

NOMINATIONS OF THE 113TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—
JANUARY 16 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2014
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

**NOMINATIONS OF ERICA RUGGLES, GEORGE
KROL, ALLAN MUSTARD, DAVID PRESSMAN,
AND MARCIA BERNICAT**

THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2014

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

Erica J. Barks Ruggles, of Minnesota, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda
Hon. George Albert Krol, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan
Allan P. Mustard, of Washington, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to Turkmenistan
David Pressman, of New York, to be Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations
Hon. Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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

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

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We have five nominees to consider today and forward to the full committee for their consideration. I appreciate that we have a little bit of a—some kind of a demonstration is blocking a couple of the nominees from being here right at the minute, but we will get started, nevertheless. I will do some opening statements.

And I think I will just go ahead and tell you about all five of the nominees in my opening statements, and then we will begin with testimony from Ms. Ruggles and Mr. Pressman, and we will allow the other three nominees to do their testimony when they arrive.

First, congratulations to you, and to all five of the nominees. It is an honor to be nominated to represent the United States in the

capacities for which you are nominated. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, it has been a privilege to work on the committee, and one of the things that is so exciting is the opportunity to meet Foreign Service officers of every grade and every capacity, both in Washington and around the world. We are served very, very well by some dedicated public servants, and many of them live in Virginia. So, I want to make sure I say that right up front.

The five nominees that we have today for a variety of positions are as follows: Marcia Bernicat to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh; George Krol to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan; Allan Mustard to be Ambassador to Turkmenistan; and then two witnesses who are here, David Pressman, who is the Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs to the U.N., with the rank of Ambassador, and an Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the U.N.; and Erica Barks-Ruggles to be Ambassador to Rwanda.

I am chairing this hearing, as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Near East, South, and Central Asia, where a number of these positions are in that real estate.

A few words about each of our five nominees: Ambassador George Krol is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister Counselor, currently serving as the U.S. Ambassador for the Republic of Uzbekistan, previously the Ambassador in Belarus, with many other assignments in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Welcome, to all of you. You came in quicker than I thought you were going to come in. I am very glad to have you here. Just starting the introductions.

Ambassador Krol has served much of his career in the former Soviet Union, developing deep knowledge of the region, and we are very, very pleased to welcome him here.

Ambassador Krol, welcome.

Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, who served previously as the Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and she was confirmed by the Senate for those positions in 2008. Ambassador Bernicat is a Senior Foreign Service officer who has 33 years of experience. She is currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Human Resources, and previously she has served in many capacities, including overseas postings in Barbados, Malawi, India, Mali, France, and other positions.

Welcome. We are very, very glad to welcome you here.

Allan Philip Mustard is the most Senior Foreign Service officer in the Foreign Agricultural Service at U.S. Department of Agriculture, currently serves as Agricultural Minister Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India. He has broad experience in guiding economic reform assistance throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. An expert leader and manager, he served twice in Russia and speaks excellent Russian. He will be bringing essential skills to the task of furthering bilateral relations with the Government of Turkmenistan as it transitions to a market economy.

David Pressman is an American human rights attorney and former aid to U.N. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. He cur-

rently serves as Samantha Powers' counsel at the United Nation. David served as an advisor to Secretary Janet Napolitano and chief of staff to the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, also served as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security responsible for policy development on global criminal justice issues. He was appointed by President Obama to serve as the director for the War Crimes and Atrocities on the National Security Council.

And finally, Erica Jean Ruggles is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, currently serves as consul general at the U.S. consulate in Capetown, South Africa, a position she has held since 2011. During her career, she has served as Deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., on detail as Director of the National Security Council, and Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. She has also had postings abroad in Norway, India, and elsewhere.

These five public servants have already demonstrated their mettle in difficult positions and are well qualified for the positions for which they have been nominated.

We are pleased to welcome you today. And what I would like to do is just begin with opening statements from each of the witnesses. I know you have submitted testimony for the record. It will be accepted in the record, but please take the time that you need.

We will begin with Ms. Ruggles, and we will work our way across the dais, and we will then prepare for my withering cross-examination. [Laughter.]

Ms. Ruggles.

**STATEMENT OF ERICA J. BARKS RUGGLES, OF MINNESOTA,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Thank you, Chairman Kaine. And thank you, to the members and staff who are here today.

It is, as you said, an honor and a privilege to appear before you today and to have been nominated as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I am humbled by the trust that has been placed in me by the President and the Secretary of State, and I hope that you will also find me worthy of your trust. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Rwanda.

I would like to start, if you would not mind, by acknowledging the presence of—behind me, of my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Taylor Ruggles. Without him and without our family's love and support, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I sit before your committee today an embodiment of what so many people in so many countries admire about the United States, the fact that, through hard work and a good education, anyone in America can become anything they want to be. In my 22-year career, I have seen people just like me, from modest backgrounds, with hardworking families, who have not had the opportunities I did simply because they were of a different race, tribe, ethnic group, religion, or gender. And, because of that, I have become a committed advocate for ensuring that every individual has—the opportunities they need to succeed.

Rwanda is a country that has been deeply riven by cycles of conflict, tragedy, and survival. Although Rwanda is still recovering

from the 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 innocent people, Rwandans have shown that recovery, reconciliation, and healing are possible, even in the aftermath of a genocide that no one believed possible in our time.

More, however, needs to be done to secure peace and democracy and further expand prosperity in Rwanda for the next generation of its citizens. Since 1994, Rwanda has made enormous progress in rebuilding itself by investing in the health and education of its people, laying the needed foundation for economic prosperity and sustainable growth. In the past 10 years alone, it has pulled over 1 million of its 11 million citizens out of poverty, doubled GDP, and had economic growth that has averaged over 6 percent.

Rwanda is working not only to create immediate short-term jobs and employment, but to develop a vibrant economy by meeting the basic needs of its population through building roads, providing safe water, transportation, and health care. Rwandan children have the highest primary enrollment rates in all of Africa. For both boys and girls, Rwanda is on track to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015, with a primary net enrollment rate of over 95 percent since 2012. And, unlike many countries in the developing world in which girls have limited access to education, Rwanda's young girls are enrolling in primary rates at above 98 percent.

To strengthen its economy, Rwanda has aggressively pursued a privatization policy that encourages foreign and local investment. It has diversified trade outflows and has worked strategically to achieve its goal of developing into a middle-income country by 2020 and becoming an important hub within the East African community for regional financial services, aviation, information technology, and tourism.

In addition to its economic progress, Rwanda has drawn on its own tragic history to try to alleviate conflicts elsewhere in the region. Rwandan police and troops are serving with distinction in U.N. and regional peacekeeping forces in Darfur, South Sudan, Mali, and Central African Republic. The United States has worked closely with Rwanda since 2006 in this regard, providing over \$60 million in training, nonlethal equipment, and logistics support to enable Rwandan deployments in these missions.

The United States, in partnership with the international community, has also supported real developmental change in Rwanda. We remain Rwanda's largest bilateral donor, providing more than \$200 million in foreign assistance in fiscal year 2013, including \$90 million through the PEPFAR program.

Although Rwanda has made much progress over the last 20 years, there is still much we can do to encourage and support its development, particularly in the area of respect for human rights and the rule of law, ensuring freedom of expression for political activities and the media, and deepening Rwanda's democracy.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda, I will continue to urge the Rwandan Government to abide by its international human rights commitments, including respect for the freedoms of assembly and expression, which are crucial to the success of any democratic system of governance.

If confirmed, I will also continue to encourage Rwanda to play a constructive role in restoring peace and stability in eastern Congo,

including the full implementation of its commitments to the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework, the regional peace process, signed in February 2013. One of the core objectives of that framework is the eradication of all armed groups, including increased international regional efforts to neutralize the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or the FDLR, as they are commonly known, a group whose members include individuals responsible for the genocide in Rwanda.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will commit all of my energy and experience toward strengthening the relationship between our two countries and advancing, to the best of my abilities, the U.S. goals of a democratic, prosperous Rwanda that is at peace with its neighbors.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I will welcome your questions at the end.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barks-Ruggles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERICA BARKS RUGGLES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today and to have been nominated by President Obama to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I am humbled by the trust placed in me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry in nominating me for this position. I hope that you will also find me worthy of that trust. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Rwanda.

I would like to acknowledge my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Taylor Ruggles. Without him, and our strong families' love and support, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I sit before your committee today an embodiment of what so many people in so many countries admire about the United States—the fact that through hard work, effort, and good education, anyone in America can become anything they want to be. I was born in the Midwest and had never even been on an airplane until I was 18, heading to university. As I did so, I felt the weight of ensuring I made the most of every minute of my education to further myself as I knew how much my family was sacrificing financially for me to go to college. That education opened up the world for me.

In my career, I have seen people just like me—from modest backgrounds with hard working families—who have not had the opportunities I did sometimes simply because they were of “another” race, tribe, religion, or gender. And because of that I have become a committed advocate for the need to give every child, every individual, the respect and opportunities they need to succeed.

Rwanda is a country that has been deeply riven by cycles of conflict, tragedy, and survival. Although Rwanda is still recovering from the 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 innocent people, Rwandans have shown that recovery, reconciliation, and healing are possible, even in the aftermath of a genocide that no one believed possible in our times. More, however, needs to be done to secure peace and democracy, and further expand prosperity in Rwanda for the next generation of Rwandan citizens.

Since 1994, Rwanda has made enormous progress in rebuilding itself by investing in the health and education of all of its people, laying the needed foundation for economic prosperity and sustainable growth. It has pulled over one million of its 11 million citizens out of poverty in the past 10 years, and doubled per capita GDP in that same period. Economic growth has averaged over 6 percent for the past 3 years.

Rwanda is working not only to create immediate short-term jobs, but to develop a vibrant economy by meeting the basic needs of its population for potable water, roads, transportation, and health care. Rwandan children have the highest primary school enrollment rates in Africa. For both boys and girls, Rwanda is on track to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015, with a primary net enrollment at over 95 percent since 2012. And, unlike many countries in the developing world in which girls have limited access to education, Rwanda's young girls are enrolling in primary school at a rate of about 98 percent. Rwanda has also increased

to well over 70 percent the number of children staying in school to complete their education.

To strengthen its economy, Rwanda has aggressively pursued a privatization policy that encourages foreign and local investment. It has diversified its trade outflows beyond traditional exports of tea and coffee to products such as pyrethrum (a natural insecticide), hides and skins, textiles, minerals, and specialty coffee. Rwanda is also partnering with foreign investors to increase its capacity in the areas of technology, telecommunications, and alternative forms of energy such as solar and hydropower. Rwanda has worked strategically to achieve its goal of developing into a middle-income country by 2020 and becoming an important regional hub within the East African Community for regional financial services, aviation, information technology, and tourism.

In addition to its economic progress, Rwanda has drawn on its own tragic history to try to alleviate conflicts elsewhere in the world. Rwandan police and troops have distinguished themselves as among the most capable and professional contingents to support United Nations peacekeeping missions in Haiti, as well as in regional and U.N. missions in Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, and most recently, Central African Republic. The United States has worked closely with Rwanda since 2006 in this regard, providing over \$60 million in training, equipment, and, in some cases, logistical support to enable Rwandan deployments for these missions.

The United States, in partnership with the international community, has supported real, positive change in Rwanda. We remain Rwanda's largest bilateral donor, having provided more than \$200 million in foreign assistance in fiscal year 2013, of which more than \$90 million is used to support the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Though Rwanda has made much progress over the last 20 years, there is still much we can do to encourage and support its development, particularly in the areas of respect for human rights and the rule of law, ensuring freedom of expression for political activities and the media, and deepening Rwanda's democracy to permit peaceful political discourse and competition. If confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda, I will continue to urge the Rwandan Government to abide by its international human rights commitments, including respect for the freedoms of assembly and expression, which are crucial to the success of any democratic system of governance. As Nelson Mandela, that great icon and statesman of South Africa said, "To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

If confirmed, I will also continue to encourage Rwanda to play a constructive role in restoring peace and stability in eastern Congo, including through full implementation of its commitments to the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework, the regional peace process signed in February 2013 that is intended to end the recurrent, devastating cycle of conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and its negative impacts on the surrounding Great Lakes region. One of the core objectives of the Framework is the eradication of all armed groups, and this must include increased international and regional efforts to neutralize the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a group whose members include individuals responsible for the Rwandan genocide.

