ-

ment more conducive to addressing, for example, Slovenia's difficult economic circumstances. Slovenia will be a stronger ally and trade partner as it finds a way to deal with its past.

Finally, if confirmed, my Embassy team and I will continue to engage the Slovenian public on all levels to realize these goals. In addition to continuing joint cultural initiatives that have proven popular with Slovenians, we will work to promote our top policy priorities through exchange and educational programs that encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and greater regional and international cooperation. We will advocate accurate reporting on the United States to media that are often overly skeptical of U.S. foreign policy. And we will go directly to the people to talk about U.S. policy and values through our ever-expanding toolkit of social media products. Ultimately, it's the people-to-people outreach and diplomacy that can provide the foundation for us to achieve our policy objectives.

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

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much. I shorted you on your bio, by the way. I just additionally add your service as Director for European Security and Political Affairs at the Department of State and Country Director for Pakistan, in addition to your receipt of two Senior Foreign Service Performance Awards, 11 Superior Honor Awards. The list goes on. We are very pleased that you are here before this committee.

Mr. Pettit.

**STATEMENT OF JAMES D. PETTIT, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to promote U.S. interests in Moldova.

Today represents an important point in a journey over the last three decades that has taken me to numerous parts of the former Soviet Union at various critical junctures. If confirmed, I hope to continue that journey and play my own small role in seeking a happy and successful outcome for the people of the Republic of Moldova.

I am accompanied today by my wife Nancy, who has witnessed the many changes in the region along with me and whose own insights and wisdom continue to help me on the way. Also here with me today are my brother, Gerry, my nephew, Brett, and his wife, Suzy.

Secretary Kerry visited Moldova in December 2013 and Prime Minister Leanca visited the White House in March of this year, in part to launch our bilateral strategic dialogue and reaffirm U.S. engagement in and support for Moldova's independence and European future. Our engagement is key to promoting security not just in Moldova, but in neighboring Ukraine and the region.

If confirmed, I will build upon this progress while seeking to fulfill our chief strategic objective, for Moldova to become a fully democratic, economically prosperous state, firmly anchored to Europe, within its internationally recognized borders and with an effective and accountable government. We believe European integration is the best road for Moldova's security and prosperity.

On June 27, the Moldovan Government signed an association agreement that includes provisions for establishing a deep and comprehensive free trade area, which will bring Moldova closer to the EU politically as well as benefit the country economically. This year the United States will provide over \$31 million in assistance to Moldova to continue supporting these and other objectives.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Moldovan Government and in coordination with Moldova's European partners to support Moldova's efforts as it continues down its European path.

2014 is an election year for Moldova, with parliamentary elections scheduled for late November. While the country has made great strides since independence, challenges remain to consolidate its democracy and recent EU-oriented gains. Corruption continues to be the primary vulnerability plaguing Moldova's democracy, particularly its justice sector. To its credit Moldova's ministry of justice initiated a justice sector reform strategy to modernize Moldova's legal system and meet European standards. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Moldovan Government to implement these reforms.

Moldova remains Europe's poorest country. Around 22 percent of Moldova's GDP comes from remittances sent from Moldovans working abroad, the bulk of whom work in Russia. The United States seeks to strengthen Moldova's economy by promoting regulatory reform as well as increasing the competitiveness of core export industries. If confirmed, I will continue to advance these programs as well as work with the Moldovan Government to take further steps to buffer its economy against Russian pressure.

Moldova's primary security challenge is its unresolved conflict with the Transnistria region. The 5+2 negotiations on a political settlement involve not only the parties to the conflict, but also Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as mediators, and the United States and EU as observers.

Although Russia continues to be an important partner in this process, Russia's efforts to derail Moldova's European integration aspirations and its refusal to withdraw its troops from Transnistria pose significant threats. Russia has used a number of political and economic levers against Moldova, banning the import of Moldovan wine, increasing scrutiny of Moldova's agricultural exports, and threatening to cut off Moldova's gas supply and deport Moldova's migrant workers.

If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's efforts to mitigate the negative effects of Russian pressure, help Moldova find new markets for its exports, and increase government-to-government coordination through the strategic dialogue.

I thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts about the relationship with Moldova. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and this committee. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and will submit the remainder of my remarks to the record with your permission.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pettit follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES D. PETTIT

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson and members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I deeply appreciate the confidence and

trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to promote U.S. interests in Moldova. Today represents an important point in a journey over the last three decades that has taken me to numerous parts of the former Soviet Union at various critical junctures. If confirmed, I hope to continue that journey and play my own small role in seeking a happy and successful outcome for the people of the Republic of Moldova. I am accompanied today by my wife, Nancy, who has witnessed the many changes in the region along with me and whose own insights and wisdom continue to help me on the way.

Over the last year, relations with Moldova strengthened significantly, with Secretary Kerry visiting Moldova in December 2013 and Prime Minister Leanca visiting the White House in March this year in part to launch our bilateral Strategic Dialogue and to reaffirm U.S. engagement in, and support for, Moldova's independence and European future. Continuing to strengthen our engagement is key to promoting security not just in Moldova but also in neighboring Ukraine and the region. If confirmed, I will build upon this progress while seeking to fulfill our chief strategic objective; for Moldova to become a fully democratic, economically prosperous state firmly anchored to Europe within its internationally recognized borders and with an effective and accountable government. With your permission, I would like to take a moment to touch upon core aspects of this objective—European integration, democratic development, market development, and security.