I believe the broad range of experience I have gained in my 22-year career as a Foreign Service officer will assist me in further advancing our goals with the Republic of Rwanda. As the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and as the Deputy to the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, I dealt with many of the kinds of issues that I would face, if confirmed, as the U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda. Having worked on Africa issues on and off since 1994, I have followed Rwanda's progress—and its ongoing challenges—with interest. My most recent posting in South Africa has only confirmed for me the important role that strong, independent democratic institutions—including independent courts, a free press and a vibrant civil society—play in safeguarding democracies and building more inclusive, more tolerant, and more stable societies.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will commit all of my energy and experience toward strengthening the relationship between our two countries and to advancing to the best of my ability the U.S. goal of a democratic, prosperous Rwanda that is at peace with its neighbors.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Ms. Ruggles.
Ambassador Krol.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE ALBERT KROL, OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Ambassador KROL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan. And I am honored by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in me with this nomination. And, if confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill their, and your, high expectations of me to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan.

And I am also honored to be sitting here before you today with my colleagues, with whom I have served and whom I greatly admire for their professionalism and their dedication to our country.

As a 32-year career officer of the United States Foreign Service, I can think of no greater honor and privilege to serve our country and represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States. And I am grateful for the support and inspiration my family members and friends have provided me through the years. And I count on their love and support in the future.

Encompassing the size—or, the territory the size of Europe, Kazakhstan possesses immense natural resources and is located at the crossroads of east and west and north and south, and its population is young and increasingly connected with the world around them. And, for the United States, our strategic goals in Kazakhstan are to facilitate and strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and independence, its stability, its prosperity, and its democracy.

Our strategic partnership with Kazakhstan has become increasingly important as Kazakhstan assumes its rightful place on the world stage as a country of consequence. From the earliest days of its independence 22 years ago, Kazakhstan has made numerous wise decisions. It gave up its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal, which, at the time, was the fourth-largest in the world, and has become a leader in nonproliferation efforts around the world. And, from the beginning, Kazakhstan has pursued economic reform, and, as a result, is now a middle-income nation with the most advanced economy in the region. Kazakhstan has also actively promoted trade links east and west and north and south, and shares our vision of developing a New Silk Road to connect Central and South Asia.

Another wise early decision was to send many of its young citizens abroad for education, which is an investment that should pay off handsomely in both the public and private sectors of Kazakhstan.

Long a provider of humanitarian and development assistance in Afghanistan, as well as being an integral part of the northern distribution network into Afghanistan, Kazakhstan is now standing up, in collaboration with our own USAID, its own international development body, called KazAID.

And, in short, Mr. Chairman, Kazakhstan is a country with which the United States can work. United States investment in Kazakhstan has grown to roughly \$31 billion, making Kazakhstan our most important economic partner in the region. We have expanded our ties in the security sphere and in the areas of economic

reform, education, and growth of Kazakhstan's civil society. And, if confirmed, I would use my diplomatic experience in the Central Asian region, where I now serve as Ambassador to Uzbekistan, and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, to lead our mission in advancing our growing engagement with Kazakhstan in pursuit of our broad national interests, which are: strengthening long-term stability in Central Asia and the world, promoting American business, encouraging respect for universal human rights, and preventing any threats to our national security from emerging in this region.

Mr. Chairman, mutual interests and mutual respect underlie our relations with Kazakhstan, and only the people of Kazakhstan can, and should, freely determine their future development without outside interference or pressure. Respecting Kazakhstan's traditions and transition from its Soviet past, our approach is not to dictate to Kazakhstan its path of development, but to provide the people of Kazakhstan a strong example of a prosperous, rule-based democracy on which to build durable economic, social, and political stability. The choice will be Kazakhstan's to make, but the United States will always be a reliable, principled influence and partner for Kazakhstan's efforts to advance market reform and to develop into a free democratic society respectful of the rights and choices of its citizens.

As a current Ambassador and a U.S. taxpayer, I also understand the importance of being a responsible steward of the public trust, of public funds, property, programs, and personnel. And I recognize that security of the mission and its personnel is one of the highest priorities of any Ambassador, as is ensuring that the mission is a place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment, or exploitation of any sort. If confirmed, I would maintain these high standards of ethical conduct, fiscal responsibility, and security for our mission in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent most of my adult life in the diplomatic profession, and I have learned that the key to successful diplomacy is establishing and maintaining effective relationships. Clear communication is essential. At the end of the day, it is all about trust. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and societies, but also to engagement with Congress. And, if confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and its staff, to discuss and work with you in pursuit of our national interests in Kazakhstan.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Krol follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEORGE A. KRO

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and other members of the committee. Thank for you for the opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I am honored by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill their and your high expectations of me to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan.

As a 32-year career officer of the U.S. Foreign Service and as an American citizen, I can think of no greater honor and privilege than to serve our country and represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States. I am grateful also

for the support and inspiration my family members and friends have provided me through my years of service to our Nation and I count on their love and support in the future.

Encompassing a territory the size of Europe, Kazakhstan possesses immense natural resources and is located at the crossroads of east and west, north and south. Its population is young and increasingly connected with the world around them. For the United States, our strategic goals are to facilitate and strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and independence, its stability, its prosperity and its democracy.

Our Strategic Partnership with Kazakhstan has become increasingly important as Kazakhstan takes its rightful place on the world stage as a country of consequence. From the earliest days of its independence 22 years ago, Kazakhstan has made wise decisions. It gave up its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal, which at the time was the fourth-largest in the world, and has become a world leader in nonproliferation. From the beginning, Kazakhstan has emphasized economic reform and, as a result, is now a middle-level-income nation with a financial system that largely meets international standards. Another wise, early decision was to provide international education for many of its young citizens, an investment that has paid off handsomely in both the public and private sectors of Kazakhstan. Long a provider of humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan, Kazakhstan is now standing up, in collaboration with our own USAID, its own international development body, KAZAid. This is a country the United States can work with.

United States investment in Kazakhstan has grown to roughly \$31 billion, making Kazakhstan our most important economic partner in the region. We have also expanded our ties in the security sphere and in the areas of education and growth of Kazakhstan's civil society.

Kazakhstan has been a generous partner in Afghanistan and a vital link in the Northern Distribution Network, and is a strong supporter of building greater transport and commercial links across the region and beyond. Kazakhstan has also directly supported international efforts regarding Iran's nuclear program and has been not only a responsible partner but also a world leader in global nonproliferation efforts, having given up at its independence what was, at the time, the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world. As Kazakhstan increases its role and voice in regional and international affairs, the United States wishes to be Kazakhstan's trusted strategic partner.

If confirmed, I would intend to use diplomatic experience in the Central Asia region where I now serve as Ambassador to Uzbekistan and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, as well as my interagency contacts, to lead our mission team in advancing our growing engagement with Kazakhstan in pursuit of our broader national interests of strengthening long-term stability in the Central Asia region and the world, promoting American economic and business interests, encouraging respect for universal human rights and preventing any threats to our national security emerging from this region.

Mutual interest and mutual respect underlie our relations with Kazakhstan. Only the people of Kazakhstan can and should freely determine their future development without outside interference or pressure.

Respecting Kazakhstan's traditions and transition from its Soviet past, our approach is not to dictate to Kazakhstan its path of development but to provide the people of Kazakhstan a strong example of a prosperous, rule-based democracy on which to build durable economic, social and political stability.

The choice will be Kazakhstan's to make, but the United States will always be a reliable principled influence and partner for Kazakhstan's efforts to advance market reform and to develop into a free, democratic society respectful of the rights and choices of its citizens.

Having served as an ambassador twice before, and as a U.S. taxpayer, I understand the importance of being a responsible steward of the public trust, of public funds, property, programs, and personnel.

Security of the mission and all its personnel is one of the highest priorities for any ambassador as is ensuring that the mission is a place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment or exploitation of any sort. If confirmed, I would maintain these high standards of ethical conduct and security for our missions in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent most of my adult life in the diplomatic profession. I have learned that the key to successful diplomacy is establishing and maintaining effective relationships. Clear communication is essential.

At the end of the day, it's all about building trust. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and societies but also to engagement with Congress.

If confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and staff to discuss and work with the committee in pursuit of our national interests in Kazakhstan.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Krol.
Mr. Mustard.

**STATEMENT OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD, OF WASHINGTON,
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO TURKMENISTAN**

Mr. MUSTARD. Chairman Kaine, it is a great honor to appear before you today, sir, as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan. I am humbled by the confidence and the solemn trust bestowed upon me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry by this nomination. And, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your committee to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

The United States and Turkmenistan have a growing relationship that spans a broad range of issues, from regional security to energy cooperation to expanding economic engagement. Our nations share an abiding interest in Afghanistan's future, and Turkmenistan has been a strong partner in contributing to Afghanistan's stabilization and economic development, including by permitting humanitarian overflights for our military.

Boeing and GE are just two examples of American companies that have experienced great success in the Turkmen market, and I believe there are many more opportunities to expand our commercial relations.

However, our bilateral relationship is constrained by significant human rights concerns, because the government seeks to exert control over the lives of its citizens. If confirmed, I will work actively with the government to address the full range of human rights issues, including limitations on freedom of movement, freedom of expression, undue restrictions on religious practice, reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, and torture of prisoners. I believe that the sign of a mature bilateral relationship is one where we can have frank, open discussion with our counterparts on issues where we disagree. And, if confirmed, I will ensure that we maintain a constructive dialogue with the Government of Turkmenistan across the full spectrum of issues, even these tough ones.

The United States has made clear to Turkmenistan our enduring support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the administration has also emphasized that U.S. interest in the region is long-term. Turkmenistan has been an important contributor to Afghanistan's rebirth, providing discounted electricity, housing, hospitals, and other forms of humanitarian aid to its neighbor. Turkmenistan is also making major investments in infrastructure that will connect Afghanistan to the region and open its economy to Western markets. If confirmed, I will encourage Turkmenistan to continue to provide all possible support to Afghanistan.

As Turkmenistan seeks to diversify distribution of its significant natural gas reserves, the administration continues to encourage Turkmenistan to move forward with the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, or TAPI, Pipeline, which could strengthen economic ties between Central and South Asia. U.S. firms have the experience needed to put the Galkynysh gas field, which would sup-

ply the TAPI Pipeline, into production. If confirmed, I would use my decades of experience in overseas commercial advocacy to support American companies in their efforts to invest in energy projects in Turkmenistan and, likewise, work with the top levels of government in Ashgabat to ensure their clear understanding of international energy projects and markets.

As noted earlier, the United States has a growing commercial relationship with Turkmenistan, and American companies are active across a growing range of sectors of the Turkmen economy, including energy, agriculture, and civil aviation. If confirmed, I will apply my more than 30 years of analytical, marketing, and trade policy expertise to advancing the interests of U.S. firms. I will also use my experience with Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization to encourage Turkmenistan also to join the WTO.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent 20 of my 29 years in the Foreign Service at U.S. missions overseas. Through my experiences abroad, I have come to believe that we make our greatest impact on a country through direct engagement with its people. My first job for the U.S. Government was as a Russian-speaking exhibition guide in the U.S.S.R., explaining American culture and our way of life to citizens of a one-party state with state-controlled media and a command economy. Later, as an agricultural officer, I was privileged to have opportunities to drive deep into the hinterlands of Russia, Mexico, Syria, and other countries, both to observe local crop conditions and to talk to local residents about America and our democratic form of government. These experiences proved to me the value of outreach at the grassroots level. Public diplomacy programs, educational exchanges, cultural programming, and engagement through American Corner libraries embody and convey our most cherished values and build enduring people-to-people ties that are the foundation for so much of what we do. In a country like Turkmenistan, which remains one of the most closed societies in the world, public diplomacy efforts can have an outsized impact. I will make these programs a priority, if confirmed as Ambassador.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I know that, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will ultimately be responsible for the safety and welfare of my Embassy colleagues and their families in a remote part of the world. Their safety and the safety of all Americans in Turkmenistan will be my top priority.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mustard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan. I am humbled by the confidence and solemn trust bestowed upon me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry by this nomination, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

The United States and Turkmenistan have a growing relationship that spans a broad range of issues, from regional security to energy cooperation, to expanding economic engagement. Our nations share an abiding interest in Afghanistan's future, and Turkmenistan has been a strong partner in contributing to Afghanistan's stabilization and economic development, including by permitting humanitarian overflights for our military. Boeing and GE are just two examples of American companies that have experienced great success in the Turkmen market, and I believe there are many more opportunities to expand our commercial relations.

However, our bilateral relationship is constrained by significant human-rights concerns because the government seeks to exert control over the lives of its citizens. If confirmed, I will work actively with the government to address the full range of human-rights issues, including limitations on freedom of movement, freedom of expression, undue restrictions on religious practice, reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, and torture of prisoners. I believe that the sign of a mature bilateral relationship is one where we can have frank, open discussion with our counterparts on issues where we disagree and, if confirmed, I will ensure that we maintain a constructive dialog with the Government of Turkmenistan across the full spectrum of issues, even these tough ones.

The United States has made clear to Turkmenistan our enduring support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity and the administration has also emphasized that U.S. interest in the region is long term. Central Asia stands at the crossroads of the New Silk Road, connecting Asian and European markets, and Afghanistan is integral to the effort to strengthen the region through economic cooperation. Turkmenistan has been an important contributor to Afghanistan's rebirth, providing discounted electricity, housing, hospitals, and other forms of humanitarian aid to its neighbor. Turkmenistan is also making major investments in infrastructure that will connect Afghanistan to the region and open its economy to Western markets. If confirmed, I will encourage Turkmenistan to continue to provide all possible support to Afghanistan.

As Turkmenistan seeks to diversify distribution of its significant natural gas reserves, the administration continues to encourage Turkmenistan to move forward with the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, or "TAPI," pipeline which could strengthen economic ties between Central and South Asia. U.S. firms have the experience and expertise needed to put the Galkynysh gas field, which would supply the TAPI pipeline, into production. If confirmed, I would use my decades of experience in overseas commercial advocacy to support American companies in their efforts to invest in energy projects in Turkmenistan and, likewise, work with the top levels of the government in Ashgabat to ensure their clear understanding of international energy projects and markets.

As noted earlier, the United States has a growing commercial relationship with Turkmenistan and American companies are active across a growing range of sectors of the Turkmen economy, including energy, agriculture and civil aviation. If confirmed, I will apply my more than 30 years of analytical, marketing and trade policy expertise to advancing the interests of U.S. firms. I will also use my experience with Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization to encourage Turkmenistan also to join the WTO.

I have spent 20 of my 29 years in the Foreign Service at U.S. missions overseas. Through my experiences abroad, I have come to believe that we make our greatest impact on a country through direct engagement with its people. My first job for the U.S. Government was as a Russian-speaking exhibition guide in the U.S.S.R., explaining American culture and our way of life to citizens of a one-party state with state-controlled media and a command economy. Later, as an agricultural officer, I was privileged to have opportunities to drive deep into the hinterlands of Russia, Mexico, Turkey, Syria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and other countries, both to observe local crop conditions and to talk to local residents about America and our democratic form of government. These experiences showed me the value of outreach at the grassroots level. Public diplomacy programs—educational exchanges, cultural programming, and engagement through American Corner libraries—embody and convey our most cherished values, and build enduring people-to-people ties that are the foundation for so much of what we do. In a country like Turkmenistan, which remains one of the most closed societies in the world, public diplomacy efforts can have an outsized impact. I will make these programs a priority if confirmed as Ambassador.

Finally, I know that, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will ultimately be responsible for the safety and welfare of my Embassy colleagues and their families in a remote part of the world. Their safety, and the safety of all Americans in Turkmenistan, will be my top priority.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Pressman.

STATEMENT OF DAVID PRESSMAN, OF NEW YORK, NOMINEE TO BE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR; ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. PRESSMAN. Chairman Kaine, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for their confidence in me.

I would like, if I could, to briefly acknowledge the members of my family, who are spread out across the country from San Diego to New York watching this hearing. In particular, my twin boys, Conrad and Ezra, who are 18 months old, who are at home in New York with my partner, Daniel. They are the lights of my lives. And when you have twins, you are constantly exercising your multilateral diplomacy muscles at all times. [Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman, I have dedicated my professional life to public service at the State Department under two Presidents, as a human rights advocate and attorney, and as an Assistant Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security. I served in the Multilateral Affairs Directorate of the National Security Council, and, since last fall, have served as the counselor to Ambassador Power at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. I have had the chance to work with, around, and for the U.N. I have seen both its promise and its success, as well as its failures and its shortcomings. I have looked into the eyes of displaced and desperate people who counted on protection from nearby U.N. peacekeepers, but who were instead left to fend for themselves. I have also seen, however, the U.N. accomplish the seemingly impossible; deliver vaccines, despite government obstruction, to those who would otherwise perish; families evacuated from aerial bombardments that would otherwise have killed them.

From its founding almost 70 years ago, the U.N.'s record has been a mixed one. The organization is far from the panacea that some of its most fervent backers hoped it would become, nor is it the failure its most ardent opponents feared. Its record is truly mixed. It is both indispensable and it is flawed. But, it can advance our interests; and, as such, we must lead it, and we must reform it.

As our lives and our world become increasingly interconnected, so, too, do the threats to our security and liberty. Terrorists, proliferators, aggressors, cyber warriors, criminals, traffickers, and peddlers of repression do not respect borders. In responding to them, our efforts must transcend borders, as well. And, while no country can lead as effectively as ours can, it is not America's job to police every problem, to solve every crisis. That burden must be shared. And the United Nations, with strong and assertive American leadership, can help us protect our interests and promote international peace and security while more equitably distributing the burden for doing so.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined work to make the U.N. more responsible, effective, and efficient. That means ensuring U.N. peacekeeping missions are well designed, properly resourced, and responsibly led. It means ensuring that peacekeepers who are supposed to be out patrolling and protecting civilians are not instead hunkering down on their bases. It means ensuring budget discipline, increasing transparency, and making sure that those who seek to report abuse in the U.N. system can do so without fear of retribution. It means ensuring that we live up to the spirit of the U.N.'s own charter by putting an end to the campaign of bigotry and discrimination directed against the state of Israel at the U.N. It means ensuring that voices of liberty and freedom are not muffled by noises of repression and extremism at the U.N. We can, and we should, make the U.N. work to advance our interests and security.

Because of U.S. leadership today, U.N.-backed and African Union-led peacekeepers are playing important roles in repelling terrorist organizations operating in Somalia while U.N. peacekeepers are helping stabilize northern Mali against the threat posed by al-Qaeda-affiliated and other extremist groups. Because of U.S. leadership, the U.N. is on the front lines of preventing regional instability by trying to end conflict and curb suffering in Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Because of U.S. leadership, the United Nations helped lift Cote d'Ivoire out of the arms of a strongman intent on defying the democratic will of Ivoirians.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me just say that I believe we can, and we should, use the United Nations to advance our security, protect our interests, and promote our values, and that, by so doing, we can make the world a safer, more just, and more humane place.

It is to those ends that I pledge my best efforts, if confirmed. And it is with gratitude that I thank you and the members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. And, of course, I would be pleased to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pressman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID PRESSMAN

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for their confidence in me.

I would like briefly to acknowledge members of my family who are spread out across our country from San Diego to New York watching this hearing.

I have dedicated my professional life to public service—at the State Department under two Presidents, as a human rights advocate and attorney, and as an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. I served in the Multilateral Affairs Directorate of the National Security Council and, since last fall, have been Counselor to Ambassador Power at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

I have had a chance to work with, around, and for the U.N. I have seen both its promise and its success; as well as its failures and its shortcomings. I have looked into the eyes of displaced and desperate people who counted on protection from nearby U.N. peacekeepers, but who were instead left to fend for themselves. I have also seen, however, the U.N. accomplish the seemingly impossible: deliver vaccines despite government obstruction to those who would otherwise perish; families evacuated from aerial bombardments that would otherwise have killed them.

From its founding almost 70 years ago, the U.N.'s record has been a mixed one; the organization is far from the panacea that some of its most fervent backers hoped it would become, nor is it the failure its most ardent opponents feared. Its record is truly mixed. It is both indispensable and it is deeply flawed. But it can advance our interests, and as such we must lead it and we must reform it.

As our lives and our world become increasingly interconnected, so too do the threats to our security and liberty. Terrorists, proliferators, aggressors, cyber warriors, criminals, traffickers, and peddlers of repression do not respect borders. In responding to them, our efforts must transcend borders as well. While no country can lead as effectively as we can, it is not America's job to police every problem, to solve every crisis. That burden must be shared; and the United Nations, with strong and assertive American leadership, can help us to protect our interests and promote international peace and security, while more equitably distributing the burden for doing so.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined work to make the U.N. more responsible, effective, and efficient. That means ensuring U.N. peacekeeping missions are well-designed, properly resourced, and responsibly led. It means ensuring that peacekeepers who are supposed to be out patrolling and protecting civilians are not instead hunkering down on their bases. It means ensuring budget discipline, increasing transparency, and making sure that those who seek to report abuse in the U.N. system can do so without fear of retribution. It means ensuring that we live up to the spirit of the U.N.'s own Charter by putting an end to the campaign of bigotry and discrimination directed against the State of Israel at the U.N. It means ensuring that voices of liberty and freedom are not muffled by the noises of repression and extremism at the U.N.

We can and we should make the U.N. work to advance our interests and our security. Because of U.S. leadership, today, U.N.-backed and African Union-led peacekeepers are playing important roles in repelling terrorist organizations operating in Somalia, while U.N. peacekeepers are helping stabilize northern Mali against the threat posed by al-Qaeda-affiliated and other extremist groups. Because of U.S. leadership, the U.N. is on the front lines of preventing regional instability by trying to end conflict and curb suffering in Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Because of U.S. leadership, the United Nations helped lift Cote d'Ivoire out of the arms of a strongman intent on defying the democratic will of Ivoirians.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me just say that I believe we can and should use the United Nations to advance our security, protect our interests, and promote our values; and that by so doing, we can make the world a safer, more just, and more humane place.

It is to those ends that I pledge my best efforts, if confirmed, and it is with gratitude that I thank you and the members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Pressman.
Ambassador Bernicat.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT,
OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

Ambassador BERNICAT. Mr. Chairman and members of the staff, I am honored to appear before you today. I would like to sincerely thank the President and the Secretary of State for the trust and the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Kathryn Bloom White and Luther White, my sister and brother-in-law, and Thomas Darby, a dear friend with whom my sister and I share a proud Jersey Shore upbringing. Not here today, my sons, Sumit Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, hail from the subcontinent, and, like their father, Olivier, and me, have enthusiastically called the world our classroom.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve the United States in such a strategically important country at such a critical time for our bi-

lateral relationship. As the world's eighth-largest country by population and third-largest Muslim majority nation, Bangladesh is known for its moderate, secular, pluralistic traditions.

With a consistent annual economic growth rate of roughly 6 percent, Bangladesh aspires to become a middle-income country and is an increasingly important trading partner and destination for U.S. investment. Strategically situated between a growing India and a newly opening Burma, it is well positioned to play a key role in linking South and Southeast Asia.

Labor rights and workplace safety remain a top U.S. priority. We need Bangladeshis to ensure there will be no more heartrending tragedies like the Rana Plaza building collapse or the Tazreen Fashions factory fire. With support from the United States and other international partners, Bangladesh has begun to make progress in transforming its garment sector. If confirmed, I pledge to you that I will actively further our efforts to strengthen respect for labor rights and to improve workplace safety.

Bangladesh is on pace to meet many key U.N. Millennium Development goals. Its development success story spans the past two and a half decades, and the United States has been proud to assist in achieving those successes. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of U.S. assistance in Asia, outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a focus country for three of the President's key development efforts: global health, global climate change, and Feed the Future. The United States also works closely with Bangladesh to combat trafficking in persons, mitigate the threat of natural disasters, strengthen counterterrorism, maritime security, and peacekeeping efforts, and combat trafficking in drugs and arms. I look forward, if confirmed, to continuing robust support for these important partnership efforts.

The strong U.S.-Bangladesh relationship allows us to discuss our differences in a spirit of candor and openness. The United States remains concerned about recent trends in democracy and human rights in Bangladesh. The parliamentary elections of January 5 were undeniably flawed, and Bangladesh's main political parties urgently need to engage in constructive dialogue that leads to a more representative government. We remain gravely concerned, as well, about a tax on religious and ethnic minorities, political violence, and extrajudicial killings. If confirmed, I will work hard to support efforts to promote accountability and strengthen human rights and democracy in Bangladesh. We will work with the government, civil society, and Bangladeshis of all walks of life to ensure an environment that encourages the broadest and fairest participation. I will, if confirmed, passionately advocate policies that enshrine respect for human rights and diversity, room for civil society to flourish, space for the free and peaceful discussion of political differences, and adherence to the rule of law by an independent judiciary.

The United States supports bringing justice to those who committed atrocities in the 1971 war with fair and transparent trials held in accordance with international standards. I will, if confirmed, continue to support the right of civil society organizations to operate independently and to express their views openly. We

also encourage the government to ensure the continued effectiveness of Grameen Bank and protect its unique governance structure.