FIRST: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

We believe European integration is the best road for Moldova's security and prosperity. Over the last year, Moldova has made significant strides toward this goal. On April 28, the EU lifted its visa regime for Moldova, allowing Moldovan citizens with biometric passports to visit the Schengen region for up to 90 days without a visa. Within the last 2 months alone, 78,000 Moldovans traveled to Europe visa free. On June 27, the Moldovan Government signed an Association Agreement that includes provisions for establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which will bring Moldova closer to the EU politically, as well as benefit the country economically by eliminating import duties on Moldovan products going to the EU—it is expected to boost Moldova's GDP by 5.4 percent. U.S. assistance has helped Moldova progress toward its European integration goal through programs that enhance government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen interests, as well as improve the business climate. This year the United States will provide over \$31 million in assistance to Moldova to continue supporting these and other objectives. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Moldovan Government and in coordination with Moldova's European partners to support Moldova's efforts as it continues down its European path.

SECOND: DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

2014 is an election year for Moldova with Parliamentary elections scheduled for late November. While the country has made great strides since independence, challenges remain to consolidate its democracy and recent EU-oriented gains. Corruption continues to be the primary vulnerability plaguing Moldova's democracy, particularly its justice sector. Besides hampering government effectiveness and rule of law, corruption has led to high voter disillusionment with the current governing coalition and could harm Moldova's continued European integration aspirations. To its credit, Moldova's Ministry of Justice initiated a justice sector reform strategy to modernize Moldova's legal system and meet European standards. The impact of this strategy can already be seen in the adoption of several pieces of new legislation, including anticorruption laws targeting judges and other public officials. U.S. efforts are focused on supporting this strategy by improving judicial administration, increasing the skills of judges and prosecutors, and supporting civil society advocacy. The other key component of our assistance program in this sector focuses on enabling local government to improve services for its citizens, as polling shows that locally elected officials are the most respected institutions in Moldova. Much work remains to be done. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Moldovan Government to implement these reforms and others necessary to fulfill the desires of Moldovan citizens for an accountable and corruption free government.

THIRD: MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Moldova remains Europe's poorest country with an approximate average salary of \$290 a month. Around 22 percent of Moldova's \$7.2 billion GDP comes from remittances sent from approximately 700,000 Moldovans working abroad, equal to one-fifth of the country's population—the bulk of whom work in Russia. While Moldova

exceeded international expectations and saw its GDP grow by 8.9 percent in 2013, further growth is in question due to lack of transparent, substantial legal safeguards for business and pervasive corruption, which deters foreign investments. The United States seeks to strengthen Moldova's economy by promoting regulatory reform, as well as increasing the competitiveness of core export industries, such as wine and fashion, enabling them to take advantage of the opportunities created through closer economic ties with Europe. In addition, through the 5-year \$262 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact that will close in September 2015, the United States is rebuilding a 93 kilometer road that will serve as a modern transportation corridor in Northern Moldova, and is rehabilitating irrigation systems, which will help strengthen the transition to higher value agricultural products. If confirmed, I will continue to advance these programs, as well as work with the Moldovan Government to take further steps to buffer its economy against Russian pressure.

FOURTH: SECURITY

Moldova's primary security challenge is its unresolved conflict with Russian-backed separatists in the Transnistria region. Closely related to this is the presence of Russian military forces in this same region, without Moldova's consent. Although there has been no armed conflict between the Government of Moldova and its separatist region in two decades, Russia insists its peacekeeping presence must remain until there is a resolution to this "frozen conflict." The 5+2 negotiations on a political settlement involve not only the parties to the conflict, but also Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as mediators, and the United States and EU as observers. The talks have stalled due in part to Russian and the separatists' unwillingness to engage in a political dialogue on the region's final status. Of continuing concern are media reports of increased Russian military activity in Transnistria, reports which remain unconfirmed in part due to the ongoing restrictions by Transnistrian authorities of access to the region by observers from the OSCE's Mission to Moldova. If confirmed, I will support OSCE efforts to find a peaceful resolution to this frozen conflict that guarantees Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while providing for a mutually acceptable special status for its Transnistria region. I will also work to ensure that the OSCE has unfettered access to all of Moldova, including its Transnistria region.

Although Russia continues to be an important partner in the ongoing 5+2 process and plays a large role in Moldova's economic and trade activity, Russia's efforts to derail Moldova's European integration aspirations and its refusal to withdraw its troops from Transnistria pose significant threats to the country's sovereignty, security, stability, and prosperity. Since September 2013, Russia has used a number of political and economic levers against Moldova, including banning the import of Moldovan wine, increasing scrutiny of Moldova's agricultural exports, and threatening to cut off Moldova's gas supply as well as to deport up to 265,000 of Moldova's migrant workers. In addition, Russian interests control much of Moldova's financial sector and its assets. Combined with the constant stream of anti-EU rhetoric from Russian television, a major source of news for Moldovan citizens, Russia's actions threaten Moldova's sovereignty, economic well-being and its European path. If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's efforts to mitigate the negative effects of Russian pressure, help Moldova find new markets for its exports, increase government-to-government coordination through the Strategic Dialogue, help the Moldovan Government secure its borders by completing the \$35 million Defense Threat Reduction Agency program that is building up the capacity of Moldova's border guards, and assist the Moldovan Government's efforts to counteract Russia's negative propaganda campaign.

While Moldova has come closer to its goal of European integration, its government still has much work to be done. If confirmed, I look forward to helping the Moldovan Government realize its citizens' European aspirations. At the same time, I will support any reasonable effort Moldova wishes to make in order to maintain trade and other relations with neighbors outside the EU on the basis of mutual respect and common interests, not on the basis of threats or political and economic pressure. This will contribute immeasurably to our long-standing objective of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

I thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts about the relationship with Moldova. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and this committee.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much to both of our nominees.

Let me start with the same question to both of you. You both have experience in Europe, varying levels of experience dealing with Russia. You are going to be in countries that have long-standing relationships with Russia, while also looking toward the West as well. One of the things that a lot of us have been struck by—certainly Senator Johnson and I talk about this a lot—is the major difference in the ability of Europe and the United States to communicate information to the countries in which you are going, to Moldova in particular, versus the ability of Russia to do the same. Russia has dramatically modernized and ramped up its propaganda efforts. This is particularly relevant in Moldova, but I am sure it is an issue in Slovenia as well.