The most serious responsibility of any chief of mission is to ensure the safety and security of our staff abroad. Our Embassy in Dhaka works closely with Bangladeshi counterparts to ensure protection of personnel and facilities, which will remain a top priority of mine, if confirmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your strong interest in South Asia and the positive role that the United States can play. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with you, your committee, and other Members of Congress to advance America's interests in Bangladesh and throughout the region. It would be a great privilege to serve the American people.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bernicat follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I would like to sincerely thank the President and the Secretary of State for the trust and confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Kathryn Bloom White and Luther White, my sister and brother-in-law; and Thomas Darby, one of my dearest friends since third grade with whom my sister and I share a proud Jersey Shore upbringing. My sons, Sumit Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, hail from the subcontinent and have enthusiastically called the world their classroom, as has their father, Olivier Bernicat. It has been my privilege to serve the American people in eight countries across five geographic regions over the past three decades.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve the United States in such a strategically important country, at such a critical time for our bilateral relationship. As the world's eighth-largest country by population and third-largest Muslim-majority nation, Bangladesh is known for its moderate, secular, pluralistic traditions. With an annual economic growth rate of roughly 6 percent each year, Bangladesh aspires to become a middle-income country and is an increasingly important trading partner and destination for U.S. investment. It is strategically situated between a growing India and a newly opening Burma, and therefore is well-positioned to play a key role in linking South and Southeast Asia.

Labor rights and workplace safety in Bangladesh remain a top U.S. priority. We need Bangladeshis to ensure there will be no more heart-rending tragedies like the Rana Plaza building collapse or the Tazreen Fashions factory fire. With support from the United States and other international partners, Bangladesh has begun to make progress in transforming its garment sector. If confirmed, I pledge to you that I will actively further our efforts to strengthen respect for labor rights and to improve workplace safety in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's growth extends beyond its economy, as the country is on pace to meet many key U.N. Millennium Development Goals. It has been a development success story over the past two and half decades and the United States has been proud to assist Bangladesh in achieving these successes. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance in Asia outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a focus country for three of the President's key development efforts: Global Health, Global Climate Change, and Feed the Future. The United States has also worked closely with Bangladesh to combat trafficking in persons and mitigate the threat of natural disasters, to which Bangladesh, due to its geography, is particularly prone. I look forward to the opportunity, if confirmed, to continue to support these important partnership efforts. In addition, if confirmed I look forward to continuing to advance our cooperation on strengthening security, including on issues of counterterrorism, maritime security, peacekeeping and combating trafficking of drugs and arms.

The strong U.S.-Bangladesh relationship allows us to discuss our differences, when they occur, in a spirit of candor and openness. In this context, we have noted the United States remains concerned about recent trends in democracy and human rights in Bangladesh. The Parliamentary elections of January 5 were undeniably flawed, and Bangladesh's main political parties urgently need to engage in construc-

tive dialogue that leads to a more representative government. We remain gravely concerned about attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, political violence, and extrajudicial killings allegedly committed by security forces. If confirmed, I will work hard to support efforts to promote accountability and strengthen human rights and democracy in Bangladesh.

If confirmed, I will work with the government, civil society and Bangladeshis of all walks of life to ensure an environment that encourages the broadest and fairest participation. I will, if confirmed, passionately advocate policies that enshrine peaceful democratic values, including respect for human rights and diversity, room for civil society to flourish, space for the free and peaceful discussion of political differences unmarred by violence, and adherence to the rule of law by an independent judiciary. The United States supports bringing to justice those who committed atrocities in the 1971 war, but those trials should be fair and transparent, and in accordance with international standards. We will also continue to support the right of impressive Bangladeshi civil society organizations to operate independently and to express their views openly, recognizing that such institutions play an important role in any flourishing democracy. We also encourage the government to ensure the continued effectiveness of Grameen Bank and protect its unique governance structure.

The most serious responsibility of any chief of mission is to ensure the safety and security of our staff abroad. Throughout the tense lead-up to and aftermath of the elections this past January, our Embassy in Dhaka worked closely with law enforcement and security counterparts to ensure protection of personnel and facilities, which will remain a top priority if confirmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your strong interest in South Asia and the positive role the United States can play as our government rebalances to that continent. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with you, your committee and other Members of Congress to advance America's interests in Bangladesh and throughout the region. It would be a great privilege to represent the people of the United States of America.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

And two prefatory comments and then I will ask questions. And I am actually going to move in a different order than the opening statements. But, I know, first, that all of us probably have half of our mind on this Malaysian Air downing in the Ukraine, and it is just—there is unreported—there is unconfirmed reports that there may have been Americans onboard. Under any circumstance, whether or not, this is a very, very dangerous event, and our prayers are with the victims. But, also, it points out the high stakes of the work that you all are doing. The world is a very, very challenging place right now.

And, second, on a happier note, I want you to each know I was your agent this morning. I was at a nomination hearing for General Dunford to be the next Commandant of the Marine Corps, and I stressed upon the General the importance of the Marine Security Guard Program. The Marine Security Guards who police our embassies are trained at Quantico, in Virginia, and that program is a very important one. It is been growing, in the aftermath of the Accountability Review Board report that came out following the Benghazi tragedy. You each mentioned the security of your people and the safety of your people in your statements, those of you who are assuming mission command, and I know that that Marine Security Guard component is going to be a critical ally as you go forward. And so, I wanted to make sure that General Dunford knew that, of the many issues that we care about with respect to the Corps, the Security Guard Program is an important one. And I think he certainly, himself, understands that importance.

Ambassador Bernicat, if I could begin with you. You mentioned the flaws in the January 2014 election. And there was a boycott of the election by the BNP, and other flaws. How have these flaws,

including that boycott, affected the, sort of, legitimacy of the elections as it is perceived by the Bangladeshi population? And, you know, what can or is being done to try to resolve concerns and, hopefully, plan for better elections in the future?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Thank you, Mr. Senator.

We are very concerned that the current legislature contains the majority of members who ran unopposed because of that boycott. That cannot be a representative body of governance. And so, we have pressed, we continue to press, from the day after the election, for the establishment of an all-inclusive political process that is free and fair, and free especially of violence, because that has been, unfortunately, a hallmark of the last year and a half, as well, in Bangladeshi politics, to have Bangladeshis come to resolution and develop a government that is more representative.

That said, at the same time, we have been able to work effectively—and continue to work effectively with Bangladesh on a whole host of bilateral issues of concern to both our governments and the broader region.

Senator KAINE. Madam Ambassador, how concerned are you about Islamist militancy in Bangladesh today? Is it a major concern or is it an issue that is not too, sort of, imminent and urgent?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Sir, I have spent the majority of my career serving in countries with either Muslim majority populations or significant Muslim populations, and I would simply say, Muslim population or not, absent a free and representative government and economic system that allows for broad participation, the risk for terrorism and the growth of extremism remains high. And so, we can do no more good, I think, in Bangladesh, than to continue the programs we have to counter those trends. Bangladesh is on a very impressive trajectory. Our job should be to ensure that that trajectory continues, in terms of economic growth and reinforcing what is a deep pluralistic tradition within the Bangladeshi people to make sure that extremism does not grow.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask you about a couple of issues of this kind of inclusion. There is a history of inclusion. We want to make sure it continues. You mentioned the Grameen Bank in your testimony—is Dr. Yunus still the subject of government harassment, or not?

Ambassador BERNICAT. He is no longer associated with—

Senator KAINE. Right.

Ambassador BERNICAT [continuing]. Grameen Bank.

Senator KAINE. Right.

Ambassador BERNICAT. And we have made strong representations, and will continue to do so, that a proposed law and any other actions do not undermine a governance board that is run by the members, specifically women. We want to make sure that the legacy that Dr. Yunus has given the world is not undermined, because, of course, we have all benefited from the microfinance model he began there.

Senator KAINE. The Senate has acted recently to pass legislation—we passed a resolution last week, we have passed another resolution this week—dealing with increasing complaints about oppression of religious minorities in different regions of the world. What are we currently doing to protect religious minorities in Ban-

gladesh? And are recent incidents of violence against Hindus part of a larger trend or seen as sort of, you know, unfortunate, but not necessarily a trend?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Well, there has been a general trend of increasing violence—political violence, extrajudicial killings—over the last year and a half. And religious minorities have been among those targeted, but certainly not exclusively targeted.

First and foremost, we have shown a light on this behavior. We bring to the government's attention reports of these acts. We publish them in our reports on human rights and on religious freedom. And we are working with the government, as well as asking the government, to be accountable for these actions, to investigate them and then to bring the perpetrators to justice; again, within the full framework of international standards of justice.

Senator KAINE. I would encourage you, and all of you, in this way. You know, there are—people ask about the influence that America has in the world. And one of the ways we best influence is by being exemplary. And there are a number of areas where we are exemplary. And the religious pluralism of American society, the fact that people can live next door to each other, work together, you know, go to school together—that if they had been in, maybe, original countries of origin, they would be at odds. Instead, in the United States, it works so well. Not that we are without flaws. We have flaws in every area. But, this is really a great example. Journalistic freedom is another example. We often think of these as sort of, you know, kind of soft skills. But, they really need to be held up as beacons in the world, because they are things we should be proud of. And I think we can help other nations embrace religious pluralism, as well. And I would encourage all of you in that.

In the past, the military has played an active role in Bangladeshi politics, kind of depending upon perceived threats either to them or the threats they perceive in the country. What are the prospects that the military will sort of be intervening in to the political process in the future, as you see it today?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Right. Of course, the Bangladeshi military has a long and proud tradition. We have a very active security assistance program. Bangladeshis have—in fact, 88 Bangladeshis have lost their lives around the world in peacekeeping operations in 25 different countries. We continue to work and train with the Bangladeshis to reinforce human rights, to impress upon the government that the government intervening—excuse me—the military intervening undermines the democratic process, that a true and republican military is the best defense, if you will, for a democracy. And we will continue to do that. There have been some troubling trends, as you are aware, of military involvement in efforts to address counterterrorism and other violence, domestically.

Senator KAINE. Madam Ambassador, we had a hearing yesterday in the committee about the United States-India relationship, and the timing was really to coincide with the beginning of Prime Minister Modi's tenure. There was a lot of discussion in the hearing about the India-Pakistan relationship, but not questions, really, about the India-Bangladesh relationship. Could you talk a little bit about that relationship, especially in light of the new government in India?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes, thank you for that question. I have worked in or on India, dating back to 1988, actually. And it is refreshing to see that Prime Minister Modi has reached out to all of India's neighbors as his first acts. And I think that those are very positive signs.

We share with India a desire for a region that is better and more interconnected, because it is the least interconnected region, particularly from an economic standpoint. And we share, also, with India a desire to see Bangladesh be a strong pluralistic democracy that is free of political violence and that, of course, is stable. And so, we work constantly with India, as well as our other diplomatic partners to that end. And I think Prime Minister Modi's early actions are very encouraging in that regard.

Senator KAINÉ. They certainly are encouraging, in terms of his own actions; and they were received that way in Bangladesh, as well.

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes. Yes, absolutely.

Senator KAINÉ. The last question I would like to ask you is—you mention in your testimony the really significant and—tragedy in Rana Plaza last year, and the other factory, as well. What has the—and we had a hearing on this topic, probably about a year ago on this committee, at Senator Menendez's instance. What progress has been made in the last year toward addressing some of these workplace safety, building standard, and labor rights issues?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Out of the most horrific garment-industry tragedy ever in history has arisen an extraordinary interagency and international program, or set of programs, to address both worker safety and worker rights, in terms of the ability to form unions and to have their grievances heard. In the last year, we have come together as an interagency to support these efforts within Bangladesh, and especially—I think we have to give a nod to the private sector—there are over 150 unions that have been registered with the government, and there have been over 20 factories that have been closed due to imminent danger of physical safety. The government has opened a public Web site, although it has not yet uploaded the data, regarding the inspection of factories, which is ongoing. We are supporting efforts, as is the private sector, to hire and train more inspectors. And we will continue to press in all of these areas.

Senator KAINÉ. And, Ambassador Bernicat, when you mention the private sector, that includes U.S. companies have been actively engaged in this effort?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes, absolutely, and we have worked together with the International Labor Organization, as well.

Senator KAINÉ. Great. Thank you very much.

I will now move to Ambassador Krol.

I have had a number of meetings, both in the Foreign Relations context—I recently met with the Kazak Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Umarov, and I have also met with Kazakhstan military officials as they have visited us in our Armed Services portfolio. If you would—your background and work in this region is pretty important—talk about, to the extent that you have—you know, you are sort of aware of this—how have Russian-Kazak rela-

tionships been affected by all the controversy recently in the Ukraine?

Ambassador KROL. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I believe that, like all countries that had been all part of the one country, the Soviet Union, they are all looking and watching as—what is going on with Russia and Ukraine very intently. And Kazakhstan is one of them. Kazakhstan has a particular relationship with Russia, a long border, about 20 percent of its population are Russian-speaking up in the north. They are members of a Eurasian Economic Union, Customs Union, as well as the Collective Security Treaty Organization that they have. And so, they are very intimately concerned about developments in that region. And I believe they do believe that there should be a peaceful resolution with full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. And that is something that, I think, throughout its own independent existence, Kazakhstan has been particularly concerned about maintaining for itself. It exists in a very important geostrategic place, between Russia, China, and then, to the south, the rest of Central Asia, as well, and it wants to maintain very constructive economic and political security relationships with its neighbors, but based on the principle of respect for its territorial integrity and its independence. And that is something that, as an American policy, that we have been supporting ever since we recognized the independence of these former republics of the Soviet Union. And we were the first to recognize Kazakhstan's independence.

So, yes, they are very concerned, and hope that this will resolve itself in a peaceful way before their own reasons of their own population, but for the entire region.

Senator KAINE. What is the current state of the Kazakh-Russian relationship?

Ambassador KROL. Well, as I said, that they have a strategic partnership, and they—

Senator KAINE. In these organizations that you mentioned.

Ambassador KROL. That is right, that most recently they joined a—created a Customs Union with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, and which has been turned into a—an Economic Union that will—basically, it creates a—one customs space and—with tariffs, and allowing, basically, a one market of the three countries that are members of this union. So, they are very much entwined with that. And, as I said, they are also members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization that—of the former states of the Soviet Union, and Kazakhstan is a member of that, and they are engaged in maneuvers and have a close security relationship, as well as in the air defense of the—this space is also included in the Russia-Kazakhstan airspace area, as well. So, it is a very close relationship and one, however, that is—they feel has to be based upon respect for their independence—political independence and territorial integrity.

Senator KAINE. Kazakhstan has been a very strong partner of the United States in all the work that we have done in Afghanistan—military partner; it is been of significant assistance in a northern route to retrograde personnel and material. Kazakhstan

has done a significant job in the education of Afghani students, college students, and has done that pretty significantly.

What—do the Kazakh Government have concerns about the post-2014 transition of the U.S. role in Afghanistan? And how could we work to allay concerns, if they have them?

Ambassador KROL. Yes, Mr. Chairman, that—even though Kazakhstan does not have a border with Afghanistan, nevertheless, they and other countries in the Central Asian region are quite concerned about developments in Afghanistan, because it can affect their security. They would not like to see Afghanistan fail, and they would not like to see it to become a platform for extremism or terrorism that can affect their populations and their security. And that is why Kazakhstan and other countries in the region have been particularly supportive of efforts to stabilize Afghanistan politically as well as economically, and that will continue.

We keep a very close consultative relationship with Kazakhstan and other countries in the region to keep them abreast of our policies and what we are doing in Afghanistan, and in emphasizing the point that we are not abandoning Afghanistan, that we are transitioning to another relationship with Afghanistan that is equally important and that will be even more engaged with Afghanistan in order to see it succeed and stabilize as a unitary state. And that is what countries like Kazakhstan are interested in hearing from us, and not just hearing from us, but seeing that that is the case, but also partnering with the United States and other countries to ensure that Afghanistan will become and remain a stable state that can be integrated into the larger economy.

Senator KAINE. What role is the United States playing in any current efforts to try to encourage Kazakhstan to supply energy to Europe via the Caspian pipeline system?

Ambassador KROL. Well, the—most of Kazakhstan's energy resources go out through a pipeline that goes mostly through Russia, and then there is another line that goes through China, but they have also established a line that does go through to Turkmenistan and also to build up the port of Aktau on the Caspian Sea, which could be used for sending liquified natural gas across the Caspian in order to reach into the pipeline that goes through the Caucasus. There are—they can also do tankers and things of that nature, as well, as they are developing the fields that are in the northern Caspian region. So, that is another part of their own desire to diversify their—as it were, their exports of their energy resources to—through the Caucasus, across the Caspian, as well as in the more traditional directions that they have had.

Senator KAINE. I think you mentioned in your testimony the bid of Kazakhstan for membership in the WTO. Could you talk a little bit about the current status of that bid?

Ambassador KROL. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Kazakhstan does wish to become a member of the WTO. The United States wishes to assist it to become a member of the WTO. And there have been very intensive technical discussions between the United States and Kazakhstan on their WTO accession. The fact that Kazakhstan is a member of the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union has added some technical issues that have to be resolved, particularly on tariffs and on sanitary—

phytosanitary, that is—international standards that we are working on with Kazakhstan. And so, it is a very active issue that we are working on with the Kazakhstani authorities. And we hope that this can be concluded relatively soon.

Senator Kaine. Could you offer kind of a current status of human rights or democratization issues in Kazakhstan? Particularly, I asked Ambassador Bernicat about religious freedom. I would like your thoughts on that, as well.

Ambassador Krol. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

That the issues of human rights and religious freedom and the like are issues that have been of concern of the United States in Kazakhstan, not that this is an area that is an area of religious violence and the like; it is just the matter of encouraging greater openness in—and space in their society and in their laws in order to recognize that people could have choices in their religious beliefs and not to be so repressed in being able to express their religious beliefs, as well as their political beliefs, as well as their—as well as any of the beliefs and choices that people would have in a free and democratic society.

I mean, coming out of this 70-some years of being part of the Soviet system, it is a very difficult transition of the mindset that the people can be trusted to exercise responsibility along with the freedoms that they would have. And this is an area that we, the United States Government and our agencies, as well as American civil society, wish to work very constructively with Kazakhstan in developing this atmosphere of greater space for civil society and respect for religious diversity, as well as diversity across the board.

And, you know, if I am confirmed, this would be certainly a very important element of my work in Kazakhstan, and it is, again, a matter of trying to develop a constructive relationship on these issues, and to move from concern—expressing of concern to really seeing developments that are effective, you know, on the ground and affecting people's lives and opening up this space for civil society, for political pluralism and religious pluralism.

Senator Kaine. I know, in 2011, Kazakhstan passed a religious registration law requiring the registration of religious organizations if they have certain membership at a local level or at a national level. And the justification asserted was a concern about religious extremism. Is there a significant challenge of religious extremism as destabilizing to the Kazakh Government, in your view?

Ambassador Krol. Well, right now I would say no, because it is not an area that there has been a great deal of religiously based violence. I think they are looking at a preventative strategy of trying to prevent influences that could lead to religious extremism. There have been some unfortunate examples of suicide bombings and related events in Kazakhstan in the recent past, and I think that has caused them to look at ways how they can deal with this issue so it does not become a greater issue in their society. And our encouragement is not to repress, but it is basically how to deal with the issue of preventing violent extremism by basically allowing greater openness for people to express themselves peacefully in their religious beliefs, as well as in their secular beliefs. And so, that is an ongoing dialogue and activity that we have with Uzbekistan—with Kazakhstan because of the importance of this for

the future to prevent this situation of developing, where there would be more homegrown religious extremism and violence in their own society.

Senator Kaine. We see this same, you know, delicate balancing everywhere in the world. The concerns about terrorism and extremism, you know, often—and often in a legitimate way—create a need to try to control, a bit. But, if you do that too much, then you may actually create the self-fulfilling prophecy that a feeling of repression by the government can actually make these problems worse. And, you know, trying to assist in challenging circumstances in this is not an easy balance to strike.

But, thank you for your testimony.

Ambassador Krol. Absolutely.

Senator Kaine. I will now move to Mr. Mustard, with respect to Turkmenistan.

The administration has been pretty positive in its description of Turkmenistan as I—the quote that I saw was “an enabler for regional stability,” acknowledging the importance of economic and humanitarian support, and also support, as you testified, of the overflights to Afghanistan. How do you see Turkmenistan’s role changing in the region as we enter into a new phase of our involvement in Afghanistan?

Mr. Mustard. Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman.

I see Turkmenistan becoming somewhat more important than it already has been because of the role that it has in linking Afghanistan to Europe and to other parts of Asia, looking at what Turkmenistan is doing, in terms of developing a railroad that will establish links between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Afghanistan connecting to the main line going up into Kazakhstan, also the gas pipelines that will allow Central Asia to link to Europe as well as to other parts of Asia, particularly South Asia. And then the New Silk Road Initiative that would—really the biggest manifestation of that, Mr. Chairman, is the TAPI Pipeline that would have with it not only a gas pipeline, but potentially also a road network—railroad network that would really open up Central Asia, including Afghanistan, to new markets in South Asia.

So, I think Turkmenistan will become more important, not less important.

Senator Kaine. Can you talk a little bit about the progress either—on both the TAPI Pipeline, but also on any efforts to look at more delivery of energy to Europe?

Mr. Mustard. On TAPI, the good news is that we do have the intergovernmental agreement in place. The bad news is that it seems to have stalled, at this point. So, one of my priorities, if I am confirmed as Ambassador, will be to sit down with the Turkmenistan Government and get TAPI moving again.

On the Trans-Caspian Pipeline, that is also a priority to try to get the connection between Turkmenbashi Port and Baku Port so that we can start delivering gas through that pipeline, as well. These will all be priorities.

Senator Kaine. I will ask you the same question I asked Ambassador Krol, which is, the events in Ukraine, for a country that has been part of the Soviet Union in the past—I know that they—that—you know, that that has to be a huge factor right now in

Turkmen politics—what is the current status of the relationship between Turkmenistan and Russia? And how is the Government of Turkmenistan looking at these unfortunate events?

Mr. MUSTARD. The Turkmen Ambassador to Moscow made a statement, 2 days ago, to the effect that Turkmenistan considers Russia to be a strategic partner, but does not intend to join the Eurasian Union. So, it will maintain its policy of positive neutrality and will not join into security agreements or multilateral economic agreements.

In terms of the events in Ukraine, the United States Government has made it clear to Turkmenistan that we support Turkmenistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as a matter of policy, and that will not change.

Senator KAINE. And talk a little bit about the current relationship between Turkmenistan and China, if you would.

Mr. MUSTARD. China is now Turkmenistan's largest trading partner and is the largest consumer of Turkmenistan's natural gas. And, conversely, China is a very large investor in infrastructure in Turkmenistan, not only in natural gas and in other fossil energy, but in other infrastructure, as well. So, it is a very large and growing relationship.

Senator KAINE. And, finally, the relationship with Iran. That is also one of the largest markets for Turkmenistan. Has Turkmenistan generally abided by the Iran sanctions regime that we have put in place?

Mr. MUSTARD. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. That is—thank you for that.

Talk about current human rights, kind of, status issues in Turkmenistan, any that you—will cause you concern or would be areas of priority as you begin this position.

Mr. MUSTARD. The United States Government is very deeply concerned about the status of human rights in Turkmenistan. And, as I said in my opening statement, we believe that a mature relationship allows for a dialogue about these human rights issues.

Turkmenistan is a party to international conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture. And we will continue to call upon Turkmenistan to observe the conditions of these agreements and to ensure that all persons on its territory enjoy the civil rights that are under these conventions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mustard, I appreciate it.

Mr. Pressman, your testimony about the U.N. being both necessary and always vexing was very true. It is an organization that would not exist, had the United States not shown leadership in creating it, even in the mid-1930s, as the League of Nations was collapsing. President Roosevelt realized there would need to be a successor and started to lay the plans for it before World War II delayed the plans. But, I still consider it a real mark of pride that it was America that recognized that we really needed to create such an institution.

That said, for reasons that you have described, and others, we often scratch our head about things that the U.N. does. And so, I appreciate your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Maybe just a couple of questions about it. One of the things that is been the most discouraging, in this committee, has been the repeated votes by China and Russia in the Security Council to block what we consider as necessary action in Syria. Last week was a good week. After a resolution promoting cross-border humanitarian aid that was passed in February generally had not produced significant result, because the aid was only to be allowed at the approval of the Syrian Government, the Security Council, last week, did a resolution that called for the cross-border delivery of aid whether or not the Syrian Government allowed it. That was a positive step. And the fact that Russia and China voted for that after blocking similar resolutions in the past was important.

But, it does raise the question about Security Council reform. And I know there have been a number of, you know, thoughts and ideas thrown around about reforming the Security Council. What is the current status of reform efforts? And what are your thoughts about what our policy should be with respect to reform?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question.

The United States believes that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole needs to—as one of the central pillars of the international security architecture, needs to reflect the changing world that we live in. As such, with respect to the Security Council, the administration has articulated the view that we are open, in principle, to a modest expansion of the permanent and nonpermanent membership of the Council. That said, with respect to the permanent members of the Council, it is critical that we consider their capacity to meaningfully contribute to maintenance of international peace and security. We do not think it would be a productive exercise to open up the veto arrangement. And these conversations are sensitive, and they continue in New York, but they are important to have.