With your broad experience in the region, what are your recommendations as to how the United States and Europe can try to compete in the information wars with Russia. Maybe I will put the question to you first, Mr. Pettit, in particular because you are going to have elections coming up in Moldova and an imbalance in information and its sourcing can have a pretty big impact on the outcome of those elections.

So what are your recommendations? I am more asking for your recommendations to us as a committee as we debate this question of how we better resource our side of the messaging operation here, without of course getting into the same kind of, I would argue, over-the-top propaganda that the Russians engage in?

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Senator, for that question, Mr. Chairman. It is indeed daunting, the competition with the Russian propaganda tools that they have, and it is hard to duplicate, and therefore needs to be countered in a different way. Eighty percent of Moldovans do get their news information from television. There are many, many Russian cable stations that are rebroadcast in Moldova and which reach an audience of almost the entire country. Most people in Moldova do speak and understand Russian very well. The programming is superior, it is very slick, it is well packaged.

In terms of countering that influence, we have to use the tools at hand. The U.S. does have RFE-RL. We do have our radio broadcasting programs. We do not have the equivalent of Russian television and therefore we have to use other tools. We have to use exchanges, we have to make ourselves available. High-level visits are very helpful. Several members of this committee have visited Moldova in recent months. This gives us access to Moldovan media. It allows us to do outreach.

If confirmed, one of my priorities will be to have mission members go out and do outreach throughout Moldova, including Transnistria, which we already do. These efforts are very, very important. We have 100 Peace Corps Volunteers in Moldova. All of these tools in their own way do help spread the message.

But of course, what is critical is that our EU partners also assist us in this effort, particularly since the signing of the association agreement.

Mr. HARTLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would second what Jim indicated with regard for the priority that we need to put on this issue and for the engagement of the entire Embassy staff in these efforts. I think the challenge that we face in this regard in

Slovenia is far less than what Jim will face in Moldova and other states closer to Russia and in countries where they have a Russian-speaking minority.

But nonetheless, it is critical that we get out and we are as active and creative as we can be. As I indicated in my statement, that is going to be a key priority for me if I am confirmed. The Embassy currently has a very active social media program, creative, educational, and other exchanges, including bringing interns in, partnering with the American Chamber of Commerce to bring interns in to work with American businesses during the summer months, in addition to some of the more classic exchanges that we have in the Fulbright scholarships, things like that.

I certainly agree with Jim that high-level visits help. General Breedlove, the Supreme Allied Commander and Commander of U.S. Forces in Europe, was there recently and we would certainly welcome members of the committee visiting as well.

Senator MURPHY. We will look forward to your thoughts on this subject. I think it is time that this committee has a more robust conversation about what new assets we can provide the information programs we already run. We made a commitment to Radio Free Europe when radio was the primary means by which people received information. That is not true today and it is a little hard to understand, if we still have a commitment to a concept like that, why we have not upgraded the technology to recognize how people get their information.

Back to you, Mr. Pettit. Talk a little bit about the association agreement. A big step forward for the Moldovans, but the question is how does it operate? What needs to happen in order to make the potential benefits of that agreement real? What do we need to be saying to the Europeans in order for Moldova to take advantage of the newfound abilities they have under that trade pact?

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, the economic benefits for Moldova are almost immediate. Some analysts estimate that GDP should rise approximately 5.4 percent just in the first year because of the favorable treatment of Moldovan products. However, there is a lot of hard work to comply with EU standards, and that is going to be the most difficult part for the Moldovan economy, the Moldovan Government.

We have programs in place, as does the EU, to specifically assist Moldovan government, industry, with compliance. This is across the board. This is regulatory, this is meeting standards, this is rules applying to agriculture and tariffs and all sorts of things, including social components, such as human rights and governance. We have programs in all those areas. The EU has programs in all those areas. We see our role assisting Moldova in this aspect with attaining the necessary compliance with EU standards. It will be a definite benefit for the economy of Moldova, including Transnistria.

Senator MURPHY. People have posited that the sort of next shoe to drop in terms of Russia's ambitions to gain control over the near abroad is an increased level of Russian activity in Transnistria. They may not have to do that, given the fact that there are upcoming elections that are going to be hotly contested, and should the Communists win you could see a so-called democratic reorientation

of Moldova back to being within a closer sphere of influence with Russia.

So my guess was always that Russia was going to put its efforts into winning these elections, which may get them most of what they want anyway. What do we know about level of Russian activity in the early stages of the November elections? What is going to be the U.S. disposition on those elections and making sure that they are, at the very least, conducted in a free and fair manner?

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is definitely Russian activity behind the political scenes in influencing electorates, particularly the more disaffected groups. As you may know, there are some ethnic divisions within Moldova, such as specifically Gagauzia, also places in the north that are more—that have more of a tilt linguistically and historically toward Russia.

The Russians definitely take advantage of that. As we had already discussed, the Russian propaganda machine is enormous. That said, the last parliamentary elections had many foreign observers and were deemed and fair and transparent. I am not as concerned about the process itself as what the results could be. We will work with whatever coalition emerges from the November elections. We have high hopes on the pro-European inclinations of the current coalition, but it bears noting that, even when the communists were in power, they were very amenable toward European integration and actually implemented some of the preliminary steps that led to the signing of the association agreement.

So the election results are impossible to predict. The Communist Party remains the largest single party, but it is not a majority. They would have to enter into a coalition with others. We are hopeful that the current European path will not be disrupted regardless of what the results are of the election.

Senator MURPHY. The Communist Party did oppose the association agreement, so it seems that for the time being they have cast their lot against European integration. We certainly know there is high levels of coordination between that party and the Russian Government. So I understand it is difficult for the United States to press political levers within a country when it comes to an election, but I hope we are not going into these elections with an optimism that a Communist majority is going to automatically continue a pathway toward European integration. I am not sure that that is a forgone conclusion.

Mr. PETTIT. You are absolutely correct, Mr. Chairman, that the Communists are publicly stating that they do oppose the association agreement. We are really talking about hearts and minds. Unfortunately, the polls do indicate waning support for the association agreement. A lot of that is based on misperceptions of what the result will be. So I think it is really in the arena of public opinion and outreach is where we have our work cut out for us, we, the EU, and the Moldovan Government, which also has to take responsibility to explaining to the electorate just exactly what the benefits are, which to us seem very clear, but have not been made clear to the electorate.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Hartley, we had a hearing last week on European energy security. In my opening comments I told a story about a recent visit that Senator McCain and Senator Johnson and

I made to Bulgaria, in which during our time there an announcement was made that Bulgaria was going to for the time being suspend work on the South Stream pipeline, and thereafter we were criticized in some sectors of the country as being Americans coming into Bulgaria and telling them how to run their business.

It struck me and still strikes me that the United States is in a no-win position. When we attempt to exert leadership to benefit our interests and European interests, we are criticized for being too heavily involved in other nations' business, and then if we are not showing that level of leadership we are told that the United States is sitting back and failing to show the same kind of leadership that we have in the past.

Slovenia is a member of the South Stream coalition. They have shown a willingness to move forward with the project, that is in contravention with the Third Energy Package from the EU. What is the current state of affairs with respect to South Stream in Slovenia? What are the things that you can do to try to convince them to stay on the same page as Europe when dealing with these complicated questions of energy transmission in and through the continent?

Mr. HARTLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a big question. The Slovenians seem very interested in their participation in the South Stream project, which is interesting in light of the fact that they only get about 10 percent of their energy from gas and they have access to hydroelectric power, nuclear power, and other alternatives. In some ways they are better set for pursuing a diverse energy base than many other countries in that area.

But nonetheless, they remain interested. From what I understand from public statements by Slovenian officials, however, they are not prepared to take on the European Commission's rulings with regard to how the South Stream project has been structured and the EU Commission's, the European Commission's opposition to it.

If confirmed, energy security and energy diversification will be an important priority. It is a very big issue, especially in light of Russian behavior toward Ukraine and the ability and the willingness it has shown to use its energy resources as a political tool. I would want to promote greater interconnectedness between—within the European gas and electrical network and encourage Slovenian interest that is already evident in the possibility of building a second nuclear reactor, the first of which they share with Croatia.

Senator MURPHY. All right. You guys got off the hook relatively easily today. Really important postings; looking forward to working with both of you; very excited to have such eminently qualified individuals going into very important posts for the United States.

We are going to keep the record open for members to pose additional questions to you and our first panel, only until the close of business tomorrow, in an effort to try to move your nominations as quickly as possible. So if you do receive questions, we hope that you will turn around answers as quickly as possible so that we can move your nominations, as well as the first panel's, through the committee in as expeditious a manner as possible.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:46 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In the past few years in Turkey, some Turkish citizens have been organizing and participating in events to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. The United States consulate has sent representatives to some of these commemorations in Istanbul.

- ◆ Will you make participating in the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the genocide a priority for you and your staff? How do you personally characterize the events that took place between 1915-23 that resulted in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians and the killing of as many as 1,500,000 men, women, and children?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, a senior representative from our consulate in Istanbul has attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens in Turkey now live. If confirmed, I will continue to make attendance at such commemoration events a priority, particularly in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

The administration has commemorated the Meds Yaghem, and remains engaged in diplomatic efforts that support the President's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts." If confirmed, my role would be to represent faithfully the President's policies and priorities. I will continue to support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their shared history.

Question. For over 20 years, Turkey has maintained an illegal blockade against landlocked Armenia, despite public calls from successive U.S. administrations for it to open Europe's last closed border without any preconditions.

- ◆ What steps will you take to move this issue forward and bring an end to the blockade?

Answer. It has been and remains the administration's policy to encourage Turkey and Armenia to reconcile their past and normalize relations as a means of creating the peaceful and prosperous bilateral relationship that the people of both countries deserve. The status quo is not beneficial for either side, and both countries would benefit greatly from increased direct trade and normal relations. Facilitating Armenia's regional integration by opening its border with Turkey is a priority for the United States.

If confirmed, this would be one of my key goals as Ambassador. I would work closely with colleagues in Washington and in our Embassy in Yerevan on this common objective, including taking every opportunity in meetings with government and civil society leaders to encourage greater dialogue. In addition, I would continue to support increased cross-border cooperation between the people of Armenia and Turkey through research initiatives, conferences, and exchange programs.

Question. Will you commit to meeting periodically with the Greek and Armenian American communities on a regular basis when you are in the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, it will be my honor and duty to serve as the representative of the U.S. Government and fellow American citizens to the Republic of Turkey. To that end, I look forward to engaging regularly with American citizen groups of all ethnic backgrounds who have an interest in our relations with Turkey, including and especially the Armenian American and Greek American communities.

Question. The recent conversion of two historic churches in Turkey into mosques and the threat of legislation that would convert the historic Hagia Sophia is of grave concern. Will you raise these concerns with Turkish authorities when you arrive in Ankara?

Answer. The State Department views the Hagia Sophia museum as a unique and historic symbol for Turkey and the surrounding region, and we strongly support maintaining the current status of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. We recognize and continue to emphasize U.S. concerns over the challenges religious minority

groups face in Turkey, including by highlighting instances of the conversion of other historic religious sites to mosques in our annual International Religious Freedom Report. The Government of Turkey has taken positive steps over the past year to return some properties to active religious communities, including the Mor Gabriel Monastery and 47 acres of property surrounding Halki Seminary, but more can be done. We currently have no confirmation of any serious effort to convert the Hagia Sophia to a mosque.