Senator KAINÉ. Let me ask you about one area. I mean, the United States has been a huge financial supporter of the U.N., but one area where we have been falling behind is in some of our peacekeeping dues payments. Is that affecting our ability to pursue, or effectively pursue, our interests at the U.N., or is that issue of the dues for peacekeeping activities not really a factor in the influence that we have?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Mr. Chairman, the ability of the United States to lead at the U.N. is directly tethered to our meeting our bills and our responsibilities. We—by virtue of meeting our—of not going into arrears in areas like peacekeeping, we have managed to sustain and maintain greater leverage over troop contributors, over the way peacekeeping missions are shaped, ensuring that they are responsible and that they are effective. So, it is critical.

Now, underlying the question, I recognize, is a concern that many members of the Senate have with respect to how peacekeeping budgets are going up and up and up. And, if I could, Mr. Chairman, is—just reflect for a moment that we were making increasing demands on the U.N. peacekeeping system, just in the last several years, with several new missions that we, the United States, has turned to the United Nations, because we see peacekeeping as an effective and cost-effective way to advance our own national security interests around the world. That said, we also be-

lieve that the assessment scales under which these things are calculated—and it is complicated with respect to the regular budget and its relationship to the peacekeeping budget—needs to reflect the changing world in which we live in, as well. And these are negotiated at every—3-year intervals. And, as we approach the next round of negotiations in 2015, one of the things that Ambassador Power seeks to do—and, if confirmed, I would certainly support her—is try to ensure that the way that we are assessed reflects the realities of a changing economy.

Senator KAINÉ. How confident are you that the peacekeeping mission to the Central African Republic, which I guess will deploy in September, will have the resources that it needs to carry out the stabilization and civilian protection missions of that peacekeeping effort?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Chairman, the situation in the Central African Republic is grave. It is extremely serious. Ambassador Power has now visited the Central African Republic twice. I was honored to travel with her on one occasion there. It is in—because of U.S. leadership, we—and because of a multiplicity of commands that were on the ground—you had a African Union contingent, you had an EU contingent, you had a French contingent—and because of the gravity of the situation and U.S. leadership, we decided to go ahead and authorize a U.N. peacekeeping operation, as your question reflects.

Your question also reflects an awareness that it is hard, given the increasing demands on peacekeeping, to find the right enablers and the right troops, particularly in a situation like CAR, where there really is very little infrastructure that preexists to support the deployment of troops. So, everything is having to be built. We are—as recently as this week, the Security Council was briefed on this. This is something we are tracking daily. Ambassador Power has committed that, on September 15, when MISCA, as it is known, the African Union troop, transitions to MINUSCA, the U.N. peacekeeping operation, that we are in as good a position as possible. I would—it would not be fair to say I have great confidence that we are going to be where we need to be on September 15, but we are trending in the right direction.

Senator KAINÉ. And let me ask about another one, in Africa, the importance of U.N. efforts to assist displaced civilians who are seeking refuge in U.N. compounds in South Sudan. Talk a little bit about the current status there.

Mr. PRESSMAN. It is—Senator, thank you—the situation in South Sudan is similarly horrendous and deeply concerning. I mean, at present, we have approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons who are hunkered down on UNMIS, the U.N. peacekeeping operation there, compounds, because they fear for their lives if they leave. In addition to that 100,000, we have approximately a million other IDPs floating about South Sudan, we have a famine warning that was—just went into place, which means that those million IDPs are about to become a million hungry IDPs.

So, the—what the U.S. has done with respect to the South—the mission in South Sudan is really important, which is, as the crisis emerged—the most recent crisis emerged, at the end—December of last year—we essentially reformed, almost entirely, giving it—al-

most doubling its authorized troop ceiling and trimming back its pretty expansive mandate to focus almost exclusively on protection of civilians and monitoring human rights abuses.

That said, Senator, I think it is clear, to you and to anyone who looks at the situation, that fundamentally the parties—President Kiir and Riek Machar—need to actually live up to their Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and perform the responsibilities that they have said that they would. And until that happens, we are going to be living in a very dire situation, and the lives of civilians in South Sudan will continue to hang in jeopardy.

Senator KAINE. How important is it, in your view, that the U.S. continue its support for the U.N. mission and also the French forces in northern Mali?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Senator, it is critical. What—the Mali MINUSMA, the U.N. mission in Mali, is an excellent example of the United States using U.N. peacekeeping to help protect our direct national security interests. We have AQIM elements floating around in northern Mali. We have a situation where the Government of Mali needs the international community's help. There is, similarly—somewhat related to CAR, there is a division of labor, so to speak, within Mali, in which you have Operation French—the French Operation Serval, which is taking a more offensive counterterrorism approach; MINUSMA, which is trying to hold the large population centers to ensure that they are—they do not become victims to the prey of al-Qaeda-affiliated extremists. And, similarly, you have an EU contingent on the ground that is working to build up the capacity of the Malian Government to deal with this crisis. This is important work, it is hard work, it is dangerous work. We have lost U.N. peacekeepers, including recently, in this effort, but it is one that the United States should—and, if confirmed, I would look forward to the opportunity to continue to—support.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Pressman, for your answers.

And now, Ms. Ruggles, I will say that Senator Coons really wanted to be here, for you and, to some degree, to pose those last questions to Mr. Pressman, as well. He could not be here today, but, as he waited, he thought, giving you a quicker hearing might be more important to you than waiting until he could come. [Laughter.]

So, I just will say that I am speaking with some passion from Senator Coons, obviously, as well.

Your post is a very important one. You know, one of the—you know, Rwanda has an iconic place in, sort of, our collective memory and thinking about human rights issues in the world, because of the tragedies that occurred there. Now, that creates pressure to do very well, but it also creates a wonderful opportunity. When there have been tragedies such as Rwandans have been impacted by, then positives can also generate, not only attention, but a sense of hopefulness. Well, there may be other tragic or hard situations, but look what is happening. And I like the fact that, in your testimony, you focused on a number of instances—school attendance and things like that—in Rwanda that are real positive news stories. I think it is important that we point those out, because there are other desperate situations in the world, where people would want

to see that situations that were desperate, or more so a number of years ago, are now pointing in the right direction. So, I think part of your task—not that I would advise you how to do your job, but I think part of your task is to shine the spotlight on positives in Rwanda, because I think that has a benefit to the U.S. relationship with Rwanda, but I think it has a broader benefit, as well.

Let me begin with political scenarios in Rwanda. President Kagame's term expires in 2017. What are, sort of, likely political scenarios, post the end of his term?

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Well, the—as you point out, Mr. Chairman—and I thank you for adding me to this hearing, and please thank Senator Coons on my behalf, as well—the second term for President Kagame expires in 2017; two 2-year terms is the term limit in the constitution. And, at this point, it is unclear how that is going to play out. This is the first time that—under this constitution, that they will have had that scenario. And so, one of the things that I will focus on, if confirmed, when I go out there is making sure I am engaging in a broad political dialogue with all the actors, civil society as well as the government, to hear how they are planning for those elections, how they are planning to handle the inevitable contest that happens when you have the—have term limits. And I look forward to having that dialogue, because I think it is an important signal, both for the people of Rwanda, but also for the region.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit about how you envision your—division of responsibilities of your working relationship with the U.S. Special Envoy, Russ Feingold, to the DRC in the Great Lakes Region. Have you talked about this challenge? It is not a challenge; it is a great opportunity—

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE [continuing]. To have you both working on this mission.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have to say, I have the greatest admiration for former Senator Feingold in his new role as special envoy. I think he has taken a very difficult situation, 18 months ago, when he first came onboard, and really dug in and worked with all of the Ambassadors in the region, as well as all the regional actors, to try and tackle some of the very, very tough issues that are really the underpinning for the continued instability in eastern Congo and throughout the region—the refugee flows, the armed groups. And the inability to build those trust bonds has been a real issue since 1994, since the genocide. And he has taken that head-on. And the fact that he is now working with all the governments on implementing—truly implementing the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework Agreement that was signed in February last year, dealing with the FDLR. They have now agreed to a 6-month timeframe, with a 3-month checkpoint half way through that timeframe, to begin the process of disarmament of the FDLR. Now, that has to be taken seriously by all governments, but, if they are—if we are able, all of us collectively, to implement that, that will go a long way towards getting rid of the instability, the continued distrust between the governments in the region, of each other, and tackling some of those underlying instability issues, much as the defeat of the M—

23 last year after the U.N. Intervention Brigade was signed off by the U.N. Security Council, has led to a lessening of the violence and an increase in the trust between the various parties. It is far from a perfect world, but he has been doing a terrific job.

I would view my role, if confirmed, out there as being one of supporting his role and working as part of a team, because we are going to need a team approach between myself and all of the colleagues in the region, working with Senator Feingold, if we are going to help the governments of the region build that trust that we need for them to have to then build the economic prosperity that they should be building across those borders, and to be building the cross-border roads and transportation networks that are badly needed to make sure that economic growth actually comes to those regions.

Senator KAINE. One of the themes in all of your testimony, and some of the questions with the four mission chiefs here, proposed mission chiefs, is sort of the space for civil society in the companies—in the countries that you will—where you will serve. There have been some reports that that space has been kind of narrowing in Rwanda. Talk about, kind of, your perspective on that now, and what you believe you can do, as Ambassador, to, you know, in the right pace, a right pace for Rwanda, see that the space opens for civil society participation.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The existence of a strong, vibrant civil society, including free media, NGOs, watchdog groups, is important and absolutely critical for any democratic society. It is something that we hold dear here, and it is something I have seen in my most recent posting in South Africa, the huge institutional importance of those groups, as well as strong, vibrant political opposition parties to make sure that there is that political dialogue.

And, if I am confirmed, one of the things that I will commit to is working with all the various actors across Rwanda to help encourage that kind of dialogue, because they do have a lot to deal with from their past. A huge amount of distrust from—arising from the genocide, which is still fairly recent, only 20 years—and recognizing that, and helping them think about, “How do you work through that dialogue?”—I would view this as part of my role, but also hearing from everybody their concerns and how they can move forward as they are now turning to the next generation. Their youngest—their younger generation was born after the genocide, and they do not come carrying all of that baggage. Maybe some of it, but not all of it. And helping them figure out how to work through that, I view very much as part of our role, as you said, as an exemplar, the United States being the exemplar to others.

Senator KAINE. One of the things that interests me as I travel for Foreign Relations is the degree to which, in countries where there has been significant sectarian schisms—and the genocide in Rwanda would be the most extreme, certainly more extreme than countries I have visited—but, to what degree in a nation’s military are they able to integrate throughout the military, at every level, leadership to, you know, the first day enlisted, a real pluralistic and inclusive sense? How cohesive—are you aware of, sort of, this issue within the military in Rwanda, and their capabilities? But,

in a way, more—I am just kind of more interested in how cohesive the military is across these schisms that still are fresh with many people.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Mr. Chairman, I do not have an ethnic breakdown of the military, but what I will tell you is that the Rwandan military and police force have both been very professional, extraordinarily good partners for us. In peacekeeping missions, they have stepped up to the plate in tough places, like CAR, where we were having problems, and come in with the Africa Union mission to stabilize—help stabilize the situation there; similarly in AMISOM in Somalia. And they have been one of the groups that has been the most flexible in saying, “We will join a regional force and then go over to a Blue Hat.” And the level of professionalism they have exhibited, and cohesiveness that they have exhibited, has—is really extraordinary.

So, as a cohesive military unit, they work very well together. I would have to get back to you on the ethnic breakdown.

Senator Kaine. No, that is good evidence, though, I mean, if they are able to work together in tough circumstances. If there was a lot of internal morale challenges, that would demonstrate itself in performance. And so, I am happy to hear your perception of their effectiveness in these operations.

Just one last thing, just kind of educate myself. Main strengths and weaknesses to the current Rwandan economy.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. The main strengths and weaknesses. They have a great record of economic growth, but from a very low base. So, keeping that going, and making sure that they are actually taking what has been extraordinary reforms to make themselves open for business, if you will—they are considered number one by the World Bank now in the sub-Saharan Africa, for the ease of doing business—and building upon that and taking that to the next level. So, from a high level of growth from a low base, and turning that into, now, the middle-income country they aspire to be.

One of the areas where they have been really focusing on is Internet technology and renewable energy. We have a \$325 million methane gas investment from a U.S. corporation there, and another large renewable energy investment that is going in there. And I think all those are signs that they are taking seriously how to move their economy into the 21st century.