If confirmed, I will continue to stress to Turkish officials the global sensitivity of any move to change the current character of the Hagia Sophia. I also pledge to continue our policy and practice of regularly raising these concerns with Turkish officials and encouraging additional measures to strengthen religious freedom in Turkey.

Question. Less than 100 years ago, there was a vibrant and large Christian population in Turkey. Because of genocide and persecution, the population has been decimated and accounts for less than point 2 percent of the population today. In January 2011, President Obama noted the importance of “bear[ing] witness to those who are persecuted or attacked because of their faith.”

◆ How will you address issues of religious persecution against Christians and other religious minorities with Turkish authorities?

Answer. Religious minority groups face continuing challenges in Turkey, as noted in our annual “International Religious Freedom Report.” The State Department regularly engages at all levels with Turkish officials regarding the importance of religious freedom, including legal reforms aimed at lifting restrictions on religious groups, property restitution, and specific cases of religious discrimination. To this end, we strongly support efforts to reopen Halki Seminary on terms acceptable to the Ecumenical Patriarch. Furthermore, we condemn in the strongest terms violence toward all religious minorities, and we urge Turkish authorities to pursue investigations and bring perpetrators to justice.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Turkish Government to follow through on the return of religious minority properties and to take additional steps to promote religious freedom, such as allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train clergy.

Question. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Turkish invasion and occupation of Northern Cyprus. Peace talks restarted in February with the aim of creating a bizonal, bicomunal federation on the island. Thus far, confidence-building measures have been a sticking point, and other issues, such as property, are proving to be as difficult as they have been over the course of the last four decades.

◆ What efforts will you exert to encourage Turkey to proactively and productively engage in these talks in order to reach a final resolution that will reunify the island?

Answer. We welcome the constructive roles of both Turkey and Greece in support of the settlement process, including hosting historic visits by the Turkish-Cypriot negotiator to Athens and the Greek-Cypriot negotiator to Ankara. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work closely with my colleagues in Greece and Cyprus and give my full support to the efforts under the auspices of the United Nations Good Offices Mission to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation that would bring security and economic prosperity to all Cypriots. I will also engage senior Turkish officials to promote a just and lasting comprehensive settlement on Cyprus.

Question. The Eastern Mediterranean could contribute to European energy security, but many analysts believe that the main impediment to greater oil and gas exploration is the lack of regional cooperation. Turkey’s provocations in Greek Cypriot waters, such as its insistence on deploying small research and exploration ships off the island’s southern coast, exemplify a barrier to greater regional cooperation.

◆ What do you believe are the opportunities for greater regional cooperation in exploring these resources? What is your plan for bringing Turkey to the table to negotiate in good faith? Are there any positive signs?

Answer. The discovery of offshore hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean has the potential to change the landscape for many countries in the region. If managed correctly, these resources could be a catalyst for increased cooperation and stability. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue ongoing U.S. efforts to ensure energy is used to promote cooperation and prosperity, rather than conflict.

There have been some encouraging signs. For example, a recent conference held in the buffer zone brought together Turks, Greeks, Israelis, Lebanese, Turkish Cypriots, and Greek Cypriots to discuss the future of hydrocarbon developments in the

Eastern Mediterranean. The gathering sent an important message about the potential role that hydrocarbon development can play in promoting greater regional cooperation and, ultimately, increased economic prosperity and energy security for Cyprus and its neighbors in the region.

The United States recognizes the Republic of Cyprus' right to develop its resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone. We also believe the island's resources should be equitably shared between both communities within the context of an overall settlement. Collaboration with regional partners such as Israel and Egypt could enable efficient development of these resources while also expanding potential for future cooperation on a wider range of issues.

Question. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the spiritual head of 300 million Orthodox Christians who compose the world's second-largest Christian Church. As U.S. Ambassador, what will you do to encourage the Turkish Government to allow the reopening of the Halki theological seminary, cease interference in the election of church leadership, and encourage the return of other religious properties belonging to the Patriarchate?

Answer. The United States strongly supports efforts to reopen Halki Seminary on terms acceptable to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Secretary Kerry and Vice President Biden have consistently called for the reopening of the seminary without preconditions, and the U.S. Embassy in Ankara and consulate general in Istanbul have engaged the Turkish Government on this issue regularly. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Turkish officials at the highest levels to reopen the seminary as a symbol of Turkey's commitment to religious freedom.

In addition, we support the Church's right to choose its own Patriarch, obtain citizenship for Church Metropolitans, and gain recognition of the Patriarch's ecumenical status from the Turkish Government. If confirmed, I will urge the Turkish Government to work cooperatively with the Patriarchate to resolve these and other matters of importance to Orthodox Christians and other religious minorities in Turkey. I will also continue to encourage Turkey to take additional steps to strengthen religious freedom, including allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train their clergy.

Question. In 2013 Turkey announced that it would procure the Chinese FD-2000 (HQ-9) air defense system. This system is not compatible with the evolving ballistic-missile shield being built in Europe.

- ♦ What is the administration doing, and what will you do, if confirmed, to ensure that Turkey does not coproduce an air and missile defense system with a Chinese Government-owned company which has repeatedly been sanctioned by the United States?
- ♦ If Turkey does pursue such cooperation with the Chinese, how would this affect other elements of U.S. and NATO defense cooperation with Turkey, including on missile defense and coproduction of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter?

Answer. We have serious concerns about Turkey's decision to negotiate with a sanctioned Chinese company for an air and missile defense system that will not be interoperable with NATO. We remain actively engaged—at the highest levels—in urging Turkey to end negotiations with the Chinese and turn to a NATO interoperable tender. We have enlisted NATO and our allies in this effort; they share our concerns. Turkish officials have reaffirmed that negotiations with the Chinese have not concluded and have extended the tender period through August 28. They have indicated the door remains open for a revised U.S. proposal. We have made clear that if Turkey does choose a Chinese system, it cannot and will not be connected to NATO systems and may have other consequences for our defense relationship.

Other aspects of our defense cooperation with Turkey remain strong, including the strategically important access that Turkey continues to provide us to key bases and its hosting of the AN/TPY-2 missile defense radar. The Raytheon-Lockheed Martin bid would be NATO-interoperable and contribute to a stronger U.S.-Turkey defense relationship. Turkey remains a key partner in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, and announced on May 6 its plans to order two F-35 aircraft. We have told—and will continue to reinforce to—Turkish officials that if they procure an air defense system from a sanctioned Chinese firm, it could inhibit our shared goal of expanding our economic and defense relationship.

If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to support and advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and investors, including those competing for business and contracts in the defense and security sectors, consistent with applicable U.S. law and regulations. That includes advocacy to promote the American consortium's bid for this air defense tender.

Question. Turkey ranks 154th among 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index. What concerns do you have about freedom of expression in Turkey in the aftermath of efforts by the government to ban Twitter and YouTube and enforce regressive new Internet laws? What can the United States do to raise these concerns, including in international fora, and to provide a forum for public opinion and the press in Turkey?

Answer. I share your concern regarding government actions that have weakened freedom of expression in Turkey, which the administration has conveyed both publicly and privately to the Government of Turkey. We believe that democracies are strengthened by the diversity of public voices, while an independent media operating without fear of retribution is crucial to ensuring transparency and accountability. The State Department has urged the Turkish Government to unblock its citizens' access to social media and ensure free access to all such platforms; we welcomed the Turkish constitutional court rulings in favor of restoring Twitter and YouTube. If confirmed, I will continue to call on the Turkish Government to ensure open access to information from many sources—including social media.

Question. The U.S. innovative pharmaceutical industry faces severe challenges in Turkey, including an arbitrary fixed exchange rate system that saddles the industry with an extra 50 percent erosion of their prices. This is on top of a pricing regime that already forces the industry to accept some of the lowest prices in the world, in a market that hopes to be a top 10 global economy by 2023.

◆ What will you do to help resolve this long-standing, market-distorting, unfair trade practice?

Answer. I agree the fixed exchange rate currently utilized by the Turkish Government in connection with reimbursements for imported pharmaceutical products impedes access to the Turkish market by U.S. pharmaceutical companies. It also acts as a barrier to Turkey's access to the latest innovative medicines. The U.S. Government takes this issue very seriously and continues to urge changes in the pricing regime with senior Turkish officials. Most recently, Commerce Secretary Pritzker and Ambassador Froman raised pharmaceutical reforms with Deputy Prime Minister Babacan and Minister of Economy Zeybekci during the 2014 U.S.-Turkey Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC) meeting in May.

If confirmed, I will encourage Turkey to work with the U.S. pharmaceutical sector to better understand their market needs. I will also work with our Foreign Commercial Service and U.S. companies to urge Turkey to implement key pharmaceutical sector reforms—and in doing so, to build momentum for a broader U.S.-Turkey trade relationship.

Question. Turkey has identified the pharmaceutical sector as a top priority for its government. However, U.S. innovative pharmaceutical companies continue to face a rash of highly punitive market access barriers that impede Turkish patients' access to medicines that are available to patients around the world, including in Europe and the United States. These barriers include marketing authorization and good manufacturing practices delays, uncertainty surrounding intellectual property protection, growing protectionist policies, a government-pricing regime that distorts the market through mandatory price discounts, and a draconian exchange rate system for pharmaceuticals. This exchange system is especially burdensome, as the industry must accept a forced devaluation that is currently 50 percent below market levels, despite a law and court rulings requiring the government to adjust the rate upward. This has been a top commercial priority for the Embassy and the former Ambassador.

◆ How will you work to improve the market conditions for the U.S. research-based pharmaceutical industry in Turkey?

Answer. I agree that the fixed exchange rate currently utilized by the Turkish Government in connection with reimbursements for imported pharmaceutical products acts as a barrier to Turkey's access to the latest innovative medicines. The issue of delayed marketing approvals as a barrier to access is also an area of concern for the United States.

During this year's Framework for Strategic and Economic Commercial Cooperation (FSECC), the Ministry of Health suggested Turkey would begin implementing a "parallel processing" approach to pharmaceutical product applications for good manufacturing practices inspections and marketing authorizations, which should accelerate the entry of innovative drugs into the market.

If confirmed, I will monitor these and other developments and encourage prompt implementation of such provisions. I will also press the Turkish Government to improve market conditions for the U.S. pharmaceutical industry in Turkey.

Question. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, foreign fighters and funding have flowed through Turkey and into Syria in ever-increasing numbers to extremist groups, giving them a major advantage over moderate, local, Syrian opposition forces. Many foreign fighters moving through Turkey come from North Africa, Western Europe, and even North America. Now there is a threat that these battle-seasoned fighters could return from Syria, via Turkey, intent on attacking their home countries. Furthermore, representatives of Syrian extremist groups are operating from eastern Turkey, where they meet with wealthy benefactors to raise funds.

- ◆ What should the Turkish Government be doing to stem the flow of fighters and funding through Turkey into Syria? How will you engage with the Turkish Government on this critical set of issues that pose security threats to the United States, regional partners, and NATO allies?

Answer. This is a critical issue for the United States and Turkey, as well as for the “source” countries from which foreign fighters are departing and then returning. Turkey faces particular challenges as violent extremists take advantage of its geographical location and high volume of legitimate travelers. As the conflict in Syria has continued, the increasing threat from violent extremists has prompted stronger action by the Turkish Government to counter foreign fighters traveling or moving money across its borders. For example, the Turkish Government is working to tighten entry and exit controls. The Turkish Government has also made significant progress in implementing terrorist designations.