However, 70 percent of their population still depends, at least in large part, on subsistence agriculture for their income. And so, learning how to take that and turn that into a much more market-oriented agricultural economy and pushing entrepreneurship so that people can come off the subsistence farming and start growing those small businesses that grow jobs, is going to be their challenge for the coming two decades.

Senator Kaine. Thank you for that testimony.

All you have all demonstrated great competence and professionalism in your answers, very thoughtful answers. And we would be lucky to have all of you, with your expertise, serving in the capacities for which you have been nominated.

Again, I say what I said at the start of the hearing, the opportunity, as a member of the committee, to visit our personnel—Foreign Service personnel abroad, whether it is people on their first

tour or whether it is seasoned professionals like you all are, is always—I always walk away from those, very impressed with the work that is done. And I know a lot of Americans probably think of Foreign Service as just—what a super-glamorous profession. And it has its glamour, and it has its unique opportunities to consider the world your classroom. But, there is also a great degree of sacrifice—moving repeatedly, changing jobs—that is not easy for spouses and kids and other family members and friends. But, the more you know about what our Foreign Service professionals do, the more one comes to admire the quality of the work under the circumstances in which it is performed. So, I want to thank you all for your service.

If members of the committee choose to file additional questions in writing, I will ask them to do that by noon tomorrow; and I will appreciate your responding promptly, should those be filed. We will try to act promptly in the full committee on these nominations.

And again, I thank you.

And, with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AND LETTERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The 2013 State Department Human Rights Reports on Bangladesh notes that disappearances and extrajudicial killings continue to be committed by security forces such as the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and that human rights violators operate in an atmosphere of impunity. Would you support the establishment of an independent commission:

- ♦ To assess the Rapid Action Battalion's performance;
- ♦ To identify all those plausibly deemed to be involved in serious violations such as extrajudicial killings who should be excluded from a reformed RAB and prosecuted; and,
- ♦ To develop an action plan to transform RAB into an agency that operates within the law and with full respect for international human rights norms?

Answer. If confirmed, I will maintain the U.S. Government's insistence that the Government of Bangladesh hold its security forces accountable for any violations of internationally recognized human rights. I will push the Government of Bangladesh to transform the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) into an agency that operates within the law and with full respect for international human rights. The establishment of an independent commission is one such way to conduct thorough, timely, and credible investigations of all alleged human rights violations and abuses in a manner that is fair and transparent to both the victims and the accused. If Bangladesh moves to create an independent commission, we will support that effort. Meanwhile, I am encouraged by the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh to establish the RAB Internal Enquiries Cell, to train requisite staff as part of a campaign to investigate misconduct and abuses, and to hold members of the RAB accountable for their actions.

Question. Will you commit to consulting regularly with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on your efforts to support labor rights and factory safety in Bangladesh?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our active engagement with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the important issue of labor reform in Bangladesh. I very much appreciate the role this committee plays in joining our efforts to promote U.S. interests and support the people of Bangladesh, particularly in defense of labor rights and worker safety. I value the consultation and cooperation offered by the committee because it strengthens our hand in promoting real and enduring change for workers in Bangladesh. If confirmed, I will invite committee members and staff to visit Bangladesh so we can further collaborate to advance labor rights and safety.

Question. I am concerned about progress on expanding U.S. efforts to assist independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh.

The FY 2014 Appropriations bill states "Bangladesh.—Of the funds appropriated by this act under the heading 'Development Assistance' that are available for assistance for Bangladesh shall be made available for programs to improve labor conditions by strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh's readymade garment, shrimp, and fish export sectors." The conference report language states: "The agreement provides \$5,000,000 to improve labor conditions in Bangladesh as described in the Senate report, to be provided through an open and competitive process, and not less than the budget request for democracy and governance programs."

The Senate report states "Bangladesh.—The Committee directs the Secretary of State to prioritize assistance to labor programs in Bangladesh and recommends \$5,000,000 to improve labor conditions in Bangladesh's readymade garment, shrimp and fish export sectors. The Committee expects the Department of State and USAID to provide training for workers on understanding and asserting their rights, including by improving the capacity of independent worker organizations. The Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Labor should coordinate efforts to avoid unnecessary overlap and work in consultation with the Government of Bangladesh and the International Labor Organization on an integrated approach."

Last month, USAID told SFRC staff that "USAID's new \$5 million labor activity will focus on ready-made garment and shrimp/fish sectors to increase the capacity of workers and improve conditions both in their workplaces and communities by addressing a range of issues, including women workers' safety, union representation, gender-based violence, health care, education, child protection, sanitation, and living conditions."

While "health care, education, child protection, sanitation, and living conditions" are causes worthy of U.S. support, they are outside the scope of legislation that focuses on strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh's ready-made garment, shrimp, and fish export sectors. Why are these areas included within the scope of the \$5 million procurement for labor rights?

Also, I am concerned that if a procurement vehicle is not issued by February 1, 2015, or current programming is not extended, there will be a lapse in programming on strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh. USAID told SFRC staff that it will release the Request for Applications by the end of FY 2014. Given that timeline, can a contract competition and final award be completed before February 1, 2015, so that there is no lapse in programming?

Answer. I welcome this committee's continued attention to labor rights in Bangladesh and know that congressionally funded programs to promote freedom of association in the garment and shrimp sectors are making a real difference on the ground to improve labor rights and ensure workers have a voice.

Following the announcement of the Senate's FY 2014 Appropriations bill, an interagency team from the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Labor visited Bangladesh to identify areas of need for the new program and ensure there was no unnecessary overlap with programs already in place. Based on their recommendations, I assure you that the focus of the new program will be to directly improve labor conditions by strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations. Specifically, USAID assistance will support the ability of workers to organize independently and strengthen the capacity of these worker organizations to address the issues they identify as most pressing, such as protection of labor organizers, improvement of workplace safety, mitigation of environmental hazards, and ensuring timely payment of wages. While workers have identified improving health care, education, child protection, sanitation, and living conditions as needs, this program would not directly address those issues. Rather, it would seek to support the capacity of workers to organize independently and address such conditions as they themselves prioritize them.

Given the timeline to implement the program, we do not foresee any gap in funding. The existing Global Labor Program will run through January 2016, and the new labor program will be awarded in early FY 2015. For roughly 1 year, the two programs will run concurrently and will be closely coordinated.

RESPONSES OF GEORGE ALBERT KROL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. I appreciate Kazakhstan's aspiration to become one of the top economies in the world and support U.S. efforts to that end, including for Kazakhstan's bid to join the WTO. I also believe that if Kazakhstan seeks to be held to a higher

standard in the economic realm, it should also be held to a higher standard on democracy and human rights and not simply compared to its neighbors. I remain concerned about the imprisonment of Mr Kozlov and urge you to continue to raise his imprisonment with Kazakh officials. The space for civil society appears to be closing in Kazakhstan.

♦ With that in mind, what do you expect the U.S. efforts to support civil society can achieve in the coming year?

Answer. What our efforts can achieve over the next year will ultimately depend on the choices that the Government of Kazakhstan itself will make. The United States, however, seeks to be a partner to the Government of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstani civil society in our advocacy for stalled legislation designed to strengthen state support for nongovernmental organizations by introducing an independent grantmaking system. The U.S. mission in Kazakhstan will also work with the government and civil society to encourage the development of implementing regulations that ensure that the new criminal and other related codes passed earlier this year will be implemented in ways that do not constrain the space for civil society.

The United States strongly supports the development of a sovereign and independent democratic Kazakhstan that seeks to protect the universal human rights of all its people, and we strongly welcome the government's repeated statements of commitment to meet this goal. We also value that our strategic partnership with Kazakhstan that is the basis for an open and frank dialogue on human rights and religious freedoms as well as on our continuing concern about the judicial process that resulted in the imprisonment of Mr. Kozlov.

Question. I am concerned about the ubiquitous nature of media from Russia in Kazakhstan. What specific efforts is the U.S. taking to support the development of the professionalism of the media sector in Kazakhstan? If an increasingly professionalized media can be developed, will the Kazakh Government provide space within which they can operate and conduct genuine and credible reporting?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the development in Kazakhstan of a professional, free, and independent media. In support of this goal, we have provided Economic Support Funds to nongovernmental organizations that support the Kazakhstani media's ability to provide accurate, unbiased, and objective information to the citizens of Kazakhstan.

Current USAID programming to strengthen the development of a professional, independent, and commercially competitive media sector in Kazakhstan includes a regional network that broadcasts social, economic, political, and children's programming every day in four languages to over 20 local partner television stations. In addition, we are supporting the production and distribution of quality television content to a regionwide network of 43 independent local stations.

Our mission is also increasing its outreach to Kazakhstani media via various social platforms in both the Kazakh and Russian languages and as a result is receiving significantly more requests for interviews with U.S. officials. More can be done to expose the Kazakhstani public to a broader range of information and opinions. To this end, we are exploring the expansion of the media-hub program to create a platform for U.S. voices, including U.S. policy experts and scholars, to engage more broadly with media throughout the region.

RESPONSES OF ALLEN P. MUSTARD TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question #1. Human rights and democratic development remain substantial hurdles to deepening our relationship with Turkmenistan. Last May, I sent a letter to President Berdimukamedov calling for the release of several prisoners of conscience (see attached). Will you commit to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that you will advocate on behalf of these and other prisoners of conscience and that you will work with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to ensure a coordinated State Department approach to addressing these issues? Will you also commit to consulting with SFRC on human rights issues?

Answer. The State Department has been steadfast in raising human rights concerns with Government of Turkmenistan interlocutors. Our bilateral relations with other nations should be broad-based and true to our fundamental values, not limited solely to those areas where we find easy agreement. The State Department, including our Embassy in Ashgabat, regularly engages with Turkmenistan across the spectrum of human rights issues, and has been a strong advocate for prisoners of conscience. We also seek to advance these issues through multilateral venues, including funding International Organization for Migration (IOM) and U.N. Develop-

ment Program (UNDP) programs that promote antitrafficking in persons and other human rights initiatives. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing these practices.

The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor provides valuable expertise on the many difficult human dimension issues that constrain our bilateral relationship with Turkmenistan and I look forward to working closely with them if I am confirmed. I also commit to being at the committee's disposal to discuss human rights or any other issues that may be of interest to you and I look forward to our continued collaboration to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

Question #2. With the intergovernmental agreement in place, and in light of the lack of progress on the pipeline, what are the next concrete steps that the U.S. can take to encourage the development of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline?

Answer. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) is a long-term project with enormous potential long-term benefits, but it can only succeed if it is done on a commercial, economically sustainable basis. TAPI appears to have nearly all of the essential elements to succeed, including strong political support. What is missing, however, is a commercial champion. Without the involvement of an international oil company (IOC) to work in cooperation with Turkmenistan in the development of gas production and serve as commercial champion for the project, it is doubtful that the project will be financeable.

The State Department is encouraging the Government of Turkmenistan to sign confidentiality agreements with U.S. IOCs in order to allow those companies to evaluate the commercial viability of the project and participate in a consortium that will both develop the gas field that will supply TAPI and also build the pipeline. We are also working with the downstream countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India) to encourage them to work with Turkmenistan to develop a TAPI project based on economically and commercially sound principles. Further, the administration consults regularly with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which is also providing technical assistance to the TAPI partner countries.

While the U.S. Government negotiated the terms of a nonbinding intergovernmental framework arrangement with Turkmenistan on energy cooperation, the framework has not yet been signed.

Continued political investment and technical assistance by the U.S. government will be needed to advance TAPI, particularly efforts to convince Turkmenistan to press forward on TAPI with IOC upstream involvement. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Turkmen to take the necessary steps to make TAPI a viable project.

Question #3. What are the main impediments to progress in the Trans-Caspian pipeline? What steps will you take to address these issues?

Answer. There are both political and commercial impediments to progress on the Trans-Caspian pipeline. Russia and Iran have stated that a Trans-Caspian Pipeline cannot be built unless all five littoral states agree, and both have raised strong objections to the project. Their opposition is based largely on ostensible environmental grounds, despite the fact that there are hundreds of miles of pipelines already operating in the Caspian. In fact, gas from Turkmenistan flowing to European markets could threaten Russia's strong position in those same markets. Long-standing disagreement between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan over the disputed Serdar/Kapaz field in the Caspian Sea would also need to be resolved, although relations appear to be improving with several high-level bilateral meetings between the two countries this year.

In addition to these political impediments, Turkmenistan will also have to attract commercial partners, including an international oil company (IOC), to help build, finance, and operate the pipeline. To date, the Turkmen Government has not been willing to provide acceptable terms for an IOC's access to its onshore gas fields (which would feed the pipeline), and without such terms, an IOC is not likely to be interested in the project.