If confirmed, I will continue our ongoing dialogue with Turkey to strengthen and intensify collective action to counter the threat posed by foreign fighters. I will also urge more focused, intense efforts to cut off financial flows to terrorist organizations through continued work with the multilateral Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Finally, I will work to ensure that U.S. Government agencies present in Turkey—including the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and Defense—are continuing to provide advice and technical expertise to help the Turkish Government share information about suspected or designated extremists and further strengthen border security.

Question. In March 2009, Assistant Secretary of State Phil Gordon, in response to a question I asked at his confirmation hearing before the Foreign Relations Committee, expressed his hope that the Turkey-Armenia border would be opened by October 2009. Today, nearly 5 years later, Turkey has refused to end its blockade of landlocked Armenia.

- ◆ In the past year, what adjustments has the executive branch made to its approach and policies to accomplish our repeatedly stated interest in seeing Turkey open this border? What progress can you report on this issue? Do you believe that Turkey’s nearly 20 year strategy of blockading Armenia has been effective?

Answer. Both Turkey and Armenia are important friends and partners of the United States, and improving bilateral relations between them is an important priority for the administration. The status quo is unsustainable and detrimental to Turks and Armenians. It does not serve the interests of either society or contribute to stability across the region. Both countries would benefit from reopening the border. Increasing direct trade and contact between the two peoples would foster greater trust and understanding, and would help facilitate the necessary reconciliation between these two nations.

The administration has been focused on this goal for many years. Despite our best efforts, progress has unfortunately been limited, with fewer advances than we would have liked to achieve. In the last year, the administration has stepped up support and encouragement of government-to-government discussions. We have also sought new ways to actively promote greater people-to-people contacts and partnerships as well as other cross-border and regional initiatives. We will continue our efforts to build and expand commercial, social, and cultural ties between Turks and Armenians in order to foster good will and understanding, and to encourage their governments to reconcile their past and normalize relations.

The countries of the South Caucasus region are increasingly important strategic security and commercial partners for the United States and Europe. Armenia’s full integration into the region remains a focus of U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues in Yerevan and in Washington to promote normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, including by reopening their shared border, which remains key to providing people in both countries with the stability and prosperity they deserve.

Question. What specific actions will you take, if confirmed, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide?

Answer. As the 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century approaches, Turkey must be proactive in seeking to come to terms with its past. If confirmed, I will personally encourage Turkish leaders to take meaningful steps toward reconciliation. The administration acknowledges the Meds Yeghern and mourns for the 1.5 million Armenians who were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. U.S. Government officials have commemorated this tragedy at Remembrance Day events in Washington and Yerevan, as well as in Istanbul, where the largest and most public event in Turkey takes place.

If confirmed, I would ensure senior-level representation by our mission to Turkey at such commemoration events. I would also do everything I could to advance concretely President Obama's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts." In advance of this important anniversary year, I would seek opportunities to support publicly the courageous steps taken by Armenian and Turkish individuals to engage in honest dialogue about their shared history. Finally, I would be happy to provide briefings to Congress on the status of these efforts and discuss additional steps that might also stimulate further progress.

Question. What assistance can you provide to American citizens who are the heirs of victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide with respect to their legal claims to property?

Answer. Though the U.S. Government is not a party to these cases, we continue to follow closely developments in the litigation. California's courts have dismissed several cases filed by Armenian descendants on procedural grounds, but some litigation remains pending.

We recognize these cases are more than just legal claims for the heirs of victims and survivors of the tragic events of 1915; they represent a deep and passionate search for resolution of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. These cases are also a stark reminder of the importance of ongoing U.S. Government efforts to encourage the Turkish and Armenian people and governments to heal the wounds of the past. If confirmed, I would seek to intensify support for the ongoing reconciliation efforts between these two nations, to allow them to move forward together toward a future relationship grounded in security and prosperity.

Question. What will you do to promote free speech about the Armenian Genocide within Turkey and end the gag-rule to allow their own history to be discussed freely?

Answer. I share your commitment to supporting freedom of expression, as democracies are strengthened by diverse voices in the public sphere. If confirmed, I will be a champion for this and other universal values, as I was during my tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Georgia, and urge the Turkish Government to demonstrate full respect for its citizens' right to engage in open debate and free discussion without fear of retribution.

The Department of State has supported civil society and people-to-people initiatives to encourage reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia, including programs that further the President's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts" regarding the tragic events in 1915. The upcoming 2015 anniversary of the Meds Yeghern presents an opportunity for Turkey to expand the political space for dialogue on this issue and chart a new course for the future. Both Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu have taken helpful steps in this direction in the last year, acknowledging the events of 1915 were "wrong" and "inhumane," and offering condolences for the lives that were lost. This was the first time in history that Turkish leaders have publicly made such statements.

If confirmed, I would encourage Turkish leaders to build off these statements and engage further in honest and open dialogue. I would also pursue opportunities to highlight the human dimension of this tragedy, including by continuing our current practice of meeting with courageous individuals in Turkey who are working to move forward the conversation about these countries' shared history.

RESPONSE OF KEVIN F. O'MALLEY TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) promotes economic development and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border areas of the Republic most affected by the conflict. Appropriations for the IFI averaged \$23 million annually during the 1990s, and \$18 million annually from 2000-10. Since FY 2011, funding has fallen to just \$2.5 million, with the administration asking for no funding in its budget request.

- ◆ How has this significant decrease in funding affected our ability to promote development and reconciliation?

Answer. The United States continues to support Northern Ireland as it works to build a strong society, vibrant economy, and enduring peace. Since 1986, the United States has supported Northern Ireland's movement toward a shared future of peace and prosperity with over \$530 million in U.S. foreign assistance to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) programs. Through the years, the fund has contributed to establishing stability and promoting peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties.