If confirmed, I would encourage Turkmenistan to finalize the trilateral agreement currently under negotiation with the European Union and Azerbaijan that would form the legal basis for a Trans-Caspian pipeline. I would also draw on my decades of commercial-advocacy experience to help open opportunities for U.S. energy companies to bring their expertise and participate in the Trans-Caspian Pipeline consortium.

LETTER ATTACHED TO QUESTION NO. 1 SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

ROBERT MENENDEZ, NEW JERSEY, CHAIRMAN
 BARBARA BLUMENFELT, CALIFORNIA
 BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND
 JEANNE SHAWHEE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
 CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, IDAHO
 RICHARD J. DURBIN, ILLINOIS
 TONI COULTER, MISSISSIPPI
 CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
 FRANK RAYBURN, VIRGINIA
 EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
 BOB CORNER, TENNESSEE
 JAMES L. RISH, OHIO
 MARGO BLUMENTHAL, FLORIDA
 NICK JONAS, WASHINGTON
 JEFF FLAKE, ARIZONA
 JOHN ELGAR, MONTANA
 JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING
 RANDY PAUL, KENTUCKY

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 1, 2014

His Excellency Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
 President of Turkmenistan
 c/o Embassy of Turkmenistan
 2207 Massachusetts Ave, NW
 Washington, DC 20008

Dear President Berdimuhamedov:

I write to express my concern about the detention of nine Jehovah's Witnesses, currently being imprisoned for exercising their freedom of religion in Turkmenistan. International human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Freedom House have characterized these prisoners as conscientious objectors for objecting to military service. The current known imprisoned conscientious objectors - all of them Jehovah's Witnesses - are:

Zafar Abdullaev, age 26; Sentenced to 2 years in March 2012
 Navruz Nasyrlayev, age 22; Sentenced to 2 years in May 2012
 Dovran Matyakubov, age 21; Sentenced to 2 years in December 2012
 Yadgarbek Sharipov, age 21; Sentenced to one year in December 2012
 Matkarim Aminov, age 22; Sentenced to 2 years in January 2013
 Arslan Dovletov, age 21; Sentenced to 18 months in January 2013
 Atamurat Suvkhanov, age 27; Sentenced to one year in March 2013
 Amirlan Tolkachev, age 21; Sentenced to 18 months in July 2013
 Suhrab Rahmanberdiyev, age 18; Sentenced to 18 months in November 2013

Seven of the nine current conscientious objector prisoners, as well as a number of former prisoners have lodged complaints with the United Nations Human Rights Council protesting against their imprisonment and mistreatment. The complaints note that most of the conscientious objector prisoners have regularly been subjected to solitary confinement, and have been brutally beaten. The continued detention of these individuals is inconsistent with our countries' cooperation in many other areas and symbolic of a troubling pattern of harsh treatment for political prisoners.

Accordingly, I ask you to please clarify the circumstances surrounding the arrest, detention, as well as the health of these individuals, issues the U.S. government has previously raised directly with you during the Annual Bilateral Consultation in Ashgabat in January. We further ask that, given the deeply troubling questions regarding the validity of these cases, you consider granting them amnesty. Their release would further our growing and important bilateral relationship.

Sincerely,


 Robert Menendez
 Chairman

RESPONSES OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD TO QUESTIONS
 SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Question. For years I have been urging the Government of Turkmenistan to release a number of political prisoners languishing in its jails, including Annakurban Amanklychev, Sapardurdy Khadzhiyev, and Gulgeldy Annaniyazov (see attached letters). Last year my staff and that of Senator Boxer traveled to Turkmenistan to further press for their release. Amanklychev and Khadzhiyev were released early from

their sentence in 2013, but Annaniyazov remains in jail. These cases are unfortunately only examples of a larger lack of political freedom in Turkmenistan. Can you comment on your commitment to pursuing political freedom and human rights should you be confirmed as Ambassador to Turkmenistan?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, one of my very top priorities will be to urge Turkmenistan to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensure accountability for torture and other human-rights violations, allow civil-society groups to function freely, and build fully democratic institutions. As party to a number of international human-rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, I will remind government officials of Turkmenistan's obligations to respect and ensure to all persons on its territory the rights that it has recognized and guaranteed under those conventions.

The Department of State has regularly raised Gulgeldy Annaniyazov's case directly with Government of Turkmenistan interlocutors since 2008. The case was recently raised by the U.S. delegation at our Annual Bilateral Consultations on January 14, 2014, in Ashgabat, and Ambassador Robert Patterson discussed the case with Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hajiev again on February 12. The Embassy followed up with diplomatic notes requesting amnesty for Annaniyazov on the occasion of Turkmenistan's February 19 Flag Day holiday, Constitution Day on April 22, and Night of Omnipotence at the end of July (Turkmenistan customarily amnesties prisoners on the occasion of national holidays). Annaniyazov's case and our related due-process concerns have also been referenced in numerous public statements by the United States at the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM) in Warsaw. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the United States advocacy for Annaniyazov's release.

LETTERS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

RICHARD J. DURBIN
 ILLINOIS
 ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510-1704

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
 COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
 COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
 COMMITTEE ON RULES
 AND ADMINISTRATION

August 14, 2012

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
 President of Turkmenistan
 Presidential Palace
 74400 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Dear President Berdimuhamedov:

I write to request your consideration of a humanitarian gesture to resolve the detention of a number of Turkmen citizens that are considered prisoners of conscience by many in the United States Senate and prominent human rights groups. Some years ago, you showed compassion in releasing such a person, Mukhameitkuli Aymuradov, and I appeal to your leadership to show similar consideration around the upcoming October 28 Independence Day holiday with three other detainees.

More specifically, prominent international organizations, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and at least twenty of my colleagues in the US Senate have raised concerns over the last several years regarding the detention of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, Annakurban Amanklychev, and Sapardurdy Khadzhev. Annaniyazov is a long-time political dissident who left Turkmenistan in 2000 to settle in Norway as a political refugee. He reportedly returned to Turkmenistan in June 2008 to visit family and was arrested for entering Turkmenistan without a valid visa. After a closed trial on October 7, 2008, he was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhev are members of the human rights organization, Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation. After being held incommunicado under reportedly harsh conditions, they were convicted in August 2006 and sentenced to seven years in jail.

With Messrs. Amanklychev and Khadzhev's sentences concluding next year, a pardon around the upcoming Independence Day offers a reasonable opportunity to move beyond these long-troubling cases. Allowing Mr. Annaniyazov to return to Norway would offer an equally agreeable path forward.

As your respected Ambassador Orazov here in Washington has often pointed out, our two countries share a great many common interests – ones that I believe can and should be strengthened. One way to continue on such a path is to quietly resolve these cases on humanitarian grounds. I would hope to have my Senior Foreign Policy Advisor Chris Homan visit your historic nation in early October to further respectful discussions on these cases and continue building our nations' relationship.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
 United States Senator

711 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304
 (202) 224-2152
 TTY (202) 224-8180

230 SOUTH DEARBORN, 28TH FLOOR
 CHICAGO, IL 60604
 (312) 353-4002

525 SOUTH EQUITY STREET
 SPRINGFIELD, IL 62769
 (317) 492-4002

1104 THIRD AVENUE
 SUITE 237
 ROCK ISLAND, IL 61201
 (309) 786-5173

PAUL SIMON FEDERAL BUILDING
 750 W. CHERRY STREET
 SUITE 116-D
 CARBONDALE, IL 62901
 (618) 351-1122

durbin.senate.gov

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2013

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
President of Turkmenistan
Presidential Palace
74400 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Dear President Berdimuhamedov:

We understand that two Turkmen citizens of particular concern to us and others in the United States Senate, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev, have recently been released from prison and allowed to return to their families. Some months ago, our staff traveled to Turkmenistan to discuss their detention and well-being and our hope for their timely release. We want to recognize and thank you for your government's hospitality on this visit and for your leadership in releasing Amanklychev and Khadzhiiev.

As our staff discussed with Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hadjiyev in Ashgabat and on many occasions with Ambassador Orazov here in Washington, our two countries share many common interests – ones that we believe can and should be strengthened. We believe continued compassion and tolerance for those hoping for greater political openness in Turkmenistan, including Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, will greatly advance that relationship.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

CC: Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hadjiyev

RICHARD J. DURBIN
ILLINOIS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON RULES
AND ADMINISTRATION
ASSISTANT MAJORITY
LEADER

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

389 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304
2001 224-3182
TTY 2021 224-4182
230 SOUTH DEARBORN, 8TH FLOOR
CHICAGO, IL 60604
(312) 268-4882
636 SOUTH EIGHTH STREET
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703
(217) 482-4882
701 NORTH COURT STREET
MARIETTA, IL 60089
(618) 999-8912
durbin.senate.gov

November 23, 2010

Ambassador Ian Kelly
U.S. Mission to the OSCE
Obersteingasse 11/1
A-1190 Vienna, Austria

VIA FAX: (+43) 1 31339 3136

Dear Ambassador Kelly:

In light of the upcoming OSCE summit in Kazakhstan, I want to bring to your attention the troubling cases of three political prisoners in Turkmenistan. I understand Turkmenistan will be at the summit and believe it important that its human rights record be a matter of transparency and discussion.

For almost two years, I and a number of other senators have been urging the Turkmen Government to release Annakurban Amanklychev, Sapardurdy Khadzhev, and Gulgeldy Annanlyazov – all apparent political prisoners. While the Turkmen government did release one of four originally referenced detainees, it has rebuffed repeated appeals on behalf of these three remaining prisoners. Turkmenistan's OSCE delegation should be asked to directly account for these individuals and the country's human rights record should be an important criterion for maintaining its OSCE membership.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter sent by 21 senators to Secretary Clinton on this matter from earlier in the year.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Richard J. Durbin

cc: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 5, 2010

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write to request your help in addressing the continued detention in Turkmenistan of journalists Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiev and civic activist Gulgeldy Annaniyazov. A number of us wrote to Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow in December about these detainees, all of whom have been characterized as prisoners of conscience by several human rights groups. We remain deeply concerned about the treatment and detention of these individuals and ask that their cases be raised at the highest levels in upcoming bilateral consultations with the Turkmenistan government.

Mr. Amanklychev and Mr. Khadzhiev, both members of the human rights group the Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation, were arrested in 2006. At that time, they were reportedly helping French journalists film a documentary on Turkmenistan. Government officials later said that they were "gathering slanderous information to spread public discontent." These individuals, who have now been imprisoned for nearly four years, were not informed of the criminal charges against them until nearly one month after their arrests and were not allowed to call witnesses during their brief trial.

Mr. Annaniyazov, a long-time political dissident, served four years in prison during the 1990s for participating in "anti-government" demonstrations. After his release, he moved to Norway as a political refugee. While reportedly visiting family in Turkmenistan in 2008, Mr. Annaniyazov was arrested on the basis that he did not possess valid travel documents and possibly other undisclosed charges. He has been held incommunicado since receiving an 11 year sentence following a closed trial in October 2008.

According to Turkmenistan's constitution, all citizens enjoy freedom of association, freedom of press, and freedom of speech. In addition, the constitution guarantees criminal defendants the right to be promptly notified of charges against them, the right to present a defense, and the right to a public trial. Messrs. Annaniyazov, Amanklychev and Khadzhiev's arrests, trials, and ongoing detentions fall short of Turkmenistan and international standards for due process of law. Their detentions also raise concerns about political intimidation in Turkmenistan.

Under President Berdimuhamedov's leadership, Turkmenistan has taken a few steps to improve its human rights record, including releasing political prisoner Mukhametkuli Aymuradov and pardoning many other prisoners who were detained during his predecessor's period in office. The release of Messrs. Annaniyazov, Amanklychev, and Khadzhiiev would be another important step in that process.

We thank you for your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,


Senator Richard J. Durbin


Senator Sam Brownback


Senator Benjamin L. Cardin


Senator John Kerry


Senator Patrick Leahy


Senator Carl Levin


Senator Joe Lieberman

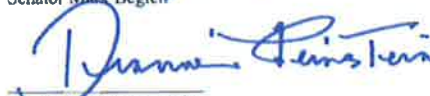

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.


Senator George Voinovich


Senator Robert Menendez


Senator Mark Begich


Senator Mary Landrau


Senator Dianne Feinstein


Senator Arlen Specter

Chris Dodd

Senator Chris Dodd

Mark Udall

Senator Mark Udall

Evan Bayh

Senator Evan Bayh

Bernie Sanders

Senator Bernie Sanders

Frank R. Lautenberg

Senator Frank Lautenberg

Sherrod Brown

Senator Sherrod Brown

Herb Kohl

Senator Herb Kohl