Given significant budget constraints and the need to focus scarce resources on the highest priorities globally, the administration did not request funding for IFI in FY 2015. However, with the funding provided from FY 2011 to FY 2013, and funding the administration expects to allocate for FY 2014, the United States will meet an existing \$7.5 million commitment to the IFI's Peace Impact Program. The Peace Impact Program is part of a commitment to a lasting and sustained peace, targeting those communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland most prone to dissident recruitment and activity.

If confirmed, I will make it my priority to continue the United States support for the Northern Ireland peace process through diplomatic engagement and cultural and educational exchanges.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. If confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, you will be Ambassador during the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

- ◆ If confirmed, will you make participating in observances within Turkey that commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide a priority for you and your staff?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, a senior representative from our consulate in Istanbul has attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens live in Turkey. If confirmed, I will continue to make attendance at such commemoration events a priority, particularly in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Question. Despite death threats and intimidation, Turkish scholars and writers have affirmed the Armenian Genocide.

- ◆ If confirmed, will you commit to meeting with these Turkish citizens who are risking their lives to urge their government to openly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide?

Answer. Over the last several years, the Department of State has supported civil society and people-to-people initiatives to encourage Turkey-Armenia reconciliation, including programs that would support the President's call for a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts regarding the tragic events in 1915. If confirmed, I will continue our current practice and meet with individuals in Turkey involved in these and similar efforts and support their courageous steps to foster a dialogue that acknowledges Turkey's shared history with Armenia.

Question. In your testimony, you mention the importance of normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia as a means to creating a peaceful, prosperous relationship that will benefit people of both countries.

- ◆ How does the failure of the Turkish Government to openly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide impede efforts to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia?

Answer. To achieve full reconciliation, Turkey must come to terms with its past. While progress has been slow, there have been some recent signs of change, such as remarks by Prime Minister Erdogan this past April expressing condolences to the grandchildren of Armenians who suffered the tragic events of 1915. The administration will continue to encourage a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts in order to promote understanding between Turkey and Armenia. In addition, we will continue our efforts in support of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the opening of their land border. If I am confirmed,

I will also promote government-to-government discussions, as well as people-to-people, cultural and economic contacts and partnerships. Such interaction begins to build trust, which is an important step toward reconciliation. I stand ready to support all such efforts in service of reconciliation.

Question. For two decades, Turkey has maintained its illegal blockade of landlocked Armenia despite public calls by successive U.S. administrations for an end to Europe's last closed border.

◆ If confirmed, how will you work to end this illegal blockade?

Answer. It has been and remains the administration's policy to encourage Turkey and Armenia to reconcile their past and normalize relations as a means of creating the peaceful and prosperous bilateral relationship that the people of both countries deserve. The status quo is not beneficial for either side, and both countries would benefit greatly from increased direct trade and normal relations. Facilitating Armenia's regional integration by opening its border with Turkey is a priority for the United States. If confirmed, this would be one of my key goals as Ambassador. I would work closely with colleagues in Washington and our Embassy in Yerevan on this common objective, including taking every opportunity in meetings with government and civil society leaders to encourage greater dialogue. In addition, I would continue to support increased cross-border cooperation between the people of Armenia and Turkey through research initiatives, conferences, and exchange programs.

Question. Will you commit to meeting with the Armenian American, Greek American, Assyrian American and Kurdish American communities on a regular basis?

Answer. If confirmed, it will be my honor and duty to serve as the representative of the U.S. Government and fellow American citizens to the Republic of Turkey. To that end, I look forward to regularly working with American citizen groups of all ethnic backgrounds who have an interest in our relations with Turkey, including and especially Armenian American, Greek American, Assyrian American, and Kurdish American communities.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Ambassador Bass, if confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Turkey, your tenure will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Commemorating this anniversary will be greatly important to Armenian communities around the world, including in Turkey and the United States.

Question. How do you believe the United States can help advance broader recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey?

Answer. Over the last several years, the Department of State has supported a number of civil society and people-to-people initiatives to encourage Turkey-Armenia reconciliation. This includes programs that support the President's call for a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts regarding the tragic events in 1915 which resulted in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. If confirmed, I will continue to promote these initiatives and explore whether there are other avenues that could further reinforce U.S. efforts to promote a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts and reconciliation between the two countries. I also look forward to meeting with the courageous individuals in Turkey who are taking steps to foster a dialogue that acknowledges Turkey's shared history with Armenia. Turkey must come to terms with its past, and I stand ready to support all such efforts.

Question. What role do you believe the U.S. Embassy and consulates should play in marking this important occasion?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, a senior representative from our consulate in Istanbul has attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens in Turkey now live. If confirmed, I will continue to make attendance at such commemoration events a priority, particularly in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Question. How do you believe the failure to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide hinders the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey?

Answer. To achieve full reconciliation, Turkey must come to terms with its past. While progress has been slow, there have been some recent signs of change, such as remarks by Prime Minister Erdogan this past April expressing condolences to the grandchildren of Armenians who suffered the tragic events of 1915. The administration will continue to encourage a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts in order to promote understanding between Turkey and Armenia. In addition, we will continue our efforts in support of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the opening of their land border. If I am confirmed, I will also promote government-to-government discussions, as well as people-to-people cultural and economic contacts and partnerships. Such interactions begin to build trust, which is an important step toward reconciliation. I stand ready to support all such efforts in service of reconciliation.

Question. Do you agree with the accounts of U.S. diplomats, including Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, who served as U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, regarding the attempted annihilation of the Armenian people?

Answer. I am aware of the history of the tragic massacres and forced exile that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire, and with U.S. policy during that period. Ambassador Morgenthau's accounts, and the reporting of other U.S. diplomats, serve as important historical records of these tragic events from various perspectives. The individual stories of the tragedy are horrifying.

The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. If confirmed as Ambassador, my role would be to represent faithfully the President's policies, as it has been in all of my previous assignments.